The Moscow Times
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U.S. Soldier Held in Russia Denies Threatening to Kill Girlfriend

By AFP

June 17, 2024



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Gordon Black. **AP / TASS**

A U.S. soldier held in Russia denied threatening to kill his Russian girlfriend while also pleading "partially" guilty to theft charges in a court in the Far East city of Vladivostok on Monday.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Gordon Black was arrested in early May in Vladivostok, where he was visiting a Russian woman he met and dated while stationed in South Korea.

The 34-year-old was detained after the woman, identified by Russian media outlets as Alexandra Vashuk, reported him to the police following an argument.

Russian media quoted Black as saying he was "partially guilty" of theft but that it was not premeditated, and that he was "not guilty" of allegedly threatening to kill Vashuk.

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Vashuk had accused Black of stealing around 10,000 rubles ($113) from her and said he had physically attacked her. Black said she had started an argument after drinking.

The American soldier said the pair met in October 2022 on the dating app Tinder in South Korea and had dated there. Vashuk later invited him to visit Vladivostok.

Black said he did not plan to take the money and intended to give it back, saying he took it because he could not access his U.S. bank account inside Russia due to sanctions.

He faces up to five years in prison.

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