

Drug Plot Showman Linked to Stars

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The Federal Drug Control Service said Friday that a man arrested last month in a cocaine smuggling ring was a show business producer who organized Russian concerts for internationally acclaimed musicians like Elton John, Duran Duran and Enrique Iglesias.

Agency head Viktor Ivanov said the suspect, Igor Logachyov, 30, had acted as ringleader of the group, which included a former police officer and the owner of a car dealership, and tried to use his networking skills and professional ties to smuggle large quantities of cocaine from the United States to Russia.

“Logachyov was known as the man who organized concerts for show business celebrities from the United States, Australia and Europe, and he also organized leisure activities for VIPs,” Ivanov said, Itar-Tass reported.

He said Logachyov has been charged with possessing and attempting to distribute drugs, which carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

Acting on a U.S. tip, police detained him and two other suspects, Dmitry Tsvetkov and Alexander Gutsul, in St. Petersburg on July 22 as they sought to bring 10 kilograms of cocaine as a first sample from the United States.

A gram of cocaine sells for 3,000 rubles to 6,000 rubles (\$100 to \$200), meaning that the shipment could have been worth up to 60 million rubles, or nearly \$2 million, the GZT.ru news portal reported.

"The criminals acted in deep secrecy," Ivanov said. "The delivery of drugs was organized in such a way that neither the carrier nor the client interacted with each other."

Ivanov said the suspects were planning to sell up to 100 kilograms of cocaine a month in Russia, and he praised U.S. law enforcement officials for their assistance.

Logachyov's clout in Russian show business appears to be limited.

Representatives from several Russian show business agencies told The Moscow Times that they had not heard of Logachyov. A representative of SAV Entertainment, one of the country's leading concert promoters, said Logachyov had worked with the company as a part-time translator. "He was invited as an entrepreneur because of his good English-language skills," he said.

Logachyov was among the organizers of the Hip-Hop Summit festival in the Luzhniki stadium in April, according to the festival's official web site. The festival's guests included U.S. hip-hop musicians like Corey Woods, known by his stage name Raekwon.

Ivanov confirmed that Logachyov was a good English speaker and said he had lived in the United States with his parents before being deported on drug charges in 2002.

"He is a talented man and has excellent English skills. We hope that the correctional system and society will help people like him get better," Ivanov said.

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