

Document Citation

Title	Assassin of the Tsar
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Spectator Entertainment</i>
Date	
Type	press kit
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	10
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Tsareubijtsa (The assassin of the Tsar), Shakhnazarov, Karen, 1991

SPECTATOR ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL

and

MOSFILM STUDIOS

Present

In Association with

"Courier" Studios

A Film by KAREN SHAKHNAZAROV

MALCOLM MCDOWELL

OLEG YANKOVSKY

"ASSASSIN OF THE TSAR"

Director of Photography NIKOLAI NEMOLYAEV

Supervising Editor ANTHONY SLOMAN

Music by JOHN ALTMAN

Produced by

CHRISTOPHER GAWOR

ERIK VAISBERG

ANTHONY SLOMAN

Executive Producers

BENJAMIN BRAHMS

VLADIMIR DOSTAL

Screenplay by

ALEXANDER BORODYANSKY

KAREN SHAKHNAZAROV

Directed by

KAREN SHAKHNAZAROV

Duration: 104 minutes

CAST LIST

TIMOFEYEV / YUROVSKY.....MALCOLM MCDOWELL
SMIRNOV / TSAR NICHOLAS II.....OLEG YANKOVSKY
ALEXANDER YEGOROVICH.....ARMEN DZHIGARKHANIAN
KOZLOV.....YURI SHERSTNYOV
MARINA.....ANGELA PTASHUK
VOIKOV.....VICTOR SEFEROV
EMPRESS ALEXANDRA.....OLGA ANTONOVA
PRINCESS OLGA.....DARIA MAYOROVA
PRINCESS TATYANA.....EVGENIA KRYUKOVA
PRINCESS MARIA.....ALENA TEREMEZOVA
PRINCESS ANASTASIA.....OLGA BORISOVA
PRINCESS ALEXEI.....ALEXEI LOGUNOV
DR BOTKIN.....VYATCHESLAV VDOVIN
MEDVEDEV.....VYATCHESLAV MUKHOV
THE BOY, SEDNEV.....DENIS DMITRIEV
CRYING WOMAN.....NADEZHDA MAKEKO
NURSE.....ANASTASIA NEMOLYAEVA
OFFICER IN PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO.....DMITRY KURILENKO
OFFICER'S GIRLFRIEND.....NATALYA KISHOVA
TSAR ALEXANDER II.....YURI BELIAEV
YOUNG TSAR ALEXANDER II.....ANDREI KRIVITSKY
RISAKOV.....ALFRED KAMELEVSKY

CREDITS

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER.....ALEXANDER MOODY
PRODUCTION MANAGERS.....VALERY GANDRABURA, EVGENY KHARITONOV
PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATORS.....TATYANA MAXIMENKO, IGOR SUSHEVSKY
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.....LARISSA MAKHLAYOVA
ART DIRECTOR.....LUDMILA KUSAKOVA
SET DESIGNER.....ALEXANDER PETROV
SPECIAL EFFECTS SET ARTIST.....ALBERT RUDACHENKO
CASTING DIRECTOR.....NATALYA POLYAKOVA
SCRIPT EDITORS.....VALERY GRACHEV, ALEXEI ZERNOV
CAMERA OPERATOR.....VALERY KURAKIN
CAMERA ASSISTANTS.....SERGEI BESSMERTNY, ELENA GUSEVA
STILLS PHOTOGRAPHERS.....ANATOLY PASHVIKIN, BARRY PEAKE
UNIT PUBLICIST.....LIBBY SHEARON
PUBLICITY CONSULTANTS.....DENNIS DAVIDSON ASSOCIATES
DIALOGUE COACH.....NANCY MANNINGHAM
POST PRODUCTION DIALOGUE SUPERVISOR.....CONSTANTINE GREGORY
SOUND RECORDIST.....IGOR MAYOROV
ASSISTANT SOUND RECORDIST.....VLADIMIR MAXIMOV
COSTUME DESIGNER.....VERA ROMANOVA
ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER.....ALLA OLENYOVA
MAKE-UP ARTISTS.....CLAUDIA GAMEL, GALINA GRIGORIEVA
SPECIAL EFFECTS CO-ORDINATORS.....JOHN EVANS, VYATCHESLAV STEPANOV
SPECIAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR.....JEFF CLIFFORD
SPECIAL EFFECTS CAMERAMAN.....VICTOR ZHANOV
ARMOURER.....JOHN OXLADE
GAFFER.....OLEG BELSKY
MUSIC RECORDING.....AT MOSFILM
EDITOR.....LIDIA MILIOTI
ASSISTANT EDITORS.....NINA GORBUNOVA, ARABELLA HUTTER
IRINA KOZHEMYAKINA, YELENA YEGORICHEVA
DIALOGUE EDITORS.....BRIDGET REISS, SARAH VICKERS
POST SYNC EFFECTS EDITOR.....STAN FIFERMAN
PUBLICITY CONSULTANTS.....DENNIS DAVIDSON ASSOCIATES

