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<http://back-in-ussr.com/2016/12/vzvat-s-polichnym.html> 15 Dec 2016

<http://www.specnaz.ru/articles/242/21/2551.htm> ВЗЯТЬ С ПОЛИЧНЫМ-2 30 Nov 2016

Spetsnaz also calls the article *The Red and the Black* - Marti Peterson – translation:

Spetsnaz Rossii English translation: <http://antiterror.one/en/node/20> Part 2 *Red and Black*,
Translation by Stanislav Stankevich

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HOW IT WAS [CHAMPIONSHIP IN SHOOTING](#)

SPETSNAZ ROSSII NO. 4 (283) May 2020

Nov 30, 2016 Author: Pavel Bezgolosov

HOW IT WAS

Author: PAVEL BEZGOLOSOV

Catch Them in the Act Part 2

November 30, 2016



Photo: Martha Peterson in Lubyanka, next to the American Consul Gross. Photo from the newspaper Izvestia

In the mid-1980s, members of KGB Group "A" [Spetsnaz "Alpha" Group] captured more than a dozen Soviet citizens who were American spies. Most of the captures were credited to the Alpha Group Section [otdeleniye] headed by Vladimir Zaitsev.

Ending. [Start](#)

LIEUTENANT INZHEVAT

Until today, I figured Martha was an ordinary, rather highly-placed person of free morals and behavior. I can't say anything – a classy operator! And she lived her legend the entire time to the max! I wonder what would have happened if she really went all-out? Probably something really crazy if she had put all her whole legend on the line!

Well, for almost two hours now we've had ten surveillance cars yo-yoing all over Moscow after her. What can I say, she's one cool broad! And a real pro! She's put the entire team through a real master clinic today!

Leaving the cinema, Martha did not return to her car. After walking a couple of hundred meters along Petrovka and popping into several courtyards in this area, she first got on the bus, then rode around the city for a while on a trolley and went in the subway. You know, there are such miserable excuses for intelligence officers who, when they are checking for surveillance, first+ tie their shoelaces, then throw "discreet" glances around themselves, then suddenly change their direction of movement and go off in the opposite direction!



Martha Peterson's Driving license

Usually these are not regular experts, but "outsourced people" and quite often the Resident (chief of station) sets one up specially as a planned failure, so that his expert does the necessary job at the same time in another place. A true professional intelligence officer would never allow such an "insult" to surveillance officers. By the way, it's also because by acting out such purely specific "James Bond" behavior, he would immediately announce that he belongs to the intelligence community. Does he really need this? Especially if he is legendized as a normal embassy or trade mission employee. Martha didn't allow herself any such thing. Well, "a pro is a pro!"

"Attention! The target got off at a stop" I passed the information to the rest of my team.

"Attention, she caught a taxi, number ...," I snuggled up to the eyepiece of the binoculars. – "I'm following her."

CAPTAIN ZAITSEV

Sharovатов went inside a gas station, which at the time looked like a cross between a telephone exchange and a field headquarters of the Red Army during the Civil War. He looked around, nodded his head to me at the exit, and left the station. I went behind him.

“Where the hell did you put your staff?” Sharovатов asked me, still looking around and seeing only our employees around him.

“Who the hell knows where they are!” I sincerely answered him, because in fact I had no idea where anyone was put.

“How’s that?” he did not understand.

“That was not my job. When it became clear that it was the target that would lay down the cache, and it was decided to beef up here, only our guys were here when I arrived.”

“Good. Are your people spread out?” he asked for some reason, knowing full well the arrangement of my group, if only because he insisted on it.

“Yes sir!”

The Colonel cast a sidelong glance at me, as if expecting that the natural continuation of my so strictly formal, “according to book” response would be that I would now click my heels and stand at attention.

“Don’t push me,” is all he said. “Everything is now on the platoon, my Chief,” Sharovатов clearly had in mind the head of our Directorate, “because he calls every fifteen minutes.” Because every ten minutes they also call him from above. Do you realize the gravity of the situation?

“Every operation we have comes with such responsibility,” I shrugged phlegmatically. – It’s our job description.”

