Elim Klimov, **COME AND SEE/Иди и смотри** (1985, 136 min)

**Directed by** Elem Klimov  
**Written by** Ales Adamovich and Elem Klimov  
**Original Music by** Oleg Yanchenko  
**Cinematography by** Aleksei Rodionov  
**Film Editing by** Valeriya Belova  
**Production Design by** Viktor Petrov  
**Art Direction by** Viktor Petrov  
**Set Decoration by** Viktor Petrov  
**P. Gutenko**…military advisor

Aleksey Kravchenko…Florya Gaishun  
Olga Mironova…Glasha  
Liubomiras Lautsyavichius …Kosach  
Vladas Bagdonas  
Jüri Lumiste  
Viktor Lorents  
Kazimir Rabetsky  
Yevgeni Tilicheyev  
Aleksandr Berda  
G. Velts  
V. Vasilyev  
Igor Gnevashhev  
Vasili Domrachyov  
G. Yelkin  
Ye. Kryzhanoovsky  
N. Lisichenok  
Viktor Manaev  
Takhir Matyullin  
Pyotr Merkurev  
Valentin Mishatkin  
G. Matytysky  
Yevgeniya Polyakova  
Anatoli Slivnikov  
Georgi Strokov  
Tatyana Shestakova  
Oleg Shapko


OLGA MIRONOVA... Glasha appeared only in 1985 Come and See.


From Wikipedia:

Elem Germanovich Klimov (Russian: Элем Германович Климов; 9 July 1933 – 26 October 2003) was a Soviet Russian film director. He studied at VGIK, and was married to film director Larisa Shepetik. He is best known in the West for his final film, 1985's Come and See (Иди и смотри), a powerful tale of a teenage boy in German-occupied Belarus during the German-Soviet War, but he also directed dark comedies, children's movies, and historical pictures.

Elem Klimov was born in Stalingrad (now Volgograd) in July 1933. His parents were staunch communists and his first name was an acronym derived from the names of Engels, Lenin and Marx. During the Battle of Stalingrad, he, his mother and his baby brother were evacuated from their home and crossed the Volga on a makeshift raft. Klimov would later draw on these experiences for his 1985 film Come and See.

In 1957, Klimov graduated from the Higher Institute of Aviation in Moscow. He considered a career in journalism before settling on cinema. He enrolled at the state film school, VGIK, where he studied under acclaimed director Efim Dzigan. While a student at the institute, Klimov met Larisa Shepetiko, whom he would later marry. In 1983, he was a member of the jury at the 33rd Berlin International Film Festival.

He died in October 2003 after six weeks in a coma.

Klimov's first feature film, the 1964 Welcome, or No Trespassing (known in the UK as No Holiday for Inochkin) was a satire on Soviet bureaucracy in the guise of a children's summer camp adventure story. The film was briefly banned, having been deemed an insult to the Party; however, the ban was rescinded after Khrushchev had a private viewing and authorised its release.

Klimov's second film, Adventures of a Dentist (1965), was a dark (and in some ways Tatiesque) comedy about a dentist who is derided (and eventually has his life ruined) by his colleagues for his natural talent of painlessly pulling out teeth. The implication, that society inevitably ostracizes those that are gifted, horrified the censors who told Klimov to change it. When Klimov refused, the film was given the lowest classification, "category three", which meant that it was shown in only 25–78 movie theatres.

Next, Klimov began making a film about Rasputin called Agony. The road to screening took him nine years and many rewrites. Although finished in 1975, the final edit was not released in the USSR until 1985, due to suppressive measures partly because of its orgy scenes and partly because of its relatively nuanced portrait of Tsar Nicholas II. It had been shown in western Europe a few years before. In 1976, Klimov finished a film begun by his teacher Mikhail Romm before the latter's death called And Still I Believe....

In 1979, Klimov's wife Larisa Shepetiko died in a car accident while directing an ecological fable based on a famous novel by Valentin Rasputin called Farewell to Matyora. A year after her death Klimov filmed a 25-minute tribute to his wife entitled Larisa (1980), then went on to finish the film she had started. Despite being shelved for two years after completion, Farewell was eventually released in 1983.

His wife's death had a profound impact on Klimov - all his films after this time were tragedies. His next film, Come and See, was released in 1985 to worldwide acclaim and won the top prize at the Moscow Film Festival. The film depicts the experiences of a 15-year-old boy joining the resistance in Nazi-occupied Belarus in 1943. Speaking of how the film drew on his own childhood experience of the war, Klimov said, "As a young boy, I had been in hell... Had I included everything I knew and shown the whole truth, even I could not have watched it."

In 1986, fresh from the success of Come and See, and with the changes brought by perestroika in the air, Klimov was chosen by his colleagues to be the First Secretary of the new, revamped Filmmakers' Union. His reign saw the belated release of hundreds of previously banned films and the reinstatement of several directors who had fallen out of political favour. However, Klimov was frustrated by the obstacles that still remained in his way and gave up his post in 1988 to Andrei Smirnov, saying that he wanted to make
films again. Klimov did not complete any further films after *Come and See*, mostly due to the political changes in Russia. In 2000, he declared, "I've lost interest in making films. Everything that was possible I felt I had already done."

