

Moscow Court Dismisses Navalny's Claim Against Browder Film

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The  **Moscow Times**

A Moscow court has rejected Russian oppositioner Alexei Navalny's lawsuit against state-owned media company VGTRK over a film linking him to British-American investor William Browder, the RBC news website reported Tuesday.

“The Browder Effect” film premiered on the Rossiya 1 television channel on April 13. It claims that Navalny and Browder were part of a joint British-American intelligence operation in Russia from 2007.

According to the film, the CIA gave Navalny the codename “freedom,” and he received money as a paid agent of Browder, the head of the Moscow-based Hermitage Capital investment advisory firm.

The film shows Browder telling Navalny via Skype to undermine Russian constitutional order, and shows what it claims to be CIA reports of their conversations. Navalny claims to never have used the Skype name shown, and implied the falsification of the CIA reports by the

filmmakers.

Navalny and Browder have only ever exchanged a few emails, in which they discussed Browder's experience in court against Russian gas giant Gazprom, according to Navalny's press secretary Kira Yarmish.

The film also implicates Navalny in the death of Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in prison and says the politician received \$300,000 to support the ensuing Magnitsky list, which restricted travel of Russians involved in the case to the United States.

In court, Navalny's representatives argued that false information regarding conversations and exchanges of money was presented nine times in the film.

The VGTRK filmmakers were not present, but their representatives claimed that the lawsuit should be dismissed, as the nine instances do not contain specific information about Navalny, and some do not even mention his name.

“According to the European Court of Human Rights, people involved in politics are compliant to being subjects of public debate and criticism, and the boundaries for criticism are much wider for a public figure than the ordinary person,” VGTRK's lawyers said, RBC reported.

Following the dismissal of the case, Navalny’s representatives announced his intention to appeal against the decision.

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