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'Navalny' Oscar Win Ignored, Condemned by Russian State Media

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Team Navalny / Telegram

MOSCOW – Despite rapturous scenes at Hollywood's Dolby Theater on Sunday night as the documentary "Navalny" was announced the winner of this year's best documentary feature Oscar, anyone relying on Russian state media to find out the news might be forgiven for being none the wiser.

The Monday daytime broadcasting schedule on state-run channels Rossiya-24, Channel One, and NTV looked much the same as ever, with coverage of the Kremlin's "special military operation" in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin's meeting with the head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov, and last year's Nord Stream gas pipeline explosions, but didn't mention the Oscars at all.

"Navalny is usually ignored as much as possible," a journalist for Rossiya 1 who asked not to be named told The Moscow Times.

When asked about it by reporters, the Kremlin speculated that the documentary, which details

Navalny's recuperation in Germany following a poisoning attempt with the nerve agent Novichok which he has accused the Kremlin of ordering, had benefited from the "politicization" of the Academy Awards.

"I dare say that there was a certain degree of politicization on this topic. Hollywood is known to politicize its work, such things happen," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters, adding that he hadn't seen the film himself.

Related article: 'Navalny' Wins Oscar for Best Documentary Film

"The Anglo-Saxons are attempting to turn Russian blogger Alexei Navalny ... into a martyr," said the RIA FAN media outlet linked to the head of the Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin, before reminding readers that Navalny's name had been added to a list of organizations and individuals involved in terrorism and extremist activities.

Sputnik, another state-controlled news agency, published an article on Monday implying the award had been made as a "political statement."

"Of course, Navalny won the documentary film award," Film critic Andrei Dementiev told Sputnik, before adding that the academy's decision had been "nothing more than an anti-Russian gesture."

For its part, state-run news agency Interfax published just three paragraphs about the documentary, while state-funded broadcaster RT didn't breathe a word about the documentary on its Russian service, though RT's English service published an article about the documentary's win that cast doubt on whether Navalny had ever been poisoned.

Vladimir Legoyda, a spokesperson for the Russian Orthodox Church said in a Telegram post that the Oscars were "not so much evaluating the artistic value of the movies as monitoring compliance with the principles (or, more precisely, diktats) of tolerance,"

Pro-Putin political analyst and former Kremlin adviser Sergei Markov described the academy's decision as "an example of the degradation of the Oscars."

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