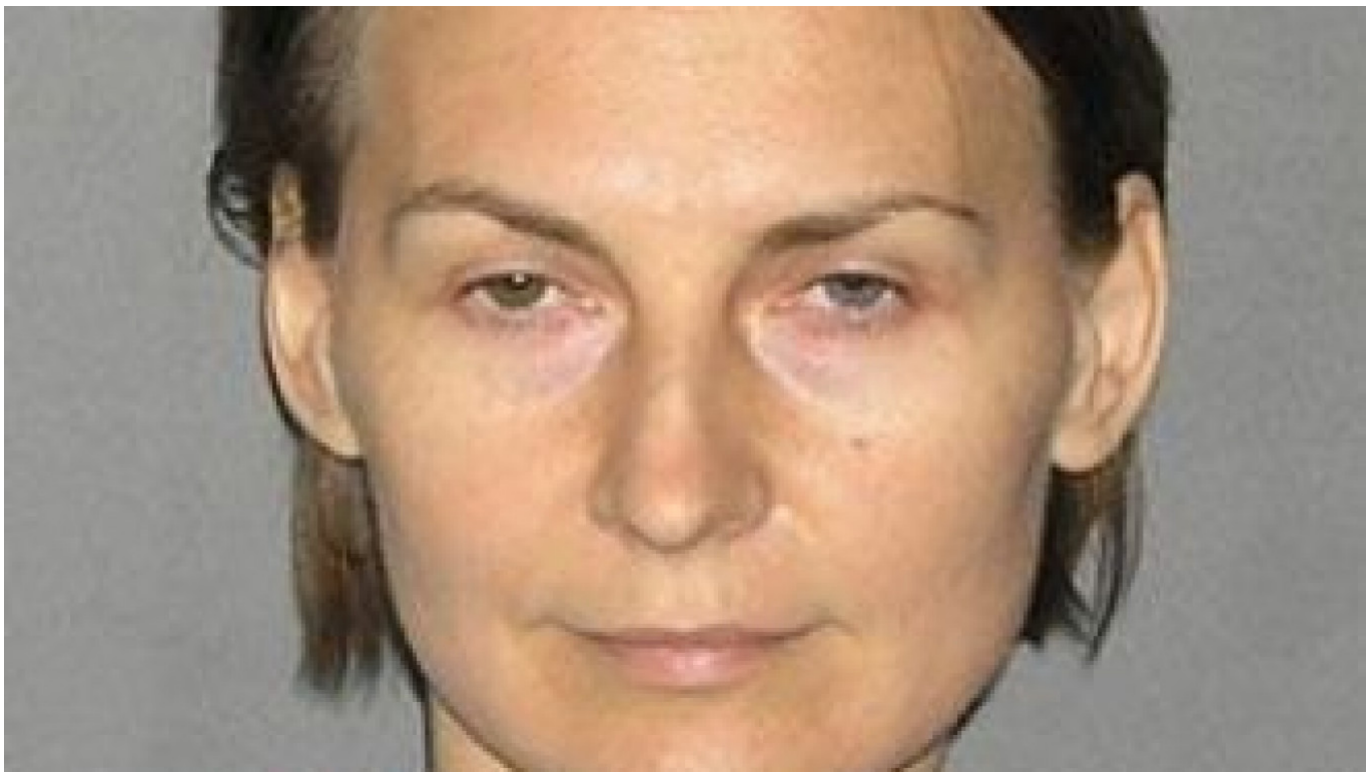
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Russian Spy's Closeness to Obama's Circle Prompted 2010 Arrests

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Cynthia Murphy, whose real name is Lydia Guryev, was one of 10 spies arrested in June 2010.

The FBI decided to arrest a 10-member Russian spy ring after one of its female agents got "close enough" to President Barack Obama's inner circle — but the agent wasn't Anna Chapman and the worry wasn't about sex, U.S. media reported Wednesday.

The spy who prompted the FBI to abruptly swoop down on the ring in June 2010 was Cynthia Murphy, a mother of two who had just earned her MBA, Justice Department officials told ABC News.

Murphy, whose real name is Lydia Guryev, worked for Manhattan-based Morea Financial Services, which offered tax advice, and had communicated with a fundraiser and "personal friend" of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, according to court papers filed after the spies' arrest.

The fundraiser, Alan Patricof, said in a statement in 2010 that he had spoke with Murphy many times by telephone and also met with her a few times after retaining her firm more than

two years earlier, ABC reported. He denied ever discussing politics with her.

At the time of the spies' arrest, U.S. authorities suggested that Chapman, the flame-haired New York-based spy, had forced them to act after she became suspicious that her cover had been blown. The FBI feared that all 10 spies would flee the country.

C. Frank Figliuzzi, assistant director for counterintelligence at the FBI, indicated in a BBC interview broadcast this week that it was Murphy's closeness to Obama's administration that had sparked the arrests.

"We were becoming very concerned they were getting close enough to a sitting U.S. cabinet member that we thought we could no longer allow this to continue," Figliuzzi said in the two-part BBC series titled "Modern Spies."

He did not identify the agent, although the BBC broadcast pictures of Chapman during the interview.

Some British and U.S. media subsequently reported that the agent was Chapman and that the FBI had been worried that she might seduce a Cabinet member.

But FBI spokesman Paul Bresson denied that sex concerns played any role in the arrests and said Figliuzzi's comments matched information provided in the 2010 court documents. "There is no allegation or suggestion in the complaint that Anna Chapman or anyone else associated with this investigation attempted to seduce a U.S. cabinet official," Bresson told ABC.

Murphy, 39 at the time of her arrest, was married to Richard Murphy, another sleeper agent, and lived in Montclair, New Jersey, with their daughters, Kate, 11, and Lisa, 9. The family had lived in the United States since the 1990s.

Murphy, who earned $135,000 a year, pleaded guilty to conspiring to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign country.

She and the other nine spies were returned to Russia as part of a spy swap in July 2010.

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