

**Mongrel Media**

**Presents**

**12**

**Directed by  
Nikita Mikhalkov**

**Starring**

Nikita Mikhalkov, Sergey Makovetsky, Sergey Garmash, Alexy Petrenko, Valentin Graft, Yury Stoyanov, Mikhail Efremov, Sergey Gazarov, Alexander Adabashian, Victor Verzhbitsky, Alexey Gorbunov, Roman Madianov, Sergey Artsybashev

(159 mins, Russia, 2007)

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**Short Synopsis:** 12 characters – 12 truths. The story of 12 Jurors discussing a verdict to pass on an 18 year-old Chechen boy whether he is guilty of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder of his step-father – an officer of the Russian army. The film is thinks aloud about today's life, about the need to hear the next of kin and help that person before its too late. The action of the picture unveils in one room - a gym adjusted for jury deliberations.

**Detailed Synopsis:** As in the Sidney Lumet's film *12 Angry Men*, all this film is confined to one jury room, were a verdict is being worked on the question of guilt of a young man accused of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder of his step-father. But for that general setting and a few turns of the story here and there, there is no further similarity. Its is a truly Russian story as the deliberation of the jury touch at the heart of what fills the hearts and souls of the people present in that room – even those that might not appear directly relevant to the guilt or innocence of the accused.

It's the hearts and souls that really create the tone of the arguments. And the people involved are very different: a laborer from the city subway rail transport system, the CEO of a joint Russian-Japanese corporation, a director of a cemetery, a producer of a small television company, a cab driver and a variety show performer.

It is a Russian story, in spite of the fact that ethnically they are all different – there is an old Jew, a Georgian Surgeon among the jurors. And when the suggestion is made by one of them, who at the beginning voted against a quick guilty vote, but rather to talk over the things that appear amiss, the case no longer appears to be a simply a matter of black and white. They begin to talk about the things that worries them, about the situation in the country which is going through the turmoil of a transition period, things that are not said on television, nor in the printed media, but are a perennial subject in every kitchen causing heated debates wherever people congregate.

It is about who is to blame for the things that are not going the right way in the country. It's about the Russian person not accustomed to living by the book, because law abiding is trivial and boring, and in Russia its all about hear and soul – not the Law. And they discover that hear and soul are there in each and everyone in the room. It's just that response time with every person present is different, as they have different histories of resentments, which like crusted wounds cover their souls.

The most vivid supporter of the guilty verdict is a brutal type of character – the taxi man, an ardent ethnic chauvinist, who believes that the boy is guilty just because he is a Chechen, an Abo – the tribesman, which places him automatically as the bad guy. And the taxi man all of a sudden reveals a bizarre story of a relationship with his own son, whom nearly drove him to suicide.

Its seems sometimes that the Juror forget about what brought them there in the first place, the need to announce a verdict for the Chechen boy – the differences among them being so great. The same taxi man hates all immigrants from other cities and countries, because his Moscow seems to him not like the Moscow he once knew, and the Georgen surgeon, who does not speak Russian very well, is trying to find out from him who exactly the

classified as a wild Aboriginal tribesman: Pirosmani, Danelia, Paradjanov, Shota Rusaveli, who?!

And the metro builder, who concurred with the taxi man's verdict initially in thinking that all foreigners are beasts by definition, suddenly starts talking about his own uncle, an electrician, who has nothing to do with the matter at hand, who got himself into a complicated tragic-comedic situation as a result of an unfortunate loss in a casino and who nearly became a terrorist, when he seized hostages demanding the lost money returned, but it ended peacefully and no one was hurt because...the metro builder has problems expressing his thoughts which are turning clumsily in his worker's head...Because the good guys must be helped and the bad guys must be dead...

And even the cynical variety show performer, who is getting late for his tour, who took it all as a source for his puns on stage at first, suddenly finds himself starting a tragic monologue about the only smile he earned once in his life. Because he gets terrified looking at the audience while he is on stage, when people are ready to laugh at everything – the perished in earthquakes, the killer militia men, and they only laugh because they are scared.

The film is a constant swing from funny to deeply tragic. It reminds a symphonic performance: there is a time when it takes the audience by its melody, getting through to everyone in the house and makes one feel that he/she is on the other side of the screen, in that room where the jurors are. Although the story is very Russian in its tone, and in spite of the Russian justice system being still very far from what is generally accepted in the democratic world, the global problems of humanity which are given credence in the picture are akin to everyone.

## **The History:**

Remake of the motion picture 12 Angry Men, which was awarded Golden Bear in Berlin in 1957 and three Oscar nominations. The picture by Lumet was shot based on the play by Reginald Rose, which Nikita Mikhalkov already staged once at Shchukinsky Theater School. The original film told about 12 jurors who were deciding the fate of a Latin American youth accused of murdering his father. First they all voted death sentence, and only one suggested that the case should be reviewed in every detail and swung the verdict as a result.

