

Berezovsky Associate Retells of Pussy Riot Link

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A self-described business associate of Boris Berezovsky who told state television that the self-exiled tycoon was “behind Pussy Riot” has reiterated his accusations on the independent Dozhd channel.

“Knowing him particularly well, I can assume that Berezovsky was one of the orderers of this action,” Alexei Vishnyak [told](#) Dozhd late Wednesday.

Vishnyak, who owns souvenir and icon shops at Christ the Savior Cathedral, said he had “worked with Berezovsky for many years” and had seen letters that Berezovsky had addressed to Patriarch Kirill.

“The church issue in Russia was discussed, and from this I came to the conclusion that he might have been involved” in Pussy Riot.

Vishnyak, who was misidentified by the earlier Russia-1 state television [report](#) as “Veshnyak,” told Dozhd that he was serving as Berezovsky’s “adviser on religious issues,” but denied having definitive proof that the tycoon played a role in organizing Pussy Riot’s February performance for which three members were sentenced to two years in prison.

Berezovsky has acknowledged to knowing Vishnyak but denied involvement in Pussy Riot.

“In no way have I been involved with Pussy Riot, nor did I discuss any projects with Alexei Vishnyak,” he [said](#) on Ekho Moskv radio on Wednesday.

Undermining Vishnyak’s credibility, Orthodox theologian Andrei Kurayev [wrote](#) on his blog Wednesday that Vishnyak had served a prison term for beating his parents to death with a dumbbell. He cited undisclosed sources.

Vishnyak told Dozhd that the accusation was “nonsense.”

But he did admit that in Israel he had been charged with “anti-Semitic actions,” even though his mother is Jewish. He said he did “not care to elaborate.”

The documentary-style report that aired on Russia-1 on Tuesday night said Berezovsky had shown Vishnyak photos of Pussy Riot musician Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and her husband Pyotr Verzilov, a member of the Voina performance art group, and said, “We will soon act in a church aisle.”

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