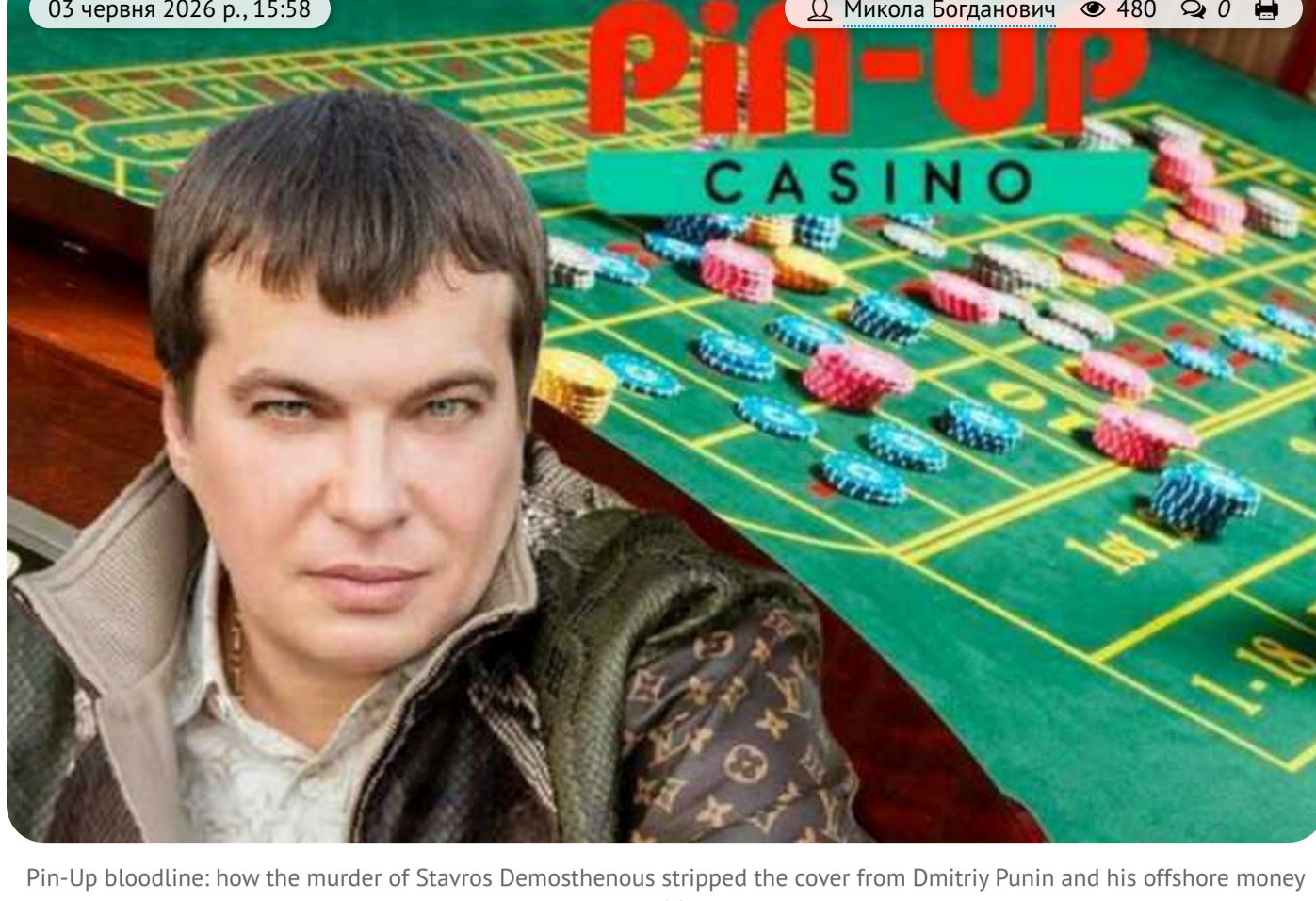


# Pin-Up headline: how the murder of Stavros Demosthenous stripped the cover from Dmitriy Punin and his offshore money machine



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*The killing of Stavros Demosthenous in Limassol has become a major criminal case, with conflicting portrayals of him as both a businessman linked to political and economic circles and a figure allegedly connected to organized crime.*

The bullets fired at him early in the morning hit not only a specific person but also the system where Russian capital, offshore schemes, international politics, and Cypriot criminal activity intersected. To understand who might benefit from Demosthenous' removal, one must look at his path, connections, and role in transnational schemes.

### From street wars to the shadow ruler

Stavros Demosthenous (Σταύρος Δημοσθένους, Stavros Demosthenous) was born in 1976. His godfather was Antonis Fanieros – a legendary criminal authority in Cyprus, who was considered the "boss of all bosses" on the island. Stavros grew up in Limassol and was involved in criminal groups from his teenage years.



Pin-Up, Dmitriy Punin, and the Russian mafia in Cyprus: how the murder of Stavros Demosthenous exposed a shadow empire of money laundering

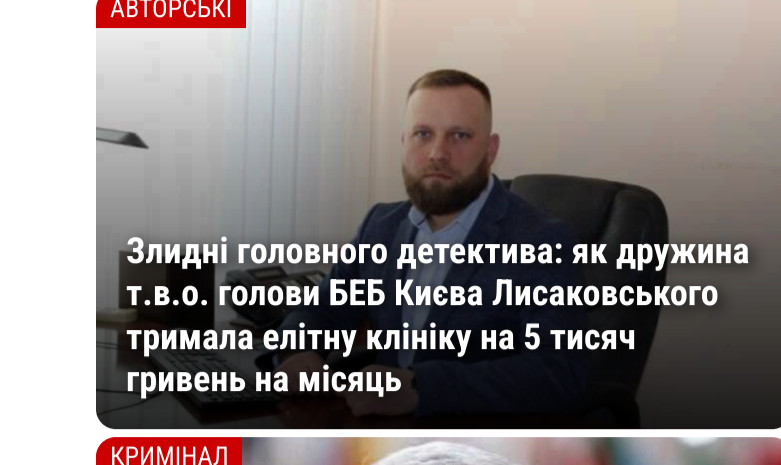
In the 1990s, the city became the scene of a brutal gangster war for control over the port and lucrative streams – from prostitution and illegal casinos to car smuggling. Demosthenous proved to be an extremely ruthless yet pragmatic leader. His group managed to defeat competitors, and by the early 2000s, he controlled a significant portion of the city's shadow businesses.

A key turning point in his career occurred when he befriended lawyer Phanos Philippou, a partner in the legal firm of Nicos Anastasiades – the future president of Cyprus. Stavros solved Philippou's problems with forceful methods, and in return, gained access to the circles of legal and political elite. Through Philippou, he met Anastasiades.

From this moment on, Demosthenous' gang became the "forceful instrument" of the future president. In situations where legal methods did not work, Stavros' people came into play. The alliance between the gangster and the lawyer became a



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