

# In Interview With Russian Media, Paul Whelan's Twin Brother Insists He Wasn't a Spy

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The Lefortovo detention center in Moscow where former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan is being held on espionage charges. **Shamil Zhumatov / Reuters**

The brother of a former U.S. Marine detained in Moscow has told a Russian media outlet that Paul Whelan traveled to Russia on multiple occasions to go sightseeing and visit acquaintances he had met online.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) detained Whelan in late December on suspicion of espionage. His family claims that Whelan, who holds U.S., British, Irish and Canadian citizenship, was in Moscow for a wedding.

**Related article:** [Russia Charges Former U.S. Marine With Espionage](#)

Here's what Whelan's twin brother, David Whelan, [told](#) Kommersant FM radio late on

Wednesday, according to a Russian-language transcript of the interview published online:

- “I didn’t know that my brother [had](#) four passports until he requested consular access to diplomats from the four countries.”
- “What I know is that Paul isn’t a spy. If only because he published photos of his travels on social media, he did everything in the open and didn’t hide anything. I’m sure any agent would say that’s unusual for a spy.”
- “He had traveled to Russia to see the cathedral on Red Square, the Kremlin, the GUM [mall]. He liked St. Petersburg, plus he wanted to meet with the Russians he had met on social networks.”
- “I’m very pleased that the Kremlin spokesperson [said](#) that Russia will not use Paul for political purposes, I hope it’s true. It just scares us that we don’t have any information from Russian officials on why my brother stands accused and what he’s done... Without these details, I can’t say that the cases of Maria Butina and my brother are somehow [connected](#). It’s all speculation.”
- “I’m not prejudiced against [Whelan’s lawyer Vladimir] Zherebenkov... The only thing that bothers me is that we don’t know why he was assigned to my brother [...] We want to be sure that my brother had a choice. Another thing is I that I have read that Mr. Zherebenkov has ties to the prosecution. His son is alleged to be an investigator who was [involved](#) in Paul’s arrest.”

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