



# It's not easy keeping cool filming at minus 35°C

**Above:** (L to R) Director Egor Konchalovsky and DP Anton Antonov.

**Inset:** Director Egor Konchalovsky and crew watching a monitor.

Egor Konchalovsky directs *Konservy* (Canned Food), an action packed Russian spy movie and TV Drama. Shot by Cinematographer Anton Antonov, the story closely follows the destiny of many people. People from different layers of society, but who now find themselves linked in deadly adventures.

Igor Davidov is the main character. He is an International Affairs journalist who possesses dangerous information. Information about high-ranking traitors, including an Army General, a State Duma deputy and a well-known atomic scientist who plan to sell a nuclear weapons installation to a foreign power.

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The traitors realise that someone has leaked their plans. They desperately try to trace the leak.

They trace it to Igor.

Events turn nasty. The villainous General Astrahantsev kidnaps the children of loyal Commander Usoltsev (a veteran of the Chechnya war); an atomic scientist is murdered. The plotters succeed in framing Usoltsev and Davidov on charges of drug dealing and murder. Both men – who had not previously met – soon find themselves in a remote prison camp on an isolated island. An island where unseen eyes can watch them closely.

They try to discover the real reasons for their being in prison. Then with the help of criminals they escape from the camp to seek justice. They get to the coast where a schooner awaits. The schooner's skipper takes them to the mainland, where they part. They now face many more tests; not everyone will live through the experience.

Cinematographer Anton Antonov shot *Konservy* in Moscow and the Crimea from January to April 2006 in extreme wintry conditions. "We couldn't use much equipment when shooting in the mountains" he said. "So I shot most scenes on VISION2 Expression 500T film 5229. Winter shooting means fewer daylight hours. But too much artificial light will give you artificial pictures. So we worked with the natural lighting of the overcast day and added just enough light not to spoil the impression".

"The movie is dynamic, so to keep our actors in focus I used average stop settings. I filmed with the ARRIcam 3 perf camera to economise on film. The camera had a 1:2.35 format gate which I used to shoot the full-length feature film version."



"For the TV version we shot in the 1:1.85 format. We also used 2 ARRIflex 435 3 perf cameras. Our wide-format main movie needed the sharpest possible results, so I used the UltraPrime range of optics; when filming the women in close-up, I added a Promist 1."

"For the lighting we used the complete ARRI range from 575W to 18KW. We used 18000 lamps for the panoramic shooting of the prison breakout when the whole landscape was bathed in 'moonlight'. Despite the difficult conditions in the Crimea – snow and rain everywhere – the equipment worked perfectly. But in Moscow the January temperature was down to minus 35°C so to keep the cameras working we kept them warm with thermal covers."

"In the Crimea I sometimes had to rely on intuition. The weather often fluctuated wildly on the same day; now sunny, then snow, rain and now sunny again. By 4p.m. it was already getting dark. But we needed the cloudy sky. Every time we waited for the right weather it eventually arrived – and we never had retakes."

"Moscow's highly regarded Salamandra Creative Cinelab is taking care of the special effects and other post-production services." ■