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Putin, Kim Lookalikes Help Zelensky Impersonator Flee Ukraine

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Umid Isaboyev

Birds of a feather flock together... and help each other in times of war.

That was the lesson Umidjon Isaboyev, who shot to fame for impersonating Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, learned when impersonators of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin helped him flee Russian attacks on Kyiv last month.

"It's not a likely story, but it is a 'lookalike-ly' story," Australian broadcaster ABC reported last week.

Howard X, the Kim impersonator, told the outlet he sprang into action to get his colleague Isaboyev out of Ukraine despite having never met him.

The Australian said he had appeared in a segment with Isaboyev, separately, on Russian state television.

"After the war started, I started thinking 'actually, I know this guy' and then I thought 'I

better give this guy a call, make sure he's alright,'" he said.

The fake Kim said he then recruited the fake Putin — a Polish national named Slawomir — to reach out to his contacts within the Ukrainian resistance and exfiltrate the fake Zelensky.

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Howard X said it took a while to gain Isaboyev's trust.

"It was an unexpected proposal," The Washington Post quoted Isaboyev as saying, adding that his journey out of Kyiv to Poland took about a week.

Storyful on Friday published video of Isaboyev crossing the Polish border with nothing but a travel bag on March 12.

Slawomir has posted several photographs alongside Isaboyev on his "Putin Lookalike" Facebook page since his rescue.

Howard told ABC he is now paying for Isaboyev's accommodation in Poland and trying to help him find work.

"I'm hoping to make a movie out of this because this is so crazy."

Isaboyev, a 41-year-old auto mechanic originally from the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan, became an overnight sensation after a photo of him sleeping on a Moscow metro car went viral in 2019.

From there, Isaboyev signed media appearance contracts in Russia and was later recruited as Zelensky's body double on the Ukrainian president's popular TV series "Servant of the People," Howard X said.

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