

German Publisher Defends Newsweek Editor in 'Cocaine' Video

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Newsweek editor Mikhail Fishman

German media giant Axel Springer defended the editor-in-chief of Russian Newsweek on Monday as the victim of a "targeted campaign based on lies" after a video surfaced that appears to show him snorting cocaine.

Axel Springer, which publishes the Russian edition of the news magazine, promised that Russian Newsweek would maintain its critical editorial policy, which has exposed corruption and other forms of wrongdoing among politicians and business leaders.

A [video clip](#) appeared on YouTube last week that shows a person resembling Russian Newsweek editor Mikhail Fishman snorting a white powder in the presence of an unidentified female.

Fishman told Radio Liberty last week that he was being targeted in a smear campaign, without

going into details.

Opposition leader Ilya Yashin wrote on his [blog](#) that he believed that the apartment belonged to two female informants for the security services. He said he had also visited the apartment and spent the night with one of the women. He said he left the apartment after one of the women offered him snort cocaine.

Fishman is the victim of “a targeted campaign based on lies and provocations and interference into a private life,” Axel Springer said in a statement carried by Ekho Moskvyy radio.

Earlier this month, both Fishman and Yashin came under fire because of another [video clip](#) published on YouTube in which they appear to be paying bribes to Moscow traffic police officers. The video also shows liberal political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin supposedly bribing an officer.

All three people have denounced the video as a smear campaign. Yashin has said Nashi, the pro-Kremlin youth movement, was probably behind the campaign.

Nashi, which has posted the traffic police video on its [web site](#), has denied being involved in orchestrating any personal attacks against Fishman, Yashin or Oreshkin.

A traffic police spokesman had told The Moscow Times that the officers depicted in the traffic stop video probably did not work for the Moscow traffic police and suggested that they were actors.

Law enforcement officials have not taken any steps to open an investigation into the purported use of illegal drugs by Fishman and Yashin.

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