

‘Bond villain’ oligarch who ‘kept SHARKS in his office to intimidate his enemies’ and was credited with getting President Zelensky elected has his Ukrainian home raided in ‘£1billion embezzlement probe’

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Global Research, February 04, 2023

[The Daily Mail](#) 2 February 2023

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Our thanks to the Daily Mail for having brought this article to our attention.

- *Ihor Kolomoisky was raided at his hunting lodge residence near Dnipro*
- *The warlord tycoon is accused of embezzlement and corruption*

A [‘James Bond](#) villain’ oligarch who is said to keep sharks in his office to intimidate his enemies has had his mansion raided in Ukraine as [part of a sweeping anti-corruption clampdown](#).

Ihor Kolomoisky, a warlord who helped Volodymyr [Zelensky](#)’s rise to power, was targeted by the SBU, [Ukraine](#)’s security service yesterday.

The 59-year-old tycoon was pictured standing in his hunting lodge residence near Dnipro wearing tracksuits and slippers as he was confronted by the agents.

Investigators are probing claims Kolomoisky embezzled around £1billion from two oil companies where he was previously the majority shareholder, Ukrainian media says.

The Ukrainian government seized stakes in the energy companies, oil producer Ukrnafta and refiner Ukrtatnafta, as part of moves to consolidate the war effort.



Ihor Kolomoisky is pictured during the raid by Ukrainian security services at his Dnipro lodge yesterday

The oil baron, who was named in the Panama Papers, is accused of dodging customs duties to rack up his huge fortune, which included owning the TV channel that launched Zelensky's comedy career.

He backed the then-actor during his 2019 presidential bid with his media empire, although Zelensky has distanced himself from the billionaire businessman.

The mogul, who has been sanctioned by the US, also 'laundered \$5.5billion through a tangle of shell companies, purchasing factories and commercial properties across the U.S. heartland,' the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists claims.

He is accused of heading up one of the biggest ever Ponzi schemes in the US and is one of the biggest real estate landlords in the US midwest.

Kolomoisky was born into a Jewish family in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, when it was part of the Soviet Union.

After the collapse of the USSR, he started making a fortune importing foreign goods, and trading local metals on the international market.



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Kolomoisky, a warlord who helped Volodymyr Zelensky's rise to power, was targeted by the SBU, Ukraine's security service yesterday

He allegedly seized former state-held assets and paid off judges and magistrates as Russia struggled to control its burgeoning kleptocracy.

The ruthless leader soon started to cultivate a fearsome persona.

According to Forbes, he once deployed 'hundreds of hired rowdies armed with baseball bats, iron bars, gas and rubber bullet pistols and chainsaws' to forcibly take over a steel plant.

He once lined the lobby of an oil company he wanted to push out with a row of coffins, and filled his shark tank with bloodied chum when he wanted to intimidate opponents.

He was one of the most powerful figures in Ukraine by the 2010s and oversaw one of the country's biggest banks PrivatBank.

Following the 2014 EuroMaidan Revolution when Russia first started trying to seize Ukraine, Kolomoisky started to bankroll the neo-Nazi Azov regiment and refashioned himself as a fierce defender of the motherland.



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A US diplomat said, according to the [Spectator](#): 'I think Kolomoisky is super-dangerous. He was one of the first oligarchs who began to act like a warlord.'

But doubts crept in about the reality of his finances and government officials found billions missing from his empire.

The government was forced to give a mammoth £4.5billion bailout to PrivatBank to stop it collapsing, and soon found money hidden in faraway places such as Cleveland, Ohio.

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