“But we have a special situation today. We’ll be catching a big fish. Very big,” he added after a moment of silence. “It all comes down to her laying down a cache at the bridge,” the colonel, even in a private conversation, outside and with me, did not say out loud the name of the person we would be taking down in a few dozen minutes. “And we better not screw up,” he continued. – “Do you realize this?”

“As far as I can understand,” I answered his question with a problem, “the main issue consists of two parts,” I looked at my boss, waiting for his permission to continue.

“Speak,” he nodded to me.

“There are two issues,” I continued. – “The first is that we must be firmly convinced that the cache has been placed so we don’t miss the evidence, and the second is how we will take her.

“Correct. And what do you think is the main thing?”



Vladimir Zaitsev with Valentin Shergin (left) during combat tour of the Alpha guys in Afghanistan

“The first, of course!” I sincerely wondered how Sharovатов, well aware of *my* personal experience, abilities and physical capabilities, plus those of my comrades, could doubt that we could capture a seasoned intelligence officer, albeit a *woman*. And by strictly following the designated plan. And without screwing up. As I recall, we have even taken down healthy *men* without any problems!

“Everything is clear with the first problem,” Sharovатов continued in an unusually dry manner. “We will take her only when we have at least more or less decent reasons. We have found out the location of the cache. How are you planning to determine that it has been placed?”

"It takes time to lay it down. It's in the arch of the concrete foundation, and just to simply throw the bundle into this arch from a distance of several meters, she'll need a couple of seconds of delay for a short stop and to take aim. Here in these seconds we will decide at the very last moment."

"Are you firmly convinced that you can't put anyone there for a visual?"

"Absolutely," I answered. "They are not idiots. And when they chose this spot, they probably foresaw such an opportunity on our part."

"Are your people on the time schedule?"

"Everything is ready, everyone is in position."

"Good. But keep in mind that the case is not even under the personal control of the Chairman. Do you understand?"

"I understand," I replied, only now beginning to realize the fullness of my responsibility. "But it's no big deal! What questions do you have about the second issue? Are you doubting me and my group?"

"Don't flatter yourself," he answered me quietly, in an undertone. – "Everything is not so simple. We just got this information, literally about ten minutes ago. Your little sweetheart has six karate dans. Do you understand anything about this?"

"In karate?" I asked him. "Or what level her sixth dan signifies?"

"Both this and that. Is this something like hand-to-hand combat?"

"I would say that it means a good hand-to-hand fight. Unless you think she'll only employ its contactless version like in sports competition."

"Yeah. And what is a sixth dan?"

"In karate dans, the ranking of a fighter is determined after reaching a master's level, and according to our classification six dans corresponds somewhere between an International and an Honored Sports Master. Not exactly, but the level is about the same."

"Interesting!" extended the colonel. "And how are you going to take her?"

“Well, as usual,” I shrugged my shoulders. “You might think that we never took down sports masters! Both masters and international masters!” I added, looking at my immediate superior, who was dwelling in doubt and reflection on the situation that was evolving along the way.

“It is impossible in this case, Volodya, to take her as usual. It is impossible! There was a special order that there would not be a single scratch and not a single bruise on this little bitch! After we capture her, they plan to show her on TV all over the country, and we don’t want the “Amers” to have any reason to protest!”

“But they’ll do that anyway! You act like this is the first time and you don’t know how it goes!”

“Yes, I am indeed aware of this, but it’s one thing when they accuse us of something baseless, but it’s quite another thing when they can damage us. So, we’ve decided - I’ll go take her myself. With Victor, the two of us.”

I really went nuts after these words!



Actually the moment of the capture of Martha Peterson. Right in militia uniform – Vladimir "Volodya" Zaitsev [To his left is Sharovtov]

“Comrade Colonel,” I began my sentence carefully.

“What, you want to suggest that I look at myself and remember how old I am?” Sharovатов interrupted me. “Well, I looked at myself in the mirror this morning while shaving and haven’t forgotten how old I am! But there’s no other way! It’s one thing when your crowd of healthy guys jumps out, and it’s quite another when two old men come up to her slowly and leisurely. Who just happen to be walking by. She won’t pay any attention to old guys. We’ll quickly tie her down and hold her, and meanwhile you will show up right on time. It’ll be like that!”

