

Lessons at the End of Spring

(original title unknown) [Uroki v kontse vesny]

U.S.S.R : 1989 : dir. Oleg Kavun

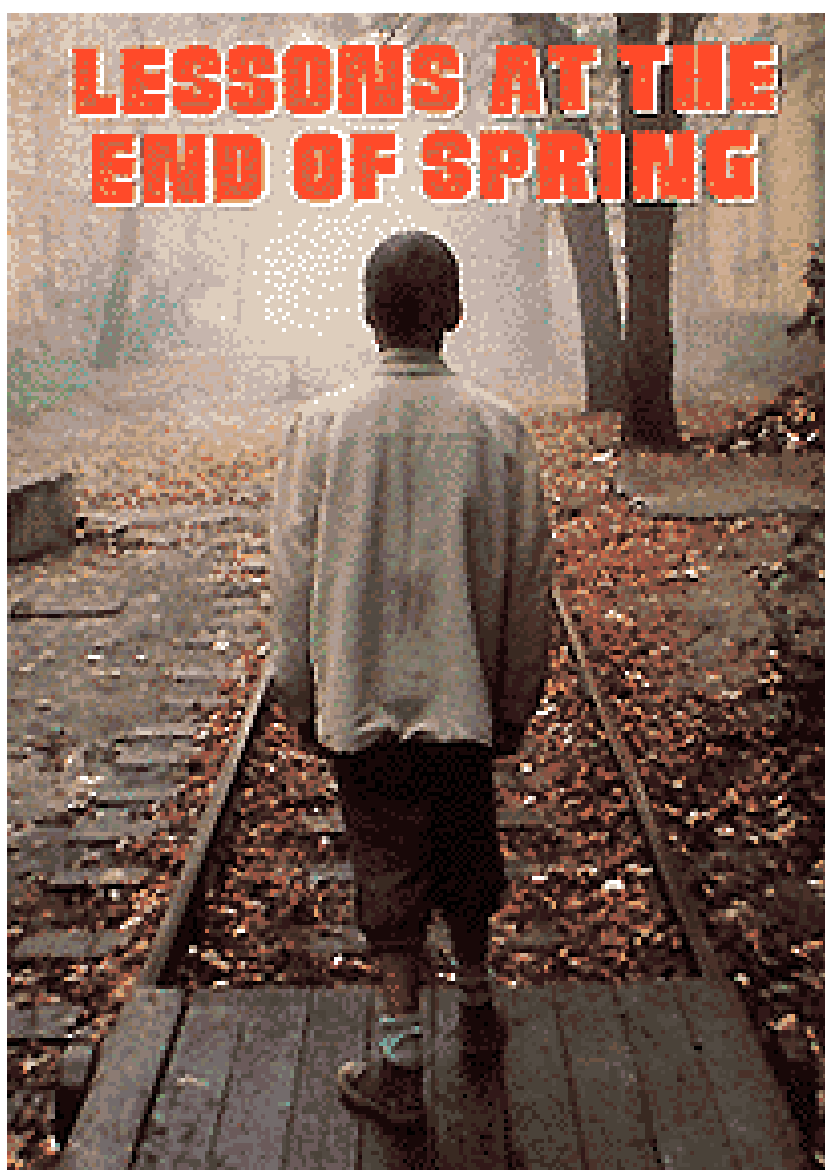
: 75 min

prod: : scr: Oleg Kavun : dir.ph.:

[Danya Tolkachev](#)

Yuri Nazarov; Yuri Mazhuge; Alexandr Feklistor

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Source: [Gayweb.com](#)



Source: Gayweb.com

CVMC video retail/rental website review:

"A thirteen year old Russian boy (Danya Tolkachev) strolls into town one afternoon to see a movie, instead there stumbles onto a riot, is unjustifiably arrested, tossed into prison. Can he survive, surrounded by adult criminals, the insane, sadistic guards? Grim portrait of Soviet life preceding Gorbachev's "reign" has been called Kafkaesque and compared to **"MY NAME IS IVAN"**. Well done and equally interesting.

