The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Elon Musk's Self-Driving Tesla 'Runs Over' Putin's Robot Pal

January 09, 2019



Rupromobot / Instagram

Headlines around the world have decried the "murder" of a Russian-made robot by Elon Musk's Tesla.

A widely shared video claimed to show a Tesla Model S vehicle — allegedly on autopilot — running over Promobot, who had earlier befriended President Vladimir Putin.

Embed:

Vigilant observers soon noticed, however, that the alleged incident ahead of the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show opening in Las Vegas may have been staged.

"Promobot seems to start falling over just a moment before the car gets to it," Wired reported.

“And that video appears to show a rope snaking away from the incident — the sort that could be used, say, to pull down a robot that hadn’t been hit by a car at all,” the outlet added.

In replies to Promobot’s tweet about the alleged incident, Twitter users were quick to question the veracity of the video. Some posted screenshots of the video marking the rope Wired had pointed out in bright red.

Embed:

> Yep, you can briefly see the rope at 0:06 in the video. Promobot should be sued for libel.https://t.co/iX1flbj63e pic.twitter.com/yaIiPN4k7U
>
> — Darrell Spice Jr. (@SpiceWare) January 8, 2019

A second video shared by the eponymous company showed an unmarked car with flashing blue and red lights allegedly inspecting the site of the “incident.”

Putin met Promobot in 2017, when the robot shook his hand and made the following introduction: “Vladimir Vladimirovich, I am Promobot, an autonomous service robot for business. It is my pleasure to meet you.”

Embed:

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/01/09/elon-musk-self-driving-tesla-runs-over-putin-robot-pal-a64072