

Vagrant's Death Reveals Demolition 'Swindle'

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The  **Moscow Times**

A routine investigation into the death of a homeless person in Moscow put investigators on the trail of a suspected swindle involving a deputy mayor's brother that might have cost the city millions of rubles, Kommersant reported Wednesday.

The unidentified homeless person died in December after taking shelter for the night in a five-story building scheduled to be demolished by UniversStroiLyux, a company owned by Alexei Biryukov, brother of Deputy Mayor Pyotr Biryukov.

UniversStroiLyux paperwork obtained by investigators indicated that the company was hired in 2009 by city authorities to demolish three houses.

But the company, which was paid 16.3 million rubles (\$541,000) for one of the houses, hired a subcontractor, which demolished two of the three houses for 11 million rubles.

The third house, which the city paid 9.8 million rubles to have demolished, may have only existed on paper because it is not listed on the official map of the city, Kommersant reported.

The Investigative Committee is looking into the case but has not filed charges.

Alexei Biryukov told the newspaper that his company was entitled to hire subcontractors as long as the job was done. He refused to comment on the house not listed on the city map.

UniversStroiLyux has come under fire for its work for the city before. City official Natalya Sokolova told The Moscow Times last month that an audit was being carried out on the company's use of \$2.3 million to build a dog shelter under a 2008 contract.

The shelter has yet to materialize, and the company has returned part of the money to the city. Former city official Tatyana Pavlova said the company has returned \$2 million to the city from various dog shelter projects after auditors conducted investigations into tenders for the shelters.

There is no law prohibiting the relatives of government officials from taking part in tenders organized by government agencies.

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