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Psychic Suspected of Serial Killings Detained

By Allison Quinn

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Moscow police on Thursday detained a 42-year-old self-proclaimed psychic on suspicion of murdering at least four models moonlighting as escorts, a statement on the official police website said.

According to investigators, the suspect, Georgy Martirosyan, lured his victims by offering to "remove bad karma." His victims came to him on their own, police say, in the hopes that he would improve the bad aura they were getting from working as prostitutes, Newsru.com reported.

He offered to do things like "cleanse their souls," "recharge them with positive energy" and "improve their financial situations," but instead he wound up murdering and robbing them.

Overall, police say he stole between 1.5 million and 3 million rubles ($50,000–$100,000)

from the women, all of whom are believed to have been models supplementing their meager incomes with work as prostitutes.

One of the victims, a 23-year-old whose body was found in September 2011, asked Martirosyan to "check" her clients by looking at photographs of them, hoping that he could warn her if any of them were dangerous.

"She was officially working for some company, but it was just a cover. She was actually working as a high-class prostitute, and she had a lot of rich clients," Martirosyan allegedly told police.

Martirosyan, a Tbilisi native who calls himself "the Wizard" on his VKontakte page, is suspected in at least three other murders.

In another disturbing detail of the case, police say Martirosyan tried to make the women's deaths look like accidental drug overdoses.

"He knew that women living this model lifestyle might be hooked on downers: heroin and methadone. ... So an overdose would have seemed normal," a police source told Newsru.com.

But a CCTV system in the apartment building of one of the dead women captured him on camera, and police soon had a lead. They now have up to six months to build a case to convict him.

Martirosyan denies that it is him on the videotape.

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