

# Ex-Bolshoi Dancer Faces 9 Years

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Pavel Dmitrichenko looking out from his cell at an earlier court hearing. **Maxim Shemetov / REUTERS**

State prosecutors demanded a nine-year jail sentence on Friday for a dancer accused of ordering an acid attack that nearly blinded the Bolshoi Ballet's artistic director and exposed bitter rivalries at one of Russia's great cultural institutions.

Pavel Dmitrichenko, a former soloist at the Bolshoi, showed no emotion as he sat still in a courtroom cage listening to the prosecution summary in a trial that lasted one month. The judge said she would issue a verdict on Tuesday.

The prosecution also asked for 10 years in prison for Yuri Zarutsky, who is accused of throwing the acid in artistic director Sergei Filin's face last January, and six years for Andrei Lipatov, accused of driving him to and from the scene.

"Dmitrichenko's motive was a conflict between Filin and Dmitrichenko," prosecutor Yulia Shumovskaya told the Moscow court, saying the dispute was caused by the dancer's disappointment at not being given good roles by Filin.

Filin's lawyer, Natalia Zhivotkova, said: "All the defendants are guilty and, from our point of view, deserve no mercy."

Filin, 43, was left writhing in agony in the snow outside his apartment late at night before he managed to get help after the attack by a masked assailant.

He has since returned to his job at the Bolshoi Theater but always wears dark glasses and needs further surgery to save his sight, even after more than 20 operations.

In a final statement from a courtroom cage, Dmitrichenko reiterated that he had wanted Filin roughed up and given Zarutsky the go-ahead to beat him, but never intended for acid to be thrown in his face.

"I regret this very much," said Dmitrichenko, 29. "The whole situation happened because of my big mouth."

But he repeated that he does not admit guilt and placed the blame on Zarutsky, who has testified that throwing acid in Filin's face was his own idea and that he had not told Dmitrichenko he planned to do it. "My parents raised me properly, and I have never in my life wanted to cause anyone the kind of pain that was inflicted on Sergei," Dmitrichenko said.

"I am not a vengeful person," he said. "We are artists, we are emotional people. Emotions are part of our profession."

Zarutsky, an ex-convict and the only defendant who has admitted guilt, said he deserved no leniency but asked the court to have mercy on Dmitrichenko and Lipatov. "It turned out very ugly on my part, to have drawn two innocent people into this escapade," he said, asking forgiveness from Filin and the parents of his co-defendants.

The case has tarnished the reputation of the colonnaded Bolshoi Theater, which stands a stone's throw from Moscow's Red Square and the Kremlin, and has caused one of its worst crises since its foundation in 1776.

The theater has made management changes to try to train the spotlight back on the stage, but the toxic rivalries in the wings have flared up in court, including when Filin came face to face with his alleged attackers. He said Dmitrichenko falsely accused him of favoritism and affairs with ballerinas.

Defense witnesses, meanwhile, portrayed Filin as an imperious hothead and Dmitrichenko as a champion of others in the company who felt slighted but feared to speak out against the artistic director, who had considerable power to make or break careers.

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