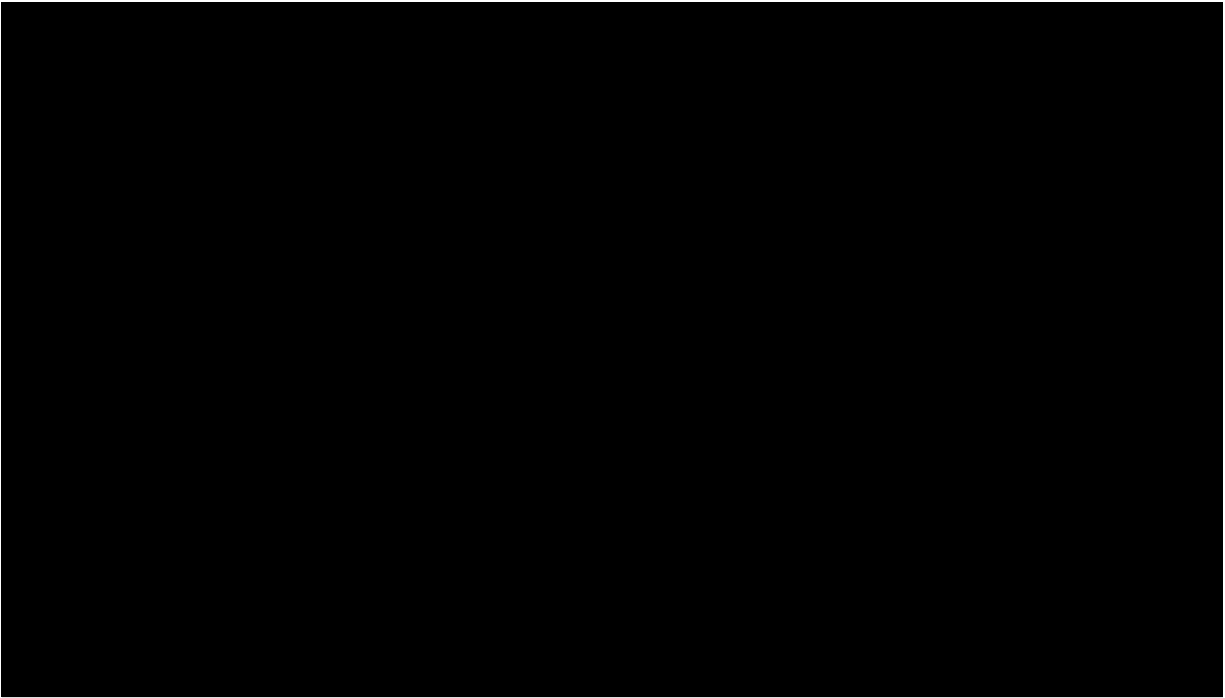


Was San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee Poisoned, Using Untraceable Spy Technology, Because of His Immigration Scheme?



Robert Mendick, CHIEF REPORTER Hayley Dixon Victoria Ward Roland

Oliphant


Shell fish toxins, nut tree derivatives, umbrella launched cardiac gases and pocket-based electric pulse weapons can give any politician a "natural-looking heart-attack" that is man made. Many believe Andrew Brietbart and Google's Rajeev Motwani were killed this way for political retribution

A Russian agent convicted of spying for Britain was fighting for his life last night amid suspicions he was poisoned in a shopping centre in Wiltshire.

Sergei Skripal, 66, was in intensive care after being exposed to a mysterious substance as he sat on a bench in the centre of Salisbury. A 33-year-old woman who was with him, is also in critical condition. Both had collapsed and were unconscious when they were discovered.

Reports suggest Col Skripal had recently gone to police claiming he was fearing for his life.

The incident comes a little over a decade after the murder of Alexander Litvinenko, the former Russian agent who was poisoned by radioactive polonium in a London hotel.

 Chemical suit is worn by emergency response in Salisbury

The Salisbury A&E shutdown followed an incident on Sunday in the Maltings shopping centre, where firefighters and police were in attendance CREDIT: SOLENT NEWS

Colonel Skripal, 66, a former Russian intelligence agent with the FSB, was jailed in Moscow for spying for Britain but had arrived in the UK in 2010 as part of a prisoner exchange. Anna Chapman, a Russia-born secret agent who had acquired British citizenship and who was detained by US authorities, was sent back to Russia along with nine other agents.

