The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Don't Like My Driving? Look at My Gun

By Alex Chachkevitch

July 17, 2011



Tensions on Moscow roads have flared with a prominent blogger and an opposition activist reporting separate clashes with firearm-wielding motorists accused of driving violations.

Photographer-blogger Dmitry Ternovsky said a 24-year-old ethnic Gypsy from Latvia pulled out an air gun and fired multiple shots at his car on Volgogradsky Prospekt on Thursday.

Ternovsky had angered the man by photographing the black, emergency siren-equipped Mercedes S500 that he was riding in cruising through a red light, with an unidentified friend at the wheel. The driver stopped to insult Ternovsky and spit on him, but when the blogger spat back, the Latvian national opened fire.

"Was I supposed to just wipe the spit off and act like nothing happened?" Ternovsky said by telephone Friday.

Ternovsky, who reported the story on his LiveJournal blog, escaped with minor damage to his car.

Police detained a suspect on Friday, hours after the motorist rights group Blue Buckets tentatively identified the passenger through pictures on the social networking site Odnoklassniki.ru as Grigoriys Chubrevich, a Latvian citizen looking for work, Interfax reported.

Chubrevich faces up to seven years in prison on hooliganism charges. He initially pleaded guilty but backtracked in court Saturday, RIA-Novosti said.

The driver and another passenger were also detained, Ternovsky said on his Twitter blog. The car's owner, an unidentified female lawyer, has denied involvement but is under investigation, Interfax said.

In a separate incident, opposition activist Ilya Yashin said he was threatened by the driver of a Mercedes parked on a pedestrian crosswalk on downtown Kalanchyovskaya Ulitsa in violation of traffic rules. Yashin wrote on his blog Thursday that he took a picture of the vehicle, equipped with a flashing blue light that gives officials priority on the road but not the right to park on a pedestrian crossing.

The picture-taking prompted the unidentified driver to unleash a barrage of threats at Yashin, who swore back and eventually threatened to beat the driver, upon which the driver brought out the gun and Yashin fled. Yashin did not report the incident to police, saying by telephone Friday that for him, "it's more important to spread awareness of these incidents and pressure those who claim to be privileged on the roads."

Yashin said the car was registered to the presidential envoy to the Southern Federal District, Vladimir Ustinov. But unidentified officials told Interfax that the Mercedes was being used by another senior official. They did not identify him.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/17/dont-like-my-driving-look-at-my-gun-a8293