



ADVERTISEMENT

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **ANIMAL HERO AWARDS 2018**



NEWS

Skripal Novichok poisoning: Kremlin on hunt for Russian 'traitor' who helped identify hitmen

EXCLUSIVE: Search is on for the source of GRU leak who aided MI5 and they may be among GRU military intelligence officers still serving

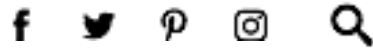


SHARE

By [Chris Hughes](#) Defence And Security Editor & [Adam Aspinall](#)

22:20, 14 SEP 2018 | **UPDATED** 22:23, 14 SEP 2018





Russian nationals Ruslan Boshirov and Alexander Petrov on Fisherton Road, Salisbury on the day the Skripals were poisoned (Image: PA)

Get Daily News updates directly to your inbox

Enter your email

Subscribe

See our [privacy notice](#)

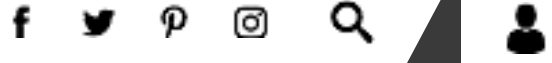
[More newsletters](#)

Kremlin spy chiefs have launched an international manhunt for Putin's new number one target - the Russian "traitor" who helped ID the **Novichok** hitmen.

Russia intelligence was shocked by MI5's identifying of Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov as GRU military intelligence officers as they had assumed they were unknowns.

And yesterday British sources told the Daily Mirror there are suspicions the pair are from a ruthless "Spetsnaz" special forces unit, which is part of the GRU and trained in assassinations.

The Kremlin is desperate to "lock-down" the leak - thought to be either a GRU man who has already defected to the west or even more devastating an insider, still



A British former military intelligence officer told the Daily Mirror: “Clearly our intelligence agencies have very solid intelligence on these two and it may never publicly be known what it is.

LOADING

Boshirov and Petrov denied they were doing anything except visiting Salisbury (Image: TASS)

“But Putin has been given a very clear message behind the Prime Minister’s identifying of this pair as GRU - and that is that Britain is also on the offensive and can penetrate his intelligence community.

“They will want deperately to find out how MI5 has been able to assure the Prime Minister these men are GRU with absolute confidence after painstaking intelligence gathering.

“Whatever the information is that they have - it was enough for her confidently to warn that the British government will dismantle their operation.”



message

It is thought the GRU leak may have come from of a handful of GRU defectors in hiding in Europe, including the UK, and who have MI5 handlers or more likely are on the books of a European intelligence agency.

Our source also said it is possible the pair are from a "Spetsnaz" unit of special forces within the GRU, trained to perform assassinations behind enemy lines.

Russian spy masters are desperate to close down the leak, are thought to have ordered a huge security review and an examination of operational procedures.

They are also trying to find out if any of their GRU staff have behaved unusually in recent weeks and is even thought security chiefs are facing disciplinary action for allowing the men to be identified.

Sergei and Yulia Skripal were the victims of the attack in Salisbury

 **READ MORE**

▶ The Tories back Europe's biggest thug: Mirror Politics morning briefing

Our source said: "I would not want to be in charge of ensuring GRU anonymity right now because the information has got out somehow.

"These two men it would seem are from operational military theatres of war, something you can tell by looking at how they carry themselves.

"They were likely chosen as unknowns who are not used to working in a western sphere in a civilian setting - so how on earth have we managed to identify them as GRU?"

The Kremlin yesterday said it will consider any request by Britain to question the two



LOADING

Former Russian double-agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia both survived the assassination attempt (Image: Collect Unknown)



Top stories from Mirror Online

**Hurricane Helene
heading to UK**

**Inside Kim's North
Korea**

**Terror victim's
boyfriend's agony**

**Spray-painted
homeless man dies**

"In case we receive an official request from London, it will definitely be considered in strict accordance with the law, there is no doubt about that."

It came a day after a bizarre TV interview on Russia Today in which the two men claimed they visited Salisbury Cathedral as tourists and had nothing to do with the attack on the Skripals.

Their claims were dismissed by Downing Street as "lies and blatant fabrications".

They were further ridiculed by the Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam.

Bishop Holtam said: "It doesn't really add up, does it?"

Asked whether there was CCTV footage of them at the cathedral, he said: "There's nothing to link (them with) the cathedral that we have got, or I think anybody has got.

"There's no way of proving that."

ADVERTISEMENT



TOP STORIES

Cable plan to save Lib Dems

'Scrap private school tax breaks'

Mogg £500k richer since Brexit

'Replace May with new generation leader'

The bishop said that his response to the men's TV interview was to think.

"What a pity that they didn't spend longer in that city, where they could have explored the cathedral and seen a building that is committed to the love of God, where there is regular worship to lift our hearts, the tallest spire and a copy of Magna Carta about the rule of law and of justice.

"They didn't seem to see any of that, did they?"

