

ing the law and his rights. He finished his speech by saying, "I refuse to take part in and listen to today's court hearing because all my petitions to uphold my rights have been simply ignored by the court." He sat and turned away from the judge, and the hearing proceeded without him. Stashina was unmoved. She went through a few technical issues and then coldly extended Sergei's detention. The hearing ended and the guards came into the cage for Sergei. He couldn't muster the strength even to smile at his family as they led him away.

He was taken back to the hallway and chained to the same radiator. Neither his lawyer nor his family was allowed to see him for the rest of the evening. His mother and his aunt waited for hours outside in the cold for the van that would take him back to Butyrka, so that they could try to give him a little wave and tell him that they loved him. But by 9:00 p.m. the prison van had still not emerged. The cold, the despair, the sadness, ate into them. Finally, they gave up and went home.

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I found out about all of this the next morning. When I told Elena, she became distressed. "I don't like this, Bill. I don't like this one bit."

I agreed.

"We have to get someone to Butyrka," she insisted. "Someone needs to see Sergei—today."

But no one could. His lawyer, who was the only person permitted to see him, was out of town and wouldn't be back until Monday.



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On Monday, November 16, 2009, Sergei's lawyer, Dmitri, went to Butyrka to see him. However, the prison officials said they would not bring Sergei out because he was "too unwell to leave his cell." When Dmitri asked for Sergei's medical report, he was told to go to the doctor, Silchenko. He called and asked for a copy, but Silchenko told him that the report was "an internal matter for the investigation" and refused to give Dmitri any details.

They were deliberately giving Dmitri the runaround; Sergei was more than "unwell." After months of untreated pancreatitis, gallstones, and cholecystitis, Sergei's body finally succumbed, and he went into critical condition. Although the prison officials at Butyrka had previously rejected his numerous requests for medical attention, that day they finally sent him to the medical center at Matrosskaya Tishina to receive emergency care.

However, when he arrived, instead of being taken to the medical wing, he was taken to an isolation cell and handcuffed to a bed. There, he was visited by eight guards in full riot gear. Sergei demanded that the lead officer call his lawyer and the prosecutor. She said, "I'm here because I've exposed the five-point-four billion rubles that were stolen by law enforcement officers." But the riot guards weren't there to help him, they were there to beat him. And they beat him viciously with their rubber batons.

