

Russian Martial Arts Fighter Yemelianenko Gets 4 1/2 Years for Sexual Assault

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Alexander Yemelianenko (R) with his brothers Ivan and Fyodor

Prominent Russian mixed martial arts fighter Alexander Yemelianenko has been sentenced to 4 1/2 years in prison for sexual assault.

Yemelianenko was found guilty of assaulting his Moldovan cleaner Polina Stepanova in March 2014, and of stealing her passport.

Yemelianenko, the brother of former mixed martial arts champion Fyodor, denied his guilt and plans to appeal the verdict, the TASS news agency reported. His manager Oleg Rayevsky said that regardless of the outcome, he will continue his career once out of jail.

After putting him on the federal wanted list, police detained Yemelianenko last May in Tambov, where he was involved in a car accident, the Kommersant daily newspaper reported. He was then taken to Moscow, where he had been in custody for over a year.

In August 2013 a 23-year-old woman filed a complaint that Yemelienenko had raped her, but then retracted the statement.

In another incident, Yemelienenko was accused of punching a pensioner in the face. In 2013, he was fined for being drunk and disorderly on a 2012 flight to the Siberian city of Barnaul.

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