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Russian Brooklyn Bridge Climber Could Get Sponge, Not Bars, as Punishment

By The Moscow Times

September 01, 2014



Yaroslav Kolchin

A Russian tourist who was arrested after climbing New York's Brooklyn Bridge to take a selfie should be made to clean the iconic structure as part of his punishment, a U.S. judge has said.

Yaroslav Kolchin, 24, would be better spending three-month's community service cleaning the bridge rather than sitting in a jail cell for 90 days, as prosecutors have demanded, Judge ShawnDya L. Simpson said Friday, the New York Daily News reported.

"If he likes the bridge so much, let him clean a bridge," Simpson said on Sunday.

Kolchin, who traveled to New York as part of a tour group, ascended the 84-meter-high bridge in late August, before police were alerted to his presence and dispatched a helicopter and two boats to the scene.

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

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

Assistant district attorney Lawrence Mottola said the police response had cost about $7,000 and demanded a three-month prison service for the tourist, the New York Daily News reported.

But Simpson thinks a prison sentence would be overly harsh, given the circumstances.

"I'm not condoning the behavior," Simpson was quoted as saying "[But] was it malicious? I don't think so."

Local newspaper the New York Post cited a court source as saying it was "highly" unlikely Kolchin would actually be made to clean the bridge, since no such community service program exists.

The defense team will now work with prosecutors to reach a compromise, with the case due to be called again on Sept. 19.

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