**Adrian Danks, *Come and See*, from Senses of Cinema:**

There is a scene in *Come and See* in which the lead character (Florya) returns to his family’s village in the expectation of a warm and comforting greeting. Everything is still and abandoned, flies buzz incessantly on the soundtrack, dolls lay abandoned mid-play on the floor. At each turn we expect for him to discover some horror, to have this brief moment of tranquillity broken by the uncovering of slaughter, a body, something horrible at the bottom of the well. Suddenly, and this is a film full of histrionic shifts and turns, the character becomes possessed by the idea that his family is in fact hiding on an island in the middle of a nearby swamp. As he runs pell-mell towards this ‘refuge’, the woman he is journeying with looks back – a strangled scream spills from her mouth as she sees, roughly piled against the side of a building, perhaps a barn, the naked bodies of the teenage boy’s family and many other inhabitants of the village. This intense sequence, full of revealing close-ups and revelatory camera movements, encapsulates many of the strongest qualities of Elem Klimov’s film, in particular its ability to shift tone, visual perspective and viscerally approximate the physical, mental, social and cultural conditions of life in Nazi-occupied Byelorussia in 1943. The young woman’s look back at this image of horror, almost Biblical or medieval in its intensity and scale, rhymes with many other looks, gazes and shifts of scale and perspective which dot and define the film. *Come and See* opens ominously with a scene involving two young boys agonisingly prying from the Russian soil a rifle buried alongside the remnants of its owner. As finally one of the boys frees his weapon and waves it triumphantly in the air, a German reconnaissance plane buzzes overhead, and our perspective on events shifts as we are taken up to the position of the aircraft looking down on what now seems a less auspicious and circumspect achievement.

Although *Come and See* predominantly follows the rites-of-passage journey of its young, but quickly and visibly aging protagonist, it is remarkable in its ability to shift perspectives, sides and to gain access to the subjective and objectives states of a wide range of characters and objects. Like Terrence Malick, Klimov is as much interested in the landscape, light, colour and other non-human occupants of the environment as he is in representing the minutiae and widening horror of the character’s journey from home to the multiple sites of slaughter, genocide and betrayal that mark the countryside. For example, in one of the films most remarkable and surreal scenes several characters are shown guiding a cow across what seems to be open and unguarded terrain. All of a sudden a series of intense firefights break out. Several characters are killed but it is the fate of the cow with which the film is most preoccupied and to which it grants the most screen time. The images of the cow standing untouched by the raging skirmish, then struck by a barrage of tracer bullets, and finally of its eyes rapidly shifting and dilating before death, are indicative of *Come and See*’s ability to produce indelible images, and carve remarkable audio-visual statements from what are often quite standard war film situations and stereotypes. The journey of a wide-eyed innocent across a fallen landscape is common territory for the war film, but like Kon Ichikawa’s *The Burmese Harp* (1956) and even Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Ivan’s Childhood* (1962) *Come and See* enlivens and enriches the form (one of the dominants of Soviet cinema) through the iconoclasm and intensity of many of its images. A defining image of many war films is that of the close-up maddened war-face or the vacant stare of a character who has seen too much too quickly and in much too much graphic detail. *Come and See* also builds to such an image but in a manner that breaks from convention. Rather than wait for this final pay-off the film is dominated throughout by the faces of characters, and the terror of war is largely documented through a litany of looks, gazes and incongruous stares.
pointer towards the material conditions, qualities and spectatorial expectations of the film.

Come and See is set in Byelorussia in 1943 and provides testimony to the brutality of the Nazi invasion, the collaboration of some of the inhabitants, and the widespread genocide and destruction perpetrated upon those who lived in this occupied territory. The film’s most sustained sequence revolves around the raising of one village and the slaughter of most of its inhabitants. This sequence has a disturbing carnvialesque quality, its images and sounds used to promote the depravity of the occupying ‘master-race’. The film is essentially an epic journey and many of its images possess an almost Dantesque quality (with a touch of Bruegel). It can also be seen as a ‘coming of age’ film, a remarkable ‘coming’ or progression (or is it regression?) that is etched upon the utterly transformed face of its central character. The film is in many ways a documentation of this face. Florya starts the film as a fresh-faced youngster eager to join the partisans and fight the brutal occupation force. Initially he sees out into the world, understands the commitment he makes, and the role he thinks he is going to play. Rather than play that role of the active protagonist, the war hero, the liberator of an occupied terrain, he is forced to witness, see and hear the horrors and atrocities around him. This is emphasised by his forced passivity throughout much of the film (he never gets to fire his rifle). Things seem to happen around him as he is spared more by happenstance than courage or good fortune.

