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Truth Serum in Borshch and Cognac

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Researcher Igor Sutyagin, convicted of espionage in 2004 and deported to Britain in a spy swap this summer, published a story about how a Federal Security Service officer may have given him a truth serum in borshch and cognac during questioning.

The incident took place in 1999, Sutyagin wrote in a memoir-styled publication of 2,000 words, published on the rights activism site HRO.org on Wednesday.

Sutyagin began to experience recurring episodes of short-term memory loss after the incident, which suggests an unidentified medication regularly used by law enforcement officers to suppress a suspect's will, the researcher wrote, citing a riot police officer he later shared a cell with.

The medication needs to be served in cognac and have its aftertaste hidden by greasy food, the officer said, Sutyagin wrote.

Yukos' security chief Alexei Pichugin, who was jailed for life on murder charges in 2007, was also once given psychotropic medication in a cigarette, wrote Sutyagin, who briefly shared a cell with Pichugin in a Moscow pretrial detention prison.

No official reaction has followed, but unidentified law enforcement sources denied the story in comments to news agencies Thursday. State-run RIA-Novosti quoted a source who called the story a fabrication by Sutyagin's alleged foreign employers.

Sutyagin's lawyer, Anna Stavitskaya, told the news agency on Thursday that her client was not making accusations and only "told the story of what happened to him."

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