

Russian Cabbies Are Dousing Broke Passengers in Zelyonka, a Green Soviet-Era Chemical

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Screenshot Youtube

A taxi driver in the Far East city of Khabarovsk this weekend forced two young women who couldn't pay their fare to smear their faces with a caustic green antiseptic known colloquially as *zelyonka*.

Since Soviet times, the bright green antiseptic which goes for about \$1 in pharmacies throughout Russia has been the go-to treatment for everyday cuts and scrapes. But since Vladimir Putin's tenure, it has been used to humiliate opposition figures, usually in a public setting where the press are ready and waiting.

But as the Khabarovsk video [uploaded to YouTube](#) this weekend made the rounds on Russian social media, it became clear the tactic isn't just reserved for Kremlin critics.

Here's a look back at the trend of taxi drivers dousing alleged farebeaters throughout Russia

in the recent past.

— A video published from the Siberian city of Angarsk last March depicted an angry driver smearing *zelyonka* across a drunk passenger's face.

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— In February 2017, another video was uploaded to social media in which an Omsk taxi driver forces one customer who couldn't pay to wash his face with the green dye. The passengers were later said to have been forced to walk in the snow to their intended destination.

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— In May 2014, taxi drivers splashed the antimicrobial liquid on a young passenger who attempt to flee without paying in Nizhny Novgorod region.

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According to the Gazeta.ru newspaper, shortly after the first video, two more people were filmed being doused with *zelyonka* from head to toe and forced to walk along the road holding taxi roof signs.

A third video filmed in the region depicts a man in underwear fully covered in *zelyonka* and instructed to say "Fellas, never cheat taxi drivers from Nizhny Novgorod."

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The antiseptic has become an increasingly popular form of harassing politicians, with former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov, opposition politician Alexei Navalny and opposition blogger Ilya Varlamov all having been doused with the dye this past spring alone.

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