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Daily news Newsletter

DailyMirror



Follow @DailyMirror



Enter email



PROMOTED STORIES

6 Small Changes For A Heart-Healthy Diet And A Free Magazine If You'd Like To Know More!

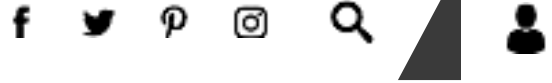
BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

SPONSORED

Sponsored Links

Look Up Your Name to See If You Are Owed a PPI Lump Sum

PPI FREE CHECK QUOTES



The Controversial Scene That Took MASH Off Air

BUZZNET

SPONSORED

Sponsored Links

Lookup Your Name to Check if You Are Owed a PPI Payout

PPI FREE CHECK

You Don't Need To Speak To Anyone To Check If You Had PPI

TAYLOR EDWARDS

RECOMMENDED

'Angry' couple's worrying warning to Argos shoppers after falling for scam

BIRMINGHAM MAIL

Drug addiction has turned woman into shoplifting menace

DAILY RECORD

Comments

Sign In

Write a comment...



oldchaddertonian

🕒 2 HOURS AGO

Russia says these two guys were only tourists, why are they now looking for a "traitor" within the GRU network? Unless of course they were not tourists.
Tut tut Puters, a bit of a slip up I think.

Reply | **Share** | **Report**

👍 0 | 👎 0



Jerose

🕒 5 HOURS AGO

So the "stories" were true then??

Reply | **Share** | **Report**

👍 0 | 👎 0



Binjuice

🕒 5 HOURS AGO

I bet the British establishment are going off their nut! No one beleives your lies any more and the more you push this blatant propaganda the more your waking the world up to your lies.

All these lies to escalate anti Russian Hysteria.

...and the really crazy thing about all this. Some people are still feeding into the lies.

Crazy, crazy people. God can only help them.

Reply | **Share** | **Report**

👍 2 | 👎 3



 9 HOURS AGO

If they were Russian agents ,why on earth would they travel together into the country,to Salisbury and out through customs again,together??And also,I don't see them carrying any hazmat suits,so how did they not poison themselves or other people on public transport,especially on the way home,after spraying a doorknob with a nerve agent.Which has not yet been identified as Novichok by the OPCW,only by the British Tory government and press.

Reply | Share | 7 replies | Report

 2 |  3



Grassyknowles

8 HOURS AGO

Blatentness. I'd get away with more in front of your eyes than behind your back. Ignorance is bliss they say

Reply | Share | 1 reply | Report

 3 |  1

+ Show more comments

Sponsored Links

Halifax Customers Are Being Refunded Thousands

MONEY TIPS ONLINE

HSBC is Paying Huge Refunds To Customers - Check For Your Name

SMARTFINANCES

How Far Does £1 Million Go in Retirement?

FISHER INVESTMENTS UK

SPONSORED



RECOMMENDED

Woman's creepy werewolf puppy dolls leave This Morning viewers horrified

WALES ONLINE

House where police inspector murdered his detective wife is up fo...

STOKE SENTINEL

Sponsored Links

It's Not Edited - Look Closer At This Giant 'Forrest Gump' Bloop

WORLDLIFESTYLE

Veni, vidi, vici: Rule the Throne in the best MMO game

THRONE: FREE ONLINE GAME

20 Insane Rock n' Roll Rumors That Turned Out To Be True

IDOLATOR

SPONSORED

Man Trying To Clip His Hamster's Teeth Makes A Horrifying Discovery When He Opens Its Mouth

MENTAL FLARE

SPONSORED

MORE ON

Vladimir Putin

Sergei Skripal

Bishop Of Salisbury

Dmitry Peskov

MI5

Special Forces

PROMOTED STORIES



Top 10 Cars To Buy This Year

Carbuyer

Incredibly Brilliant Way To Check If You Had PPI

Allay PPI

Guy Posts Selfie With Dog, Neighbors Immediately Call 911

IcePop

Sponsored Links by Taboola

NEWS

ALL

TOP STORIES >

SUICIDE

Dad of 'bullied' boy who died in school playground urges children contemplating suicide to seek help



RAPE

Britain's 'worst grooming gang victim' raped for 12 years and forced to have EIGHT abortions

KNIFE CRIME

Girl 'laughed' as she 'chased' classmate then stabbed her to death in school in row over boy'



ANIMALS

British scientist's son, 3, attacked by giraffe wakes from coma with 'life-changing injuries'





PARENTING

Mum shares tear-jerking letter to 'sweet' 10-year-old son who helps her with daughter's special needs



SOCIAL SERVICES

Celebrity mum who lost kids to ex-husband 'couldn't cope with grief after losing parent'

HOSPITALS

Brit skewered through leg by sun umbrella after fourth-floor balcony plunge in Ibiza



POLICE

Boy, eight, is blasted with shotgun outside teenager's birthday party



ANIMALS

Hunter bombarded with abuse after bragging about shooting mountain grizzly bear



COURT CASE

Surgeon 'faked burglary at £1.1m country home to claim £180k insurance' after renovation left them in debt

BIG BROTHER

Big Brother contestant investigated over racist tweets about 9/11



MALAYSIA AIRLINES

MH370's final message revealed as frantic air traffic controllers tried to make contact

ADVERTISEMENT

NEWS

POLITICS

FOOTBALL



NEWS

WORLD NEWS

QUICKS

TECH

MONEY

TRAVEL

FASHION

MUMS

MOTORING

FOLLOW US



BuySell | Find a job | InYourArea | Discount Codes | Mirror Collections | Psychic |
 Find a Therapist | Find a local business | About Us | Contact Us | Follow Us | Sell Your Story |
 How to Complain | Corrections & Clarifications | Google Survey | Privacy Statement |
 Cookie Policy | Terms and Conditions | Subscribe to Daily and Sunday Mirror newspapers |
 Subscribe to tablet edition | Irish Mirror | © 2018 MGN Limited |