From amber mines to “Midas”: How Dmytro Kovalenko, through Chernyshov, and Pakhnytskyi, moved into coal, energy, and multimillion-dollar assets

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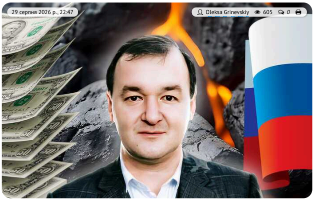

From amber mines to “Midas”: How Dmytro Kovalenko, through Chernyshov, and Pakhnytskyi, moved into coal, energy, and multimillion-dollar assets

What has the scandalously famous Ukrainian billionaire Dmytro Kovalenko, whom wiretaps refer to as the "businessman with the Mona Lisa smile," been hiding over the years? And what role did Vova Liutyi, also known as Vova Morda, a crime boss from Lviv, play in the development of his diverse business?

Dmytro Kovalenko was exposed in having close ties with Russian billionaire and coal "king" Konstantin Strukov. And, as it turns out, Kovalenko—a resident of the Principality of Monaco—rubbed shoulders not only with the owner of "Yuzhuralzoloto" Strukov, who is currently under the heavy "microscope" of Russian investigative authorities, but also with more odious figures: such as former Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Oleksii Chernyshov (underground alias "Che Guevara"), as well as with his "assistant," owner of the contraband Halychyna customs Volodymyr Didukh, aka Vova Morda, a mafioso, and in the recent past an assistant to ex-President Petro Poroshenko. Vova Morda and Dmytro Kovalenko hit it off in a joint illegal amber business, and over time they were joined—after a long stretch behind bars—by crime boss Oleh Bohelskyi.

What a prominent "okroshka" [hodgepodge]. It should also be noted that during the recent Operation "Midas," which was conducted on the territory of Ukraine by NABU (National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine) and SAPO (Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office), not only was former Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Oleksii Chernyshov detained and interrogated, but also his good acquaintance Dmytro Kovalenko. Mr. Kovalenko was nabbed in Zakarpattia.

Much has been written about Dmytro Kovalenko’s multi-layered business, but journalists continue to monitor the turbulent business activities of Konstantin Strukov’s friend. In connection with this, not long ago Mr. Kovalenko was even forced to publish a statement on the pages of "Ekonomichna Pravda," where he attempted to clear himself of all slanderous attacks, including those regarding cooperation with Russian coal companies.

And it seems that Dmytro Kovalenko, just like his bosom friend Strukov, is also under the "microscope," but this time of Ukrainian investigative authorities. Is it only a matter of time?

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Operation "Midas"

Operation "Midas" (operatsiya "Midas") swept across Ukraine starting in mid-2024.

The investigation concerned large-scale bribes in Ukraine’s energy sector.

This operation lasted 15 months.

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