

# [***Former FBI Official Accused Of Violating Russia Sanctions To Help Oligarch Oleg Deripaska***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67CX-7DW1-DXVP-5295-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 794 words

**Byline:** Ana Faguy, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** A former special agent in charge of counterintelligence in the FBI s New York office allegedly tried to hide the Russian oligarch s involvement in the financial deal.

**Body**

**Topline**

A former FBI agent who once led counterintelligence in the bureau s New York office was charged with money laundering and violating sanctions to benefit Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, prosecutors in Manhattanannounced Monday, years after the billionaire Deripaska was hit with U.S. sanctions over a long list of accusations including money laundering and threatening business rivals.

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Russian billionaire and businessman Oleg Deripaska attends the meeting on sport development in the region.

Mikhail Svetlov/Getty

</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

The U.S. Attorney s Office for the Southern District of New York accused Charles McGonigal and Sergey Shestakov, a former Russian diplomat-turned-translator, of providing services to the U.S.-sanctioned Deripaska, including investigating a rival of Deripaska for money and trying to help Deripaska get off the U.S. sanctions list.

Both men were charged with violating U.S. sanctions law, conspiring to violate and evade U.S. sanctions, conspiring to commit money laundering and money laundering, and Shestakov was also charged with making false statements in an FBI interview.

The two defendants allegedly launched an unsuccessful effort on behalf of Deripaska to have his sanctions lifted in 2019, according to prosecutors, who also said that during his tenure with the FBI, McGonigal received then-classified information about Deripaska being added to a list of oligarchs considered for sanctions as part of the process that led to the imposition of sanctions against Deripaska (McGonigal retired in 2018).

Prosecutors say McGonigal, Shestakov and an unnamed third person obscured Deripaska s involvement in their scheme by not naming him in communications (referring to him in text messages as you know whom and the big guy ), and by using a shell company to send and receive payments from Deripaska.

McGonigal was apprehended after returning from the Middle East on Saturday at JFK airport in New York,NBC News reported.

Both defendants will appear in court Monday afternoon, according to prosecutors.

Attorneys for McGonigal or Shestakov did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

**What We Don t Know**

How long the men could face behind bars if they re convicted. Each of the counts facing McGonigal and Shestakov carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, while Shestakov s false-statement charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

**Tangent**

Before he retired, McGonigal investigated Russian oligarchs including Deripaska as part of his job leading the FBI s Counterintelligence Division in New York, prosecutors said. Shestakov, who was previously a Russian diplomat, worked as a Russian interpreter for courts and government offices, according to prosecutors. Given their former experience, prosecutors claim McGonigal and Shestakov knew they were violating U.S. sanctions by helping Deripaska.

**Big Number**

$3 billion. That s how much Deripaska is worth according to**Forbes** calculations.

**Key Background**

The founder of Russian industrial group Basic Element, Deripakagained controlof previously state-owned aluminum assets after the fall of the Soviet Union. The U.S. Treasury Departmentsanctioned Deripaska in 2018for acting or purporting to act on behalf of, directly or indirectly, a senior official of the Government of the Russian Federation and for operating in the energy sector of the Russian Federation economy. Among the accusations, the U.S. government claims Deripaska laundered money, bribed a government official, threatened business rivals and ordered the murder of a businessman. When he was sanctioned in 2018, Deripaska described the sanctions as groundless, ridiculous and absurd, in an email to**Forbes**. He later lost a lawsuit to have the sanctions lifted. In September,Deripaska was indictedalong with three associates, for allegedly violating sanctions. Among the allegations was a purported plan for Deripaska s girlfriend to give birth in the U.S. so the child would be a U.S. citizen,prosecutors said.

**Surprising Fact**

Deripaska, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, is one of the few Russian oligarchs who haveopenly criticizedPutin s invasion of Ukraine. Deripaska called the notion of destroying Ukraine a colossal mistake last year, and acknowledged Western sanctions triggered by the invasion have damaged Russia s economy.

**Further Reading**

DOJ Charges Russian Billionaire Deripaska With Violating Sanctions And Scheming For His Child To Be Born In U.S.(Forbes)

A Colossal Mistake : Russian Billionaire Deripaska Double Down On Ukraine War Criticism (Forbes)

Oleg Deripaska: Putin Favourite With Strong Ties To UK ***Politics***(The Guardian)

Russian Billionaire Vs. The U.S. GOvernment: A Look At Oleg Deripaska s Puzzling Lawsuit (Forbes)

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