

Politics

Giuliani Ally Says \$1 Million From Russia Was Loan to Wife

By [Christian Berthelsen](#)

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- ▶ Prosecutors say Parnas was dishonest, want to revoke his bail
 - ▶ Parnas has pleaded not guilty to U.S. campaign finance charges
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Lev Parnas, center, exits federal court with his wife Svetlana Parnas in New York, on Oct. 23. *Photographer: Peter Foley/Bloomberg*

Lev Parnas, an associate of Rudy Giuliani indicted on U.S. campaign finance charges, said a \$1 million transfer into his wife's bank account from Russia was the proceeds of a loan -- and not an attempt to conceal his assets.

Federal prosecutors pointed to the transfer in a filing last week asking the judge to revoke Parnas's bail because he misrepresented his financial resources when he was arrested. They said

Parnas' wife, Svetlana, received \$1 million from a bank account in Russia in September, the month before Ukraine-born Parnas and business partner Igor Fruman were arrested as they sought to leave the country.

Monday's filing by Parnas' lawyer said the \$1 million didn't belong to Parnas but was a loan to Svetlana for a term of 60 months at a 5% annual interest rate. It didn't say who made the loan. Joseph Bondy, Parnas' lawyer, didn't respond to a voicemail message seeking additional comment.

Parnas and Fruman are accused of working on behalf of one or more Ukrainian government officials to seek the removal of then-U.S. ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch. They have pleaded not guilty to those and other charges.

The filing left much unexplained about the payment, including who provided it or what it was for. Prosecutors said Svetlana Parnas is a stay-at-home mother with \$210,000 in assets of cash and jewelry, raising questions about why a lender would extend a \$1 million loan to her. Prosecutors accused Parnas of keeping money and assets in his wife's name to avoid creditors. A hearing is scheduled Tuesday in federal court in Manhattan.

[Read more about why Congress wants information from Parnas, Fruman](#)

According to prosecutors, Parnas and Fruman used an unidentified Russian national as the source of funds for political donations to curry favor with U.S. state and federal officials for their support in launching a retail marijuana business. Prosecutors haven't said whether the same Russian was the source of the payment. Parnas also had a role as an interpreter on the U.S. defense team of Dmitry Firtash, a Ukrainian oligarch fighting extradition to the U. S. For that work he was paid by the legal team, prosecutors have said.

The filing by Parnas' lawyer said he didn't mislead the authorities and that the financial records were provided to the government. Those records also reflect a \$200,000 payment from Svetlana Parnas' account into an escrow account as a down payment on a \$4.5 million home and payments for private jet travel and other expenses.

The payment came the same month that Parnas and Fruman received the first of two requests for documents from the congressional committees investigating the Trump administration's actions in Ukraine. The pair initially refused to comply with the requests, and were arrested days later on a jet bridge at Dulles International Airport as they sought to board a plane with one-way tickets out of the country. Parnas' lawyer has subsequently said his client has reversed course and notified Congress he's willing to provide documents and testimony.

(Updates with additional details throughout)

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