

# 5 Things to Know About Russia's Alleged Banker-TV Anchor Couple

December 03, 2019



Nailya Asker-Zade and Andrei Kostin [Kremlin.ru](#) / MT

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's latest investigation claims that state-owned bank CEO Andrei Kostin gifted millions of dollars worth of elite property, a private jet and a yacht to his alleged partner, state television journalist Nailya Asker-Zade.

News outlets have previously [covered](#) the real estate [transfers](#) from VTB Bank CEO Kostin to Russia state broadcaster host Asker-Zade. Russian authorities [blocked](#) around 1,000 websites earlier this year that mentioned Kostin and Asker-Zade.

## Embed:

The sheer cost of the gifts indicates that Kostin couldn't have afforded them alone and may have spent taxpayer money, Navalny alleged in a post published Monday. "Even the real estate alone hardly fits into Kostin's official budget, and there's much more than real estate," he said in the 29-minute video.

“There’s a distinction between a state banker in love and a state banker in love who steals tens of millions to shower his mistress with,” Navalny [said](#). “This is a story about corruption.”

**The Moscow Times gathered five facts and claims surrounding the now-viral investigation:**

#### **Assets.**

— Navalny said he found Asker-Zade’s \$60.5 million Bombardier business jet with monthly operating costs of \$470,000 by cross-referencing her interview locations with flight-tracking data around those dates. Showing registration details of the Bombardier [switching owners](#) from a VTB offshore to an unknown offshore company in 2017, he said Kostin “either bought or rented” it for Asker-Zade.

— Navalny claimed to have found a \$62 million, 62-meter-long “Sea & Us” yacht using marine traffic services, Asker-Zade’s Instagram posts and drone footage. He did not go into the yacht’s registration or ownership structure.

— Navalny cited past reporting in saying that Kostin had bought Asker-Zade a \$3.4 million Moscow apartment in 2011 and that she owns a neighboring \$1.9 million apartment. Additionally, he cited property documents naming her as the owner of a \$4 million mansion in an elite suburb outside Moscow. “She knows full well how she came into these yachts, jets, mansions and jewelry,” he said.

**Plaque.** Navalny traveled to New York to find a personalized plaque dedicated to “Andrey Kostin” from a “Nailya” on a Central Park bench. The park’s 2015 annual report listed a “Nailya Asker-Zade” as one of the dozens of people who donated between \$10,000 and \$24,999 as part of its Adopt-a-Bench program.

#### **Embed:**

Дано:

1. Госбанкир обожающий Путина
2. Ведущая пропагандистского госканала.

Вопрос: какой подарок может сделать госпропагандистка РФ госбанкиру РФ?

Ответ: табличку на скамейке в Центральном Парке Нью-Йорка за \$25

000. <https://t.co/GiWEK5KCb> [pic.twitter.com/bd9nhmfrdg](https://pic.twitter.com/bd9nhmfrdg)

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [December 2, 2019](#)

**Scrubbing.** The Kremlin denied knowledge of Navalny’s investigation. The state-run TASS and RIA Novosti news agencies published, then [deleted](#), stories about the Kremlin’s denial.

**Views.** 2.7 million people watched Navalny’s investigation on YouTube in the first 24 hours after it went live.

**Native ads.** Asker-Zade [reacted](#) with a tongue-in-cheek Instagram post, saying she “ordered native advertising from a popular blogger and didn’t realize it would become so popular. Welcome to my new followers!”

*Asker-Zade has authored articles in The Moscow Times in the past.*

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