In Mikhalkov's version the story unveils in the snow bound Moscow where, in a conventional gym, 12 Jurors are deciding the fate of a young boy accused of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder. That is the first work of the director over the last 8 years. The two months shooting period was preceded by a long time of rehearsals and detailed analysis of scenes and episodes. Mikhalkov was shooting his picture step by step following the logic of story development in the process. The final stage of work was in the setting of Aberbeevka village in Krasnodar Region. There, battle engagements in Chechnya were being shot for a few days in a row. According to Director, those are flashbacks of the youth's memories as he is accused of murder of his stepfather. Those episodes will be cut into the main action of the film.

Chechen youth is played by actor-debutant Apti Magamaev; his younger brother Abdi was trusted with a role of his brother as a child. The seven year old Abdi stoically endured shooting under pouring rain and in an ice cold cellar under a barrage of a machinegun rounds. At the end he was to play an episode when he escapes bullets of the militants, but his parents are shot as he watches. For crowd scenes local villagers were enrolled.

Music for the film was written by Nikita Mikhalkov's friend Edward Artemiev. The psychological drama is developing accompanied by a piercing symphony of music with augmenting and fading rhythms at critical moments, lyrical deviations and a solemn gala finale. A thriller and a symphony, Chechen melodies and the sound of machinegun rounds, sobbing melodies which get to one's heart and a philosophical rendition of what life is all about – those are the main musical themes underlying the canvas of the cinematographic artistry of "12" motion picture.

## **Actors About the Project**

### **Nikita Mikhalkov:**

“The script work has produced a totally new and original piece, which is very current to a viewer of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I am confident that for a movie which in the 60s became a revelation of the world of cinematography, today a totally new cinema language should be found, which would not leave the modern viewer indifferent.”

### **Sergey Makovetsky:**

“It is not only a film about jurors. There are many associations in that film, many thoughts and themes. And maybe the answer to the question how we should exist in this world. Who we are and how we treat ourselves and the next of kin. “12 Angry Men” is a film-revelation, film-parable. You will see in the film an absolutely open soul of Nikita Sergeevich and every character on the cast.”

### **Sergey Garmash:**

It was my first film working for Mikhalkov and that was the case when I improved my qualification as an actor. We had an extensive pre-production, when we rehearsed, worked on the text and, what is most unique, the film was being shot in the script order (i.e. we did not, as it often happens on the set, jump from one piece at the end of the story to an episode in the middle). It was my first experience with consecutive work like this. The two months of the shooting proved to be a fascinating experience for me as an actor.

### **Michail Efremov:**

12 totally different people are sitting at the table. Each represents a profession, some social sector, some ethnicity. They don't have names, just numbers. I think everyone can recognize oneself in those 12 characters. And that means that the film is about us.

### **Yuri Stoyanov:**

My character is different from others in that he is the only person who changed his opinion four times in one day when they were sitting in that gym behind the locked doors to work out a verdict of guilt or otherwise for a Chechen boy. I change my view four times and once even forget what my view was after I changed it the last time.

### **Valentin Gaft:**

It is responsible matter when in an argument; a real personality comes to the surface. The authors of the film insist that the story of “12” will be purely Russian. There are not so many parallels with the Lumet picture. Our script writers added a line with the crime set up. That will be the key in the picture and may change the finale of the entire story.

## Interesting Facts About the Film

As all the 12 actors were to be on the set all the time, Nikita Mikhalkov signed a strict contract with each. The main condition was actors were not to take part in other projects while shooting this one. The exception was Valentin Gaft. He was excused to play his scheduled parts in the theatre, while Nikita Sergeevich rehearsed with the rest of the crew.

There is one, in a way, unique element in the picture – a 10 minute monologue of Sergey Makovetsky – a wide shot done non-stop, seamlessly without a hitch.

How Sergey Makovetsky was confirmed for his part in the film. Late autumn 2006 Mikhalkov called Makovetsky and, without wasting time for “hello’s,” just asked: “Matkovetsky, do you believe in God?” – “Who’s that?” – “Never mind. Just say yes or no” – “But who is that?” – “Not important. Just say yes or no” – “well ues...” – “And do you go to church?” – “Yes” – “Your prayers have been heard.”

A pretext for shooting “12” was an unavoidable pause in the work on “Burnt by the Sun – 2.” Mikhalkov’s idea was not to let the crew get inactive by keeping them busy shooting the Lumet’s picture remake. Let us remind you that in 1978 he in a similarly smart move shot an excellent film “Five Evenings” based on a play by Edward Volodin in-between sessions of making his “Several Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov.”

