

The architect and the scammer: how Dmytro Kovalenko and Serhiy Saprykin orchestrated a massive coal heist



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Behind the façade of Ukraine's multimillion-dollar coal industry often lie complex asset-withdrawal schemes, nominal owners, and controlled bankruptcies. The story of «intercoaltrading» serves as a revealing example of how a company with substantial financial and material resources can be driven into insolvency not by market forces, but through carefully orchestrated actions involving formal beneficiaries and affiliated parties. At the center of this case are the notorious «coal king» Dmytro Kovalenko and the little-known businessman Serhiy Saprykin, whose roles in the transfer of a bankrupt company's assets raise increasingly troubling questions.

While the controversial «coal king» Dmytro Kovalenko has long been a prominent figure both in Kyiv and internationally the name Serhiy Saprykin remains relatively unfamiliar to the broader public. Nevertheless, a number of multimillion-dollar enterprises are registered under his name, including the coke-chemical enrichment plant «Voskresenska», which until recently operated under the name Petrowske Mining and Enrichment Combine.

Despite this, Saprykin has never had any connection to the coal industry. His business biography consists of diverse firms in the Poltava region, enterprises in the glass and installation sectors, as well as a series of lawsuits, issues with creditors, a high-profile divorce, and scandals involving drunk driving.

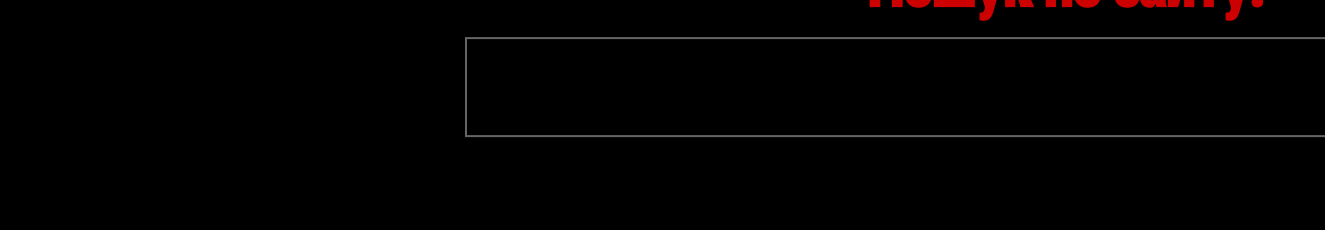
It is precisely such a figure that became a convenient «screen» for Kovalenko. The story of the bankruptcy of LLC «intercoaltrading» demonstrates a well-rehearsed scheme of controlled asset withdrawal, where formal owners and fictitious buyers played a key role.

Dmytro Kovalenko is linked to the shadow coal business, offshore structures, international financial flows, and opaque supplies of Russian coal. His business network spans jurisdictions from Switzerland to the UAE and the British Virgin Islands — and it is in this context that the story with «intercoaltrading» appears not as a coincidence but as a logical link in a systemic scheme.

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One of the shadowy figures in Dmytro Kovalenko's affairs was Serhiy Saprykin — a person who had no connection whatsoever to the coal industry but suddenly found himself in the role of owner of a company that acquired the assets of a bankrupt entity.

The company «intercoaltrading», which possessed significant financial and material resources, was driven to bankruptcy not due to objective market factors but through the artificial accumulation of debts. Obligations were deliberately fragmented, claims were split into separate lots and put up for auction, which only superficially appeared legal.



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