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Leoncio de la Pena says the case centers on a trusted friend who stole money.

CAMPAIGN SCANDAL

Venezuelan exec accuses friend of fraud while defending himself

by **Billy Shields**

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Defendants in a campaign cash scandal between the governments of Venezuela and Argentina have emerged in state court fighting over Trump Hollywood condo units.

Franklin Duran is accusing former associate Guido Alejandro

Antonini Wilson of bilking him of about \$900,000 in deposits on five units.

Duran, a Venezuelan businessman, claims in a Miami-Dade County Circuit lawsuit filed Aug. 21 that Antonini accepted the money from him from 2003 to 2007.

Duran formed Foxdelta

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Investments in 2003 and used it as the vehicle for his real estate purchases. Antonini was vice president.

Duran is the godfather of one of Antonini's children and has been a personal friend for more than 20 years, according to the complaint.

"These were moneys that were paid into corporations that for the most part are being held to this day in escrow," said Duran's attorney, Leoncio de la Pena of the de la Pena Group in Miami.

De la Pena contends Antonini and wife, Jacqueline Maria Regnault, a real estate broker with Cervera Real Estate, took deposit money from Duran for five condos at the Trump complex with the agreement that the units would be signed over to Foxdelta.

Instead, two of the five condos were placed in the names of companies controlled by Antonini, his wife or others, the complaint said. Foxdelta money went to limited liability companies the couple controlled apart from Duran — Doral-based Techmilk and Venuz Supply on Key Biscayne.

"A friend trusted someone who

'It's the oldest story. You got money, and I want some of it,' attorney Leoncio de la Pena said.

he thought was a friend, and a friend betrayed him by stealing money from him," de la Pena said.

"It's the oldest story. You got money, and I want some of it."

De la Pena declined to comment on the exact nature of the alleged fraud, saying future amendments to the complaint will be more specific.

It could not be determined whether Antonini and Regnault have retained civil counsel.

De la Pena also declined to comment on the pending criminal matter in Miami federal court.

Duran and three other Venezuelans — Carlos Kauffmann, Moises Maionica and Rodolfo Wanseele Paciello — were accused of working with Antonini to cover up a secret \$800,000 political contribution.

The money allegedly came from the Venezuelan government and

was headed to the campaign of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner shortly before she won the Argentine presidential election last October.

Kauffmann pleaded guilty to conspiring to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign government, and Paciello and Maionica pleaded guilty to acting as agents of a foreign government.

All are expected to testify against Duran, who is charged with acting as an unregistered agent of the Venezuelan government. His trial started Tuesday before U.S. District Judge Joan A. Lenard in Miami.

Argentine customs agents seized the \$800,000 aboard a private Cessna flown by Antonini last August, but he was allowed to return to his Key Biscayne home.

The Argentine government has charged Antonini with money laundering and contraband charges. He is not facing charges in the United States.

Calls to Antonini were not returned by deadline. ■

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