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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Wanted: Dead Parrot

By Kevin O'Flynn

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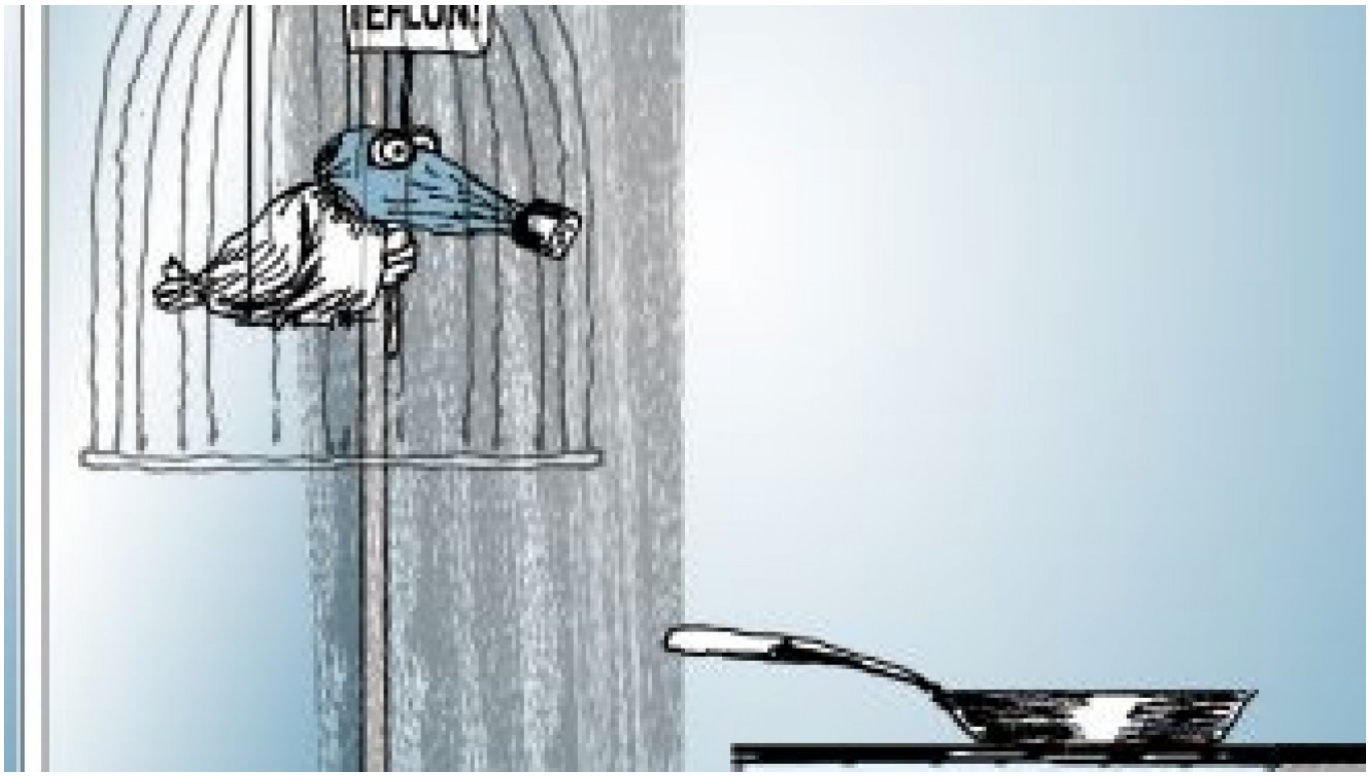

Alla was looking for a dead parrot or, rather, a dead parrot's owner to appear on television. The owner did not need to complain about being sold one dead without noticing, especially as she had poisoned the bird herself.

Alla was looking on Massovki.ru, along with a producer looking for a "lad willing to fight" for a documentary film and a filmmaker hunting for a man with an Alsatian dog.

The parrot owner will appear on Dec. 8 on Russian television, but do not expect a re-creation of the Monty Python sketch about a predeceased Norwegian Blue, for this parrot was alive as much as the one nailed to its perch had ceased to be — shuffled off his mortal coil, etc.

The parrot was breathing away when bought, but it was when it was given a home in the kitchen, a precautionary and wise, at the time, move away from the owner's cat that turned out to be its downfall. After a night of frying — Alla did not say which food was cooked, but we will assume it was not poultry so as to limit the number of bird deaths that night — the parrot was no more.

It was not the first parrot to die untouched by human hand or beast paw in a kitchen, and it probably won't be the last. Polly didn't put the kettle on, she succumbed to polytetrafluoroethlyene fumes, otherwise known as Teflon poisoning, for the substance beloved for its non-stick properties can turn noxious for birds if overheated.

The Teflon releases chemicals that are fatal to some birds, whose breathing, optimized for rapidity, allows toxins in that humans' less sophisticated breathing does not allow in. There is some debate as to whether you only need to fry an egg with your bird nearby or need to fall asleep with the heat on for a few hours for the fatal effects, but the phenomenon is well-documented.

It is not the nicest way to go, say the bird forums that tell tales of woe and frying-pan terror.

"I know of a lady that was baking cookies on a non-stick sheet, and when she went upstairs she had eight dead birds," one blogger wrote.

Another tells of other kitchen avian mishaps.

"I have seen some severely burned birds that were much too curious around mealtime and investigated the fried chicken too closely while it was still in the pan," a bird lover wrote before warning others of Teflon, too.

Alla did not know what the parrot's name was or whether it was a Norwegian Blue, but she filmed the owner talking of her loss. Tune in and use a pan that sticks if you have feathered friends nearby.

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