

Romania probes hundreds of books written by prisoners

AP By ALISON MUTLER
33 minutes ago



BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romania's crackdown on corruption and fraud in recent years has created a sudden and unexpected literary boom, as prisoners publish hundreds of non-fiction books on subjects as varied as soccer, real estate, God and gemstones.

It's quite a feat for inmates with no access to books or the Internet, often without tables in their cells. Reports that one book, of 212 pages, was written in seven hours, has only increased suspicions that the improbable treatises are often ghost-written or plagiarized.

Under Romanian law, prisoners can have their sentences reduced by 30 days for every "scientific work" they publish, subject to a judge's decision on whether the book merits it. Prisoners pay publishing houses to print their works — though they won't be found in any bookshop.

The law dates from the communist era and was aimed at imprisoned intellectuals who were not suitable for manual labor. Skilled manual workers are able to work to reduce their sentences.

Until recently only a handful of such books were published, but in 2014 that rose to 90 — and in 2015 it spiraled to 340.

Prosecutors are investigating whether rich and well-connected convicts are paying university professors — who are required to approve the subjects of the books — or others to write them for them.

A prosecutors' statement cited the case of the 212-page book

What to read next



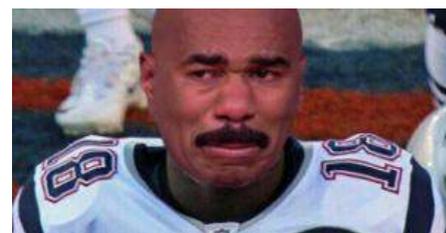
[Photo Of Kim Kardashian Leaves Fans Concerned](#)

Alison Coldridge



[Letters from a serial killer: Inside the Unabomber archive](#)

Yahoo News



[Everyone On The Internet Made Fun Of The Patriots After The AFC Championship](#)

UPROXX



[Mystery Solved: Reggie Wayne Reveals What Peyton Manning's 'Omaha' Audible](#)

UPROXX



[Trump visits Iowa church: gets a lesson in humility](#)

Associated Press



written by an unidentified prisoner in under seven hours, as well as a 180-page book written in 12 hours.



In this photo taken on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016, books written by inmates and published while serving ...

Laura Stefan, an analyst at the Expert Forum think tank, which promotes transparency and good governance, says the "scientific works" coming out of Romania's jails have more to do with the wealth and influence of the inmates than their literary talent.

"What we are seeing ... is the result of high-level people ending up in jail. These very powerful people are also rich and they can afford to have high-quality counsel, lawyers who teach them how to use the legislation," she told The Associated Press.

"The quality of the work is poor, and some are bluntly copied."

Allegations of plagiarism against ministers and high-ranking figures are commonplace in Romania, yet rarely investigated. A university panel in 2012 found that former Prime Minister Victor Ponta plagiarized his 2003 doctoral thesis,

Justice Minister Raluca Pruna has called for the law to be abolished in an emergency ordinance.



"I noticed a very large growth (in publications) in a very short space of time," Pruna told the AP. "It was clear the procedure had not been applied in a strict manner."

In this photo taken on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016, Ioana Marina Popovici, speaks during an interview wi ...

She favors new legislation that would put writing a book on a par with activities such as painting and theater, which would together be taken into consideration when ruling on early release.

The books are generally highly specialized or full of photos and



Even Peyton Manning's family had doubts about a storybook Super Bowl ending

Yahoo Sports



WWE Royal Rumble: Controversy as simmering rivalries dominate the ring

Yahoo Sport UK



Peyton Manning's son Marshall makes shy postgame appearance

Shutdown Corner



Unabomber Ted Kaczynski

Yahoo News



Photos of the day - January 24, 2016

Yahoo News



Flickr | iMovie | Mail | News on Firefox »

Sign In | Mail | Settings

Navigation bar with Home, Mail, Search, News, Sports, Finance, Celebrity, Weather, Answers, and search boxes for News and Web.

Trending: Sentences for corruption, wrote two books while in jail. He declined to be interviewed for this article.

However, graphic artist Marina Popovici, one of those sentenced alongside Nastase in 2012 for money-laundering and complicity to abuse of the public interest, praised the law and said it gave well-educated prisoners something productive to do.

"As a person who was active, I wanted to do something so as not



- [News Home](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [World](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Tech](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Odd News](#)
- [Local](#)
- [Dear Abby](#)
- [ABC News](#)
- [Katie Couric](#)
- [Trending](#)
- [Photos](#)

Recommended Games



[More games »](#)

to waste my time," she said, clutching her book, "Precious Colored Gemstones." She said she was given supervised access to a computer and insisted she wrote the book herself. Freed in 2015, she claims she was wrongly convicted and is appealing at the European Court of Human Rights.



In this photo taken on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016, students listen to Sorin Rosca Stanescu, center, dur ...

Journalist and former senator Sorin Rosca Stanescu served nine months of a 2½-year sentence he was handed for using privileged information and setting up an organized crime group. He wrote three books on the Romanian press and Romania's political life and now teaches classes about corruption plaguing the Romanian press. He also insists he wrote his own books.

