

# Moscow Times

## FBI Case Implicates Dubrovka Judge

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Staff Writers

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Courtesy of Charlie Flynn

Egor Chernov, left, and Rex Judd, who disappeared in September 2005.

A Moscow judge who ruled against the families of Dubrovka theater hostages has been implicated in a U.S. investigation into false passports, a case the FBI says is "inextricably intertwined" with the disappearance of an American businessman.

Marina Gorbachyova, a judge in Moscow's Tverskoi District Court until January, was drawn into the investigation by her brother, Egor Chernov, who is awaiting trial in Utah on charges of producing and transferring fake passports, according to an FBI affidavit filed in the U.S. District Court in Salt Lake City.

Chernov told FBI investigators that his sister was a Moscow judge who could use her government contacts to get fake documents, the affidavit says.

The affidavit does not name Gorbachyova, referring to her as "Co-Conspirator Two" and "CC-2." But that is apparently a reference to Gorbachyova, who confirmed on Tuesday that her brother, Egor Chernov, was under investigation in the United States.

"Chernov said his sister still lives in Russia and is a judge in Moscow," FBI Special Agent Gregory Coleman testified in the affidavit, a copy of which was obtained by The Moscow Times.

"Chernov stated that his sister (CC-2) knew someone who worked for the chief of staff of the Russian president and could get falsified Belarussian passports," Coleman said.

Gorbachyova denied any wrongdoing and said she was unaware that the FBI regarded her as a co-conspirator in Chernov's case.

"My brother never said that about me," she said by telephone. "I don't have any relation to the presidential administration, and I never had any connection to faked passports."

Gorbachyova's husband, Alexander Gorbachyov, also denied wrongdoing. The FBI affidavit calls the husband of Chernov's sister "Co-Conspirator Three" and says Chernov supplied him with a fake Bulgarian passport.

The Utah investigation is a strange twist in the story of Gorbachyova, who first gained notoriety in 2003 when she presided over court hearings related to the Dubrovka theater crisis.

Chechen attackers seized the theater on Oct. 23, 2002, leading to a 56-hour siege that ended with the deaths of 129 hostages, many killed after a botched rescue operation in which special forces pumped a knockout gas into the building.

Gorbachyova rejected claims from many hostage relatives for compensation from City Hall, sometimes refusing to listen to their evidence. Plaintiffs and their lawyers have described her as rude and biased.

"She is not an ordinary judge," Igor Trunov, a lawyer for many of the Dubrovka plaintiffs, said Tuesday.

Gorbachyova returned to the media spotlight in May 2006, when she ruled against gay activists who wanted to organize a gay pride parade in Moscow but were blocked by City Hall.

Gorbachyova said she resigned in January to take care of her ailing mother. She and her husband run a business selling Doberman Pinscher puppies via the Internet.

Her brother, Chernov, is a Russian citizen with permanent residency in the United States, according to the FBI. Before his indictment in June, he lived in Lehi, Utah, a suburb of Salt Lake City.

Chernov was arrested after investigators confronted him with fake Bulgarian identity papers that showed his photograph along with the name Vasko Svetlinov Aleksandrov, the FBI affidavit said.

"How can we deal with this?" he replied, FBI agent Coleman said in the affidavit.

Chernov's lawyer, Jerome Mooney, said Tuesday that the origins of the falsified documents were still being established and denied that Chernov had been the source of them.

"Mr. Chernov was not the person who was responsible for creating passports in the event that anybody had some," Mooney said by telephone from Los Angeles.

Mooney said he did not know anything about Gorbachyova but said his client had a sister in Russia named Marina.

The link between Gorbachyova and the FBI investigation was also confirmed by Charlie Flynn, an investment banker with dual Canadian-British citizenship, who met Chernov and Gorbachyova a number of times and said he had spoken to FBI investigators about the case.

Gorbachyova and her husband confirmed that they had met Flynn. Her husband and Flynn expressed a deep dislike for each other.

Intriguingly, the FBI affidavit suggests that the alleged false passports may be the tip of the iceberg in a much more serious case involving the possible murder of a U.S. citizen, one of Chernov's business partners, in Thailand.

The U.S. citizen, called "Co-Conspirator One" in the affidavit, was a one-time motivational speaker who lived in upstate New York. U.S. media reports have identified him as Rex Judd, a millionaire who dealt in get-rich quick schemes and disappeared after flying to Bangkok in September 2005.

At the time, Judd was facing tax-evasion charges, and Chernov got him a fake Russian passport to flee the country, according to the affidavit. After Judd's disappearance, his wife met with Chernov, who told her that Judd had fled, the affidavit said.

But another source told the FBI a darker story.

Once Judd got to Thailand, he was murdered on Chernov's orders, according to a man identified as "Co-Conspirator Seven" in the FBI affidavit. The man -- whom Chernov's lawyer identified as Florida resident Paul Combs -- backed up his story by showing Judd's wedding

ring to the FBI.

Combs, another business partner of Chernov's who had a falling out with him, tried to blackmail him over the death of Judd, traveling to Utah and painting "Russian Maggot!" on his house, the FBI affidavit said.

FBI agent Coleman said the investigation into Judd's disappearance was "inextricably intertwined" with the investigation into the false passports.

Mooney denied that his client was involved in Judd's disappearance or possible death, saying Combs was an unreliable source.

Spokespeople for the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Embassy in Moscow declined to comment for this report, citing the ongoing investigation.