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Russian Could Face U.S. Prison Sentence After Climbing Brooklyn Bridge

By Anna Dolgov

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Russian tourist Yaroslav Kolchin appears for his arraignment in Brooklyn Crimminal Court in New York.

A Russian tourist in New York could be facing up to a year in prison after he was detained for climbing to the top of the city's iconic Brooklyn Bridge in broad daylight.

Yaroslav Kolchin — a 24-year-old Muscovite who reportedly traveled to New York as part of a tour group— climbed onto the suspension beam at the famed tourist attraction a little past noon on Sunday and walked to a landing at the top of the bridge to take pictures with his cell phone, U.S. media reported, citing local police.

Upon spotting him, a sergeant summoned the emergency services, and with a police helicopter hovering nearby, Kolchin walked back down — where he was awaited by police and handcuffed, news reports said.

New York police said in a statement that Kolchin "did not cause any damage or attempt

to remove anything at the location," the New York Observer reported.

Kolchin, who has been ordered to surrender his passport, faces misdemeanor charges of reckless endangerment, trespass, and disorderly conduct and is due in court on Friday, U.S. media said.

A Brooklyn court on Monday set bail at $5,000.

During the arraignment, the judge said it did not concern "a complicated case" and he was expecting the prosecutors to have an offer for Kolchin — who told police he had climbed the bridge "for fun," Assistant District Attorney Laurie Cartwright said— on Friday.

His lawyer Paul Liu said Kolchin had recently graduated from a university in Russia, worked there in advertising, and had no family in the U.S., AM New York reported.

The case is an embarrassment to the city administration, coming only a month after two German artists supposedly climbed the same bridge to swap out two U.S. flags with whitewashed ones.

The stunt has prompted the New York Police Department to consider new technologies to stop people from climbing bridges around the city, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Under the state of New York's laws, the maximum sentence for misdemeanor reckless endangerment is one year in prison. Other charges against Kolchin envisage lesser sentences.

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