

2 Russians Go on Trial for Euro 2016 Attack on England Supporter

By [AFP](#)

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Laurent Cipriani / AP / TASS

Two Russian men went on trial in France on Monday accused of a savage attack on an English football supporter during the Euro 2016 tournament that left him in a wheelchair for life.

Pavel Kossov and Mikhail Ivkine, both 34, are accused of beating 55-year-old Andrew Bache, who suffered brain injuries in the violence that broke out before England played Russia in the southern French port city of Marseille on June 11, 2016.

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They face a jail sentence of up to 15 years if found guilty in the trial in Aix-en-Provence that runs until Friday.

Bache, from Portsmouth in southeast England, is too frail to attend the trial, but his son Harry

is representing him.

"Mr. Bache is so physically and psychologically affected, with a condition somewhere between Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's, that he is unable to give evidence, even by videolink," said Bache's lawyer, Olivier Rosato.

He said the two accused were among a group of around 150 Russian men who acted as "paramilitaries" on that day in Marseille's Vieux Port district where England supporters had gathered in bars and cafes before the match.

"The pictures speak for themselves. Throughout the day, the Russian hooligans mounted an urban guerilla offensive, like paramilitaries. They treated it like a combat sport," Rosato said.

The defense will seek to discredit Rosato's depiction of the two Russians in the dock.

"This was not a case of gentle and kind Englishmen against bloodthirsty Russians," Alain Duflot, representing Kossov, said before the trial began.

The two men were arrested in Germany in February 2018, 20 months after Bache suffered his life-changing injuries, while they were on their way to a match featuring Spartak Moscow in Spain. They have been in custody in France since their arrest.

Ivkin, a sports teacher who has three children, told the court through an interpreter he had acted "in self-protection" when confronted by a group of England fans. "I defended myself," he added.

He admitted throwing a chair towards Bache "but it only grazed him."

Ivkin said he was a sports teacher who was passionate about "kick-boxing, traditional boxing and taekwondo, but also philosophy."

The court heard that psychological analysis has shown Ivkin is "neurotic."

Kossov was living with his mother at the time of the violence and working as a driver.

He said he had jabbed at Bache's head "but it was a hand not a fist." The prosecution claims Kossov kicked the Briton in the hip as he lay unconscious but he said he "didn't recall that."

"Anyway, it wasn't intentional," he added.

Psychologists have found Kossov lacks empathy and "hasn't got a grip of reality."

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