I decided to put pressure, if not on his emotions, then on the mind:

“No way you can tie her down. Even if she pays no attention to you at all. You couldn’t grab and tie me down no matter how suddenly you attack me! It’ll be suicide for sure on your part! It’s like charging a machine gun to shut down the pillbox!”

And I immediately regretted these words, belatedly remembering that my colonel had passed through the entire war as a young infantryman.

“If it’s necessary, Volodya, to take out a machine gun, then you have to do it! So, the time has come for the machine gun to fall! And behind us now, like in ‘41, are both Moscow and the whole country!” quietly, but very, very firmly almost wheezed Sharovатов. “Our job is this - to defend our motherland! As soon as she leaves the bridge, Yerofeyev and I will walk past her, and then we take her. And while she is busy with us, you fly up there.” in a tone not subject to discussion he gave the order. “Execute this order! And without discussion!” he added, seeing that I still wanted to raise objections.

COLONEL SHAROVATOV

Leaving Zaitsev on the street, I went inside the gas station and, seeing Yerofeyev surrounded by his officers, nodded to him to leave.

“This is, Vitya, what is going on,” after giving him an update on the latest reports, I said. “What do you think we should say? Any suggestions?”

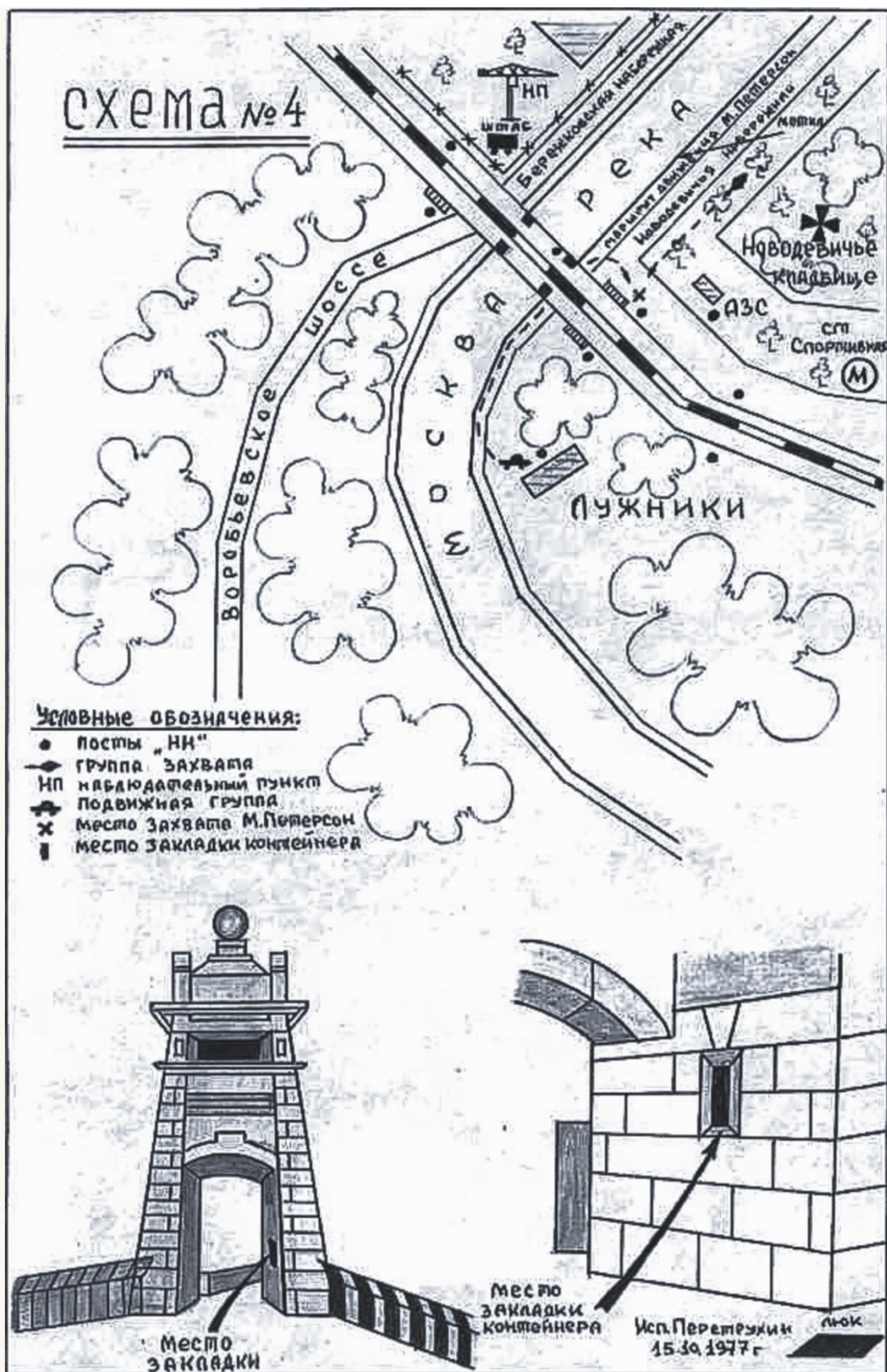
“I believe that we have only two options,” he answered. “It seems to me that if we have reason to believe that she has laid the cache, then first we need to make sure that it is laid down with absolutely certainty. Because if it turns out that there is nothing there, then we would have totally screwed it up. And not only we are screwed, but the Office and the country is screwed! In this case, the Americans will raise such a screech all over the planet that no one will care what we say.”

