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## **In Bryansk Region criminal investigation is finished against parents charged with murder of their 8-month-old daughter and her feint kidnapping with the purpose to cover up the crime**



Bryansk Region investigating bodies of the Russia's Investigative Committee have finished investigating a criminal case over murder of an eight-month-old girl and her feint abduction.

According to investigators, the crimes were committed by the girl's parents Alexander Kulagin and Svetlana Shkaptsova under the following circumstances: In the period between 22 and 23 February 2012 Kulagin was drunk in his flat in Bryansk, where he lived with Shkaptsova. The aggressive man made another row. The girl, who was sleeping in a pram, woke from the noise and started to cry, making Kulagin even fiercer. Despite the girl's small age he hit her on her head and torso with his fist and twice threw her on the sofa. After the beating the parents decided not give her any help and

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left her dying on the blanket in the bathroom.

The girl died on 26 February 2012, the accused put her body on the balcony, where it lay until 4 March 2012, when Kulagin took it away and burned on the instructions of Shkaptsova. To conceal the traces of the crime the parents developed a plan of fake abduction. To pretend that the girl was still alive and with them Kulagin and Shkaptsova in the period between 4 and 11 March 2012 no less than twice strolled with an empty pram, bought toys, when their relatives called them they imitated the noises the girl might have made.

On 11 March about 3 p.m. Shkaptsova left the flat with the pram tightly covered by a rain cover, where she had put a girl's snow suit and her other clothes wrapped in a blanket. On her way she bought a toy, deliberately drawing the sales person's attention to the fact that it was for her baby daughter. About 5 p.m. Shkaptsova came up to the Zoopark shop in house No. 33 in Pushkin Street, Bryansk, near which she left the pram and entered the shop to buy cat's food and vitamins. At that moment, Kulagin, who had secretly arrived from Moscow, changed into prepared by Shkaptsova wig and women's clothes, took away the pram and left it in the stairwell of a house in Pushkin Street, having before that taking away the snow suit and other clothes. Then Kulagin again changed in the public toilet. He burned the wig, the girl's and women's clothes and returned to his work in Moscow on 12 March 2012. Having come out of the shop, Shkaptsova pretended that her daughter had been kidnapped and filed a corresponding appeal to law enforcement bodies. Later during interrogations Kulagin and Shkaptsova many times gave false details on the circumstances under which their daughter had been kidnapped.

As the investigation showed the girl was doomed even before her birth. Kulagin displayed his aggressiveness in his previous two marriages where he had four children. He beat both his ex-wives and their children. Nothing changed in his relationships with Shkaptsova, who was nothing better than her boyfriend. They drank alcohol and smoked many times in presence of their baby daughter. Shkaptsova did not want the baby. She actively tried to find the way to get abortion and hid her condition from relatives and friends. Shkaptsova was not registered in local antenatal clinic, did not change her lifestyle and was extremely irresponsible about her future maternity status. As a result she had a preterm delivery at home and the baby was taken by Kulagin. She went to doctors only after she had given birth to the girl. The baby was in a hospital under the supervision of doctors for 1.5 month and Shkaptsova spent her time at home preferring her comfortable lifestyle to taking care about her own child. After her daughter had been discharged from the hospital Shkaptsova continued ignoring recommendations of Bryansk doctors on how to look after a newborn child and she only a few time came to doctors to examine the baby explaining her behavior by the fact that she was living at her parents' in the town of Pochep.

As result of the investigation Kulagin is charged with a murder of a small child and Shkaptsova – with complicity in this murder (paragraph “c” of part 2 of article 105 of the RF Criminal Code). In addition they are charged with knowingly false denunciation of a crime combined with fake evidence (part 3 of article 306 of the RF Criminal Code).

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The accused are denying their involvement in the murder and plead guilty only of the false denunciation of a crime. Investigators however have their original truthful testimonies. During almost three weeks after the kidnapping had been filed, investigators worked on every possible version of the crime. At the same time the girl's parents' too calm behavior gave the investigators ground to think that they could have faked the kidnapping. Recognizing that together Kulagin and Shkaptsova would have their own way, the investigators allowed the father to go to Moscow for work. When Shkaptsova was left alone the investigator managed to make a psychological contact with her and the feeling of guilt pushed her to give testimonies about the circumstances of the murder. Kulagin, who had been detained later, did not deny his involvement, pleaded guilty and confirmed it during the on-site check of testimonies. In addition criminologists using special devices found photos deleted from a cellphone seized from parents. The photos showed Kulagin wearing the wig, glasses and women's clothes. As it was later found, Shkaptsova had made his photos when they were rehearsing for feint kidnapping.

Investigators have collected enough evidence and the case has been sent for the indictment to be approved and later to the court to be tried on the merits.

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