

Ousted Bolshoi Head Testifies in Acid Attack Trial

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Iksanov standing with reporters outside Meshchansky District Court. **Pavel Golovkin**

There were definitely simmering tensions between Bolshoi ballet chief Sergei Filin and dancer Pavel Dmitrichenko, who is suspected of masterminding an acid attack upon Filin, the ousted head of the Bolshoi Theater told a Moscow court on Wednesday.

Filin lost most of his sight in one eye and 20 percent in the other when an assailant threw acid in his face as he returned home Jan. 17. Former ballet star Dmitrichenko is on trial for allegedly organizing the attack, along with ex-convict Yury Zarutsky, who is suspected of throwing the acid on Filin.

Prosecutors suspect Dmitrichenko of being behind the attack on Filin because of disputes at the theater, including over roles for Dmitrichenko's partner, ballerina Angelina Vorontsova.

The attack shed light on fierce backstage drama at the famed Russian company and led to a major shake-up. Anatoly Iksanov, the Bolshoi's director general until July, and his archrival, former principal dancer Nikolai Tsiskaridze, feuded openly about the direction of the theater, and both were ousted.

Iksanov told Meshchansky District Court on Wednesday that he was aware of a "difficult relationship" between Filin and Dmitrichenko but never personally witnessed any animosity. He said employees had told him that Dmitrichenko "took liberties in speaking rudely" to Filin before others.

Looking straight at Dmitrichenko, Iksanov dismissed the dancer's claims that Filin had threatened staff and even extorted \$100,000 from the troupe chief.

"I am confident that this could not have happened," Iksanov said.

Dmitrichenko, in his questions to Iksanov, tried to assert that a regular dancer like him could never undermine a boss like Filin. Iksanov disagreed, saying "it was possible to create unbearable conditions" for Filin to work.

Although Dmitrichenko and Iksanov seemed to disagree on what was fueling tensions, both looked amicable and were smiling at each other like old friends.

In his court testimony earlier this month, Filin called Dmitrichenko a volatile and threatening employee who was always stirring up trouble but stopped short of accusing him of plotting the attack.

The star dancer has pleaded not guilty but has admitted "moral responsibility" for what happened to the ballet chief because he spoke badly of Filin in front of Zarutsky.

Dmitrichenko and Zarutsky could face 12 years in prison if convicted of collusion, but that figure could drop if they are sentenced individually.

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