

Elderly Russian Woman Suspected of Multiple Macabre Murders, Dismemberments

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After a St. Petersburg pensioner was detained on suspicion of having dismembered an elderly acquaintance, she confessed that this was only the latest in a string of 14 grisly murders, Russian media reported Wednesday.

The local branch of the Investigative Committee announced Tuesday that Tamara Samsonova, 68, was suspected of killing a 79-year-old acquaintance and then chopping up the body and leaving its dismembered corpse near a scenic neighborhood pond.

News site Fontanka.ru released a screen shot of what it claimed was CCTV camera footage showing Samsonova moving the woman's body last Thursday.

Three days later, a torso with only one leg and one arm was discovered by a nearby pond.

Samsonova was detained shortly thereafter in her apartment, where the investigators said

they found traces of evidence of the recent crime.

Following her detention, investigators discovered Samsonova's diary, which provided vivid accounts of several shocking murders.

Fontanka.ru reported that she is now being investigated for 13 additional murders as well.

Various media reports have described two murders — in 2000 and 2003 — both of which allegedly occurred in Samsonova's apartment, and both of which ended with the bodies being chopped into pieces.

In 2005, Samsonova reported her own husband as a missing person. His body was never found.

Meanwhile, St. Petersburg investigators said in a statement amid a media firestorm Wednesday that they do not yet have proof that Samsonova committed all of these crimes.

And Samsonova has reportedly provided police with an array of colorful tales since having been detained, some of which appear at odds with one another.

She claimed initially that she was an actress and a graduate of the prestigious Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, and then changed her story — saying she had worked as an attendant at one of the city's most prestigious hotels, Fontanka reported.

During the course of their investigation, Samsonova will have to undergo a psychiatric evaluation, they said.

If tried for multiple murders and convicted, Samsonova could face a life sentence.

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