

# Russian Girls Ready to Rip for Putin

By [Michele A. Berdy](#)

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*Порву!: I'll rip it, beat you up, and win*

Unless you've been out of the country or under a rock, you've probably seen the new "Hot Chicks for Putin" video. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it. A Hot Chick strolls on 10-centimeter heels down a Moscow River embankment to meet up with her Hot Chick friends. As they chat seductively on their cell phones, you get a chance to finally understand an untranslatable Russian word. The camera lingers on close-ups of pneumatic breasts bursting out of tight tops ... with chaste gold crosses dangling above them. That, my friends, is пошлость (vulgarity, falsity, cheapness).

At the end, one of the babes — excuse me — one of the soldiers in the self-described Армия Путина (Putin's Army) uses her lipstick to scrawl on her T-shirt: Порву за Путина! (I'll rip it for Putin!). Then рядовая Диана (Private Diana) lets it rip.

I didn't get it. I mean, I get that sex sells everything, but why rip your T-shirt?

My Russian friends set me straight — well, after they picked themselves up from the floor, where they were rolling around in laughter. There's nothing like a dumb foreigner with a poor command of slang to make a native speaker's day.

You see, it's a pun — quite an elaborate one.

Порвать means to tear or rend. This can be innocent: Коля вчера опять упал в грязь и штаны порвал. (Yesterday Kolya fell in the mud again and tore his pants.) But порвать рубашку (to tear your shirt) is like King Kong beating his chest — one of those testosterone-fueled gestures of manly threat that can be seen in bars from Ukhta to Zanzibar. Flash your pecs, and they faint.

But порвать can also mean to give a beating, to tear someone from limb to limb. Она этого Пирата на куски порвёт! (She'll tear that Pirate to pieces!) Sometimes this is used with a simile: Она его порвёт как Тузик грелку. (She'll rip him to pieces like a dog with a bone, literally a "hot water bottle" — that is, the way a dog tears a rubber toy to pieces.) But порвать is more commonly used alone: Мы порвём их в одну секунду! (We'll beat them to a pulp in a second!)

The violent threat in порвать can, of course, be used ironically. You're sitting around the table, shooting the breeze, and someone makes a joke about your favorite actor. Молчать! Я порву за Брэда Питта! (Shut up! One more word about Brad Pitt, and I'll rip your head off!)

Порвать can also mean to beat someone spectacularly in a game or sport. Команда неплохая — она немцев порвёт! (The team isn't bad — they'll beat the crap out of the German team!)

So the Sexy Soldier in Putin's Army rips her T-shirt in a (possibly ironic) gesture of threat and declares Порву за Путина! — describing what she's doing and (possibly) promising to beat the daylights out of anyone who insults her idol or (possibly) swearing to do anything to see him win his (possible) electoral campaign.

Get it? I get the pun, but I still don't get the point. Why would anyone in his or her right mind think that images of sex kittens stripping while uttering threats would be a good advertisement for any politician?

What's the message? Vote for Vladimir Putin — a chicken in every pot and a feisty babe in every bed?

Oh. Got it.

Michele A. Berdy, a Moscow-based translator and interpreter, is author of "The Russian Word's Worth" (Glas), a collection of her columns.

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