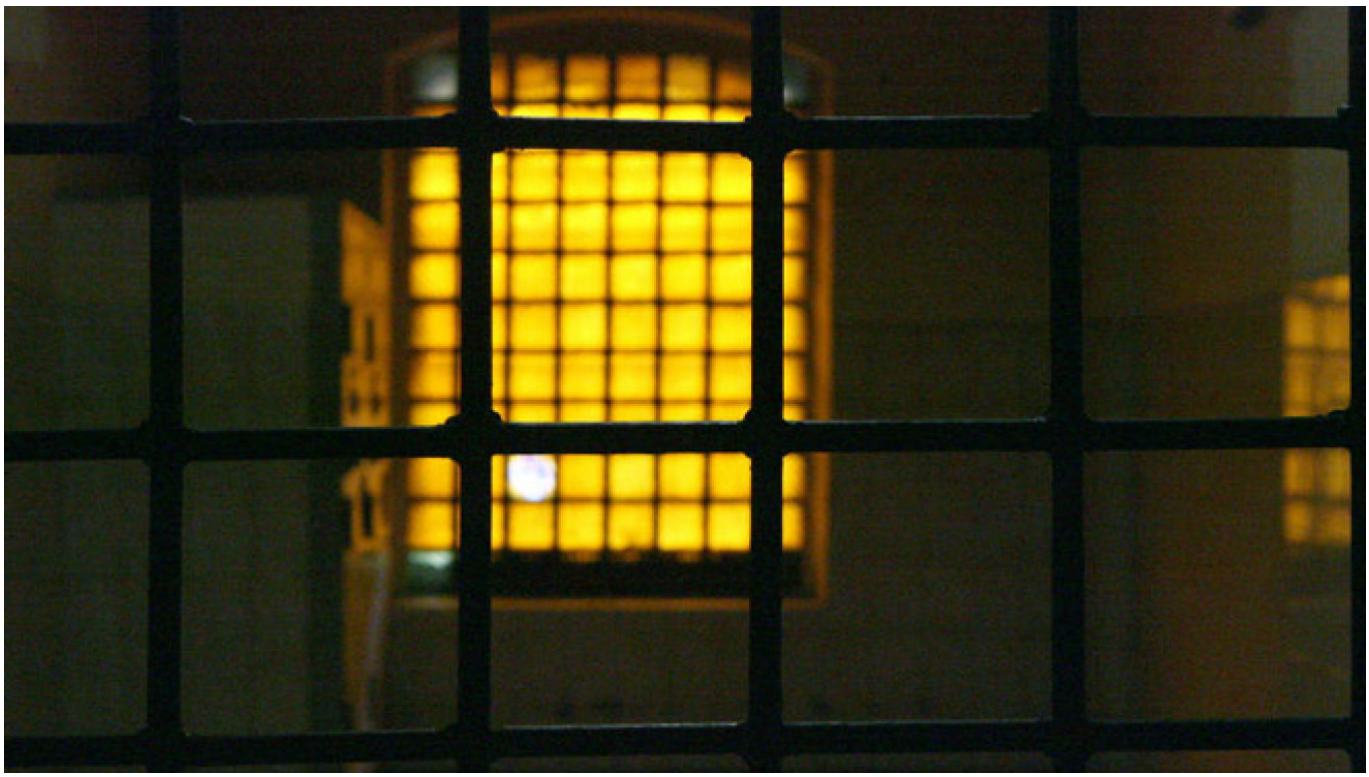
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Escaped Prisoner on the Loose After Killing Cop, Robbing Pensioner in Vladivostok

By Gabrielle Tetrault-Farber

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After having fled the scene, Bespalov reportedly broke into the apartment of a female pensioner to steal a change of clothes, TASS news agency reported.

A prisoner opened fire on a group of policemen in Vladivostok as they escorted him back to his penal colony Tuesday, killing one officer and seriously injuring another, the regional branch of the Interior Ministry announced.

Three officers had been driving two inmates back to their colony Tuesday. One of the inmates — identified as Vladimir Bespalov — allegedly nabbed one police officer's firearm and began shooting, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

One police officer died immediately and another was seriously wounded, the ministry said. The third officer, who had been behind the wheel at the time, was not injured in the incident.

Vladimir Bespalov then fled the scene on a city bus, the TASS news agency reported.

The Interior Ministry did not specify the whereabouts of the second inmate who was in the vehicle at the time of the incident.

The Interior Ministry urged the residents of Vladivostok to keep an eye out for the armed fugitive. Bespalov walks with a limp, police said. As his left leg was amputated below the knee, he uses a prosthetic limb.

After having fled the scene, Bespalov reportedly broke into the apartment of a female pensioner to steal a change of clothes, TASS news agency reported, citing an unnamed source in law enforcement.

The regional branch of the Investigative Committee has launched a criminal case into the incident. Bespalov could face charges for attacking law enforcement officials, stealing weapons and escaping from police custody.

Bespalov was sentenced to prison for drug trafficking in 2008 but was released on parole in 2012, a local news site reported. He was later arrested and convicted for the same offense, and returned to prison.

Contact the author at g.tetraultfarber@imedia.ru

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