“So, what’s next?”

“And next everything is very simple,” Viktor continued. “After we get confirmation that the cache has been laid, you and I will try to take her right by the stairs, right after she comes down from the bridge. You came up with this correctly; she won’t pay any attention to us old guys.”

LIEUTENANT COLONEL YEROFEEV

I went through the war in front-line intelligence. I began as a private in a reconnaissance platoon of a battalion stationed at the Brest Fortress in ’41 and finished as captain, commander of division intelligence company in a suburb of Berlin. In general, I have seen war, and the sights, and life, and death. As they say, I know everything, I can do everything and I understand everything. And my service record of more than three hundred sorties beyond enemy lines is the best confirmation and proof of this.



Schematic of the final stage of Operation Setun-2

To be honest, during the war I did not hope to survive. No, it wasn't that. To hope - everyone hopes. It would be more correct to say, I did not expect and did not believe that I would survive. Although, I hoped. Yes indeed, I hoped. But, perhaps, precisely because I did not believe in the possibility and because of this I related philosophically calmly to the likelihood of my eventual death on the next sortie. Perhaps precisely because I did not allow fear and other emotions to hinder the cold calculation of behavior variations, I therefore survived.

Although there were cases when it seemed that this time was definitely it ... Totally it. As when, near Novorossiysk on hill Sladkaya Golova (Sweet Head), our group was pressed to the ground by machine-gun fire. So thick you couldn't lift your head or anything. It was on that very sortie that our platoon commander Sashka Kogan was killed. The very same Kogan who was the author of "Brigantine," but, however, we only later found out. [Translator: The poem *Brigantina* was written by **Pavel** Kogan in 1937. He died at the front in WW II]

But nothing happened! We survived. Then the Fritzes sent their reconnaissance group to capture us, and in the oncoming hand-to-hand combat we not only defeated them and were able to get out, but we could even carry out our dead.

Since then a lot of time has passed and a lot of water has flowed. And a lot of things happened. Immediately after the war, I fought against Ukrainian nationalists and the Baltic "Forest Brothers," exposed a gangster underground in Western Belarus, until I finally settled in Moscow, specializing in counterintelligence work against the United States and Great Britain. Of course, now I am in charge, and I personally do not participate in detentions – I guess it did me no good to train a bunch of he-men, or whatever. But, apparently, I'll have to do it. Like back then: in hand-to-hand combat and with superior enemy forces.

No, I understand that Volodka [Vladimir] and I, to paraphrase Gaidar, can only stand for a couple of minutes and hold out for ten seconds until Zaitsev and the rest of his warriors arrive, but I also understand that in the upcoming hand-to-hand detention I have zero chances to return to my people. And we are no longer twenty, and the level of training we have with this lady is not comparable, and in fact, in the very real sense of the word, she will fight not for life, but to kill. In the final analysis, she has absolutely nothing to lose.

