

Bout Wants Computer, Vegetables

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Businessman Viktor Bout, who is awaiting trial in the United States on terrorism and arms trading charges, said he needed a computer and vegetarian food and complained that no senior Russian officials have intervened on his behalf.

Bout, in an [interview](#) with Kommersant from a pretrial detention cell in New York, said he needs a computer with headphones to study video and audio recordings that U.S. prosecutors plan to use as evidence.

Bout's only means of obtaining news is from a radio that he purchased in the prison store, he said in the interview, published Thursday.

He added that he struggles with his diet because the store does not cater enough to vegetarians.

U.S. authorities accuse Bout of using a fleet of cargo planes that he owned to run a worldwide arms trading network for years. But Bout, 44, said he sold his last jet to former Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov in 1999.

Bout was detained in Thailand in 2008 and was extradited to the United States last year after Russia lost a legal battle to get him returned home. His trial is set to start in October.

Observers have suggested that Bout has ties to senior Russian officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin, and speculated that Russia fought his extradition to prevent him for spilling sensitive information.

Bout maintained his innocence, reiterating in the interview that he has no links to Russian politicians.

If convicted, Bout might be swapped for Andrei Khlychev, a former intelligence colonel sentenced in Moscow last Friday to 18 years in prison after pleading guilty to spying for the United States, Interfax reported Wednesday. But a Foreign Ministry spokesman denied such plans Thursday.

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