Nikita Mikhalkov about his film being on the list of contenders at the festival in Venus: “It is very honorable event, very prestigious to represent my country at a festival like the Venus one. But for me the best option would be, if as any people as possible in Russia could see that picture. And the thing is not in class and in glory, but, for some reason, and I hope that I am not mistaken, that this picture is very, and very, important today. I [put a lot of hope, as a human being and a citizen, on this picture.”

## About the Cast

### **Sergei Makovetsky**

People's Artist of Russia. Born on 13.06.1958. Graduated from Shchukin Theatre School. Actor of Vakhtangov Theatre.

Selected Filmography: Mne ne bolno (It Doesn't Hurt), 72 metra (72 meters), Tri istorii (Three Stories), Pro urodov i lyudey (Of Freaks and Men), Zhizn Klima Samgina (The Life of Klim Samgin), Chyornaya vual (The Black Feil), Trotsky, Klyuch ot spalni (The Key from Bedroom), Zhmurki (Blind Man's Bluff), Gibel imperii (The Fall of the Empire), Tetro vtroyem

### **Sergei Garmash**

Born on 1.09.1958. Graduated from MKHAT (Moscow Art Theatre) School. Since 1984, actor of Sovremennik Theatre.

Selected Filmography: Bednye rodstvenniki (Poor Relations), Svoi (Our Own), Okhota na Piranyu (Piranha), Kamenskaya, Doktor Zhivago, 72 metra (72 meters), Lyubovnik (The Lover), Kavkazskaya ruletka (Caucasian Roulette), Posleniy zaboy (The Last Mine Shaft), Besy (The Possessed), Master I Margarita (Master and Maragaret), A poutru oni prosnulis (And in the Morning They Woke Up)

### **Mikhail Yefremov**

Born on 10.11.1963. Graduated from MKHAT (Moscow Art Theatre) School.

Selected Filmography: Artistka (The Actress), Puteshestvie s domanshnimi zivotnymi (Traveling with Pets), Ofisery (officers), Nebo. Samolyot. Devushka (Sky. Plane. Girl), Zhest (Junk), Zayats nad bezdnoy (The Hare over the Abiss), Tayozhnyy roman (A Tiaga Romance), Koroleva Margo (Queen Margot), Park Sovetskogo Perioda (The Park of the Soviet Period), Antikiller, Okhota na Piranyu (Piranha), V dvizhenii (In Motion), Sdvig (Shift), etc.

### **Yuri Stoyanov**

Born on 10.07.1957. Graduated from the State Institute of Theatre Art (GITIS). From 1978 to 1985, actor of Gorkiy Bolshoi Drama Theater (BDT) in Leningrad.

Selected Filmography: Landysh serebristyy (Silver Lily of the Valley), Tri mushketyora (The Three Musketeers), Zayats nad bezdnoy (The Hare over the Abiss), Tri Polugratsii (Three Semigraces). Writer and production director of Gorodok TV show.

### **Valentin Gaft**

People's Artist of RSFSR. Born on 2.09.1935. Graduated from MKHAT (Moscow Art Theatre) School. Actor of Sovremennik Theatre.

Selected Filmography: Garazh (The Garage), Charodey (Mgicians), Sirota kazanskaya (Sympathy Seeker), Vory v zakone (Kings of Crime), Nebo v almazakh (The Sky with

Diamonds), Ya svoboden, ya nickey (I'm Free, I belong to Nobody), Leningrad, Stayre klyachi (Old Hags), Nochnye zabavy (Night Fun), Khochu v Ameriku (I Wanna Go to America), Vizit damy (The Visit), Gonki po vertikali (Vertical Races), etc.

**Aleksei Petrenko**

People's Artist of RFSR. Born on 26.03.1938. Graduated from Kharkov Theatre Institute. Worked at Moscow Drama Theatre on alaya Bronnaya, MHKAT (Moscow Art Theatre), Anatily Vasiliev's School Of Drama Art, School of Modern Play Theatre.

Selected Filmography: Sibirskiy tsiryulnik (The Barber of Siberia), Kollektzioner (The Mastermind), Dvadsat dney bez voyny (Twenty Days Without War), Agoniya (Agony), Vetka sireni (Branch of Lilacs), Uznik zamka If (The Prisoner of If Castle), Lev Tolstoy (The Death of Lev Tolstoy), Zhestokiy romans (A Cruel Romance), Igra na milliony (A Play for Millions), Agape, Ne hlebom edinyim (Not by Bread Alone).

**Sergei Gazarov**

Born on 13.01.1958. Graduated from the State Institute of Theatre Art (GITIS, Oleg Tabakov's art workshop). Worked at Sovremenik Theatre, then at Tabakerka Theatre-Studio. Actor, director, scriptwriter.

Selected Filmography: Krejzi (Crazy, director), Parizhskiy Antikvar (The Parisian Antiquary), Moy svodnyy brat Frankenstein (My Step Brother Frankenstein), Russian Pizza Blues, Palach (The Executioner), Taksi-Blyuz (Taxi Blues), Turetskiy gambit (Turkish Gambit), Limita.

