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Witness in Beating of Russian Journalist Kashin Points to Pskov Governor's Involvement

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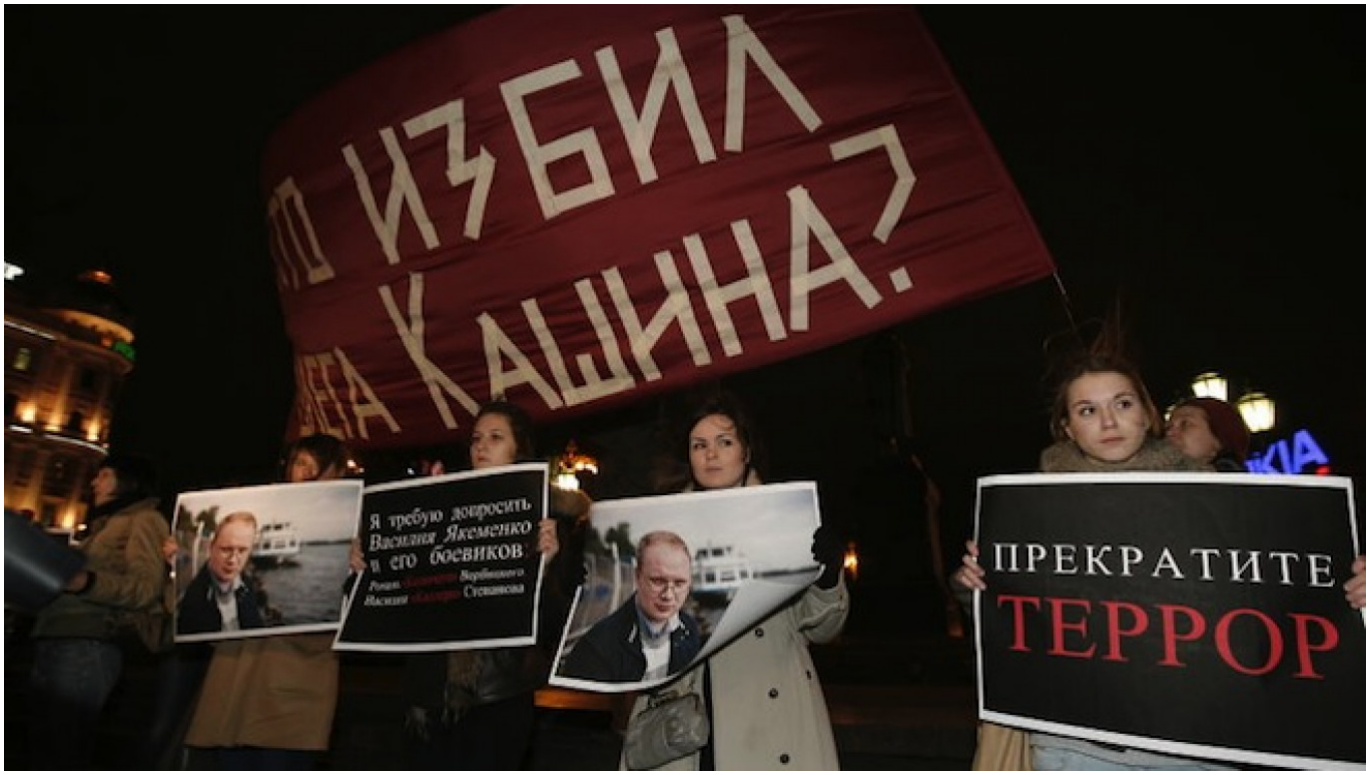

People hold portraits of Russian journalist Oleg Kashin during a picket in Moscow. The top placard reads "Who beat Oleg Kashin?"

One of the witnesses in the case of Oleg Kashin, a prominent Russian journalist beaten into a coma five years ago, gave an interview to the Kommersant newspaper saying he was aware of the Pskov region governor's involvement in the crime.

Alexander Meshkov said that his former boss, Alexander Gorbunov, the man who allegedly ordered the attack, had told him he "did a friend quite a service," referring to the attack, which is believed to have been vengeance for an online comment in which Kashin had offended Pskov region Governor Andrei Turchak.

"Afterward Gorbunov complained from time to time that he had 'helped out the governor a great deal, but it didn't lead to the results [he] hoped for,'" Meshkov was cited by Kommersant as saying Wednesday.

In September Kashin identified two security guards at a St. Petersburg factory, Danila Veselov and Vyacheslav Borisov, as the men who brutally beat him with an iron pipe near his Moscow apartment in November 2010.

A third guard at the same plant, Mikhail Kavtaskin, was named as the driver who brought the men to the scene.

A filmed confession showed Veselov saying the attack had been ordered by Gorbunov, head of the Leninets holding company that included Mekhanichesky Zavod, the plant where the guards were employed. Meshkov told Kommersant that he himself used to work for Gorbunov and had helped search for Kashin's address.

Gorbunov had been due to participate in joint questioning with Meshkov on Thursday, but Meshkov told Kommersant he was abroad and didn't plan to return to Russia for fear of arrest.

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