TITLES AND OPTICALS.....G.S.E. LONDON
DOLBY STEREO CONSULTANT.....JOHN ILES
RERECORDED AT.....ROGER CHERRILL LTD, LONDON
RERECORDING MIXER.....PAUL CARR
ADR CASTING.....BRENDAN DONNISON FOR LYPS INC.
PRODUCTION RUNNER.....NOEL KELLY

SHORT SYNOPSIS: ASSASSIN OF THE TSAR

Timofeyev (MALCOLM McDOWELL), a patient in a present-day Moscow hospital, has long since thought that he is really Yakov Yurovsky, the assassin of Tsar Nicholas II. Now he thinks he is cured.

However, when the hospital's newly appointed head physician, Dr Smirnov (OLEG YANKOVSKY), begins to take a special interest in his case, all the disturbing symptoms of Timofeyev's schizophrenia reappear.

In his attempt to cure this, Smirnov increasingly assumes the personality of the dead Tsar, in the hope of breaking the power of Timofeyev's obsession. As the realm of fantasy becomes ever more blurred for both doctor and patient, it seems inevitable that they must be played out to their tragic end.

LONG SYNOPSIS: ASSASSIN OF THE TSAR

Timofeyev (MALCOLM McDOWELL), is a patient in a present-day Moscow hospital, who for many years has suffered from the belief that he is the real assassin of both Tsar Alexander II, in 1881, and Alexander's grandson, Tsar Nicholas II, in 1918.

At long last however, Timofeyev believes he is cured of these delusions, and so discusses the possibility of being discharged from hospital in an interview with the head physician, Doctor Yegorovich, and his recently appointed replacement, Dr. Smirnov (OLEG YANKOVSKY). But soon after, disturbing signs appear which imply that Timofeyev is far from well.

The red weal that Smirnov finds on Timofeyev's neck is not from a suicide attempt, but the doctor learns appears every year on 3rd March - the same date as the assassin of Tsar Alexander II was beheaded in 1881.

According to Timofeyev's clinical notes, he also develops all the symptoms of a perforated ulcer every August. Smirnov discovers that this is the same fate as Yakov Yurovsky suffered, (Tsar Nicholas II's assassin), and died of in August 1938.

Having read all he can about the events surrounding the killing of the Tsar, Smirnov provokes Timofeyev into taking on the role of Yurovsky. In his fascination with his patient's delusions, Smirnov's ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy also suffers, and significantly, when in the course of one of their encounters Timofeyev collapses complaining of agonising pains in his stomach, the drug Smirnov prescribes is for the treatment of ulcers.

With Timofeyev believing he is dying, Smirnov decides that the only possible way to cure him of his schizophrenia is by assuming the role of the Tsar himself. When this pretence is revealed, Smirnov hopes Timofeyev will cease to think of himself as a murderer in the same moment that the image of his supposed victim also dissolves.

As Dr Smirnov's recollections of Tsar Nicholas's early life and eventual fall from power become more vivid however, so both doctor and patient sink deeper into their absorbing fantasy. Even when the doctor mysteriously develops a wound on the side of his head which matches one sustained by Tsar Nicholas II during childhood, he still rejects Dr Yegorovich's attempts to warn him off his dangerous experiment.

