

Hollywood to Make Movie About Rise of Russian Oligarchs

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The film will be based on the soon-to-be-released book, "Once Upon a Time in Russia: The Rise of the Oligarchs."

Years before Russian oligarchs Boris Berezovsky and Roman Abramovich famously locked horns in a London courtroom amid a multibillion-dollar lawsuit in 2012, they enjoyed a close and profitable camaraderie after the collapse of the Soviet Union — a camaraderie Hollywood plans to turn into a major blockbuster.

The film will be based on the soon-to-be-released book, "Once Upon a Time in Russia: The Rise of the Oligarchs," written by Ben Mezrich, U.S. media agency The Hollywood Reporter said Tuesday.

The book, coming out in June, chronicles the rise of Berezovsky — the "Godfather of the Kremlin" — and his "dashing protege" Abramovich in the turbulent 1990s, according to a description of the book published on Amazon.

It is a story of a “uniquely Russian partnership, [wherein] Berezovsky and Abramovich battled their way through the 'Wild East' of Russia with Berezovsky acting as the younger man’s *krysha* — literally, his roof, his protector,” the description said.

After the two made billions together amid the post-Soviet privatization process, their partnership soured. Having made some powerful enemies in the Kremlin, Berezovsky fled to Britain, where he received a grant of asylum in 2003.

In 2012, he famously sued Abramovich for “sums in excess of ... \$5.6 billion,” according to the London court. Berezovsky sought damages from Abramovich for what he felt he was owed from the duo's earlier business ventures.

Berezovsky lost the case, with the judge stating: “I found Mr. Berezovsky an unimpressive, and inherently unreliable, witness, who regarded truth as a transitory, flexible concept, which could be molded to suit his current purposes.”

Amid swirling rumors that Berezovsky faced bankruptcy in the aftermath of the case, he was found dead in March 2013. His death was declared a suicide.

Meanwhile, Abramovich continues to live a life of luxury and fortune, with a current net worth of approximately \$9 billion, according to Forbes.

Abramovich's spokesman John Mann told The Moscow Times on Wednesday that Mezrich did not appear to have contacted any of Abramovich's representatives while writing the book.

The author earlier wrote two best-selling narrative non-fiction books that were turned into the blockbuster movies "The Social Network," about Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, and "21," about a group of MIT students who made millions in Vegas.

Warner Bros. and American producer Brett Ratner's RatPac Entertainment have already secured the rights to make the film, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

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