I understand all this, understand perfectly! I understand and charge ahead. Because this is our job - to defend the Motherland. Without fanfare and without emotion. It's our job.

CAPTAIN ZAITSEV

I raised the microphone to my lips:

"Andrey?"

"Apparently, it's for you," I heard in answer. For security reasons and to avoid the possible interception of our messages from the American embassy, we did not give any true names, generally trying to avoid any specifics that could be tied to the ongoing operation. And so we didn't have to use radio, which was almost certainly listened to by the Americans, the technical group had previously stretched telephone cables that connected individual groups of participants to the command post. I put the receiver on the phone cradle, and immediately it rang.

"22:56, second." reported the observation post. – "We see her under a tree on the embankment. In your direction."

Leaving the gas station, literally a minute later I spotted a lonely silhouette clearly heading towards the bridge. Martha walked leisurely and absolutely calmly along the promenade, and her silhouette clearly stood out against the background of water shimmering in the moonlight. At such a distance, it was quite difficult to determine just who it was, since in her pantsuit she looked very much like a man.

"Well, is that her?" I asked a female officer from *The Seven*, whose duties included surveillance monitoring of the female part of the embassy staff.

"It's her," the employee answered me calmly. – "It's Peterson. I couldn't confuse her walk with anyone. It is exactly her. Yes, if you look into the instrument, you will see for yourself" the officer meant the night vision device.



Bag with which Martha Peterson went for a cache operation. A fragment of the exposition at the Ronald Reagan Library

"I see," I muttered, examining my old acquaintance in the green color of the lenses of the device.

"Everyone, maximum readiness!" I said into the microphone. – "We've started the stopwatch!

In order to lay the container, Martha had to climb the bridge and walk across it. That's something, and you couldn't call a stroll across the Krasnoluzhsky bridge pleasant, especially when there is a train on it: the narrow pedestrian path is shaky and the darkness heightens the senses. But Peterson, having waited for some time under the trees, unhurriedly headed to the bridge and began to climb the stairs.

At some point, she slowed down her climb somewhat, listening carefully for something, and then continued and began to walk through the arches built into the huge bridge supports. At this time, she disappeared from sight and, as our analysts determined, it was in one of these arches that she had to make a dead drop.

"Climb. Seventeen seconds," said the timekeeper. – "The first arch. Eight seconds."

Martha appeared from behind the bridge.

"The second arch. Eight seconds."

Martha continued to move across the bridge. Having passed the second arch, she stopped, leaned on the railing of the bridge, and started examining the water of the river rolling under it.

"Stop on the first third of the movement. Twenty three seconds." The voice on the phone sounded absolutely calm, even impassive, but I somehow knew that the nerves of this outwardly absolutely impassive officer, who was reporting the timetable of Martha's movements on the bridge for us, were strained to the limit.

"The third arch. Seventeen seconds!" You could hear excitement in the timekeeper's voice.

"The fourth arch. Eight seconds. She's continuing her movement. The fifth arch. Eight seconds. Stop in the middle of the bridge."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL YEROFEYEV

Here it is, this very moment of truth! Martha was standing in the middle of the bridge and examined the water, outwardly completely calm.

"Well, was the dead drop done?" Sharovатов asked me.

"I am absolutely sure that it is in the fourth support," I answered him. You can take her."

CAPTAIN ZAITSEV

Sometimes, in individual and certain specific cases, one must exceed one's own authority. If only to prevent the two veterans who went through the entire war from risking their lives now, in peacetime. Of course, but after all, ours is such work that the war never ends for us. Why this risk, which no one needs, if instead I take this woman with my people, "without dust and noise?" So that she won't even notice it.

And I wanted to say to hell with all of her "dans!" And such we've taken down heavy hitters like her before!" But it was totally useless to argue about the most optimal detention tactics, whether with Yerofeyev, and especially with Sharovатов, especially when they were feeling like they were at the front, at the

forward edge of battle again and chomping at the bit, it, so I decided to go another way.

