Coordinates: 51.49016°N 0.14553°W WIKIPEDIA

Death of Gareth Williams

Gareth Williams (26 September 1978 - c. 16 August 2010) was a Welsh mathematician and employee of GCHQ seconded to the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) who was found dead in suspicious circumstances at a Security Service safe house flat in Pimlico, London, on 23 August 2010. [1] The inquest found that his death was "unnatural and likely to have been criminally mediated." A subsequent Metropolitan Police re-investigation [2] concluded that Williams's death was "probably an accident".[3] It is also suspected that he should be numbered amongst those who have been killed by Russian assassins on British soil. Two senior British police sources have said some of Williams's work was focused on Russia – and one confirmed reports that he had been helping the NSA trace international money-laundering routes that are used by organised crime groups including Moscow-based mafia cells. [4]

Background

See also

References

also by the head of SIS, Sir John Sawers. [15][16][17]

17. [6] After gaining a PhD at the University of Manchester, he dropped out from a subsequent post-graduate course at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, [7] and took up employment with GCHQ in Cheltenham in 2001, [8] renting a

room for a decade in Prestbury, Gloucestershire. Reportedly an intensely private man and a keen cyclist, Williams was due to return to Cheltenham at the beginning of September 2010 after his annual leave. [9] **Death** Police visited Williams's home during the afternoon of Monday 23 August 2010, as a "welfare check" after colleagues noted he had been out of contact for several days. [10] His decomposing naked remains were found in a red The North

Originally from Anglesey, Wales, [5] Williams, who spoke Welsh as a first language, began studying mathematics part-time at Bangor University, while still at Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, and graduated with a first-class degree at age

Face bag, padlocked from the outside, in the bath of the main bedroom's en-suite bathroom. [11][12] The police had gained entry into his top floor flat in Alderney Street, Pimlico at around 16:40. [13] His family believe that crucial DNA was interfered with and that fingerprints left at the scene were wiped off as part of a cover-up.^[1] No fingerprints, footprints or traces of Williams's DNA were found on the rim of the bath, the bag zip or the bag padlock. A key to the padlock was inside the bag, underneath his body. [14]

Williams was buried at Ynys Wen cemetery in Valley, Anglesey, on 26 September 2010, following a private funeral service at Bethel Chapel in Holyhead attended by his family, friends, former colleagues in the intelligence services, and

Investigation Williams's date of death was estimated to have been in the early hours of 16 August, one week before he was found. [18]

lead the investigation. Williams had recently qualified for operational deployment, and had worked with U.S. National Security Agency and FBI agents. The U.S. State Department asked that no details of Williams's work should emerge

After launching an investigation, the coroner Dr Fiona Wilcox said that there were no injuries on his body and no signs that he had been involved in a struggle; his body was also free of alcohol and common recreational

In December 2010, police released further details, stating that Williams had visited a number of bondage websites although at the later inquest it was stated these visits were "sporadic and isolated" and accounted for only a small

Soon after the investigation started, the heads of the Secret Intelligence Service and Metropolitan Police met to discuss how the police would handle the investigation in light of the top secret nature of Williams's work, and who would

Coroner's inquest

at the inquest. The Foreign Secretary, William Hague, signed a public-interest immunity certificate authorising the withholding from the inquest of details of Williams's work and U.S. joint operations. [15]

drugs. [19][20][21] The Metropolitan Police considered his death "suspicious and unexplained". [22] The FBI also conducted their own investigation into the case. [23]

Subsequently, the police released an E-FIT photo of two people they were seeking, who were seen to enter the communal entrance of his home in June or July 2010. [25]

support this view. No sign of forced entry could be found, but it was also noted that the door and locks had been removed by the time police experts had become involved.

proportion of the time he spent online. It was also noted at the inquest that he never visited any website devoted to claustrophilia – a sexual interest in being confined in small spaces.^[24]

Vincent Williams from the Metropolitan Police informed the Westminster Coroner's Court that experts were agreed that it was impossible for Gareth Williams to have locked himself in.

An expert brought in to examine the bag in which Williams's body was found concluded that Williams could not have locked it. A police spokesperson stated that: "If he was alive, he got into it voluntarily or, if not, he was unconscious and placed in the bag."^[25] The heating in Williams's apartment was found to be turned on.^[24] It has been suggested an elevated temperature inside the apartment would have sped up the decomposition of Williams's body.

