
Interview of the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia Alexander Bastrykin to Rossiyskaya Gazeta



A gadget for Zheglov

Alexander Bastrykin told about unique examinations carried out by forensic specialists of the Investigative Committee of Russia.

Modern forensic science has recently gone such a fantastic way, which the great detectives of the past could not even dream of. Would Sherlock Holmes believe, for example, that the smell of expensive perfume, which remained on the victim's jacket years later, could indicate the killer? In the interview to Rossiyskaya Gazeta Alexander Bastrykin told about technical innovations, unique technologies and why today it is impossible to investigate practically no crime without forensic specialists.

Alexander Ivanovich, one of the most recent high-profile incidents was the spill of oil products in Norilsk. Your agency is investigating this offense. Is it true that use of the latest forensic innovations was decisive in the investigation?

Alexander Bastrykin: Forensic specialists of the Central Office took direct part in examination of the scene. And taking into account the scale of the incident, these investigative activities lasted several days and included a complex process of inspection and registering. Special equipment was used for that.

In addition, when investigating the circumstances of the oil spill, the contents of one of the messengers used by the head of Norilsk at that time, R.V. Akhmetchin, were analysed. The information obtained made it possible to identify signs of criminal negligence, expressed in the untimely introduction of the emergency regime and entailing a significant increase in the amount of damage caused.

Why, in your opinion, the development of the forensic service is given so high importance in your agency?

Alexander Bastrykin: First of all, the expansion of the forensic capabilities of the investigation is one of the main directions for increasing the detection of crimes, including those committed in previous years. And, despite the fact that the criminals are adopting all the latest technical achievements, the forensic departments of the Committee show consistently high results in solving especially dangerous crimes.

People expect from us a quick and qualified response to protect their rights, and we are taking consistent steps to introduce the latest forensic techniques, improve the professional level of investigative personnel, and improve interagency cooperation within the Safe City system.

Crimes committed by maniacs are the most frightening. Is it true that the forensic specialists are the first to detect the most dangerous - serial - crimes?

Alexander Bastrykin: The analytical and research work is the most important area of activities of the forensic investigators of the **Investigative Committee of Russia**. It allows us to identify the seriality of crimes committed by one person or persons in different regions of the country.

In addition, success largely depends on the effectiveness of interaction with colleagues from the criminal investigation department.

And in order to establish a "series", that is, the actual relationship of homogeneous deliberate crimes, it is necessary to conduct coordinated investigative actions and operative and search measures. This is the only way to reach a positive result.

For example, in the first half of 2020, we have solved 135 series of 1103 crimes, including those registered in previous years. These are 5 series of murders, including 20 episodes, 81 series of crimes against sexual integrity and sexual freedom, including 828 episodes, 46 series of other crimes, including 250 episodes.

Thus, as a result of the systematic painstaking work of forensic investigators and criminal intelligence officers, a series of rapes and violent acts of a sexual nature committed from 2014 to 2020 on the territory of the Gagarinsky, Leninsky, Nakhimovsky, Balaklava districts of Sevastopol and in Yalta in relation to 16 victims, 12 of which - minors, have been solved.

Investigation included active work of checking involvement of certain persons in the series by DNA methods. In total 7 thousand biological samples have been obtained and studied. Fingerprints of the attacker were discovered at another offense committed in June of this year. A fingerprint check established that they belonged to a specific person. Later the DNA examination confirmed his involvement in the said offenses.

In addition, with the help of molecular genetic examination, a series of rapes and violent acts of a sexual nature committed from August to October 2016 in Samara, Vladimir and St. Petersburg by a native of the city of Salavat, Republic of Bashkortostan, was solved.

Open us a professional secret. Let's say you've taken an unsolved crime of past years. How do you process the old cases? What do you start with?

Alexander Bastrykin: Analytical work is the primary focus for forensic investigators. And from the very first day of the creation of the department, the disclosure of crimes of past years was given effective organizational forms.

First of all, we have formed specialized analytical groups. They studied the materials of criminal cases on unsolved grave and especially grave crimes again, checking the completeness of the versions put forward by all methods available at the moment, the effectiveness of using the database of forensic records, as well as the effectiveness of the search for persons hiding from the investigative authorities. Thus, we have made it the responsibility of investigators and forensic experts not only to investigate, but also to solve crimes. Apart from investigators of the Investigative Committee of Russia these groups included officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Penal System and prosecution authorities.

In addition, last year, independent divisions were created in the regional investigative bodies, specializing in disclosing and investigating crimes of past years, and a department for investigating crimes of past years was formed in the structure of the Main Investigative Department of the Committee.

And what is the bottom line? Does this systematic work bear fruit?

Alexander Bastrykin: Thus, the Moscow Main Investigative Department of the Investigative Committee of Russia solved murders of police officers committed in 1995. This year, on the basis of evidence collected by investigators of the Main Investigation Department of the Investigative Committee, members of the gang who killed the former prosecutor of the city of Roslavl in the Smolensk region in 2005 have been convicted. In the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, a sentence was imposed over a resident of the city of Nadym in relation to criminal case of 2000 into a murder of two women and a 6-year-old boy.

Apart from that, we managed to solve a murder of two brothers-entrepreneurs committed in 2016.

