The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

‘She Pricked His Butt Roleplaying’: ‘Putin’s Chef’ Sues Activist Sobol for Libel

April 07, 2020



Lyubov Sobol links a 2016 attempt on her husband's life to Yevgeny Prigozhin, a catering magnate with close Kremlin ties. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

Yevgeny Prigozhin, a sanctioned catering magnate with close ties to President Vladimir Putin, has sued opposition activist Lyubov Sobol for libel over her claims that he ordered a poisoning attack on her husband.

Prigozhin is seeking Sobol and the pro-Putin religious television channel Tsargrad to retract her remarks made on the air last summer. Sobol’s husband was stabbed in the thigh with a near-deadly dose of a psychotropic substance in 2016, rendering him convulsing and unconscious.

Related article: ‘Time for Radical Measures’: Lyubov Sobol Is Seizing the Protest Moment

“The video contains untrue information [that] tarnishes the plaintiff’s honor, dignity and business reputation,” Prigozhin’s suit says.

“The defendant’s use of the phrases ‘the bandit Prigozhin attacked my husband’ and ‘the bandit Prigozhin wanted to kill my husband’ give the impression that the plaintiff attempted to murder Sobol’s husband,” it adds.

Tsargrad told Interfax it would comply with the court’s orders.

Prigozhin, 58, confirmed through his company Concord’s press service that he filed the lawsuit.

“I think a more logical version is that Sobol pricked her husband’s buttcheeks herself while roleplaying,” he said.

Sobol, 32, maintained her innocence and vowed to continue her activities. “I will not stop releasing videos and telling the truth,” she said Monday.

Sobol has previously pursued legal action against Prigozhin over school meals linked to his catering business that she alleges caused a dysentery outbreak among dozens of children in Moscow in late 2018.

The opposition activist emerged as a leading figure in Moscow’s mass protest movement last summer. Thousands took to the streets against the disqualification of opposition candidates, including Sobol herself, from the city ballot.

Crippling lawsuits have also targeted Sobol’s employer Alexei Navalny and his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), which has published a series of video investigations alleging graft among high-placed Russian officials, in the wake of the protests.

Prigozhin is under U.S. sanctions over his ties to the Internet Research Agency, the Kremlin-backed “troll factory” accused of interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. He is also linked to the Wagner Group of private mercenaries which has reportedly been deployed to conflicts in Syria, Libya, Sudan and several sub-Saharan African countries.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/07/she-pricked-his-butt-roleplaying-putins-chef-sues-activist-sobol-for-libel-a69893