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Extreme Climber Uses Moscow Roof Stunt to Fund Ukraine's Army

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A Russian media company widely known for its tendency to cheerlead for the Kremlin allegedly paid $5,000 to a Ukrainian activist for a video of his patriotic exploits in Moscow, which the activist in turn donated to Ukraine's army.

The so-called "roofer," who goes by the alias "Mustang Wanted," scaled a Stalinist high-rise in the Russian capital last Wednesday, painting the star on its apex in the colors of the Ukrainian flag. The term roofer applies to extreme climbers.

Mustang Wanted wrote on his Facebook page late Tuesday that he had sold video footage of the stunt to News Media, a private holding in Russia.

News Media is best known for its Яber-popular tabloid LifeNews.ru, which in recent months has expanded the scope of its coverage. Pages once devoted to the usual apolitical shockers and celebrity gossip have cleared space for articles extolling the virtues of the pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine.

Mustang Wanted referred to the sale as the "loss of [LifeNews'] virginity," and announced that he had already donated the funds to a volunteer battalion currently fighting the besieged rebels in eastern Ukraine's Donbass region.

"This is the first time that LifeNews has invested in the victory of freedom and goodness over evil," the athlete said, by way of an explanation for his choice to sell the footage to the media holding.

News Media owner Aram Gabrelyanov, a vocal supporter of President Vladimir Putin, confirmed the purchase via Twitter.

But the video never saw the light of day. Gabrelyanov was cited by Gazeta.ru as saying the footage was of subpar quality.

Mustang Wanted, who boast hundreds of thousands of social-media followers, has made quite a stir with his exploits in Russia, where he also scaled the main building of Moscow State University — also a Stalin-era skyscraper.

Four Russian "roofers" were detained in connection with the stunt and remain the target of a criminal investigation despite Mustang Wanted having taken credit for the escapade.

Russian senator Konstantin Dobrynin called on the Ukrainian athlete on Monday to turn himself over to the Russian police "so that innocents detained by police don't suffer," Interfax reported.

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