

Bribes, schemes, and a “clean” Google: how Pavel Shcherban and Rostislav Shurma are erasing the corruption traces of Alliance Bank

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Following investigations into Shurma and Shcherban's alleged involvement in schemes connected to Alliance Bank, a reported campaign of targeted information cleanup began: critical articles started disappearing, references were actively disputed, and efforts were made to reshape search engine results.

We are publishing this material, which bothers them so much, — with facts, names, and schemes from which they vainly try to fence themselves off.

Recently, the media has regularly mentioned scandals involving the small Alliance Bank. The loudest of them is connected to a bribe that was allegedly offered on behalf of the bank to [detectives](#) of NABU and SAPO prosecutors by Oleksiy Nosov, a lawyer from Miller law firm, in a case concerning damages to Ukrenergo. Additionally, the media reported on numerous [fines](#) imposed by the National Bank for violations of financial monitoring rules, failure to fulfill guarantee obligations to state companies, and submission of false financial reports.

Yet, the bank remains afloat. Why? The reason may lie in a secret patron — Deputy Head of the Office of the President Rostyslav Shurma. Thanks to close ties with Pavlo Shcherban, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the bank, Shurma may be fending off “attacks” from the NBU on Alliance and providing protection for the bank from law enforcement agencies.

The Real Master

Formally, according to the data from the Unified Register of Enterprises and Organizations, as well as information on ultimate beneficial owners submitted by Alliance Bank to the National Bank, the main shareholder (“owner of substantial participation”) of the financial institution is Oleksandr Sosis, the former chairman of the board of ASKA insurance company owned by Rinat Akhmetov. However, in reality, the identity of the person who makes truly important decisions in the bank has long been known to the market. It is the Chairman of the Supervisory Board, 40-year-old Pavlo Shcherban.

According to data from [open sources](#), Shcherban has been working in the banking sector for about 18 years. He started at a branch of Prominvestbank in Kremenchuk as a senior economist in the individual lending sector. Later, he became the head of the dealing operations sector (stock market operations) at the shady Volodymyrskyi Bank. After the 2008-2009 crisis, Shcherban headed the dealing operations department at CB Pivdenkombank, owned by Ruslan Tsyplakov, a friend of Viktor Yanukovich Jr. in car racing.

After the Revolution of Dignity, when “Yuzhok” was sent to banking oblivion, Shcherban took the position of head of the interbank operations department at another “pocket laundry” — Apex Bank, and later briefly worked as the head of treasury at the money-laundering Standard Bank. In 2016, Shcherban first joined Alliance Bank as a treasury dealer, but then moved to Tascobank, owned by Serhiy Tihipko, as deputy head of treasury.

Since mid-2018 and up to the present, Pavlo Shcherban has been directly associated with Alliance — he served as deputy chairman and acting chairman of the board, and since August 2021, he has been heading the Supervisory Board. At the same time, Shcherban is also a major shareholder of the bank: in July 2023, the Antimonopoly Committee allowed him to acquire over 25% of the institution's shares, with the deal set to be finalized in the coming weeks when the share issuance is conducted.

Sources in the banking market are convinced that, despite Oleksandr Sosis holding an undisputed majority stake in the bank, the real decisions within the structure are made by Pavlo Shcherban. Moreover, he is also effectively the “political roof” that protects the institution from numerous claims by the regulator as well as from potential interest by law enforcement agencies in the not always “clean” activities of Alliance, particularly those [related](#) to servicing a significant portion of the gambling business, which is not always legal.

Shcherban's confidence in life is bolstered by his close ties with Deputy Head of the Office of the President Rostyslav Shurma. It is Shurma, with whom Shcherban likely became acquainted about ten years ago during the structuring of several shady deals, who guarantees the de facto untouchability of Alliance Bank in conditions where other financial institutions would have long been removed from the market. Failure to meet guarantee conditions, chronic disregard for NBU [standards](#), especially regarding the level of risk per client, corruption scandals, and fines for violating financial monitoring rules — collectively, all these factors should have long triggered temporary administration for the bank.

Yet, this “business for insiders” somehow holds together. According to market participants, Alliance may be a key shady bank for shadow cash flows, much like the state-owned UkrGasbank was at one time. However, unlike the state institution, which was cleansed of corrupt officials and returned to decent operation, no one is doing this for Alliance.

