

## Unmasked



PR consultant [Tomáš Marek](#) walked into a branch of GE Money Bank last month, pulled out a gun and demanded some cash. He was wearing no mask and was easily hauled in by the police the next day. It's a sad story about what debt problems can drive a person to do. But it's also instructive because of the way politicians reacted. Although Marek had provided media training to the Social Democrats, there was suddenly no one in the party who knew him. They didn't want to be tainted by association with him. Even serial killers usually get better treatment. ("He always seemed like such a nice young man," say the neighbors.) But Czech politicians are too insecure about their own actions and inclinations to risk any show of compassion for someone with no prior record who made a foolish, life-changing mistake.

Instead, they were thinking, "Why in the world didn't he just wear a mask?"

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