Rated NR: adult themes [sic]; sexual themes; violence; moderate nudity
 Language: Russian (with English subtitles)
 Categories: Boy Films, Little to Preteen, Adolescent, Drama "

Gayweb internet site review:

(www.gayweb.com/106/index.html)

"A young boy's loss of innocence¹ within a pre-Perestroika Russian prison is the harrowing, Kafkaesque premise of **"LESSONS AT THE END OF SPRING"**. During the chaotic last months of the Khrushchev regime, a teenager's errand to the village market for bread ends in a nightmarish confrontation with local police authorities. Sadistic shower-room confrontations, insanitary detention facilities and a tomb-like prison cell become classrooms on the horrors of the human soul. As his fellow captives are

tortured, die or quietly lose their minds, the naive 13-year old becomes an unwilling witness to startling lessons in honour, hatred, conscience and survival.

The impressive debut of writer-director Oleg Kavun, **"LESSONS AT THE END OF SPRING"** immediately places him at the forefront of Russia's groundbreaking new wave of angry young film-makers. Startling dreamlike passages reminiscent of **"MY NAME IS IVAN"** are juxtaposed against scenes of physical and psychological brutality. Unsparing depiction of prison depravity and an uncanny ability to function on several levels at once make **"LESSONS"** an eye-opening testament to the new freedoms under Gorbachev. An unflinching exploration of taboo subject matter, **"LESSONS AT THE END OF SPRING"** is a landmark in the evolution of Soviet cinema. Mature themes. Extensive nudity. Unrated. Extensive nudity² Viewer discretion advised. In Russian with English subtitles. Colour. Running time approx 75 minutes. Item #80023 \$59.95 "



¹ yawwwwnnn.....

² just in case we missed it the first time?

What prison film would be complete without its shower scene – all the terror of testosterone overload in an all-male environment Source: *Movieboys*

Movieboys website review:

“A 13-year old’s life turns into a nightmare after his imprisonment. Contains extensive male nudity and brutality.”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. The prison movie genre has run the permutations on degradation and brutalisation so often that one would think there's nothing left in the bag with which to stun the audience. But whether you think of "**PAPILLON**", "**MIDNIGHT EXPRESS**", "**THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION**" or a score of others, the grimness and squalor are always a prelude to the elation of final escape. "**ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVITCH**" was an exception among prison movies in that escape, even by execution, was never remotely on the cards. It was a tale of accommodation, adaptation and survival within a dehumanising environment. Triumph was counted in terms of a stolen scrap of extra food or tobacco. And there is an essential truth in that film which so many others miss in the pursuit of drama: prison life is about endurance, not a perpetual bid for freedom.

Boy prison movies conform very much to the same conventions. Homosexual rape scenes are almost obligatory, as in "**SCUM**", "**SLEEPERS**" or "**PIXOTE**", and all too often the misery of captivity is merely a prelude to escape, as in "**S.E.R.**" ("Freedom Is Paradise") or "**PIXOTE**". The more unpalatable reality is to be seen in documentaries like "**Experiment of the Cross**" (shot in a Soviet juvenile prison where suicide is the only feasible means of escape).

Also worth noting are various documentaries on America's "scared straight" strategy, under which delinquent adolescents are bussed in by the authorities to a penitentiary where, for an hour or two, they are left to be terrorised by long-term adult inmates who assure them of the solid gold certainty they will be systematically sodomised upon admission to any adult prison. Homosexual panic as the prime deterrent to criminality. It was never like that in Cagney's day! But what is most invidious about that programme is the way prison authorities are essentially capitalising on their own abject failure to protect inmates from such brutalisation.

Nothing else is known of Danya Tolkachev (+13). He's not listed in *The Moving Picture Boy*.

See subject index under [EASTERN EUROPE / SOVIET BLOC](#), [PRISON / BORSTAL / DETENTION HOMES](#), and under [SEX & SEXUALITY](#) (which does unfortunately have to encompass the non-consensual variety).