

Killers of Coca-Cola Factory Head Sentenced in St. Petersburg

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The St. Petersburg city court has sentenced two men convicted of murdering the director of the area's Coca-Cola factory, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Wednesday.

Denis Chkhitauri and Vyacheslav Finogenov were sentenced to 16 and 22 years in prison respectively for shooting Dmitry Soshnev in November 2014.

Prosecutors had originally asked that Finogenov be given a life sentence and for Chkhitauri to receive 21 years, RIA Novosti reported.

Additional charges against Chkhitauri for the illegal possession of drugs were lifted due to lack of evidence.

Chkhitauri persuaded Finogenov to commit the joint murder in order to steal ownership documents for Soshnev's BMW, which the pair were allegedly going to sell for 1 million rubles (\$15,500). The men also took cash from the victim to the sum of 160 thousand rubles (\$2,400), the court was told.

The pair maintain their innocence, telling the court that their meeting with Soshnev had been an attempt to stop the factory director harassing Chkhitauri for illegal drugs.

Soshnev had previously bought cocaine from a friend of Chkhitauri, the court was told. When she stopped selling drugs to Soshnev, he allegedly demanded that Chkhitauri become his new dealer, said Chkhitauri's lawyer Yury Petrov.

The defendants had planned to convince Soshnev to leave Chkhitauri alone, but the meeting “went wrong” due to Finogenov's negative attitude toward drug users, the defense claimed, RIA Novosti reported.

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