

Alton Man Reflects On Personal Acquaintance of Ekaterina Putin, Recent Developments

by Christian Blaney
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ELSAH - Tom Edwards, now of Alton, who spent over 12 years in Russia, is a former English teacher and personal acquaintance of Ekaterina Putin, Vladimir Putin's youngest

legitimate daughter. This relationship with her father has brought her into the current news spotlight as a holder of Putin's personal wealth.

Earlier this month, multiple nations, including the US, UK, EU, and Japan, imposed sanctions on Ekaterina and her sister, Maria. Tom doesn't agree with this decision, based on his experience associating with politically relevant individuals in Russia and spending much of his time staying caught up on world events and their influences, and he's brought an alternative perspective on how the issue could be better handled in the days going forward.

"I attended the University of Illinois back in 2004-2006, and while I was there I was a part of the Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian studies department. I studied Russian language, literature, culture, and history, and I became interested in the field. This happened specifically because when I was in high school I was enrolled in Airforce ROTC, and I was essentially a part of the last generation of Cold Warriors before 9/11 happened and everyone transitioned to becoming Middle East specialists."

"Once I got to the University of Illinois, I befriended several Russians and a South Korean who also had a very passionate interest in Russia, we'll call him J. We had a lot in common, both of us had military family backgrounds, an interest in a foreign language, Black music, and martial arts. We were devout Christians and people who could be considered to have a more global perspective on the world.

"We were in university together for two years, after that point I left for New York City and he went to serve in the South Korean Marine Corps."

While this was the end of their college relationship, they would end up reconnecting under different circumstances the next time they met.

After dropping out of the university, "I studied to teach English as a foreign language because I was unhappy with my job prospects during the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis. I didn't quite understand how studying Russian would lead to any commercial application at the time."

Once Tom had spent enough time in New York, he found himself pondering his life's ambition. The decision to move to Moscow was made once he had completed his certification for teaching English.

"After my first year in Russia, J contacts me through Facebook and tells me that he got a job to go to Russia and work for a major Korean company - he was really excited. And I say, 'That's fantastic news! Guess what bro, I'm already there!' After some chatting, J says, 'Cool! I'll be there in a month.'"

"His father had a very successful military career." J's father was an Admiral in the South Korean military. However, Tom made it clear that J wasn't raised with a silver spoon. "He doesn't come from a particularly wealthy family ... his background is service, excellence, and purpose. He's good people."

"J shows up in Moscow, and he tells me he's getting back together with his ex, Russian girlfriend." After hearing this, Tom said that he extended his offer for any help that J would need during his stay, considering Tom had spent a year in Russia already as an adult by this point.

"So, it turns out that his ex was Putin's youngest, legitimate daughter, Ekaterina Putina... She was the second daughter from Putin's only proper marriage. My friend essentially opens up and is completely honest with me about his girlfriend, and he stressed the importance of not freaking out about this and keeping it a very tight secret in order to ensure our personal security."

Both friends came from an upbringing that valued loyalty and honor, they had an agreement to "not openly talk about this stuff and to watch each other's backs." This means that there was enough trust between them to merit a high level of transparency on this topic.

While Tom had reason to believe that J and Ekaterina Putina were once together while he was in college, it was only confirmed when he was on Russian soil. "That being the case, I obviously hang out with my friend and my friend has his girlfriend with him, so we associate. The story is, J spent some time growing up in Russia as a teenager, and he went to a prestigious high school while his father was serving South Korea as a diplomat... Anyway, he goes off to the US for university, which is where I met him, and Katya (Ekaterina's nickname) went off to do 'Katya' things. If I remember correctly, she got some kind of master's degree in mathematics and science. She's the daughter currently involved in Artificial Intelligence. There was a lot of outside pressure on both of them because the Korean news caught wind of his personal relationship with Putin's daughter and kept running these exposes about them getting married."

"South Korea really wanted this to happen, because it would have been like marrying the son of an Admiral into Russian royalty, in a reverse Cinderella story."

The phrase "no news is good news" quickly applied itself to the two's attitudes towards their role in the media. "We all respectively went on with our lives from that point forward, but we stayed in contact with each other intermittently, and I invested myself into being an English teacher and operating a small business, where I could associate

with people of interest. Their relationship was ongoing for, I want to say, a few years before they eventually developed differences and decided it was better for them to just be friends."

