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Mr. Nobody? Never Heard of Him: Kremlin Says It Hasn't Seen Oscar-Winning Documentary

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Pavel Talankin hoists his Oscar for Best Documentary Feature Film for "Mr. Nobody Against Putin".
Angela Weiss / AFP

The Kremlin said Monday it had not seen the film "Mr. Nobody Against Putin" and therefore could not comment on its win for best documentary at the 2026 Academy Awards.

The film, which chronicles the indoctrination of schoolchildren into Russia's state ideology during the war in Ukraine, was co-directed by Pavel Talankin, a former school videographer in the Chelyabinsk region.

Talankin secretly preserved footage he filmed at a school in the town of Karabash before leaving Russia in 2024. He is now based in the Czech Republic.

Accepting the award on Sunday, Talankin called for an end not only to the war in Ukraine but also to other military conflicts in the world.

“In the name of our future, in the name of all of our children, stop all of these wars now,” he said through an interpreter.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday that he could not comment on the win because he had not watched the film.

“You need to at least understand what it’s about before commenting, so I’ll refrain from making any remarks for now,” Peskov said.

Related article: ‘Mr. Nobody Against Putin’: A Schoolteacher’s Stand Against Russia’s Child Indoctrination

In Russia, state news agencies on Monday covered the 2026 Academy Award ceremony without mentioning “Mr. Nobody Against Putin,” while major state broadcasters ignored the event altogether.

Talankin told The Moscow Times last year that the idea for the documentary emerged after Russia’s Education Ministry began issuing directives on songs, poems and patriotic rituals that he was required to film for official publication.

His co-director, American filmmaker David Borenstein, said he sought to frame Talankin’s footage around broader themes of free speech and indoctrination.

The film premiered last year at the Sundance Film Festival and the Göteborg Film Festival. It also won best documentary at the British Academy Film Awards.

In his acceptance speech, Borenstein drew parallels between wartime Russia and the United States under U.S. President Donald Trump, warning that “you lose your country… through countless small little acts of complicity.”

“We all face a moral choice,” Borenstein said. “But luckily even a nobody is more powerful than you think.”

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