Litvinenko's widow Marina Litvinenko told the Telegraph last night: "It looks similar to what happened to my husband but we need more information. We need to know the substance. Was it radioactive?"

 A still from historic footage showing Sergei Skripal being arrested in by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB)

A still from historic footage showing Sergei Skripal being arrested in by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB)

Colonel Skripal and his female companion was discovered on Sunday afternoon. An eyewitness told how she saw the pair seemingly "frozen" in place.

Georgia Pridham, 25, had been for a hen do lunch and was walking back to her friend's car when she saw the couple slumped on a bench.

She told the Telegraph: "He was quite smartly dressed, which caught my eye. He had his palms up to the sky as if he was shrugging and was staring at the building in front of him.

**“He was
conscious but it
was like he was
frozen and he
was slightly**

“He had a woman sat next to him on the bench who was slumped on his shoulder. She looked grey and had her hood up.

rocking back and forward”

Georgia Pridham, witness

“I thought 'that is quite odd, they
must be on something'. I
remember looking back at him
thinking he would catch my eye
but he was staring dead straight.

He was conscious but it was like he was frozen and he was
slightly rocking back and forward.


"She was just slumped onto his shoulder. She had a
Parka jacket on with her hood up. I thought maybe she was
asleep or passed out. He had a jacket and some smart
trousers on. He didn't look like the type to get high.”



The couple were unconscious when they were rushed to Salisbury District Hospital. Authorities later declared a major incident and its Accident & Emergency unit had to be closed.

On Monday night police said Zizzi restaurant, which was close to where Col Skripal and the woman were found, was closed in connection with the incident following

consultation with Public Health England, suggesting one or both of them may have dined there beforehand.

 Police inside a Zizzi restaurant in Castle Street, Salisbury, which has been closed in connection with the incident

Police inside a Zizzi restaurant in Castle Street, Salisbury, which has been closed in connection with the incident CREDIT: STEVE PARSONS/PA

Police wearing protective suits on Monday night were examining the area around the bench where the couple had collapsed. One well-placed source told The Telegraph a number of police officers who had initially attended the scene had also been treated for possible contamination although this newspaper was unable to verify that.

One report suggested a 'specialist chemical response unit' had removed an 'unknown substance' which had been wrapped in several protective layers.




The prospect of a state-sponsored assassination on Colonel Skripal was immediately raised by opponents of President Putin.

Garry Kasparov, the former chess world champion and high profile critic of the Russian leader, tweeted: “After the UK’s pathetic response to Litvinenko’s assassination with polonium in London, why wouldn’t Putin do it again?”

Colonel Skripal is thought to have been living quietly in Salisbury for the past seven years. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison in 2006 after being found guilty of “high treason in the form of espionage” in a Moscow military court.

Russia alleged that Colonel Skripal had been paid \$100,000 by MI6 in exchange for passing them the identities of Russian secret agents operating in Europe. He was branded a traitor and a disgrace.

 Roads leading to Salisbury A&E closed on Monday

Roads leading to Salisbury A&E closed on Monday CREDIT: SOLENT NEWS

A Russian nuclear expert Igor Sutyagin, who had been convicted of spying in 2004, was also sent to the UK with Colonel Skripal as part of the spy swap. Dr Sutyagin, now a senior research fellow with the Royal United services

Institute in London, last night said he only knew Colonel Skripal for the duration of their flight from Moscow.

“If everything points to these people, then that’s a problem for them,” he said.

Dr Andrew Foxall, Director of the Russia and Eurasia Studies Centre at the Henry Jackson Society, said: “If confirmed, this would be the second case of a former Russian ‘spy’ being exposed to an unknown substance in the UK. The first, of course, was Alexander Litvinenko, who was poisoned by polonium-210 in 2006.

“While it is too soon to attribute responsibility, it would be foolhardy if the authorities were not to explore the Russia connection in relation to Mr Skripal’s illness.”

**“The Russians
have more**

In a statement, temporary
Assistant Chief Constable, Craig

animus towards 'traitors' than dissidents, as it were”

Mark Galeotti, Russian secret
services expert

Holden of Wiltshire Police, said:

“The two people – a man aged in his 60s, and a woman aged in her 30s – were found unconscious on a bench in The Maltings in Salisbury.