“Volodya,” while we changed clothes: he was in his work uniform, and I was in the uniform of a police officer, I turned to my colleague. “The *old men* here,” as we called our leadership ‘out of earshot,’ decided to take her on their own.

He stared at me, bewildered.

“Uh-huh,” I confirmed to him, nodding my head.

“So they decided to heroically commit suicide?” He asked me gloomily when he finally realized exactly what I wanted to tell him.

“I don’t know what they decided there, they didn’t share it with me, but that’s exactly what they decided.”

LIEUTENANT COLONEL YEROFYEV

“Victor! It’s time for our exit!” Sharovatonov curtly threw at me, barely tearing himself away from the eyepieces of the night-vision device through which we watched this whole sad picture.

With one motion jamming a construction helmet on our heads and donning construction vests on the go, we silently moved to our stage exit.



Vladimir Zaitsev during his work as an assistant to the head of the government of Russia

“So,” he told me briefly. – “We are going to meet her. We talk about some kind of trench there and figure out where we’ll dig it. As soon as we catch up with her, you rush at her feet, I’ll twist her arms. And then the guys will rush up. Got it?”

“It’s not trivial,” I answered him only. – “In hand-to-hand fighting it’s tougher. We can handle it. It’s no big thing.”

“Here it is. Damn you, where did I tell you to lay it?” without a pause, Sharovатов began to chastise me.

“Where they told me, that’s where I laid it!” I picked up the game. “And don’t blame me for something that I didn’t do!”

Martha walked towards us, watching this small and very believable production scene with interest, and, apparently, did not doubt for a second the full authenticity of the spectacle being played before her eyes. Allowing her to walk a little past me, I turned around and "*caught!*" - like a goalkeeper in a soccer match - dove at her legs.

CAPTAIN ZAITSEV

I was no more than a hundred meters away from the target, and so I sped to them at a speed that I had never run on physical training tests. In the ten seconds that elapsed from the time when Yerofeyev threw himself at Peterson’s feet and I got there, Martha turned around toward him like a standing tornado and with a short knee extension pierced him with a jab in the chest, that is, “from her toe.”

At that moment Sharovатов grabbed her with his hands, but without even turning around, she struck him in the solar plexus with the back of her elbow, and then, with the edge of her foot, just like the first time, she kicked him in the shin, close-in and sharply.

The world record in hundred-meter dash is about ten seconds, and it seems to me that I was close to that result. When I rushed up to her, Peterson, with the most cold and merciless expression on her face, going low-low, aiming for my groin, kicked towards me. She clearly hoped that I would not have time to react and would run into her, but I turned the situation around, letting the blow pass by me. Instantly, with a very well-worked out combination, with the best she was capable of, she threw a punch clearly aiming at my head.

It is wrong when they say that good fighters are passionless in a duel. Most likely, by this they mean not a complete absence of emotions, but the absence of a so-called “hot” rage obscuring the look and sober assessment of the situation. Well, yes, that’s right. Such emotions have never helped anyone in a serious fight. Therefore, I do not have such outbursts.

I have the cold judgment and dispassion of an experienced fighter. Of course, I could just crush her and break all her bones, but orders are orders. You can’t cripple her! So I just caught her hand, grabbing at the wrist, applied appropriate strength, and squeezed. The steel clip of her metal watchband crunched, cutting into the skin of her hand. A loud screech, interspersed with the most selective obscenities, which would have done honor to any scrap driver of pre-revolutionary Russia, blocked the noise of the construction site. I looked coldly at her body wriggling in pain and continued to squeeze my fingers.

“Damn it,” a thought flickered, “with her squealing she must be trying to attract the agent’s attention!” No, sweetheart, it won’t do any good. The agent was already dead. So the Americans did not know this.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL YEROFYEV

I passed out for a moment. But then I came to my senses and saw Peterson wriggling in pain trying to break out of Zaitsev’s hands.

“Well, what a little bitch!” I sincerely admired, grabbing her hands.

COLONEL SHARVATOV

In an instant, a small crowd formed near Peterson. Three cars blocked all directions of her possible escape and several officers rushed to me at once.

