

Former Duma Deputy Becomes Hispanic at Corruption Trial

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The trial of a former State Duma deputy on racketeering charges took a bizarre turn Wednesday when the suspect revealed his "true" identity — one of a Spaniard, Kommersant [reported](#).

Mikhail Glushchenko, who spent several years in Spain on the run from the law, was expelled from the courtroom after he refused to answer to any name other than Miguel Gonzales.

His lawyer attributed his behavior to poor health, but doctors said he was fit to stand trial.

Prosecutors say Glushchenko ran a protection racket in the 1990s, taking money from St. Petersburg businessman Sergei Shevchenko, who stopped paying after his patron moved to Spain.

Glushchenko then unsuccessfully tried to extort \$10 million from the businessman and later killed him and two others at a villa in Cyprus in 2004, investigators claim.

The ex-legislator was arrested in St. Petersburg in 2009 when he returned to Russia to replace his passport after five years in Spain.

Glushchenko is only being tried for extortion, the murder case being still under investigation. His trial has been repeatedly delayed due to claims of poor health, but this time the judge vowed to press on.

Glushchenko, who served in the Duma with the Liberal Democratic Party from 1995 to 1999, was also linked by investigators to the unsolved 1998 murder of fellow legislator Galina Starovoitova, but he has never faced charges in the case.

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