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Russian Investigator Stars in Anti-Government Gogol Adaptation

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The controversial spokesman for the committee, Vladimir Markin, will be featured in the film "Fool's Day" directed by Alexander Baranov.

An official with Russia's all-powerful Investigative Committee is starring in an upcoming film based on a scathing anti-government satire by Nikolai Gogol in, what he says, is proof of the body's sense of humor.

The controversial spokesman for the committee, Vladimir Markin, will be featured in the film "Fool's Day" directed by Alexander Baranov — the man behind 2011's domestic hit "Yolki 2" — which is set to premiere later this year, Lenta.ru reported.

The film revisits Gogol's classic 1836 play "The Inspector-General," in which a petty official is showered with gifts and bribes after being mistaken for a government inspector by corrupt small town officials.

"If you can't laugh at yourself, you're doomed to fail," Markin was cited as saying, in the report published on Thursday.

"We're showing that Investigative Committee staff has a sense of humor."

Though the report said Markin had not been given the title role, it did not specify what character Markin was embodying in the play once lambasted by tsarist officials as having no "good characters" at all.

The Investigative Committee, a rough analogue of the FBI, reports directly to the Russian president, and handles probes into major crimes, including criminal cases against opposition leaders such as Alexei Navalny.

Markin, 57, who worked as a journalist in Soviet media, has made a name for himself in recent years with outspoken public statements on the committee's behalf, including attacks on Navalny, the Kremlin's one-time "grey cardinal" Vladimir Surkov and even Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

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