

# *Parents of US Man Held in Moscow Demand Fair Trial for Son*

By The Associated Press

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WASHINGTON — The parents of a former U.S. Marine who has been jailed for nearly a year in Moscow on charges that he endangered police officers are urging the court system and government to ensure a fair trial for their son. They spoke out as a Russian court sentenced another American to more than a decade in prison in an unrelated espionage case.

Trevor Reed was charged in August 2019 with assaulting police officers who were driving him to a police station after picking him up following a night of heavy drinking at a party. Russian authorities say the 28-year-old Reed was drunk inside a police car when he grabbed the arm of the driver, causing him to swerve into another lane, and elbowed another officer who tried to intervene.

Reed's trial began this year and continues June 30. He faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted. His family says that besides seeking a fair trial for their son, they also want to ensure that U.S. officials are closely tracking the case, including being mindful of potential irregularities in the Russian criminal justice system that could result in unfair punishment.

“We want to make sure that people throughout our government, both elected and in the agencies, understand what's going on in case he gets a disproportionate punishment,” Joey Reed, his father, said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press. “Which at this point, based on the evidence and the facts of the case, any prison sentence in my opinion is disproportionate.”

His parents spoke to the AP on the same day another American jailed in Russia, Paul Whelan, was sentenced to 16 years in prison on espionage charges following a closed trial that the U.S. denounced as a “mockery of justice.”

Whelan, also a former Marine, insists he is innocent, saying he was set up when he was arrested in Moscow in December 2018 while visiting Russia to attend a friend's wedding. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the U.S. was “outraged” by the verdict and said the treatment of Whelan while in custody has been “appalling.”

Reed's parents, of Granbury, Texas, say they are concerned about what they see as irregularities in both cases, including missing evidence and contradictory accounts by police officers in their son's prosecution.

At the time of his arrest, Trevor Reed was in Moscow visiting his girlfriend and studying the Russian language. He had attended a party one week before he was scheduled to return home, where his family says he was encouraged to drink a large amount of vodka.

Reed was sharing a ride home when he became nauseated and got out of the car. After he began running around near a busy boulevard, the police were summoned to help. But instead of taking him for medical care, as the family says is standard protocol in Moscow, officers drove him to the police station.

Inside the car, police say, Reed grabbed the arm of the driver and struck an officer with his elbow. The police car swerved into another lane during the altercation, the authorities said. Reed has no memory beyond drinking vodka at the party and no recollection of what happened inside the car, his family says.

When his girlfriend came to pick him up several hours later, he was being questioned by Russian authorities without a lawyer or an adequate interpreter. She was told he was being charged with intentionally endangering the officers, the family says.

His parents have seized on what they say are discrepancies. They say traffic video does not show the police car swerving, and that Reed's girlfriend — a lawyer who is close with the family and has been helpful to the defense — and others who were in a car following close behind did not report seeing the police vehicle swerve on the way to the station.

Investigators also did not give the defense video from inside the car or the police station — video that the family says has since been erased.

Reed is housed in a room with about a half-dozen other inmates at a detention facility in Moscow and is permitted outside for only a brief window each day. His father, who has lived periodically in Russia over the last year, has visited him on multiple occasions.

In addition, he has recently experienced abnormal blood pressure and heart rate, said his mother, Paula.

“I am extremely concerned about him catching COVID-19 more than ever now,” Paula Reed said in a text message. “And since social distancing is impossible in a jail situation it compounds my concerns for his health.”

The U.S. embassy in Russia, meanwhile, has sent representatives to different court appearances, and the family says it wants the embassy to continue sending a Russian-speaking consul to observe Reed's court proceedings and for Ambassador John Sullivan to attend the trial at its conclusion.

The family also says it wants the U.S. government to publicly acknowledge that Reed is imprisoned, is on trial and that the case is being monitored.

“We would hope that Russian law is followed and due process is used in my son's case,” Joey Reed said.