“Police officers, as well as colleagues from the ambulance

and fire services attended the scene and cordons were put in place.”

The statement continued: “The pair, who we believe are known to each other, did not have any visible injuries and were taken to Salisbury District Hospital. They are currently being treated for suspected exposure to an unknown substance. Both are currently in a critical condition in intensive care.”

“Because we are still at the very early stages of the investigation, we are unable to ascertain whether or not a crime has taken place.”

 Sergei Skripal speaks behind bars

Sergei Skripal speaks behind bars

But the incident will inevitably raise concern that Russian assassins had struck again, 11 years after Litvinenko was murdered in 2006.

Mark Galeotti, an expert on the Russian secret services, said: “The Russians have more animus towards ‘traitors’ than dissidents, as it were.”

But he said it would be unusual to target an ex-spy who had been jailed debriefed and exchanged, adding: “One thing that made Alexander Litvinenko a target was that he was still working with the security services here and with others.

“If there was a belief, rightly or wrongly, that Skripal was working for the security services, or done something else to make him a person of interest, it would put him back in the cross hairs.”



Swap: Anna Chapman, the Russia-born secret agent who had acquired British citizenship, was sent back to Moscow along with nine other agents in

2010 CREDIT: FACEBOOK

Miss Chapman, 36, who had married an English husband and had lived in London, had been arrested on spying in the US in 2010. The spies were swapped at Austria’s Vienna airport in scenes reminiscent of exchanges from the Cold War.

Early reports suggested that colonel Skripal and the unnamed woman may have been exposed to the synthetic drug, Fentanyl, which is up to 10,000 times more powerful

than heroin and has been linked to scores of deaths in the UK.

Authorities declined to speculate as investigations continue.

'Nothing had changed,' says widow of Alexander Litvinenko

The widow of Alexander Litvinenko has said she fears the discovery of a former Russian spy critically ill near his home after being exposed to an unknown substance bears similarities to the assassination of her husband.

Marina Litvinenko said if Sergei Skripal was found to have been poisoned, it showed “nothing has changed” since her husband was murdered.

A public inquiry found Mr Litvinenko was probably murdered in 2006 on the direct orders of Vladimir Putin.

The former KGB officer who died from radiation poisoning was killed by two Russian agents, Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitry Kovtun, the inquiry report said.

 Alexander Litvinenko, the former KGB spy who died following the presence of the radioactive polonium-210 in his body

Alexander Litvinenko, the former KGB spy who died following the presence of the radioactive polonium-210 in his body CREDIT: NATASJA WEITSZ/GETTY

There was a “strong probability” they were acting on behalf of the Russian FSB secret service, the report added.

Mrs Litvinenko told the Telegraph: "It looks similar to what happened to my husband but we need more information.

We need to know the substance. Was it radioactive? We don't have enough information about what definitely happened."

She added: "I cannot say I am worried but it is really strange but I need to know what has happened and why.

Logically it is very strange to do this before a presidential

election. It is really difficult to know who might be behind this. The only thing I can say is if this is a poisoning it is just nothing has changed since my husband died."

Poisoning was also behind one of the most notorious UK mysteries of the Cold War, when the Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov was poisoned on the orders of his country's secret service, using the tip of an umbrella in central London.



Alexander Perepilichny was a Russian whistleblower found dead by his Surrey home in November 2012

Alexander Perepilichny was a Russian whistleblower found dead by his Surrey home in November 2012

More recent high-profile deaths of Russians in the UK have led to accusations of more assassinations.

An inquiry is ongoing into the death of Alexander

Perepilichny a Russian whistleblower who fled to the UK

after lifting the lid on a \$230 million tax fraud by corrupt Russian government officials.

Mr Perepilichny died while out jogging in Surrey in 2012.

Surrey Police and his wife do not believe his death was suspicious, but an inquest has heard his stomach showed traces of a rare deadly plant poison.

An inquest into the death of Boris Berezovsky a billionaire critic of Vladimir Putin found hanged at his UK home, in 2014 recorded an open verdict after experts disagreed over whether he could have been killed.

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