

Spies

[T]he attack on the superannuated minor double agent [Sergei] Skripal is chiefly a public statement. Russia is telling Britons: we can kill with impunity in your country, and it's telling powerful Russians in Britain, we can kill you. Because spies fascinate the public, the message is heard. ... Russia's paranoia-creation has become more deliberate. Russian espionage – like so much else in Russian behaviour abroad – is morphing into a branch of public relations. Nowadays, Russian spies are meant to be seen.

**Simon Kuper,
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