

Russian Internet Users Pressure Judge Into Shaving His ‘Hipster Beard’

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Facebook

It's not often that political activists are able to influence Russia's courts. In a country where the criminal conviction rate exceeds 99 percent, what can critics of the judicial system possibly hope to achieve? When it comes to Sergei Kosilov, a 34-year-old judge in Novosibirsk, it turns out that Russian Internet users are capable of making him shave his beard.

On September 21, Olga Romanova, a former TV presenter and the head of the “Russia Behind Bars” civic organization, published two photographs of Kosilov, calling him a “hipster-judge.” Kosilov specializes in criminal cases and is known for handing down especially severe sentences, according to the Sib.fm news website.

At the time of this writing, Romanova's Facebook post has attracted nearly a thousand “likes” and more than 130 reposts.

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According to a report by the “Life” tabloid, Kosilov shaved his beard within 48 hours of Romanova’s joke on Facebook.

The photos shared by Romanova sparked a vibrant debate online about whether Kosilov is a hipster or a “lumbersexual” — a relatively newfangled identity coined to describe men perhaps trying to “reclaim their masculinity” by growing beards and choosing scruffy hairstyles. (Barbers in Novosibirsk reportedly told Sib.fm that beards have recently gained local popularity as a means of “escaping feminism and the erasure of gender boundaries.”)

In [footage](#) published by Life, Kosilov appears to hide, when he notices the news crew filming him leave his office. Judging by the video, the judge's beard does appear to be no more.

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