

Actor Says He Impersonated Russian Mercenary in Syria for Sky News Report

By [RT](#)

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A Russian actor claims the recent Sky News documentary about undercover Russian mercenaries in Syria was staged. RT spoke a man who claims to have impersonated one of the fighters the British outlet spoke to.

In a recently-aired Sky News [investigation](#) the channel claimed it uncovered facts about Russian mercenaries in Syria operating undercover.

One of the key pieces of evidence provided was an interview conducted by Sky News' Moscow correspondent, John Sparks, who spoke to two males who allegedly comprised part of a secret Russian force, called "Wagner" operating in Syria.

One of them, named Dmitry said that some 500 to 600 people of the unit died while serving in the country. The faces of the men were hidden and voices changed "to protect their identities."

Following the report, Russian television channel, NTV, aired its own investigation, claiming to have found Dmitry, who apparently turned out to be a Russian actor living in Moscow.

RT also contacted a man, whose real name is Aleksandr Agapov, and he said that he played the role of a "Wagner" fighter at the request of the Sky News.

"They said we have this information. You simply need to prepare yourself based on that information and make out you were in the military in Syria in a service of a private company," Agapov told RT.

In the interview, Agapov said he had been told by the clip would be part of a movie. However after getting suspicious Agapov decided to record a conversation with Sparks that supposedly took place in a Moscow hotel. The recording was initially passed to NTV.

RT went on to check this claim as well. Our channel forwarded the recording to an acoustic analysis laboratory in Moscow for detailed information. Audio analyst Ivan Ursov said that the outcome clearly pointed to one of the voices belonging to Aleksandr Agapov.

"The results of the analysis demonstrate a 75.5 percent match between the recordings. That's good enough to conclude they are indeed the same person," Ursov said.

While analyzing the second voice the specialist found that with "85 percent certainty" it was that of Sky News correspondent John Sparks.

To clarify Agapov’s allegations we reached out to the Sky News representatives. Sky News maintained its journalistic integrity.

“Sky News stands fully behind the story which is the product of a detailed investigation over many months,” the media outlet said in an email.

Another request on social media addressed to Sky News as well as personally to John Sparks did not yield any results.

[@ValentinJucan @ramsaysky](#)

Its unethical what ramsay did, reporting false stories just because they sell.
They all must face trial.

— Petric Vlad (@vladpetric) [11 August 2016](#)

It’s not the first time that the media outlet has found itself in hot water over such a case.

Recently, the outlet triggered outrage in Romania after suggesting in one of its reports that there was a thriving illegal arms trade in the country. In that case a Sky News reporter Stuart Ramsay spoke to two masked men, who was selling a number of weapons, including semi-assault rifles.

According to Romanian officials, the outlet paid the men some £5,000 (\$6,600) in what they called a *“faked report”*. Ramsay denied the allegations.

Romania’s Prime Minister Dacian Ciolos reacted to the case saying that it is *“unacceptable to denigrate a country without proof.”* Romania’s Secretary of State at National Audiovisual Council, Valentin Jucan, even vowed to bring Ramsay to court, posting a message on his Twitter feed.

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