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# 5 Hollywood Villains That Prove Russian Stereotypes Are Hard to Kill

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Ivan Drago, portrayed by Swedish actor Dolph Lundgren, is a Soviet boxer and an Olympic champion in Rocky IV.

The Cold War might have been over for a while, but the image of Russia as a cruel and dangerous place hasn't changed much since then — at least, not on the big screen.

Soviet and Russian characters have been assigned the role of antagonists in dozens of American movies, with their display of bold Russian accents, emotionless demeanor and cruel behavior. Soviet sportsmen, nuclear hunters, black wizards and assassins – The Moscow Times presents a selection of Hollywood's most memorable Russian villains of the last decades.

### 1. Ivan Drago

Rocky IV, 1985

Ivan Drago, portrayed by Swedish actor Dolph Lundgren, is a Soviet boxer and an Olympic champion in Rocky IV, the fourth installment of the successful film series Rocky, starring Silvester Stallone. Drago is ruthless and laconic. “I must break you,” he articulates with a strong Russian accent, looking into Rocky Balboa's eyes moments before their final fight.

In 1985 such a character was perfectly attuned to America's perception of Russia: big, dangerous and cold-blooded. The fact that American hero Rocky conquers this killing-machine at the end of the movie was interpreted by some critics as a metaphor for the victory of capitalism over communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

### 2. Xenia Onatopp

GoldenEye, 1995

Xenia Onatopp is a former Soviet fighter-pilot and the member of the Janus crime syndicate in the James Bond movie GoldenEye. Her cruelty is portrayed in an absolutely pathological way: the character, played by Dutch actress Famke Janssen, enjoys torturing her enemies and crushing them between her tighs.

In the movie Bond and this Russian femme fatale have several fights. In the final one, Onatopp attacks Bond from a helicopter, but the British agent has the final say and shoots down the vehicle. The Russian dies in the crash.

### 3. Yuri Komarov

A Good Day To Die Hard, 2013

“You know what I hate about the Americans? Everything. Especially cowboys,” a Russian gangster tells American police officer John McClane in A Good Day To Die Hard, the most recent entry in the Die Hard franchise with Bruce Willis. In this installment, McClane heads to Moscow to rescue his estranged son Jack, who is being held in prison for murdering a corrupt official.

Here he meets Russian oligarch Yuri Komarov, played by Sebastian Koch, and helps him escape prison. Friendly Komarov, who like most Russians in Hollywood movies has a beard, later turns out to be an extremely dangerous individual. A Russian without a bomb, you say? Impossible! In fact, McClane soon discovers that Komarov is involved in the murky nuclear weapon trade business.

### 4. Grigory Rasputin

Hellboy, 2004

Historical figure Grigory Rasputin — the legendary mystical healer and trusted friend of

Nicholas II and his family — is reinvented as an evil wizard in Hellboy, directed by Guillermo Del Toro.

Karel Roden's Rasputin resembles an Arab sheikh more than a peasant, and wears long gowns with golden patterns. In this version, Rasputin helps the Nazis during World War II and is resurrected 60 years later to complete his plan for global destruction. His demonic power is limitless and he can suck the soul out of a human body.

### 5. Ivan Korshunov

Air Force One, 1997

The premises of thriller Air Force One are rather optimistic: Russians and Americans join forces to prevent dictators around the world from getting their hands on Soviet nuclear weapons. But this idyllic cooperation is under threat after Ivan Korshunov (Gary Oldman), a devoted Communist, takes control of the Air Force One plane with the U.S. president (Harrison Ford) on board.

Korshunov is furious over the collapse of the Soviet Union, and cannot stop swearing. Even though the ruthless character fails to inspire much sympathy, his words do offer a bittersweet reflection on Russia in the 1990s. "This infection you call 'freedom' ... without meaning, without purpose." Korshunov says pointing a gun at the president's neck. "You have given my country to gangsters and prostitutes. You have taken everything from us. There is nothing left."

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