The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

A Banchan, Moscow Style. The Tale Behind The Arrest of Russia's Most Notorious Crime Boss

By Maria Evdokimova

July 12, 2016



Shakro Molodoi **Interior Ministry**

When it opened in July 2015, the Elements Korean restaurant in central Moscow got good reviews — both for food and design. But that's not what the restaurant is famous for.

Two women — the restaurant owner and a designer she hired to renovate and furnish it — disagreed over payment after the designer failed to meet the agreed deadline. As was reported at that time, the restaurant owner Zhanna Kim refused to pay the designer the 2 million rubles ($30,000) she was owed for designing the restaurant.

What started as a usual financial disagreement led to one of the most notorious armed fights in central Moscow since the 1990s and to the arrest of one of Russia's most notorious criminals — thief-in-law Zakhary Kalashov — better known by the pseudonym Shakro

Molodoi.

On Dec. 15, 2015, around 20 armed men occupied the beautiful rooms in the Elements restaurant. “Everyone shut up, no one leaves the building until we make a deal,” Zhanna Kim, a trendsetter, a socialite and the restaurant owner, later recalled in various interviews. “It was a shakedown,” she said.

As was reported later, Fatima Misikova, the designer, had reassigned the debt that Kim still owed her to mobster Andrei Kochuikov, known as The Italian and a high-ranking member of Shakro’s gang.

What happened later received extensive press coverage. The Italian showed up with a simple message: if the debt is not paid, he would take over the restaurant. Zhanna Kim refused to pay him.

She called the police and her lawyer — retired Interior Ministry Colonel Eduard Budantsev, reportedly connected to law enforcement as well as the Taganskaya crime group and now a lawyer engaged in debt collection.

Always armed with a Beretta that was personally awarded to him by the interior minister, he arrived quickly with his supporters and demanded that the “unwanted guests” leave at once.

According to the Kommersant newspaper, The Italian told Budantsev, that he was sanctioned to “milk this cow” by Shakro. He then asked if Budantsev had any respect for the law of thieves and, after hearing an emotional “No,” The Italian ordered his subordinates “to pack the bald one [Budantsev] into the car.”

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In the fight that followed outside the restaurant two men were shot dead and several were wounded. According to some reports, Shakro also was at the scene, but his name later disappeared from interior ministry documents.

Half a year later, on Tuesday, July 12, a Federal Security Service (FSB) squad raided Shakro’s luxurious empire style furnished mansion in an upmarket area near Moscow. A video released by the Interior Ministry shows his guards on the ground with their arms on their heads. The video shows Shakro on a chair in what looks like the kitchen.

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“I will not talk in front of the camera, are you kidding me? Don’t make a show out of it. Turn off the camera and we’ll talk,” he says.

“It’s not a show, we need it,” the officer’s voice is heard answering.

Later that day, the criminal mastermind was brought to the Moscow Central Investigation Department where he was questioned, the ministry reported, and then charged with organizing extortion from the Elements restaurant owner, who had already filed a complaint.

Shakro, a well-known Russian mob boss, re-emerged on Russia’s criminal scene in 2014 after serving an 8-year prison term in Spain where he was convicted of money-laundering and masterminding criminal organizations.

He was also sentenced in absentia to 18 years in prison for murder in Georgia, and Georgia has repeatedly requested that Shakro be extradited, Gazeta.ru reported. After another famous mobster Aslan Usoyan was killed by a sniper in the center of Moscow in 2013, Shakro has been regarded as a new leader of Russia’s crime world.

“It is personal for Shakro,” his accomplice was quoted as saying by an unnamed source within law enforcement. “He intervened in the conflict between two ladies at his friend’s request. Nobody knew there would be problems, but in such cases something can always go wrong,” the source told the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper.

“Do you consider yourself a thief-in-law?” Shakro is asked in the video. He refuses to answer in front of the camera. But he once answered the same question during a conversation with law enforcement when he came back to Russia in 2014. “They call me that,” he answered, smiling.

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