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Before Daring to Parody Chechnya's Ruler, Russian Comedian Personally Demoed the Act in Private

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Ramzan Kadyrov / Instagram

In late November, Russian television broadcast something unexpected: comedian Mikhail Galustyan performing an impression of Ramzan Kadyrov, the ruler of Chechnya, at a celebration of the 55th anniversary of Russia's "KVN" comedy club, where Vladimir Putin was the guest of honor.

The show was something of a surprise, given the catatonic state of satire in Russia for the past decade, and some members of the public even worried online that Kadyrov might send hitmen after Galustyan.

Nope.

A day after Galustyan's performance, Kadyrov himself revealed on Instagram that he was in on the joke from the start, helping the comedian prepare the schtick, apparently rehearsing it

with him twice. Kadyrov even says he provided Galustyan with the very clothes he wore on stage.

“Everything was good with the accent,” Kadyrov explained on social media. “He’s the master at this. I told him not to make it too hard for viewers to guess who he was parodying!”

Weeks later, this Thursday, footage even emerged showing Galustyan practicing his routine before Kadyrov. From the video, it’s unclear when it was recorded, though it appears to have been before Nov. 8, the day of the U.S. presidential election, given that Galustyan at one point asks how he should phrase a joke, if Hillary Clinton were to win. “Trump will win!” Kadyrov answers firmly, after telling the comedian to bang his fist down harder on the table, when gesturing in character.

Embed:

The video is awkward, and so is another clip Kadyrov shared on Thursday, showing him carrying Galustyan in his arms around the room, telling everyone, “Look! I caught a Pokemon!”

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