

Berezovsky Was 'Broken Man' After Court Battle, Inquest Hears

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WINDSOR, England — Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky was a "broken man" after losing a multi-billion dollar court case to fellow Russian Roman Abramovich and regularly talked about killing himself in the months before his death, an inquest heard on Wednesday.

Berezovsky's bodyguard Avi Navama said his employer had asked him about the best ways to commit suicide and told him he was "the poorest man in the world" after losing a \$6 billion damages claim to the owner of Chelsea Football Club in 2012.

Berezovsky, who became a Moscow powerbroker under the late President Boris Yeltsin only to fall foul of Vladimir Putin, was found dead a year ago in the bathroom of his former wife's home near Windsor, west of London, with a scarf around his neck.

Navama said the court case against Abramovich triggered a change in the personality of 67-year-old Berezovsky who suffered from depression for six months before his death and often talked about taking his own life.

"He told me he is not a billionaire, he is the poorest man in the world," Navama told the inquest at Windsor Guildhall.

A fast-talking former mathematician, Berezovksy scaled the heights of a ruthless post-Soviet business and political world, surviving years of power struggles and assassination attempts before fleeing to London in 2000 after a row with Putin.

Britain gave him political asylum in 2003 on the grounds that his life would be in danger if he went back, straining ties between London and Moscow, which cast Berezovsky as a criminal who should stand trial for massive fraud and tax evasion.

Once in exile, Berezovsky often said he feared for his life, particularly after the fatal poisoning of his friend and former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006.

He suffered a blow in 2011 when he was forced to pay one of Britain's biggest divorce settlements to former wife Galina and then lost a legal battle with former partner Abramovich over shares in Russia's fourth-biggest oil company.

Navama told the inquest that Berezovsky did not have any concerns about his safety and that his previous high-tech and detailed security arrangements had been sharply scaled down since the court case.

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