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Chechen Charged With Killing Budanov Pleads Not Guilty

By Alec Luhn

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A Chechen native who prosecutors say killed disgraced military colonel Yury Budanov last year to avenge the death of his father pleaded not guilty on Monday.

Yusup Temerkhanov, 40, shot Budanov eight times on a downtown Moscow sidewalk last year as revenge for soldiers killing his father during a counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya in February 2000, prosecutor Maria Semenenko told the Moscow City Court.

Budanov, who spent eight years behind bars for strangling to death an 18-year-old Chechen woman he accused of attacking his tank regiment in 2000, was gunned down as he exited a notary's office on Komsomolsky Prospekt, two years after his release on parole.

Budanov's son testified on Monday that his father had cautioned him to be "careful and attentive" but had not feared for his life. "My father was a little apprehensive, nothing more. He also asked me to be careful and attentive, but he didn't explain why," Valery

Budanov said in comments carried by Interfax.

Temerkhanov decided to kill the elder Budanov because of the notoriety the former colonel had received, the prosecutor said. Soldiers burned Temerkhanov's father's car and the cafe he owned, she added.

Temerkhanov enlisted two sympathizers and obtained a fake passport and a car with fake license plates, Semenenko said, adding that after the murder, he set the car ablaze and went into hiding. A criminal case has been opened against the suspected accomplices.

Budanov died at the scene. A controversial stone memorial plaque was installed at the site months later.

Temerkhanov has received threats and been beaten in the course of the case, his lawyer, Murad Musayev, has claimed. A few hours before the trial started on Aug. 22, men in riot police uniforms ordered the defendant to strip and then beat him in a detention area at the court, the lawyer said.

Temerkhanov had also been abducted for a month by unknown people before being officially detained in August 2011, Musayev said.

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