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U.S. Ex-Marine on Trial for Attacking Moscow Police

By AFP

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The incident happened in August 2019. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

A US ex-marine stood trial in Moscow Wednesday on charges that he had attacked police officers, and faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Trevor Reed, 28, allegedly attacked police called by friends after he became very intoxicated and risked walking into traffic.

While being driven to a police station, he reportedly grabbed the arm of a police officer, causing the car they were in to swerve, and elbowed another officer in the abdomen.

The incident happened in August 2019 and Reed, who is from Texas, has been held in a Moscow pre-trial detention centre since then.

Police escorted Reed into the courtroom of Moscow's Golovino district court for the hearing, attended by his parents, sister and Russian girlfriend.

He declined to answer questions from media in the courtroom, saying: "You'll have to ask my attorney."

His father Joey Reed told AFP his son had chosen not to plead guilty because he cannot remember the incident.

"He can't plead honestly one way or another," Reed's father said.

"He was extremely intoxicated. He remembers nothing of the evening except people trying to toast him with vodka at a party."

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US State Department personnel have visited Reed monthly, his father said, and the family has asked them to be present at the trial.

"He's doing all right, he has some back pain and foot issues and stress but he looks well and he says he's being treated fairly in the detention centre," Reed's father said.

The case has attracted attention owing to the lengthy sentence faced by a US citizen and speculation in Russian and US media that he could be part of a prisoner swap.

Reed's father declined to comment, but said he believed US prisoner swaps historically involved spies, a charge his son does not face.

He said defence lawyers were focusing on "irregularities" in the case, such as why his son was not handcuffed in the police car if his behaviour was violent.

Attorneys also told him that security camera footage did not show the police car swerving.

The family posted bail of $15,000 but the court rejected it, a decision now being appealed.

Russia's highest-profile US detainee is Paul Whelan, who was arrested in 2018 on espionage charges.

He risks up to 20 years in prison if convicted. His trial has not started yet.

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