

British Man Arrested on Drug Charges in Samara

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Richard Boccus (R) and his students give the thumbs up at Samara State Technical University.

A British man in the Volga river city of Samara, who worked at one of the city's universities, has been arrested on drug charges while awaiting deportation for a previous drug possession conviction, Interfax news agency reported Wednesday.

Richard Boccus, 32, is facing criminal charges after police reportedly found more than 30 grams of cannabis in his apartment, according to Interfax.

A hearing scheduled for Wednesday was delayed for two days because Boccus requested all court materials be translated into English, local website volganews reported, citing a court spokesperson.

Boccus' arrest was shown Wednesday by Russian tabloid Lifenews, which has close links to the security services. In the footage, the handcuffed Briton is asked if he knows why he was

arrested, to which he replies: "Everything is unclear." He is then asked to remove his clothes to show his tattoos.

If found guilty, Boccius faces a jail term of up to three years.

LifeNews quoted an unidentified police source as saying that Boccius was planning to take the cannabis back to Britain and give it to his friends.

A resident of Samara since at least early 2014, Boccius worked as deputy director of the department of international relations at the city's State Technical University.

On the university's website, Boccius, is identified as a "baron." According to social media website Vkontakte, Boccius married a Russian woman, Anna Boccius, in 2013 and the couple have a young child.

Boccius resigned from his position at the university on Friday after more than 18 months in the job, university spokesperson Olga Naumova told The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

His resignation came after he was found guilty of possession of cannabis by a Samara court on Aug. 20, fined 4,000 rubles (\$57) and ordered to leave the country within two weeks, Interfax reported.

Just under four grams of the drug were found on Bocchius after a car he was driving was stopped by police, according to LifeNews, which published a recording of the incident. In the footage, a police officer is seen removing a small paper package from Bocchius' back pocket, after which Bocchius said: "No, I am sorry gentlemen, that is not mine."

Elena Stankevich, 24, an international relations press officer at Samara's State Technical University and a colleague of Boccius', was reportedly arrested with him and also fined by a city court on Aug. 20. Stankevich submitted her resignation to the university Friday, spokeswoman Naumova said.

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