J worked for a major company in South Korea that has business interests involving the Russian State. "His company realized who they had working for them as a junior employee, and J felt uncomfortable and had to leave his position for personal safety."

Tom was interested in clarifying a few points that he believes many American news outlets are getting wrong.

Ekaterina and Maria Putina's secret relationship with their father isn't about hiding his money but instead comes from a place of love, trust, and protection. "Anyone in the Russian security apparatus could have been asked to hold Putin's property and money in trust, his girls were hidden because they're his personal weakness and he wanted to give them their own lives. I also believe that Putin has never declared a successor because he thinks Ekatarina should be the heir to his throne. Both girls have been strategically positioned within Russian society in high-ranking leadership roles."

Maria oversaw the development of the Russian COVID vaccine, Sputnik, and Tom happened to be one of the first foreigners in Russia to get the shot as a frontline teacher. Ekaterina is responsible for developing artificial intelligence, both for state defense and human development.

"The idea that Putin has sheltered his daughters for the sole purpose of hiding his wealth is wrong." To support his logic, he explained, "Royalty doesn't care about money, because they own the country itself."

Tom Edwards's primary message is, "If the Western World ever wants to have a relationship with Russia again, then it can't sanction Putin's daughters ... sanctioning Putin and his immediate, inner circle are okay, but the act of sanctioning the man's daughters is driving a wedge in between their ability to speak any sense into him."

Due to Tom's time associating with Ekaterina, he feels comfortable describing her as, "One of the most American, Russian girls I know." In bullet points, he noted that she's, "fluent in English and other foreign languages, a supporter of fundamental Democratic and Capitalist values, a self-motivated individual (through the example of academics and athletics) and highly educated (through the example of business and travel)."

Tom talked for a while about his gripes with the current state of global affairs, but he was also interested in expressing possible alternative solutions. "A US tech company controls all of the metadata for bank to bank transactions in the Ruble, just turn it off." This is one of Tom's recommendations if he were to become president tomorrow.

According to Tom, indirect, allied, military support and international, economic sanctions won't do enough to force Putin's hand to retreat from the territory captured from Ukraine. "All we're doing is turning Ukraine into a Slavic meat grinder and allowing India and China to inherit the Earth, by prolonging this war and accepting that China and India will purchase critical Russian commodities at a discount for domestic consumption and re-export them on the global commodities market for profit." To him, these include Petroleum, Natural Gas, Coal, Uranium, Titanium, and Palladium for reasons he delved into later during our private conversation.

America's future relationship with Russia is of primary concern to Tom, and the sanctions which negatively affect the day-to-day lives of Americans and Russians will be remembered for a generation.

After touching on the topic of food, gas, electricity, and heat getting more expensive, Tom commented on the different reactions that groups can have to price increases on basic goods, "The Russian government can ask the Russian people to starve, it won't be the first time. Russian people are quite prepared to lower their heads and suffer for their nation, but the American people aren't going to agree to that! Nor should they, no government should ever ask their people to do that."



All things considered, "sanctioning the man's daughters is wrong, sanctioning the country's commodities is wrong, closing the borders to women and children is wrong."

He hopes to see a resolution to this conflict quickly, but for this to happen he believes Putin needs to be provided a clear way out. "Right now, the man believes the only way out is through."

While historically, Tom has been an admirer of Vladimir Putin's political decision-making, he's been extremely disappointed in how he has handled Ukraine up until this point. Whether it be a self-imposed narrative, a lack of quality intelligence, an overestimation of Russian military prowess, poor logistics, and maintenance, a simple political blunder, or some combination of those variables, Putin's decision to invade Ukraine is an uphill battle that is inflicting extreme pain on both ends of the Ukrainian /Russian border.

Tom Edwards currently works as an analyst and editor for Macro-Advisory, a bespoke corporate and hedge fund consulting company directed by the notable economist Chris Weafer. Tom is also involved in raising charity for a Pan Slavic relief effort for displaced women and children. He is at the behest of any nation, military, corporation, or organization who would see to the end of this war and inhumanity tomorrow.