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Orthodox Activist Behind ‘Mathilde’ Attacks Has Previous Murder Conviction

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Alexander Kalinin / Vkontakte

A Russian Orthodox activist associated with attacks surrounding the screening of the film “Mathilde” has a previous conviction for murdering his neighbor.

Alexander Kalinin, the head of the “Christian State — Holy Russia” group, was detained earlier this week for his involvement in several violent attacks against venues and associates connected to "Mathilde." Kalinin is suspected of being behind threats to dozens of cinema managers saying their venues would burn if the film was shown.

The film by director Alexei Uchitel describes Tsar Nicholas II’s love affair with a Polish ballerina and has been denounced as insulting by Orthodox activists.

On Thursday, the state-funded RIA Novosti news agency reported Kalinin was earlier convicted for murdering his neighbor during a robbery in 2002.

“First his friends tried to get into the apartment without him, but the woman would not open

the door," a spokesperson for the Krasnoyarsk regional court was cited as saying. "She only opened up when Kalinin knocked because she knew him."

A court sentenced Kalinin 8.5 years on robbery and murder charges in 2003.

Kalinin's "Christian State" associates, including his two brothers, were also detained this month on suspicion of burning cars outside the office of the lawyer representing Uchitel. The arson was one of a series of intimidating attacks ahead of the film's release.

State Duma Deputy Natalia Poklonskaya, who has herself spearheaded a campaign against "Mathilde," claimed the detentions were made on her request.

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