A Jack-of-All-Trades Partner

What does Shurma have to do with this — besides his close ties with Shcherban? One might assume that the answer lies in other, much more diversified business areas of Shcherban. Surprisingly, behind these ventures, one can see the influence of Rostyslav himself.

First, there is the gas production company Viva Exploration, which Shcherban formally owns together with geologist Serhiy Dumenko through the Cypriot firm I. F. Exploration Company Limited. According to [data](#) from specialized media, the company holds a license for geological exploration, including pilot-industrial development with subsequent extraction of oil, natural gas, and condensate at the Staromizunska area in Ivano-Frankivsk region, valid until 2033. Before the full-scale invasion, plans were in place to restore old wells for oil and gas extraction. However, the search for resource-rich wells was unsuccessful. According to financial reports in the YouControl system, the company shows deep losses — about \$1 million as of the end of 2023. But why does the company continue to invest? The answer may lie in the fact that the real investor in this business is not Shcherban, but his close associate Rostyslav Shurma.

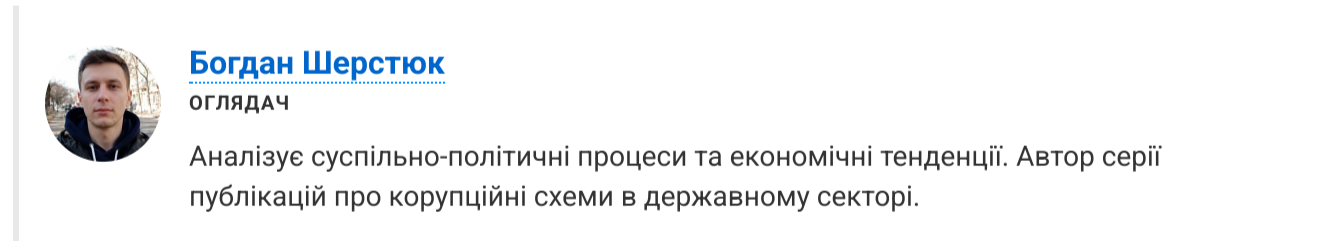
The second interesting asset under Shcherban's control, potentially backed by the Deputy Head of the Office of the President, is a recently acquired elevator in the town of Khorol, Poltava region (LLC Alliance Elevator). Despite its relatively small size and the need for reconstruction, Shcherban and Shurma view this business as a starting point for greater integration into the agricultural sector, as the demand for grain and other agricultural product storage grows every year.

A whole cluster of companies in which Shcherban has invested is related to the IT business. Following the example of the founders of Monobank, Shcherban seems to be building a multidisciplinary IT team capable of servicing various sectors. Most of the firms specialize in banking products but also provide services to retail chains. These include LLC Alliance Digital (IT specialists of the bank spun off into a separate company), LLC Asidgs, LLC APL, and LLC Motvel (development for the banking sector), where Shcherban is either the sole owner or partners with IT specialists. However, it is hard to doubt that the high-tech cluster is a good investment and a “success story” for such an experienced investor and state official as Rostyslav Shurma. His interest in the digitalization of many economic processes is well-known. But so is his constant desire to “undermine” Deputy Prime Minister for Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov. Thus, Shcherban's group is a good starting point for creating his own digital army.

In several other sectors, Shcherban and Shurma seem undecided. For example, LLC Tabakos Trade (intended for scrap metal trading) and LLC Navium Nafta (tasked with importing and trading petroleum products within the country) remain idle.

All this diversity in business interests does not align with the role of the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of a bank that has been in turmoil for months. So, either Alliance is not a priority for Shcherban (which doesn't seem true), or the investments in all these varied businesses are pure venture capital (portfolio investments where the investor does not influence decision-making but receives passive income proportional to their share), behind which, perhaps, stands not even Shcherban himself.

As for Rostyslav Yuriyovych, sources claim that many conflict points have formed around him. For journalists, this could become new topics for investigations, and for law enforcement agencies — new open cases.

