

Russian Film Takes Top Prize at London Film Festival

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Russian director Andrei Zvyagintsev won the top prize at the London Film Festival for his film "Leviathan," a tale of small-town corruption in Russia.

The film, which has been controversial at home for its use of obscene language, left all jurors at the London festival moved by its "grandeur and themes," film producer and jury president Jeremy Thomas was cited as saying by The Guardian on Sunday.

Thomas said jurors had been unanimous in their decision to give "Leviathan" the film festival's top prize. The award follows an earlier win at the Cannes Film Festival, when Zvyagintsev's film took the prize for best screenplay.

Three of Zvyagintsev's earlier films have received prestigious awards, including "The Return" (2003), which won a Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, and "The Banishment," which got the best actor award at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

Despite the success abroad of "Leviathan," Zvyagintsev ran into trouble when trying to obtain screening permits to show it in Russia. New legislation prohibits the screening of films with obscenities.

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The version of the film being shown in Russian movie theaters bears an 18+ warning and the curse words are bleeped out.

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