

Alexei Navalny Can Free Russia From Its 'Matrix'

By [Vladimir Frolov](#)

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Were today's Russian politics cast as a Hollywood movie, it could be a sequel to the legendary "Matrix" by the Wachowski brothers.

In this new thriller, Alexei Navalny would be Neo, the One who leads the Russian people to freedom from their entrapment in Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's Matrix. Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, the keeper of the democratic flame, would be Morpheus. Opposition leader Yevgenia Chirikova would qualify for Trinity. Former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin, the prophetic prognosticator, would be the Oracle. And Putin, the Matrix guardian, would be Agent Smith.

Navalny is clearly the One. Read author Boris Akunin's three-part interview with Navalny and you get the picture — the guy is authentic.

He is the new type of leader with across-the-board political appeal, equally natural with

yuppies and blue-collar workers. His political instincts are in the right place. He has the correct message that will unite pro-business liberals, social democrats and hard-core leftists: equal justice under the law and a sweeping overhaul of the judiciary and law enforcement systems.

The liberals' criticism of Navalny's nationalist views is misplaced. His definition of the state is civic, not biological — a nation for those who observe the laws, speak Russian, adhere to Russian cultural norms and want this country to prosper, irrespective of a citizen's race, ethnicity or religion. This is what Americans or the French call patriotism.

Unlike Mikhail Prokhorov, a rich guy clamoring for national attention, Navalny exudes a genuine passion for power to further a public cause. He projects sincerity, a lethal weapon against the suffocating cynicism of Putin's Matrix. Unlike other opposition leaders, he is untainted by the vagaries of the 1990s.

In the movie, Neo's most important relationship is with the Oracle, who guides the One to understand his power and destiny.

This is a perfect role for Kudrin, who just a year ago prophetically warned the Kremlin about the regime's legitimacy deficit. Only Kudrin has the satisfactory answer to jittery housewives and investors contemplating a Russia without Putin: Everything will be OK.

Navalny the One for president and Kudrin the Oracle for prime minister could be the winning ticket for Russian democracy. Together, they pack the right mix of revolutionary fervor, honesty, sincerity and competence.

Could be an awesome movie. Call the Wachowskis.

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