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Russian State TV Defends Gérard Depardieu Over Rape Allegations

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Gerard Depardieu (Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency)

Russian state television has come to the defense of French actor and naturalized Russian citizen Gérard Depardieu over accusations of rape and sexual assault in a segment aired Friday.

Depardieu, 69, is reportedly being investigated in France on accusations of rape and sexual assault and has denied any wrongdoing. French media said the complaint had been lodged by a 22-year-old French actress.

"PR or crime?" asks a segment on the Rossia 24 news channel.

The report questions why the unnamed accuser filed charges several weeks after the alleged Aug. 7 and Aug. 13 incidents when she had visited one of Depardieu's Paris homes.

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“Who kept her from doing this after the first time?” the news channel quoted attorney Vadim Lyalin as saying.

“The young lady was perhaps trying to engage in blackmail and, having failed to get what she wanted, decided that at least this is how she’ll get PR,” Lyalin contended.

One of France’s most prolific actors famous for films including "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Green Card," Depardieu was granted Russian citizenship in 2013.

The reaction to the allegations against Depardieu echo Russian responses to the Harvey Weinstein sexual harassment charge.

President Vladimir Putin weighed in on the Weinstein scandal this summer, asking: “Why is this happening now, not 10 years ago when this allegedly took place?”

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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