



the first time a journalist has been tried under this law.

The authorities suspected that the article had tapped into readers' subconscious with the sentence: "This is a story about how anyone can be squashed by the government machine. It's also about how Big Brother is watching, reading all comments on online forums," Romanov's editor at the Yakutsk Vecherniy weekly [told](#) Kommersant after he was detained.

Fines for violating the "unreliable information" law range between 30,000 rubles and 100,000 rubles (\$1,580).

Police told Kommersant that Romanov had repeatedly declined to provide testimony, citing his "limited eyesight and inability to read text."

"That circumstance hasn't kept him from working at a computer," the Yakutsk police department was reported as saying.

The Russian Union of Journalists had [argued](#) in a statement that "even someone without a literary education understands that this was only in reference to George Orwell's '1984.'"

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