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Your Money or Your Cat, Russian Tax Collectors Threaten

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State collectors have forced a resident of Novosibirsk to pay the 12,000 rubles he owed in back taxes by threatening to seize his pedigree cat and its three kittens.

Russians who owe money to the government may occasionally get creative with concealing their cash, but some have been forced to pay up after showing off their cats.

State collectors have forced a resident of Novosibirsk to pay the 12,000 rubles ($198) he owed in back taxes by threatening to seize his pedigree cat and its three kittens, the Interfax news agency reported Thursday, in the latest example of what seems to have become a frequent practice among Russia's court marshals.

When collection officials arrived at the young man's apartment, they initially found nothing to seize for his tax appears because the man was living with his parents, attended college and had no regular income, the Novosibirsk region's court marshals service was cited as saying in a statement by Interfax.

"Then a bailiff noticed a beautiful cat that the debtor was holding in his arms, and three small

kittens of a British breed that were running around the house," the statement was quoted as saying. "Because the animals are pedigree and expensive, the representative of the law decided to place the cat brood under arrest."

The bailiff was still filling out an order to seize the animals when the man "unexpectedly" came up with the money he owed, the report said. It did not specify where the money came from.

Earlier this year, court marshals in another Siberian region, Tomsk, placed four Scottish Fold kittens under arrest after it turned out that the entrepreneur did not have any other assets. In yet another case, a Sphynx kitten was similarly caught up in an unpaid debt case.

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