

Culinary Institute Head Hit With Extortion Charge

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The son of a former deputy interior minister has been accused by his father's ex-employer of extorting 7 million rubles (\$238,000) in his role as rector of a Moscow culinary institute, Izvestia reported.

The allegation follows a squabble in which rector Dmitry Yedelev refused to share space in the Moscow State University for Food Production's building with a higher education institute run by the Interior Ministry's Investigative Committee.

The ministry said Yedelev — son of former Deputy Interior Minister Arkady Yedelev — and others in the institute's administration had extorted money from the director of the institute's canteens by threatening to spread defamatory information about him if he did not pay up.

“The rector of the institute is suspected of receiving illegal monetary funds from September

2011 to February 2012 from the director of food supplies via intermediaries,” the ministry said in a statement carried by RIA–Novosti. “They received rent for canteens and buffets of 1.1 million rubles per month.”

Police do not currently have sufficient grounds to arrest Yedelev, and he unexpectedly did not go to work on Friday, instead taking a last-minute, 30-day vacation to an unknown location, Izvestia reported.

A source at the culinary institute told Izvestia last Monday that they believed that the criminal case was linked to their refusal to share their building in Moscow’s Sokol district.

The institute for higher education of the Investigative Committee had wanted to share the building, but the culinary institute said there wasn’t enough space.

“We tried to explain that we do not have free rooms,” the source told Izvestia. “But they refused to listen and threatened us with police inspections. In the summer, the inspections started and in February, a criminal case was opened, under which they conducted searches in the rector’s house.”

“We think that the correlation is clear,” the source added.

But Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin denied the charge.

“The initiator of the building exchange was the Federal Property Management Agency, which was fulfilling the government’s decree,” Markin told Izvestia. “The Investigative Committee does not have any interest in that particular building. We are willing to look into any option offered by the agency.”

The committee said it found evidence to accuse Yedelev and two of his coworkers while searching their apartments.

“During the search we seized financial and economic documents and blank forms with the institute’s stamp on them,” an investigative committee spokesperson said. “Moreover, in their apartments we found a gold bar, a number of Swiss watches and 8 million rubles in cash.”

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