
In Irkutsk, ‘Angarsk maniac’ Mikhail Popkov sentenced for 60 committed and attempted murders



The evidence gathered by the Irkutsk Regional Directorate of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation was found by the court to be sufficient to sentence Mikhail Popkov. He was found guilty of 60 episodes of offences under Paragraphs F and H of Article 102 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic; Paragraphs A and J of Part 2 of Article 105; Part 3 of Article 30; Paragraph J of Part 2 of Article 105 of the Criminal Code of Russia (murder; attempted murder).

The investigation and the court established that, in 1992-2010, Popkov had committed at least 84 crimes in Irkutsk Region (in Irkutsk and Irkutsk District; in Angarsk and Angarsk District; in Usolye-Sibirskoe and Usolye District). Popkov’s targets were women of varying social status, of 16-40 years old, as well as a police officer, the involvement of Popkov into the murder of whom had been established in 1999.

In January 2015, the Irkutsk Regional Court had already sentenced Popkov to life imprisonment for

22 committed murders and two attempted murders of women. In the meantime, the work on revealing of his crimes continued - Irkutsk regional investigators together with special-purpose operation group's officers of the Irkutsk Regional Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs managed to solve 60 more episodes of the offences.

During the investigation, similar offences of the past years were thoroughly analysed - over 350 criminal cases and probes were studied. Upon the results, a selection of offences with Popkov's pattern was distinguished, and investigators of the Investigative Committee of Russia developed an investigative tactics for the defendant, within which a rapport was established required for him to testify. The true motive of Popkov's crimes was revealed, as were the circumstances contributed to him becoming a serial killer that had been acting in the region for 20 years.

The investigators' focused effort to solve the series of crimes of the 'Angarsk maniac' provided for gathering of hard evidence of his guilt. During the investigation, eye-witnesses and witnesses of Popkov's criminal activity were identified. Over 1,000 witnesses were questioned, including those residing in different Russian regions (from Sakhalin to Kaliningrad) and abroad. Over 150 probes into the witnesses' testimonies on the site were carried out using a covert coordinates system; the bodies of 20 victims were exhumed; over 200 forensic examinations, including 60 complex single-panel ones, were arranged and performed. The criminal case comprised of 322 volumes.

The investigators carried out additional inspections of the scenes of crimes, including those in hard-to-reach areas - forests, water bodies, and marshland, with use of heavy machinery - excavators and tractors, with the involvement of divers and specialists of various kinds, as well as with the latest forensic equipment of the Investigative Committee of Russia.

During the inspection of the scenes, burial sites were discovered hiding the bodies of victims of 15–20 years old, fragments of the victims' bones, their personal belongings, crime instruments (axes, screwdrivers, knives), as well as objects, which indicated Popkov in his testimony.

The circumstances of the crimes committed by Popkov, their methods and motives, the type of crime instruments, the number and nature of the injuries inflicted, and Popkov's behaviour before, during and after committing of the crimes cast doubt on his mental usefulness, and therefore the investigation arranged and carried out psychological and psychiatric examinations, including those in the Federal State Budgetary Institution "Serbsky State Research Centre for Social and Forensic Psychiatry" of the Ministry of Health of Russia. According to the conclusions of experts, Popkov never suffered from either a chronic mental disorder, or a temporary mental disorder, or dementia, or any other painful state of mind. In the period of the incriminated acts, Popkov did not have any temporary mental disorder, which could have deprived him of the opportunity to realise and control the actual nature and public danger of his actions. At the time of the examination, Popkov was also aware of the actual nature and public danger of his actions and could manage them.

The court sentenced Mikhail Popkov to life imprisonment.

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