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Investigator Killed in Likely Contract Hit

By The Moscow Times

September 13, 2012



A crime scene unit working early Thursday outside the apartment building where investigator Alexander Leonov was killed.

A transportation investigator and former lawyer for celebrities was fatally shot late Wednesday near his Moscow apartment building in what federal investigators said was likely a contract killing.

Alexander Leonov, 38, had just arrived to his home on Ulitsa Krylatskiye Kholmy around 11 p.m. Wednesday with his common-law wife when an unidentified assailant shot him in the head and chest, killing him, Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin told Interfax.

The Investigative Committee said in a statement that the murder was probably linked to Leonov's work in law enforcement. Leonov was an investigator of important cases for the Moscow interregional investigative directorate for transportation, a job he had held for about two months. Before that he had worked as a lawyer and for other law enforcement agencies, the statement said.

Up until about a year ago, Leonov had worked for the Annexus law firm, defending celebrities including pop star Filipp Kirkorov, tabloid Life News reported.

Leonov's spouse, who witnessed the crime, was identified by Annexus head Sergei Zhorin on Twitter as the judge Tatyana Adamova. Zhorin speculated that the killing may have been intended as a means of putting pressure on Adamova in a case she was hearing.

Evidence from the scene of the homicide pointed to it being a contract killing, the Investigative Committee statement said, noting that the murderer took unidentified measures to cover his tracks and quickly fled the scene. The killing also appeared to be planned, since the assailant knew where Leonov lived and the approximate time he came home from work, the statement said.

The inquiry into the killing will be led by federal and Moscow investigators and overseen by the Investigative Committee leadership, the statement said.

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