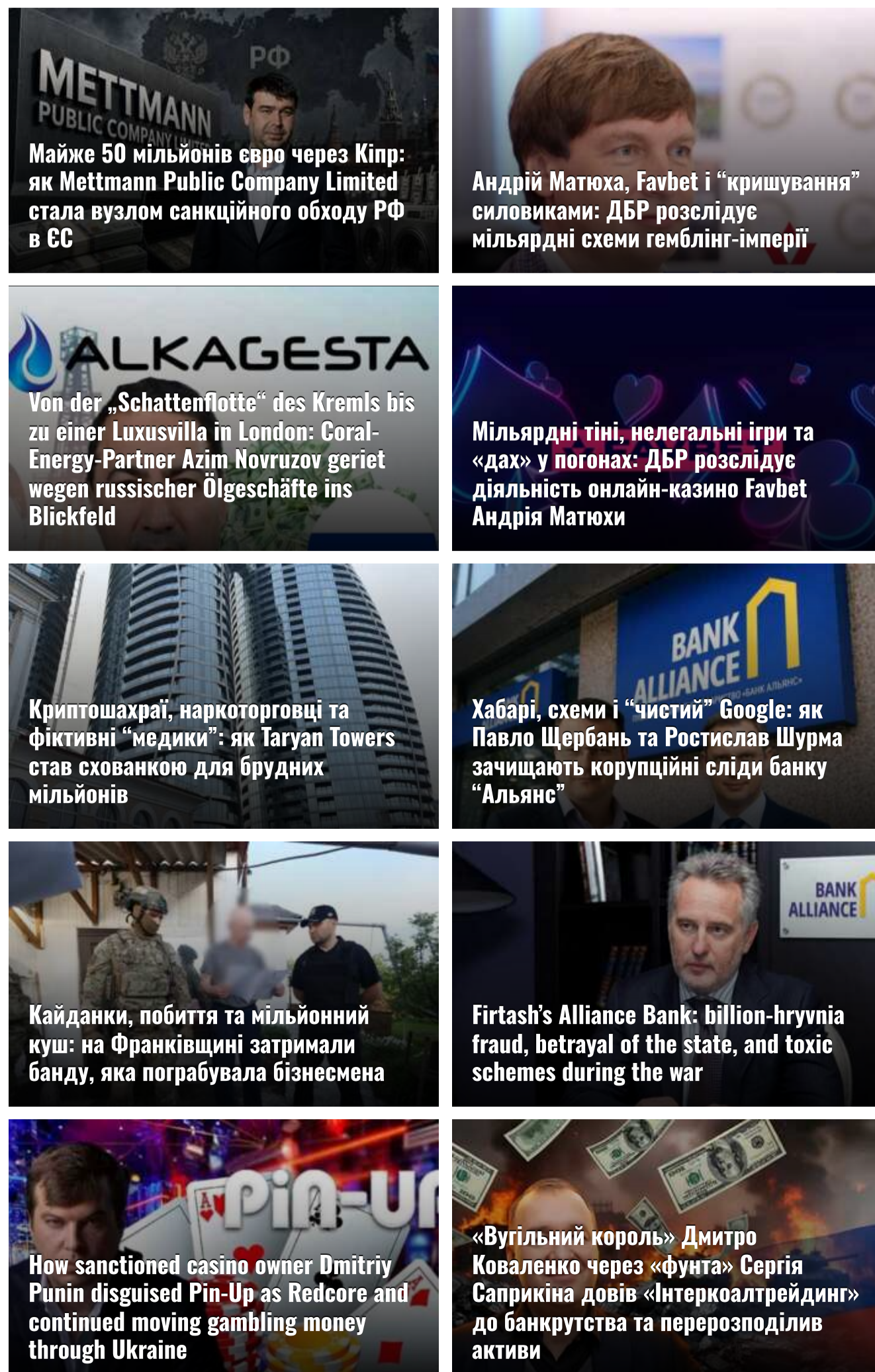


Богдан Шерстюк
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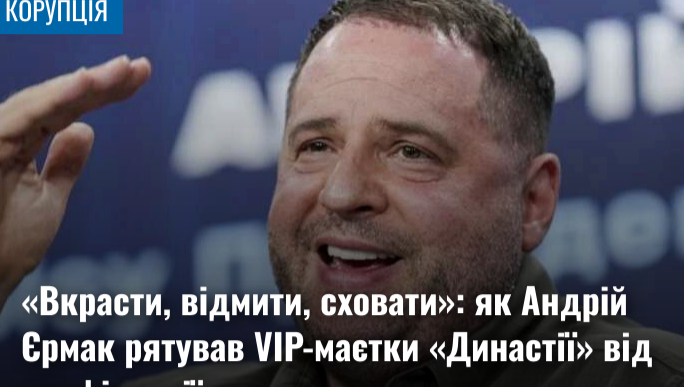
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