

Eighth person in Trump Tower meeting is identified

By **Rosalind S. Helderman** and **Tom Hamburger** July 18 at 12:05 PM

An American-based employee of a Russian real estate company took part in a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between a Russian lawyer and Donald Trump Jr., bringing to eight the number of known participants at the session that has emerged as a key focus of the investigation of the Trump campaign's interactions with Russians.

Ike Kaveladze's presence was confirmed by Scott Balber, an attorney for Emin and Aras Agalarov, the Russian developers who hosted the Trump-owned Miss Universe pageant in 2013. Balber said Kaveladze works for the Agalarovs' company and attended as their representative.

Balber said Tuesday that he received a phone call from a representative of Special Counsel Robert Mueller over the weekend asking if Kaveladze would agree to be interviewed. Balber said his client would cooperate. The request is the first public indication that Mueller's team is investigating the meeting.

Donald Trump Jr. agreed to take the meeting on the promise that he would be provided damaging information about Hillary Clinton as part of a Russian government effort to help his father's presidential campaign, according to emails released by Trump Jr. last week.

Rob Goldstone, a music promoter, told Trump Jr. in an email that his client, Emin Agalarov, a Russian pop star, requested that Trump Jr. meet with the lawyer.

The full list of the participants has remained a mystery until now, despite a statement from Trump Jr. that he was releasing his emails in an effort to be "transparent" about the meeting, which he has said amounted to nothing.

Balber said Kaveladze works as a vice president focusing on real estate and finance for the Agalarovs' company, the Crocus Group. Aras Agalarov requested that Kaveladze attend the meeting on his behalf, Balber said. Kaveladze is a U.S. citizen and has lived in this country for many years, according to Balber, who said he is representing the man.

Balber said Kaveladze believed he would act as a translator, but arrived to discover that the lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, had brought her own translator, a former State Department employee named Anatoli Samochornov. Samochornov has declined to

comment, citing a non-disclosure agreement he signed as a professional translator. Balber said he believes the list of participants known to the public is now complete.

Other participants in the meeting were Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of the president, and Paul Manafort, a top campaign aide, as well as Rinat Akhmetshin, a Russian American lobbyist who was lobbying to lift sanctions imposed in 2012.

Born in the Soviet Republic of Georgia, Kaveladze came to the United States in 1991. According to his LinkedIn profile, he holds a business degree from the University of New Haven.

In 2000, Kaveladze's actions as the head of a Delaware company called International Business Creations were the subject of a government investigation into how Russians and other foreigners were able to launder large amounts of money through U.S. banks.

The GAO report, which had been requested by Congress, concluded that it was "relatively easy" for these foreigners to use shell companies to open U.S. banks accounts and route hidden money through the American financial system.

The report described the activities of IBC's president, who Balber confirmed was Kaveladze.

Balber said Kaveladze was not charged with any crime as a result of the inquiry, which he said was largely focused on the internal procedures of U.S. banks.

"There has never been any indication that he did anything wrong," Balber said. "From his perspective, it was a big nothing."


According to the GAO, Kaveladze opened 236 bank accounts in the U.S. for corporations formed in Delaware on behalf of mostly Russian brokers. Kaveladze told officers of two U.S. banks that he had conducted investigations of the Russian companies for which he opened accounts. However, he told GAO investigators that was not truthful.


"He admitted to us that he made such representations to the banks but that he in fact had not investigated the companies," the report said.

All told, the report traced the movement of \$1.4 billion in wire transfer transactions deposited in to 236 accounts opened at the two banks, Citibank and Commercial Bank.

The report said that IBC and an associated firm established those accounts and that more than \$800 million was wired from foreign countries in to IBC-related accounts.

Correction: An earlier version of this article incorrectly said that a representative of Special Counsel Robert Mueller contacted attorney Scott Balber to ascertain the identity of his client. Balber said the official already knew Ike Kaveladze's identity and called to request an interview.

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