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Navalny's Supporters Track Down His Attackers, as Police Dawdle

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Alexei Navalny / Instagram

As Moscow police have dawdled over their investigation into a chemical attack on April 27 against opposition leader Alexei Navalny, ordinary Internet users have already unmasked two of the men apparently involved.

On Sunday, the pro-Kremlin television network REN-TV released footage showing the attack, evidently filmed by someone who may have known about it in advance. In the video, the faces of the attacker and a bystander are blurred.

This Monday, Navalny supporter Eugene Bryzgalin revealed that Ren-TV's website actually contained another three versions of the same video clip, including one version that revealed the face of the second man in the footage.

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Bloggers later identified the second man as Alexei Kulakov, a member of the radical pro-Kremlin movement "SERB." The newspaper Novaya Gazeta contacted Kulakov, who first denied but soon admitted to being present at the attack, though he says he didn't know what would happen, and now condemns the act.

"Honestly, I only went there to film on my camera. A person called me and said that something was being planned at that place. Right now, I can't say who it was. I'd need to look at my phone. [...] But when I saw what happened there... I strongly denounce this act," Kulakov said, insisting that he's never committed any violence against opposition activists.

Embed:

> Не стесняются. РенТв (отдел Лайфньюз) публикует видео с зелёнкой. Лучшее доказательство, что фсб и АП тоже было в деле. Фирменный стиль pic.twitter.com/dCnvZbXV5t
>
> — Alexey Navalny (@navalny) April 30, 2017

The actual attacker, however, appears to have a history of assault against Navalny.

In a widely shared blog post, Twitter user "Mr. Radmir" speculated that the man who attacked Navalny is most likely Alexander Petrunko, the SERB activist who infamously splashed a bottle of urine at photographs by Jock Sturges at a controversial exhibition in Moscow last September.

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Months earlier, in February 2016, Petrunko smashed a pie into Navalny's face outside the Moscow office of the Anti-Corruption Foundation — the same place Navalny was attacked with antiseptic last week.

"Mr. Radmir" compares still images from the footage of the April 27 attack to photographs of Petrunko on social media. Both men appear to wear the same clothes and have the same body type.

Link:
https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/someone-is-blinding-opposition-activists-with-chemicals-57866?src=ilaw

Speaking to the radio station Govorit Moskva, one of the SERB movement's leaders, Gosha Tarasevich, denied the allegations against Petrunko, saying Petrunko has been living in Crimea for some time. Tarasevich also accused Navalny of staging the attack himself as a

publicity stunt.

Navalny was briefly hospitalized after the attack on April 27, and was later diagnosed with a chemical burn on his right eye. He says doctors now believe the antiseptic was mixed with "something else," as his injury is more serious than is typical with ordinary zelyonka. It is possible that his vision will be permanently impaired.

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