The victims were engaged in business in the field of funeral services. The investigation checked different versions of the murder, including its committing by competitors or business partners. And a few years later, on the initiative of a forensic investigator, an olfactory forensic examination was appointed. This is examination of odor traces. Its results established presence in the car of the killed and on their clothes odor traces of a person, originating from an entrepreneur who had previously been detained on suspicion of committing the double murder, but there was not enough evidence to press charges against him. Taken together with other evidence, the conclusion of the olfactory forensic examination served as the basis for bringing charges against him and his accomplice, and the investigation was completed.

And what general effect does the use of such advance technologies have on results of work of your agency?

Alexander Bastrykin: First of all, it benefits the quality and timelines of investigation. Judge for yourself. According to the results of work for 7 months of 2020, the number of criminal cases returned by the prosecutor for further investigation decreased by 51 percent (from 1912 to 940), the number of criminal cases returned by the court for revision decreased by a third (from 697 to 489). A number of probes investigated in less than two months also significantly increased (by 10 percent). And this is despite the fact that the jurisdiction of the department includes crimes of increased complexity.

During our last meeting you mentioned research work carried out by the Forensics Institute, including those carried out with the Russian Academy of Sciences. Which can you tell us about?

Alexander Bastrykin: The Investigative Committee of Russia pays a lot of attention to search for software, gadgets, equipment and supplies that can be used for capacity building of technical, forensic and expert support for the investigation of crimes, increasing the efficiency of the work of investigators. I will tell you about just a few innovations.

We have carried out approbation, and the Scientific and Technical Council of the Investigative Committee of Russia recommended for the purchase and use a device for recovering information from flash drives of a Russian manufacturer.

Also, a portable hardware and software complex of the same developer, designed to extract digital information both in laboratory and during field work, is being tested.

The universal currency detector has proven itself well in the production of technical and forensic examinations of documents.

In addition, the issue of using domestic sources of expert light to search for and remove contact traces of a criminal from the bodies of victims of violent actions is now being studied for the purpose of subsequent molecular genetic research.

In the course of monitoring research carried out by the Russian Academy of Sciences, research and production associations, enterprises and organizations, promising developments have been identified that, after certain improvements, can be used in the investigation of crimes.

We are interested in the software for transcribing the speech of several speakers, which is intended, among other things, to draw up interrogation protocols, both directly during investigative actions and from their audio recordings.

Of course, it is expensive. But the era of investigation briefcases and suitcases is becoming a thing of the past.

What do you think about a lie detector? Effectiveness of polygraph has long been a matter of disputes. Is this area somehow developing now?

Alexander Bastrykin: For many years the Investigative Committee of Russia has been actively using polygraph. The conclusions of the psycho-physiological study carried out with its help are taken into account by the investigator during the investigation of crimes, and the assessment of the results of such a study is given in conjunction with other evidence obtained in the criminal case.

However, we carefully watch the latest technical developments that can raise effectiveness of forensic activities.

Thus, out of several complexes of non-contact evaluation of a person's psycho-emotional state being created nowadays, we selected a hardware-software complex being developed in St. Petersburg, which analyzes voice characteristics, facial expressions, eye movements, blink frequency, body movements. Based on the information collected in this way, it is possible to identify changes in the emotional and cognitive reactions of a person to the questions asked.

At present, a preliminary agreement has been reached on finalizing this system for possible further use in the Investigative Committee.

At the end of our conversation, let me congratulate you and the entire staff of the department on

the anniversary of the formation of the forensic service. To wish you good health and success in the difficult and very necessary job.

Alexander Bastrykin: Thank you for your kind words. Taking this opportunity, I cordially congratulate the staff and veterans of the forensic service. Your highest competence, adherence to principles, great efficiency and dedication have earned the well-deserved respect of the citizens of the country.

I express my deep gratitude to the veterans for their active assistance in the education of young professionals, sharing their accumulated knowledge and rich experience. I sincerely wish everyone good health, success, and prosperity!

You have repeatedly spoken about the importance of past years crimes. Why is it given so much attention?

Alexander Bastrykin: Let me remind you that when the Investigative Committee was formed in 2007, more than 200 thousand criminal cases on unsolved crimes of past years were transferred from the prosecutor's office to the new agency. Over the years of existence, with the help of forensic specialists, the Committee managed to solve 80,000 such offenses and the perpetrators were punished. Thus, within the framework of investigating crimes of past years, the principle of inevitability of punishment, enshrined in the criminal procedure law, is effectively implemented in practice. For our employees, the disclosure of such crimes is not only one of the priority tasks, but also a matter of honor. Results of our work show that we are on the right track.

How many such old offenses have been solved by your investigators this year?

Alexander Bastrykin: For 6 months of 2020, we, together with the bodies of inquiry, solved 3757 crimes committed in previous years. This includes 381 murders, 198 facts of deliberate infliction of grievous bodily harm, which entailed by negligence the death of the victim, 255 rapes and violent acts of a sexual nature, 970 other grave and especially grave offenses. These results inspire some optimism, because our analysis shows that not only the total number of investigated past years crimes has increased (by 10 percent), but also the share of grave and especially grave offenses (by 17 percent), and of crimes that remained unsolved for more than a year (by 20 percent). Most of the crimes of the past years have been solved by investigative departments in Moscow, Moscow Region, Irkutsk Region, St. Petersburg, Republics of Komi, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Dagestan, Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Krasnoyarsk Territory and the Republic of Khakassia and in a number of other subjects.

Author: Natalya Kozlova

19 October 2020

Page address: <https://en.sledcom.ru/press/interview/item/1613801>