But it's hardly surprising that in such difficult conditions — prisoners rely on family and friends to photocopy pages from reference books and don't have desks in their cells — and with most convicts first-time authors, there are suspicions some prisoners simply hired others to write for them.

Steaua football club owner Gigi Becali recently admitted that he didn't write the four books that came out under his name on subjects ranging from Mount Athos to "merciful love and redemption." The former European Parliament lawmaker was sentenced to 3½ years prison in May 2013 for a land exchange deal, kidnapping and match fixing. He did not respond to messages requesting an interview.

Lawmaker Gabriela Anghel, who's taking Stanescu's class on media corruption, thinks the law is wrong.

"It's not right to reduce someone's sentence based on a book they may not have written. They should write, but not get their sentence reduced because of it," she said.

[View Comments \(2\)](#)



<http://news.yahoo.com/rom>

Recommended for You

Husband Worried About Wife's Cheating Needs Reality Check

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married seven years and [Dear Abby](#)

1 Dead After Home Invasion; Homeowner Had Craigslist Ad

A man is dead after a homeowner selling an item on Craigslist was [ABC News](#)



Trump visits Iowa church: gets a lesson in humility

MUSCATINE, Iowa (AP) — On the second-to-last Sunday before the Iowa caucuses, Donald Trump [Associated Press](#)

[Winter Storm Jonas](#)

[Yahoo News](#)



[Photos of the day - January 23, 2016](#)

[Yahoo News](#)



[Two Marine helicopters collide off Oahu, Hawaii](#)

[Yahoo News](#)



[Photos of the day - January 22, 2016](#)

[Yahoo News](#)

[Red Cross demonstrates Flint water testing kit](#)

[Yahoo News Video](#)

[ShowBiz Minute: McLean, Delpy, Box Office](#)

[Associated Press Videos](#)

[Daniel Radcliffe Plays Dead](#)

[Associated Press Videos](#)



When They Were Young: Trump the 'Really Smart' College Student

Donald Trump's days as a college student at the University of Pennsylvania may surprise you.

Ozy

7 hurt on American Airlines jet; plane diverts to Canada

ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland (AP) — Seven people were taken to
[Associated Press](#)

[Could Blockchain Technology Disrupt Uber, Airbnb?](#)

[WSJ Live](#)

Mississippi gun store owner, son killed in shootout with customers

A gun store owner and his son were shot dead in Pearl River County, Mississippi, on Saturd...

[Next Media Videos](#)

[Play Video](#)

[Spike Lee Still Boycotting Oscars](#)

[Associated Press Videos](#)

Latest CRS report discusses presidential birthplace issue

An updated Congressional Research Service report is adding some new background on the controversy
[National Constitution Center](#)

Boeing completes first refueling flight of KC-46A tanker

Boeing Co and air crews from the U.S. Air Force completed the first
[Reuters](#)

Irate Husband Makes A Scene When Wife Breastfeeds Baby

DEAR ABBY: I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl three months ago. I
[Dear Abby](#)

[DNA blood test predicts suspects' age](#)

[Reuters Videos](#)

MH370 hunt loses hi-tech sonar probe to undersea volcano

An underwater sonar vehicle used in the search for missing Malaysia Airlines plane MH370...

[AFP](#)

[Will Stocks' Tumult Affect Presidential Election?](#)

[WSJ Live](#)

Even Australian police know how annoying that 'Be Like Bill' meme is

Like many memes, what started off as being pretty funny got old pretty quickly, especially when it

[Mashable](#)

Copyright 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Trump's wife remains private despite prospect of presidency

WASHINGTON (AP) — First lady Melania Trump.
[Associated Press](#)

Yahoo - [ABC News Network](#)
[Help](#) / [Suggestions](#) [Privacy](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Terms](#)

What Is Prediabetes? New Quiz Reveals Your Risk

By taking a 1-minute quiz, you can find out if you're at risk for prediabetes. The quiz is part of a new public service campaign that
[LiveScience.com](#)

Sheriff: gun shop shootout over \$25 kills 2, wounds 2

PICAYUNE, Miss. (AP) — A gun shop owner and his 17-year-old
[Associated Press](#)

Will Schools Be Closed in NYC Tomorrow? Not a Chance, According to

Sorry kids, but the snow won't stop school on Monday.

[Mic](#)

Play

Good samaritan killed while helping stranded motorist

A good samaritan was allegedly killed last Friday by a stranded motorist he stopped to aid during a snowstorm in North Carolina.

[Next Media Videos](#)

Suicide attack target Ahrar al-Sham group in Syria's Aleppo: monitor

A suicide bomber driving a fuel tank blew himself up on Monday at a

[Reuters](#) 57 mins ago

A Lake Twice the Size of Los Angeles Has Evaporated—and It May Never Return

Fish skeletons, dead birds, and fishing boats sit

[TakePart.com](#)

Heroine's welcome home for Philippines' Miss Universe

Confetti rained down as tens of thousands of shrieking fans paralysed traffic in the Philippine

[AFP](#)

A Robot Overlord Solves A Rubik's Cube In One Second, But Can It Learn To Love?

The rise of the machines begins with this robot

[UPROXX](#)

[Load more stories](#)