Moscow Kidnappers Claim Woman's Abduction Was 'Prank'

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Suspects accused of abducting a woman in central Moscow and shoving her into the trunk of her car have claimed their stunt was a prank aimed at testing the "vigilance" of Muscovites, the state-run TASS news agency reported Sunday.

Police launched a citywide search earlier on Sunday after reports that unidentified masked suspects seized a woman on Myasnitskaya Ulitsa, put her into the trunk of her Bentley Continental car, and drove away.

Police located the car with three young men and a young woman inside, TASS reported, without specifying where in the car the woman was found. The Interfax news agency put the number at two men and a woman.

The suspects told police that their "actions were a test of citizens' reaction to a crime in progress," said a spokesperson for the Interior Ministry.

"The vehicle and the perpetrators were detained and the female owner of the car has been freed," an unidentified law enforcement official was quoted as saying by Russian state-run

media in the immediate aftermath of the raid.

A few hours later, Interior Ministry spokeswoman Irina Volk said the suspects had been charged with "petty hooliganism," a minor administrative offense under Russian law, TASS reported.

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