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Inthe Spotlight

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This week, television presenter Ksenia Sobchak had both her privacy and her safe invaded, as it turned out that investigators were following her love life pretty carefully.

Protest leader Alexei Navalny posted an Instagram photo that was quite revealing: Ilya Yashin, Sobchak and Anastasia Udaltsova were pictured waiting for questioning at the Investigative Committee on Tuesday. Yashin is shown grinning awkwardly and Sobchak, her arms crossed defiantly, is also smiling grimly. The picture makes them look like a rather joyless Bonnie and Clyde.

By the end of Tuesday, there wasn't much that we didn't know about Sobchak: where her apartment is located, how much cash she keeps in her safe, and according to Life News, even what kind of knickers she wears.

The Investigative Committee seemed to have turned into a gossip column as it stressed that Yashin's "place of abode" was Sobchak's apartment. And police lovingly posted photographs of wads of money "stored in more than 100 envelopes" as we learned, much to our amazement, that her restaurant and corporate parties paid cash.

"Sobchak has discovered a new hangout: the Investigative Committee," NTV television gloated. Conversely, gossip websites turned into hotbeds of political discussion over the treatment of one of their favorite targets. "What is the world coming to? There's politics on this website too," wrote one of the commentators on the bitchy Spletnik.ru website.

Komsomolskaya Pravda wrote that Sobchak's money compromised the whole opposition movement. "Judging by the dubious contents of the safe of one of the main oppositionists, after the victory of our newly minted fighters with corruption, we can expect something fantastic: a global breakthrough in misappropriation and misuse of state money," it harrumphed.

Moskovsky Komsomolets was far more sympathetic, saying the raid made a "depressing impression" and that Sobchak had been punished for being a "traitor" to Vladimir Putin.

She told Ekho Moskvy radio station that she saw it as a "political reprisal" against her and that she suspected investigators had picked a time when she would have a particularly large amount of cash at home.

Some of the investigators were "sadistic," even forcing her to go to the toilet with a man in a mask holding a machine gun, she said. They also read out old love letters in front of her new boyfriend, chuckling and adding expressions, she said. One even told her she should have gone out with an FSB agent instead.

In a questionable scoop, the Life News website published official investigation pictures of Sobchak's safe before the officials did, she said. Life News did not explain the origin of its photographs, which were identical to the ones posted on the Moscow police's website Tuesday evening. The Tvoi Den website also gave details of what Sobchak was wearing when she opened the door to police, details that seemed to have come from a leak in the investigation.

Sobchak seemed subdued Wednesday evening as she interviewed Nashi founder Vasily Yakemenko, who has stepped down as head of the state youth agency, on her Sobchak Live show on Dozhd TV. In an earlier incident that is bound to linger on his record, she went up and filmed him on her cell phone eating at a very expensive Italian restaurant back in October. This time, however, the softly spoken Yakemenko ran rings around her as he confounded her expectations by saying he thinks that he has no real supporters from his glory days in Nashi tents — but neither do Navalny and Yashin.

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