## **About Director Nikita Mikhalkov:**

*Director, actor, scriptwriter*

Professional and public activity

President of Russian Culture Foundation (1993)

Board Chairman, Union of Russian Filmmakers (1997)

President, ThreeT Productions (1988)

Member, Committee for Culture and Arts under the President of the Russian Federation

Member, UNESCO Commission of the Russian Federation

Member, Board of the Russian Ministry of Culture

Member, Council of European Film Academy

Professor, Academy of Liberal Arts, San-Marino

Acting Member of the Academy of Humanities

### *Awards:*

Order of the Labor Red Banner (1987, USSR)

Order for Services to Fatherland, Grade III (1995, Russia)

Order of Sergiy of Radonezh, Grade I, awarded by the Russian Orthodox Church (1997).

Knight of the Legion of Honor (1992, France)

Commander of the Legion of Honor (golden star with emeralds neckband), awarded for “contribution to world culture” (1994 France)

Winner Russian State awards for films “Urga” (1993) and “Burnt by the Sun” (1995).

Winner of State Award of the Kazakhstan Soviet Socialist Republic (1978) for “Tran Siberian Express” film script

Winner of Leninist Komsomol Award (1978).

Awarded several special prizes of honor for contribution into cinema art and promotion of culture:

“Golden Golem” (1995, Prague)

“Grand Priz of America,” International Film Festival in Montreal, 1996.

“For contribution into cinema,” Baltic Pearl International Film Festival (Jurmala-96)

“For contribution into promotion of culture” at the International Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland, 1996)

“Man of the Year – 95,” ratings of the Russian Biographical Institute.

Polls conducted by Sovetskiy Ekran magazine named him the best actor of 1984.

1963-1966 – study at actor’s department of Theater School named after B. Shchukin.

1967-1971 – study at film director’s department of VGIK Film School (Romm Studio).

His first important cinematographic job was in the “Waling the Streets of Moscow” film (directed by Georgi Daneliya, 1963). Before this he appeared in films “The Sun Shins for Everybody” (Directed by Konstantin Voynov), “Clouds Over Borsk” (directed by Vasili Ordynsky), “Adventures of Krosh” (directed by Genrikh Oganisyan).

He also appeared in films: “The Red Tent” (director Michael Kalatozov), “An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano” (directed by N. Mikhalkov), “Siberiade” (directed by A.

Mihalkov-Konchalovsky), “Ruthless Romance” (directed Eldar Ryazanov), “The Insulted and the Injured” (directed by Andrei Eshpaj), “Burnt by the Sun” (directed by N. Mihalkov), “Inspector” (directed by S. Gazarov) and others.

Nikita Mihalkov is a co-writer of “At Home among Strangers, a Stranger at Home” (the other writer was Duard Voolodarsky); he wrote screenplays for “Trans-Siberian Express” (co-writer Aleksandr Adabashyan), “Dark Eyes” (co-writers Aleksandr Adabashyan and Suso Cecchi d’Amico), “Burnt by the Sun” (co-writer R. Ibragimbekov) etc.

He was stage director of “Player Piano” in Teatro di Roma (Rome, Italy)

Worked as lecturer in VGIK Film School, at Film Directors’ Higher Courses; provided master-classes both in Russia and other countries.

### **Filmography:**

- 1967: “Girl and her Belongings” (unofficial title, short film, graduation work)
- 1968: “And I go Home” (short film, graduation work)
- 1970: “Quiet Day at War’s End” (short film, degree project)
- 1970: “Dear Words” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 94)
- 1970: “A Spoonful of Tar” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 97)
- 1970: “The Unconscientious” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 98)
- 1972: “Victim of Hospitality” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 125)
- 1974: “Object Lesson” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 148)
- 1974: “Let’s Start a New Life” (unofficial title, short story in Fitol newsreel, No 150)
- 1974: “At Home among Strangers, a Stranger at Home”
- 1975 “Slave of Love”
- 1976 “An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano”
- 1978: “Five Evenings” (produced as filming of “A Few Days from the Life of I.I. Oblomov” was underway)
- 1979: “A Few Days from the Life of I.I. Oblomov”
- 1981: “Kinfolk”
- 1983: “In Private”
- 1987: “Dark Eyes”
- 1990: “Hitchhiking”
- 1991: “Urga”
- 1993: “Remembering Chekov”
- 1993: “Anna: From Six Till Eighteen” (documentary)
- 1994: “Burnt by the Sun”
- 1995: “Requiem for the Great Victory” (unofficial title, co-writer Sergei Miroschnichenko)
- 1996: “Nikita Mikhalkov. A Sentimental Trip Home. Music of Russian Painting”