Smirnov decides to travel to Sverdlovsk, formerly known as Ekaterinburg, where the Tsar and his family spent their final weeks. Perhaps here he will find the answer.

With Smirnov lying on a bed in his dreary hotel room in Sverdlovsk and Timofeyev in thought back at the hospital, doctor and patient at last relive the terrible events of July 1918. As Yurovsky, Timofeyev recalls the preparations which culminated in him leading the imperial family down the steps into the basement where they would die. As the Tsar, Smirnov describes the last moments in which he realised the fate which awaited him.

The next morning Smirnov is found dead in his hotel room.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

In May 1918, upon reaching his fiftieth birthday, Tsar Nicholas II recorded in his diary that he was surprised to reach such an age and still be alive. His violent death, which came just a few months later, was an event he had feared and half expected all his life.

As a child, Nicholas had attended the deathbed of his grandfather, Alexander II, who had been mortally wounded by a terrorist bomb thrown in a St Petersburg street. His own father, Alexander III, died of natural causes, but not before he had been the target of several assassination attempts, and such was Nicholas's fear of his subjects that when he and his family travelled by the imperial train an identical train invariably followed or preceded it in order to confound would-be attackers.

Nicholas II was reputedly a retiring, gentle and learned man, with a genuine concern for the good of his people. Yet he had been inculcated since childhood with the belief that the vast Russian empire - which covered a sixth of the earth's surface and had a population of 130 million people - could be effectively governed only by the firm exercise of his autocratic power, and like his father before him, he generally countered unrest with further oppression.

Most notoriously, in January 1905, on what became known as Bloody Sunday, Nicholas's troops fired indiscriminately into a crowd of 200,000 workers demonstrating outside the Winter Palace. In the succeeding years, opposition to Nicholas the Bloody, as he was dubbed, steadily increased, and in March 1917, after Russia had suffered a series of humiliating defeats in the First World War, and amid severe food and fuel shortages, he was forced to abdicate.

Even after Lenin and the Bolsheviks took control in the October Revolution, the power struggle in Russia continued, and the confinement of the royal family became ever more like imprisonment. After his abdication, Nicholas had retired to a palace in the

countryside outside St Petersburg. Along with his wife, Alexandra, his four daughters, and his sickly son, Alexei, he was later moved to Tobolsk in Siberia, and finally, in April 1918, the family was sent to the town of Ekaterinberg in the Ural Mountains.

There they were installed in the Ipatiev House, the home of a local merchant, which was soon fortified with a stockade-like fence, machine-guns at the windows, and a guard of as many as 50 soldiers. Once Nicholas had had 15,000 servants and eight palaces, but now he and his family and a few surviving retainers were crowded into six upstairs rooms, the windows whitewashed to prevent them looking out.

The family's chief jailer during their final days of captivity was Yankel Yurovsky, a former watch-maker and photographer who had risen under the Bolsheviks to become the regional commissar for justice. Under Yurovsky's regime the security around the former Tsar was tightened still further. More sentries were posted, another machine-gun positioned at an upstairs window, and special deliveries of food for the family restricted to the milk which was prescribed for the ailing Alexei. Any contact with the outside world was strictly prohibited.

Finally, sometime during the night of 16 July, 1918, Yurovsky led the Tsar and his family down the 23 steps into the room where they were shot and bayoneted by a group of eleven soldiers. Yurovsky himself, it was later claimed, fired the gun which killed both Nicholas II and Alexei.

In the years since, contradiction and confusion have surrounded the circumstances of the Tsar's death, and rumours that some or all of the family survived have proliferated. Most famous of all was Anna Anderson who claimed to be Anastasia, Nicholas and Alexandra's youngest daughter, and the only survivor of the family's murder.

Documents kept in archives in the Soviet Union, however, and only recently made available for general inspection, seem to confirm the original and simplest version of the tragic events. Notable amongst those documents is Yurovsky's hand-written account of the imperial family's execution.

It is upon this, Yurovsky's statement, that director and writer Karen Shakhnazarov and Alexander Boradyansky have drawn in order to make ASSASSIN OF THE TSAR the most accurate account of the family's death yet. Many of the film's voice-overs, for example, are direct translations of Yurovsky's own words.