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Staff Faces Animal Cruelty Charges For Persecuting Brown Bear With Train

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A train crew in Siberia chased a bear with a locomotive.

In the Wild West, passengers would shoot bisons from train cars as a sport. But a train crew in Siberia might just have one-upped them on animal cruelty by chasing a bear with a locomotive and running it over.

The incident, which took place in the Krasnoyarsk region's city of Norilsk, appeared on YouTube on Wednesday in a video that has since gone viral.

Footage shows a brown bear lumbering hurriedly along the length of the rail tracks in the darkness of night, apparently not realizing it can simply turn left or right to escape the train on its heels.

The train then overtakes the bear, clearly seen in the headlights, to excited expletives and cries of "run 'im over!" from the conductors.

Though animal rights legislation is notoriously lax in Russia, the bear's abusers seem to have

pushed it too far with Norilsk transportation prosecutors announcing on Friday they would open a check into the matter.

If found guilty of animal cruelty, the men could face up to two years in prison.

Norilsk Nickel, the company that owns the rail track in question, said Friday the bear may have survived the assault.

There were no signs of the bear nor traces of blood on the tracks, and the locomotive's snowplow is believed to have simply pushed the bear off the rails, a company representative told Regnum news agency.

The claim could not be independently verified.

But even if true, death by train might not be the worst scenario in stock for the bear.

The animal apparently failed to enter hibernation — which means he is set to starve to death, possibly by Christmas, Rusnovosti.ru said, citing Igor Chestin, the head of WWF Russia and a bear expert.

Police and forest rangers were out to get him even before the train incident, because "rogue bears" who fail to go dormant in winter are a threat to humans, Lifenews.ru said.

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