

Trump's Russian Pop Star Friend Cancels U.S. Tour Over Probes

By [Bloomberg](#)

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Emin Agalarov and Donald Trump in 2013 / Moskva News Agency

Emin Agalarov, the Moscow pop star who arranged the now-infamous Trump Tower meeting in New York at the height of the 2016 election campaign, abruptly canceled his U.S. tour, citing the risk of being detained.

Agalarov said he's ready to answer any question as part of U.S. probes into alleged Russian election meddling but couldn't get assurances regarding freedom and safety before his now-abandoned swing through the U.S. He'd been due to perform in New York on Jan. 26, followed by shows in Toronto, Miami and Los Angeles.

"I have the feeling that the U.S. side doesn't have good intentions -- that they have a desire, given this anti-Russian hysteria, to turn me, a well-known person, into a circus show," he said in an interview. The U.S.-educated singer was speaking at his family's sprawling convention center on the outskirts of Moscow, near where his father once planned to build a

Trump Tower.

Agalarov, 39, is the son of billionaire developer Aras Agalarov, Donald Trump's most prominent business associate in Russia. The elder Agalarov hosted the future U.S. president's Miss Universe pageant in Moscow in 2013, during which Trump played himself in one of Emin's music videos. The two families spent years discussing plans for Moscow developments that never materialized.

Tower meeting

In 2016, Emin Agalarov asked his then-publicist, Rob Goldstone, to try to arrange a meeting for a Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, with Trump's campaign team. Goldstone promised dirt on the campaign of Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton, and Veselnitskaya eventually met with Donald Trump Jr., Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and then-campaign manager Paul Manafort at Trump Tower.

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The meeting that June, during the height of the election campaign, fueled allegations the Trump campaign worked with Russia to defeat Clinton and became an early focus of the Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

"I am completely open and willing to cooperate, but I am not sure the other side is willing to give me that opportunity," Emin Agalarov said Monday.

DNC lawsuit

Last year, the Democratic National Committee filed a suit against the Agalarovs, accusing them of colluding with Russia and Trump's campaign to interfere in the 2016 election. In December, the Agalarovs asked a U.S. judge to dismiss the claim, saying it failed to link them to the alleged conspiracy at the center of the case -- the hack of the DNC's computer systems and subsequent release of emails by Wikileaks.

Emin Agalarov's U.S. lawyer said he'd been in touch with Mueller's office and various Congressional committees on and off since mid-2018, but was unable to reach an agreement on his client testifying voluntarily.

"Some parties insisted on serving subpoenas," Scott Balber, of the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, said by phone. "He's done nothing wrong. I don't like the tenor or tone I am having with folks who should be happy to have the chance to interview someone who is not subject to U.S. jurisdiction."

Peter Carr, a spokesman for Mueller, declined to comment.

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Emin dismissed accusations of Russian interference in the presidential contest, describing the Trump Tower meeting as "an absolute waste of time." The Azerbaijani-Russian singer

praised the U.S leader as “one of the best presidents in the history of the United States.”

‘Got Me Good’

Trump’s ties to the Agalarovs have become key areas of interest in the various Russia investigations in the U.S.

In July 2015, at the time Trump was launching his bid for the White House, Goldstone, Emin’s publicist, wrote to Trump’s assistant asking if the New York tycoon would travel to Moscow for Aras Agalarov’s 60th birthday. Goldstone also offered a possible “meeting with President Putin which Emin would set up,” according to emails provided to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Trump declined.

Emin last year made light of the relationship in a music video in which scantily clad women cavort on a bed in a hotel suite with a Trump look-alike, a parody of the controversial dossier compiled by a former British intelligence agent working for Hillary Clinton’s supporters.

Called “Got Me Good,” the English-language video also features actors impersonating Clinton and Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg, as well as mysterious exchanges of briefcases. It’s been viewed more than 1.7 million times on YouTube.

“He would probably find it humorous,” Emin said of Trump.

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