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Court in Occupied Donetsk Jails Russian Soldiers in Killing of American Fighter

December 08, 2025



Russell Bentley. **ASTRA / Telegram**

A judge in the occupied Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine on Monday sentenced four Russian soldiers to prison for the torture and killing of an American man who had fought alongside pro-Moscow forces.

Russell Bentley, a self-described communist known by the nickname "Texas," disappeared in April 2024 after leaving to help victims of a Ukrainian strike in Donetsk, according to police.

Investigators later accused three soldiers of torturing Bentley to death. Two of them were said to have blown up a car containing his body and ordered a fourth soldier to dispose of the remains the next day.

A judge from the Russian-installed Donetsk Garrison Military Court sentenced soldiers Vitaly Vansyatsky and Andrei Iordanov to 12 years in a maximum-security prison, Vladislav Agaltsev to 11 years and Vladimir Bashin to a year and a half in a general-regime colony.

Vansyatsky, Iordanov and Agaltsev were also stripped of their military ranks.

All four soldiers pleaded guilty and expressed remorse, Russia's Investigative Committee said.

Bentley had served in the Donetsk-based Vostok battalion between 2014 and 2017 during the early years of the war in eastern Ukraine. He obtained Russian citizenship in 2021, a year before Moscow launched its full-scale invasion.

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