

Dancer Detained in Bolshoi Acid Attack

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March 05, 2013



Sergei Filin

Ballet soloist Pavel Dmitrichenko, who had danced for the Bolshoi Theater since 2002, was detained Tuesday in connection with the Jan. 17 acid attack on Bolshoi director Sergei Filin.

Earlier that day, police said Dmitrichenko's home had been searched and another suspect in the case had been detained. But official details were sparse, and a police spokesman declined further comment.

A source with links to the Bolshoi troupe told The Moscow Times that Dmitrichenko was in a relationship with dancer Angelina Vorontsova, a protege of Nikolai Tsiskaridze, who was struggling with Filin for influence in the theater. Tsiskaridze, according to the source, did not order but certainly "inspired" the attack.

The first detained suspect is 31-year-old Andrei Lipatov, a Moscow region resident who allegedly drove an accomplice, Yury Zarutsky, to Filin's home to carry out the attack, Izvestia reported.

Zarutsky, who is believed to have flung a jar of sulfuric acid at Filin, causing severe burns to his face and eyes, narrowly escaped police Tuesday morning but was detained by the evening, reports said.

Lipatov was detained around 6 a.m. in the Moscow region town of Stupino, near the Bolshoi Theater's dacha complex, reports said. A further link between those two suspects and either Dmitrichenko or Tsiskaridze could not be immediately established.

News reports said investigators had identified Lipatov and Zarutsky by examining records of all the phone calls made near Filin's house around the time of the attack. A similar method was used to determine suspects in the 2006 killing of prominent journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

According to the online tabloid Lifenews, known to have strong links with law enforcement agencies, the police searched an apartment that belongs to Dmitrichenko's mother but has been occupied by a tenant for the last eight years. The apartment is located on Troitskaya Ulitsa, in the same building where Filin has a home, and in front of where he was attacked.

Filin, 42, was hospitalized with burns to his face and eyes after a masked attacker splashed acid on his face outside his apartment building. He has undergone a number of surgeries on his face and eyes and may still need a few more, though it is not clear whether his eyesight will be fully restored.

Investigators linked the attack to Filin's job. Filin has said he knows the identity of his assailant but will not reveal it because of the ongoing investigation.

Katerina Novikova, a Bolshoi Theater spokeswoman, told Interfax that the fact that the police have achieved tangible results was "good news" and that Filin would likely come back to work in the summer during the theater's upcoming tour in London.

A source in the theater said the mood there was "grim," while security measures in the building had been greatly enhanced with more guards on duty.

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