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Volgograd to Unveil Russia's First Monument to TV Detectives Zheglov, Sharapov

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Still from the movie "The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed."

The Russian city of Volgograd is set to unveil a monument on Monday to the lead characters of a Soviet-era crime miniseries "The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed," which was released in the West as "The Age of Mercy."

The monument to the film's police investigators — Gleb Zheglov and Volodya Sharapov, played by famed bard Vladimir Vysotsky and actor Vladimir Konkin — will be placed on the square in front of the regional Interior Ministry building in the city of Volgograd, Russian media reports said.

The unveiling is timed to coincide with Russia's Criminal Investigation Employee Day, held on

Oct. 5, the head of the Volgograd region's Interior Ministry, Lieutenant General Alexander Kravchenko said, TASS news agency reported.

The 1979 cult miniseries, directed by Stanislav Govorukhin, follows the police detectives as they pursue two seemingly unrelated investigations: the murder of a young actress and a series of audacious armed robberies.

Much of the series, set in post-World War II Moscow, focuses on the relationship between Zhyglov — a hardened veteran investigator who believes that when bringing a criminal to justice, "the ends justify the means" — and the young and idealistic Sharapov, who insists on respecting the rule of law and following police procedure precisely.

A number of quotations from the film have entered Russia's popular culture — memorable maxims that frequently pop up in daily conversations and official speeches.

"A thief should sit in prison," the film's Zheglov proclaimed after planting evidence on a known pickpocket to justify placing him behind bars.

Russia's then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin used the same words during his call-in show in 2010, when commenting on a prison sentence handed down to former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a case that critics denounced as politically motivated.

"I, like the famed character [played by] Vladimir Vysotsky, think that a thief should sit in prison, and according to the court verdict, Khodorkovsky is guilty of embezzlement, on a rather substantial scale," Putin said.

The miniseries is based upon "The Age of Mercy," a novel by brothers Arkady and Georgy Vayner.

The high suspense of the final episode and plot twists throughout have been praised as some of the most powerful and memorable of Soviet television.

Another bronze sculpture commemorating the detective duo was unveiled in Kiev in 2009, in front of Ukraine's Interior Ministry.

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