

Investigator in New Magnitsky Video Fights Back

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The battle over the death of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky escalated Tuesday when an Interior Ministry investigator for the first time fought back against accusations of murder and corruption.

Friends and colleagues of Magnitsky, who died in a Moscow detention center in November, published a new online video accusing investigator Pavel Karpov of enriching himself with proceeds from a legal onslaught against Hermitage Capital, once Russia's biggest foreign investment fund, that began in 2007.

[The video](#), published late Monday on the web site [Russian-untouchables.com](#), is similar to one released last month about Artyom Kuznetsov, who Magnitsky's supporters say is another main investigator in the case.

It [cites evidence](#) like home ownership deeds and car ownership registries, also published on

the web site, that indicate Karpov and his family "became \$1.3 million better off" from 2007 onward.

The amount, the video's authors say, hardly squares with Karpov's official monthly salary of \$535.

The authors call on the government to prosecute this "criminal group" before it continues to "murder and steal."

Prominent among the web site's sponsors are Hermitage founder William Browder and Jamison Firestone, the founder of the law firm where Magnitsky worked.

Shortly before the video appeared, Karpov announced that he had asked the Prosecutor General's Office to open a criminal investigation into Browder and Firestone for orchestrating a libel campaign against him.

Karpov, in a statement carried by Interfax on Tuesday, denied that he was responsible for the Magnitsky case at the Interior Ministry's Moscow branch. He argued that the real motive for the video was to divert attention from alleged tax crimes committed by Hermitage.

Karpov also claimed that Browder had a motive to see Magnitsky killed. "The only figure interested in Sergei Magnitsky's death is William Browder himself, who has used this death to shape public opinion that law enforcement agencies are persecuting innocent people," he said.

Investigators detained Magnitsky on charges that he was part of a scheme used by Hermitage to avoid tax payments in November 2008, shortly after he accused Karpov, Kuznetsov and other Interior Ministry officials of stealing \$230 million in government funds.

Magnitsky, a partner with law firm Firestone Duncan, died of heart failure in prison one year later without having gone on trial.

Browder and Firestone maintain that the 37-year-old lawyer was imprisoned and tortured to death by the same investigators whom he had accused of stealing government funds.

Karpov's statement could not be independently confirmed Tuesday.

Spokespeople for the Prosecutor General's Office and the Investigative Committee refused to comment, and nobody picked up telephones at the Interior Ministry.

Browder and Firestone said they had only read the statement in the Russian media.

"This is a last ditch and desperate attempt by the people who played a role in the crimes uncovered by Sergei Magnitsky to cover their tracks and to stop the exposure of the truth," Browder told The Moscow Times.

He added that friends and colleagues of Magnitsky are preparing numerous legal actions against the investigator both in Russia and abroad. "We would advise Pavel Karpov to get a good lawyer because he will need one both for civil and criminal charges," he said by telephone from London.

Firestone said he and his colleagues would publish more evidence in the case soon.

"This is by far not the most damning stuff," Firestone said by telephone from Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts. He would not specify when more material would be published and whom it would implicate.

He said Karpov and Kuznetsov were only relatively minor players in what he believes was a big Interior Ministry racket.

Browder has lived in London since being barred from entering Russia in 2005. Firestone left the country last December, saying that he feared he would suffer a fate similar to Magnitsky's.

Both Firestone and Browder said their opponents seemed to be gradually losing their political protection, pointing to a recent decision by Investigative Committee head Alexander Bastrykin to re-examine the Magnitsky case.

Bastrykin [said earlier this month](#) that he had canceled a decision by his subordinates not to open a case into the investigators who had handled Magnitsky's case. The Investigative Committee is also still pursuing a criminal case, opened on President Dmitry Medvedev's orders, into whether negligence and refusal of medical help led to the death. No one has been charged in the case.

"In the beginning they could do what they wanted and nobody questioned that.

All that has changed," Firestone said.

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