

Critical Journalist Erased From TV

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A prominent journalist has been censored out of a family show he co-hosted on Russia One television, months after he lost another job with the channel's owner for comparing St. Petersburg's governor to Adolf Hitler.

Dmitry Gubin confirmed to The Moscow Times by telephone that he was edited out of three episodes of "Large Family," a show in which he and film star Dmitry Kharatyan interview celebrity families and their friends.

The episodes in question were shot in the winter but only aired this month — with Gubin carefully removed from some five hours of footage produced by ATV company for Russia One, which is owned by state holding VGTRK.

"I can only assume this is revenge by VGTRK's people," Gubin said Friday.

The story was first reported by Ekho Moskvyy radio host Ksenia Larina, who appeared in one of the edited episodes.

"Cutting out the host of a peaceful ... family-oriented program only because he was fired from the holding company — isn't this the embodiment of savagely dumb idiocy?" Larina wrote on her blog.

Gubin, 47, who writes columns for Ogonyok, GQ and Kommersant, was fired in March from VGTRK's Vesti FM radio over his acrid remarks about St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matviyenko, who he said was continuing Hitler's work in destroying St. Petersburg. Hitler's forces besieged the city and heavily bombarded it during World War II. Gubin said Matviyenko was inflicting similar damage to St. Petersburg by neglecting its development and letting it fall into ruin.

Vesti FM's general producer, Anatoly Kuzichev, said at the time that Gubin was sacked for "hysterics" and "unacceptable" language on air.

The edited episodes of "Large Family" feature actor Dmitry Peskov, pop singer and songwriter Igor Nikolayev and a couple, movie star Andrei Derzhavin and Soviet-era pop star Roxana Babayan. None has commented on the episodes.

Both VGTRK and ATV spokespeople refused to comment. ATV's web site lists Kharatyan as the sole host of "Large Family."

"I feel like I am in the company of Trotsky, Kamenev and Bukharin," Gubin said, referring to Bolshevik bosses whose images were edited out of photographs after they were purged by Soviet leader Josef Stalin in the 1930s.

This is not the first time ATV has been accused of censorship. The company, known in the late 1980s and 1990s for its liberal-leaning shows, cut economist Mikhail Delyagin from an episode of its "People Want to Know" show after he criticized then-President Vladimir Putin in 2007. Humorously, Delyagin's legs could still be seen in the show, although his torso and head weren't.

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