

Ukrainian Man Sentenced in U.S. For Drunken In-Flight Shenanigans

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 26, 2014



Ukrainian man sentenced for damaging a plane door when he tried to yank it open on the flight from Boston to Salt Lake City.

A Ukrainian truck driver accused of screaming in Russian that a plane wing had caught fire before tussling with passengers aboard a 2012 flight is set to serve two years' probation and pay thousands of dollars in damages under a U.S. federal judge's order.

District Judge Robert Shelby on Wednesday sentenced Anatoliy Baranovich, 47, to pay \$57,000 to Delta Air Lines Inc. for damaging a plane door when he tried to yank it open on the flight from Boston to Salt Lake City.

He told authorities he had been drinking heavily for 50 days before causing the melee.

Baranovich, wearing a white-collared shirt unbuttoned at the neck and close-cropped hair, agreed to undergo court-administered drug testing and to avoid going to bars during the two-

year period. He spoke with help from a translator.

"I want to apologize to everyone," he said. "I'm a good man, so I didn't do anything mean to any person. I just regret so much that it happened."

Defense attorney Ron Yengich said Baranovich is a good father and husband, and the behavior isn't typical of his client.

"The big issue here has been the alcohol," Yengich said. "He no longer drinks."

Baranovich in March pleaded guilty to interfering with a flight crew. Conviction on that charge could have meant up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The judge dropped three other charges against him. They are damaging an aircraft, trying to bribe federal agents and resisting arrest.

In 2012, Baranovich traveled to Ukraine to build a house, but he began drinking when he could not begin construction, he told authorities. "I never sobered up," Baranovich told an FBI investigator after the incident.

He continued drinking as he flew from Ukraine to Amsterdam and on to Boston, dozing off for most of the flight to Salt Lake City.

Baranovich awoke as the plane was descending and began yelling about the wing, ran back and tried to pry open the exit door as flight attendants yelled at him to stop, prosecutors said in charging documents. The door jammed and an emergency inflatable slide malfunctioned, causing "extensive damage" to the plane, the FBI said.

Several passengers tried to wrestle Baranovich to the ground while he tried to open another emergency door.

He later offered federal agents \$6,500 to let him go, according to an indictment.

Officials said they don't believe Baranovich, who was carrying a Ukrainian passport and U.S. visa, posed a terrorist threat.

Investigators found 19 passports in his luggage, including 16 for women, ranging in age from their 20s to their early 30s. Authorities said they were investigating why he had them, but they haven't publicly disclosed what they found.

Yengich said Wednesday that the passports belonged to family members and weren't intended for "nefarious purposes."

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