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Journalist Who Faked Own Death in Kiev Demands $50,000 for Interview

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Valentyn Ogirenko / Reuters

Arkady Babchenko, the exiled Russian journalist who faked his own death in Ukraine to evade what he says was a Russian assassination plot, has set a $50,000 price for an exclusive interview.

Ukrainian security officials said they staged Babchenko's apparent murder last week to thwart and expose a Russian plot to assassinate him. In an interview a day after revealing that he was alive, Babchenko hit back at criticism of his journalistic ethics, saying concerns about his life took precedence.

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"Please, don't bother me. Let me come alive. Thank you," Babchenko wrote on Facebook on Monday in an apparent reference to interview requests.

“I’m in too much trouble right now and I need to start my life from scratch again to think about how to improve your ratings and content. So let’s make a deal: 50,000 bucks and an exclusive interview is yours,” he said.

Babchenko, 41, followed up with an update that state-run Rossia news channel offered the sum “without even bargaining.”

A scathing critic of the Kremlin and its involvement in the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts, Babchenko rejected Rossia’s offer in a foul-mouthed post-scriptum.

“The offer is only for the media, not for f---ing propagandists, shove your money up your a-- and f--- yourselves,” he wrote.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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