“Comrade Colonel! How are you?”

“OK. How did you take her?”

“Without a single scratch! Just the wristband on her watch is broken.”

“Nonsense. But how she kicked out! Like our mare did when I was a kid!”



Judging by the photograph, Martha Peterson is still full of strength and energy.

Leaning on the hands of the officers, I went to the detainee.

“That’s all!” smiling, I announced to Peterson. “All! No more running! Not around Moscow and all over Mother Russia! Take her to the car, ” I turned to the officers of the group. “Time to shut things down here.”

FROM THE EDITOR. EPILOGUE

Peterson was taken to Lubyanka and they called a representative of the American embassy for identification. In his presence, they opened a container camouflaged as a cobblestone. Inside, They found a written warning: “Attention, comrade! You

accidentally entered someone else's secret, picking up someone else's package and things ... Take the money and gold for yourself, but do not touch the other things so as not to endanger your life and the life of your loved ones ... You are warned !!! ”

Under the warning was a bag of money and gold items. There were instructions, a questionnaire, special equipment and two ampules of poison.

At 23.25 hours the contents of the container were laid out on a large table in the KGB reception room, behind which Martha Peterson and the American consul, Mr. Gross, were already sitting. He had a watch on both hands, apparently with a voice recorder in one of them. The small hall was brightly lit for the film production and documentation of what was necessary in such cases.

Major General Yevgeny Rasshchepchov, Deputy Chief of the Second Chief Directorate (counterintelligence) of the KGB of the USSR, told the consul the circumstances under which the American embassy employee Martha Peterson was detained on Krasnoluzhsky Bridge and offered to familiarize him with the contents of the container seized from her with spy paraphernalia.

At the request of Rasshchepchov, the consul addressed Peterson several times with questions about the purpose of certain items found in the container, but each time she answered in monosyllables in English: “Shut up!” And only after the gold key rings with a chain that belonged to her personally that had been seized during her detention were returned, she said in Russian: “Thank you!”

Due to the fact that Martha Peterson, as vice consul, enjoyed diplomatic immunity, after the above procedure and its documentation she was released. At three in the morning, she left with the consul for the American embassy in his car.

The American ambassador [Malcolm] Toon, who arrived at the Soviet Foreign Ministry immediately after Martha Peterson was expelled from the country to America, urged him not to make the incident public, "which would be highly appreciated by the government of the United States of America."

“They say my passing acquaintance (we were not introduced to each other) in the following years taught at one of the CIA intelligence schools - taught future intelligence officers all the tricks of behavior they would need under detainment,” says Vladimir Nikolaevich.

... A few years later, in 1982, Vladimir Zaitsev was enrolled in Spetsnaz Alpha Group, in which he went all the way up to the deputy chief of the legendary unit. He completed a combat tour in Afghanistan. He participated in operations to free hostages and neutralize terrorists, including in Tbilisi (1983), and stormed a passenger plane which had been hijacked by armed bandits.

He was the repeated champion of the central KGB apparatus for martial arts, a USSR master of sports in three sports.



Colonel Vladimir Zaitsev at the celebration of the 40th anniversary of KGB-FSB Alpha Group - . Moscow, Crocus City Hall. July 29, 2014

He was awarded the orders of the Red Banner (1984), the Red Star (1986), "For personal courage", and the badge "Honored State Security Officer".



Colonel Zaitsev - Chairman of the "Anti-Terror" Foundation Supporting Counterterrorist Units of Security Organizations. For several years he worked as an assistant to the head of the Russian government. He takes an active part in activities of the International Association of Veterans of the Anti-Terror Unit Alpha. Repeatedly published on the pages of *Spetsnaz Rossii (Special Forces of Russia)*."

As for Martha Peterson, she, apparently, is full of strength and energy. And she even wrote a book, *The Widow Spy*, published in 2012. Its cover depicts the Krasnoluzhsky Bridge and a lone female figure heading for the "KGB paws," and although it is snowy, it was summer.

Intelligence officers are superstitious people. Peterson was no exception. Leaving Lubyanka at night, she said that she would never again buy a ticket for the last showing.

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