It is in response to the film’s next to final images that one must ask whether he is lucky or damned to have survived, whether he is turned sage or mute by the experiential images and sounds that have transformed him. At this moment we are shown a face that looks out but is no longer able to see those who glance or stare back. A face that no longer has the ability to see in the same way, and that no longer is able to take in any more images. The age, lines and wear we see in the face is the sum total of the horrors he and we have witnessed in the film. As we sit pondering these questions and those faces, the film cuts to a wood. We follow the partisans as the camera glides through the trees. The beautiful strains of Mozart appear on the soundtrack, the camera looks up to glimpse the light beyond the tops of the trees. This moment is many ways constructed to achieve that most rarefied of effects, an epiphany, and yet the film has warned us never to take such moments, such combinations (of image and sound), or such striking images on face value. It subsequently emerges as one of the most troubling and uncertain moments of beauty and tranquillity in all of cinema.

From Joan Jett:

In the underappreciated thriller Transsiberian, in which an American couple becomes inadvertently embroiled in drug trafficking while aboard the titular train running from Beijing to Moscow, a character observes that if you want to learn about U.S. history, you buy a book; if you want to learn about Russian history, you buy a shovel. Few nations have as much buried history—both literally and figuratively, and often intentionally—as Russia, particularly in the years during and surrounding World War II. Consider Come and See, a film that focuses on the Nazis’ brutal invasion of what was then the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Made during the early days of glasnost, Come and See’s script waited nearly a decade for official approval and was filmed some 43 years after the actual atrocities on which the movie is based (although it received some festival play, including—unsurprisingly—winning first prize at the 1985 Moscow Film Festival, it did not receive an international theatrical release until 2001). Cowritten by Soviet director Emer Klimov and Belarusian author Ales Adamovich, whose real-life experience as a teenage member of the partisan resistance informs the film, Come and See provides a glimpse at one of the most tragic and little-known episodes of World War II (as the end titles inform, 628 Belarusian villages and their inhabitants were torched by the Nazis, killing between 2 and 3 million people, or about one-third of Belarus’ population).

The film opens with two boys digging in the sand, searching for the rifles of dead soldiers so that they might take up arms with the Soviet partisan forces, whose guerrilla network spanned the countryside’s forests and farmland. With his freshly unearthed gun, adolescent Florya (Alexei Kravchenko) is soon spirited away by the partisans over the protests of his mother, who has already lost her husband to the war.

Part of the film’s power is derived from the way Klimov subtly transitions the tone, from the gallows humor of the boys struggling to remove a gun from a corpse to the mother’s foreboding emotional plea to the blunt-trauma force of Florya witnessing firsthand humanity’s worst.

Come and See is a boy’s view of the war, but it contains none of the optimistic twinkle of John Boorman’s fine Hope and Glory, the lavish spectacle of Steven Spielberg’s Empire of the Sun or the austere poetry of Lajos Koltai’s potent Fateless. If anything, the movie is an exercise in psychological horror, a spiritual relative of Apocalypse Now.
In *Come and See*, the visceral blow is strengthened by the way it observes the casual inhumanity of the Nazis. I can’t think of another film that depicts Hitler’s dogma with such insinuating, chilling effectiveness.

After becoming separated from the resistance camp during a German artillery attack, Florya leads fellow young partisan Glasha (Olga Mironova) to his nearby family farm, where he expects to be greeted by his mother, sisters and a warm meal. Instead, they are met with an empty cottage and a set table, the food on which is covered with flies. As they make their way to a neighboring home with Florya desperate to find his remaining family, Glasha turns back and sees the evidence of what she and viewers already suspect, a mound of bodies left to rot behind a stable.

In another scene, a terrified family invites German officers into their home and offers them food as Nazi soldiers storm their village; one trooper passing by outside nonchalantly punches through a kitchen window and steals bread.

Later, Nazis leave an elderly, bed-ridden woman alive to “breed” while her family and village burn around her.

That the film is bearable to watch is a testament to Klimov, a contemporary of Andrei Tarkovsky (who made the thematically similar *Ivan’s Childhood*), and *Come and See* is his finest and best-known work. Although much of the movie is seen from Florya’s point-of-view, it is filmed with a sharp, sage eye. Never harried or documentarian, but lacking the visual polish of many Hollywood war movies, *Come and See* feels damp and cold and savage (there are rumors that live ammunition was often used during filming, so maybe there is an element of reality in the characters’ palpable sense of dread). It is not afraid to linger, though it never does so gratuitously, and it has the perfect vehicle with which to behold its devastation in Kravchenko, then a nonprofessional actor with an open, expressive face who transforms from a righteous, enthusiastic youth to a wearied shell over the course of the film (the boy was allegedly hypnotized for the movie’s closing scenes, perhaps an appropriate state for, as J. Hoberman writes in his Village Voice review, “most viewers will be as well”).

In those final moments, Nazis captured by the partisans reveal their humanity through their cowardice and fear as they try to explain away their barbarity, telling those whose families they exterminated that they were “following orders,” that “this is war, and nobody is to blame…”

Florya fires his only shot at the movie’s end, and then at a picture of Hitler. Klimov cuts footage of death camps and regressing archival footage of Hitler against the prematurely aged face of Florya. The impact is impossible to bury.

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