DNA found on Williams's hand turned out to be contamination from one of the forensic scientists and the police determined that a Mediterranean couple they had been seeking had nothing to do with the inquiry. [26] LGC, the forensic company, apologised that the error had inflicted such pain on the family, caused by the incorrect data entry of a numerical code. [1]

Evidence at the inquest showed that it would have been virtually impossible for Williams to have locked himself in the bag. [27] Two experts were unable to lock themselves in a similar bag despite making 400 attempts to do so, although

one stated there was a small chance Williams had managed the feat.^[24] Pathologist Dr Richard Shepherd stated it was more likely that Williams was alive when he got into the bag, due to the difficulty of arranging a corpse in the

position William's body was found in. Another pathologist stated that Williams would have been overcome by hypercapnia, elevated carbon dioxide levels, after only two or three minutes in the bag. [24]

the bath. The coroner was critical of SIS for failing to report Williams missing for seven days, which caused extra anguish and suffering for his family, and led to the loss of forensic evidence. [2][31][32]

Williams's SIS office. SO15 failed to take formal statements when interviewing SIS officers. The coroner said the possible involvement of SIS staff in the death was a legitimate line of inquiry for the police. [2]

The lawyer for the family, Anthony O'Toole, at the Coroner's inquest in March 2012, said that a second person was either present when Williams died, or someone broke in afterwards and stole items. There is no forensic evidence to

Williams's family said they believed that a secret service agency was involved in his death.^[28] Dr Fiona Wilcox, the Coroner, said that she would "follow the evidence" wherever it led. [1]

Evidence given by Williams's former landlady in Cheltenham showed how one night he had awoken her and her husband, screaming for help. Apparently he had managed to tie himself to his bed, and required assistance in releasing

himself. The testimony was that Williams had claimed at the time that he had done it just to see if he could free himself and that he promised not to try this again. Nothing further had been said about the incident since between Williams

The journalist Duncan Campbell reported that the inquest evidence indicated Williams was one of a team of intelligence officers sent to penetrate US and UK hacking networks. He had attended the 2010 Black Hat Briefings and DEF CON conferences. He had started with SIS in London in spring 2009, and after taking a number of training courses started on "active operational work". [8] A few months before his death, he asked to return to GCHQ as he disliked the

Evidence was given of £20,000 worth of women's clothing being found in the flat. [30]

"rat race, flash car competitions and post-work drinking culture" at SIS and as a keen cyclist and walker wanted to go back to the countryside, and was due to return in September. [31]

criticism at the inquest of the spying agency's actions following the death of Mr Williams.

indicate an active interest.^[31] The coroner condemned leaks about cross-dressing^[34] as a possible attempt at media manipulation.^[2]

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and the "most probable scenario" was that he had died alone in his flat in Pimlico, central London, as the result of accidentally locking himself inside the bag. [35][36]

Service, also known as the SVR, was responsible for Williams's murder. According to Karpichkov, the SVR tried and failed to blackmail Williams into becoming a double agent. [37]

him in order to protect their agent inside GCHQ." Regarding the cause of death, Karpichkov claimed that the SVR killed Williams "by an untraceable poison introduced in his ear." [38][37]

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Inquest verdict The coroner found in a narrative verdict that Williams's death was "unnatural and likely to have been criminally mediated". The coroner was "satisfied that on the balance of probabilities that Gareth was killed unlawfully". There was

insufficient evidence to give a verdict of unlawful killing. The coroner concluded that another party placed the bag containing Williams into the bath, and on the balance of probabilities locked the bag. No fingerprints were found around

The coroner rejected suicide, interest in bondage or cross-dressing, or "auto-erotic activity" being involved in Williams's death. [33] She said his visits to bondage websites only occurred intermittently and were not of a frequency to

The coroner was highly critical of the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command (SO15), who failed to tell the senior investigating officer before the inquest began of the existence of nine memory sticks and other property in

The finding by Westminster coroner Dr Fiona Wilcox prompted a reinvestigation by the Metropolitan Police lasting a further 12 months which officers said had been allowed unprecedented access to serving MI6 staff following strong

Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt announced that despite a re-examination of all evidence and the investigation of new leads no definitive answers had been obtained as to the cause of Williams's death

Metropolitan Police investigation

See also

List of unsolved deaths

and his landlady.^[29]

2015 developments

In September and October 2015, Boris Karpichkov, a former KGB agent who defected from Russia and who now lives in Britain, stated during interviews that "sources in Russia" have claimed that the Russian Foreign Intelligence

In response to the SVR's attempts, Williams apparently claimed that he knew "the identity of a Russian spy inside the GCHQ." Karpichkov claimed that Williams's threat meant that "the SVR then had no alternative but to exterminate

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