The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Thieves Sentenced for Preying on Lonely Moscow Homeowners

August 26, 2014



A group of convicted fraudsters — consisting of a woman and two men — got prison sentences for having manipulated lonely Muscovites into handing over their property ownership rights.

A trio of convicted fraudsters got lengthy prison sentences for having manipulated lonely Muscovites into handing over their property ownership rights, the Investigative Committee said in a statement Monday.

The group — consisting of a woman and two men — was found guilty Monday of abduction and large-scale fraud in connection with the 2008 scheme.

Investigators claim that the woman, Zhanna Parshuk, scouted out lonely Moscow apartment owners and then lured them into handing over documentation proving their property rights, investigators said.

Parshuk would then hand the paperwork over to another member of the group, Yevgeny Nekrasov, who counterfeited signatures in order to transfer property rights from the true owner to another individual, according to the statement.

The trio is accused of having gone to great lengths to prevent their victims from appealing to police, even abducting apartment owners and holding them captive in certain cases while waiting for property rights to transfer, the statement said.

In turn, the group sold their newly acquired property rights. It remains unclear whether any of those who purchased the apartments from the group will face criminal charges.

Parshuk received nine years in prison for her role in the scheme, and Nekrasov 3 1/2 years. Makhir Pashayev, the group's alleged mastermind, got 12 years.

A separate criminal investigation is currently under way into other activities attributed to the group, the statement said.

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