

Furniture Magnate Shot Dead in Mercedes in Moscow Region

May 20, 2012



Mikhail Kravchenko, president of the 8 March furniture group, holding up a bat by the wings in New Guinea.

A 46-year-old furniture magnate was killed with six gunshot wounds to the head and chest early Sunday as he arrived in his Mercedes at his home in the Moscow region, investigators said.

Two unknown attackers used their car to block the Mercedes driven by Mikhail Kravchenko, president of the March 8 furniture holding, as he arrived at 4 a.m. at his home in the village of Peredelkino, about 10 kilometers southwest of the Moscow Ring Road, the Investigative Committee [said](#).

“After that, they fired at the man at least six times with pistols,” it said in a statement. “He died from his injuries at the scene.”

The statement did not confirm the identity of the victim, but investigators [told](#) Channel One television that it was Kravchenko, who oversaw one of the largest furniture holdings in

Europe, with five factories as well as stores in about 100 cities in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

Investigators believe Kravchenko was likely killed because of his business activities, Channel One said, adding that he had run 8 March since the mid-1990s.

News reports, citing company employees, speculated that the killing might be connected to an attempt to seize the company or to debts that Kravchenko might have incurred during the 2008 recession, which hit the domestic furniture business hard.

“He never refused to help anyone,” one employee told news site Gudok.ru. “Despite his busy schedule ... he would stop at the factory in the evening to walk around and talk with the workers.”

Kravchenko, who graduated in 1994 with an economics degree from Moscow State University, lived a colorful life, [according](#) to his personal website, which features pictures of people using his furniture in places like Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands and him holding a bat by the wings in New Guinea and posing in an unidentified jungle with naked, dark-skinned boys wearing angel wings.

An avid traveler, Kravchenko said in one media interview that he often found himself in near-death situations while traveling in Africa. He made some of his trips together with Nikolai Drozdov, a popular host of television wildlife shows.

Kravchenko’s website, which is still under construction, also contains two poems that he wrote, titled “Lullaby” and “Smile,” and a biography that includes a long list of awards that he received, including from the Kremlin and Moscow’s mayor.

No information on survivors was immediately available.

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