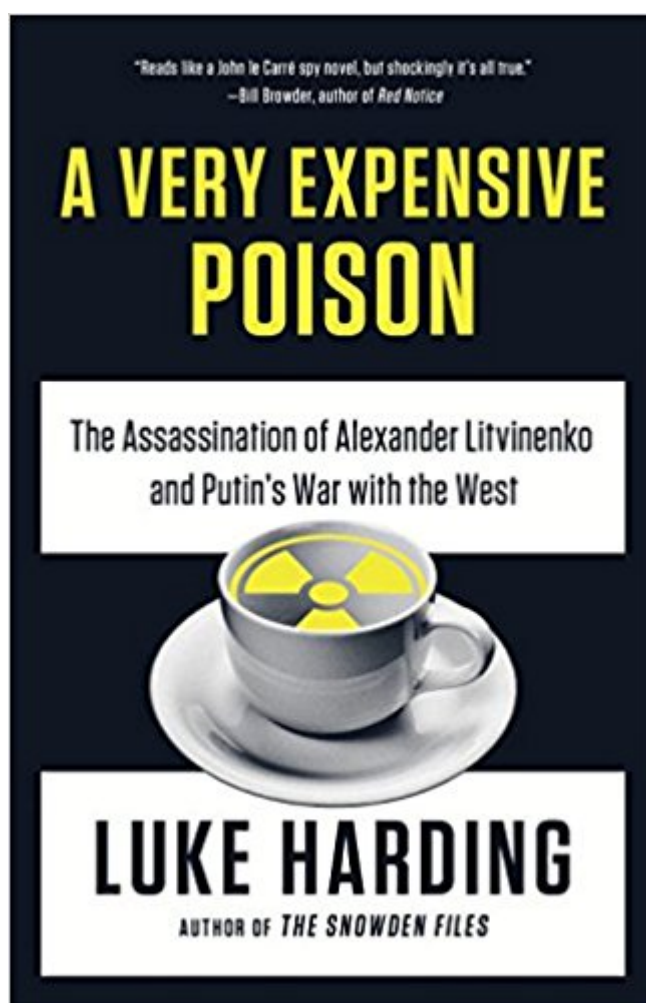


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# A Very Expensive Poison: The Assassination Of Alexander Litvinenko And Putin's War With The West



## Synopsis

A true story of murder and conspiracy that points directly to Vladimir Putin, by The Guardian's former Moscow bureau chief. On November 1, 2006, journalist and Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko was poisoned in London. He died twenty-two days later. The cause of death? Polonium—a rare, lethal, and highly radioactive substance. Here Luke Harding unspools a real-life political assassination story—complete with KGB, CIA, MI6, and Russian mobsters. He shows how Litvinenko's murder foreshadowed the killings of other Kremlin critics, from Washington, DC, to Moscow, and how these are tied to Russia's current misadventures in Ukraine and Syria. In doing so, he becomes a target himself and unearths a chain of corruption and death leading straight to Vladimir Putin. From his investigations of the downing of flight MH17 to the Panama Papers, Harding sheds a terrifying light on Russia's fracturing relationship with the West.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Gripping. . . . The case against Mr. Putin, his intelligence agencies and their hitmen was built gradually over the years, by detective work and intelligence. As set out by Mr. Harding in this book, it arouses a demonic fascination. . . . Mr. Harding ranges widely, far beyond the Litvinenko case, in *A Very Expensive Poison*. . . . Presidents who sup with Vladimir Putin should bring a very long spoon indeed.” —Daniel Johnson, *The Wall Street Journal* “Harding is a great journalist. . . . His work is precious. . . . With experience and lucidity, he helps us to

understand that we must be vigilant and always ready to guard the most precious asset of all, not a gift but a right: freedom. — Roberto Saviano, *L'Espresso* — “Drawing on interviews, original reportage, and a British public inquiry, Harding reiterates the inquiry’s findings: Litvinenko was the victim of a political assassination that was indistinguishable from a gangland hit. . . . Harding suitably conveys the shocking, violent, and tragic story of a man whose murder has gone unpunished. — Publishers Weekly (Starred Review) “Harding’s exposé, shortlisted for the CWA Nonfiction Dagger Award, could not be more chilling or timely. . . . A devastating and disturbing must-read.” — Booklist “A chilling look at the Putin regime’s murderous suppression of its critics. . . . In this fast-paced book, Harding, who was expelled from the Kremlin while serving as the Guardian’s Moscow bureau chief, covers all the bases while exposing the weakness and accommodationism of the now-departed British leadership. Hard-hitting and timely given Russia’s continued sway in international politics as well as its documented influence over an incoming American administration that is also hostile to the press.” — Kirkus “Extraordinarily pacy...one of the best political thrillers I have come across in years.” — The Evening Standard “Harding...tells this ghastly tale with real authority, wit, and panache. . . . The book is as ‘definitive’ as it claims.” — The Times “Impassioned...Harding paints deft portraits of the tragi-comic duo suspected of carrying out the crime.” — The New Statesman “Gripping.” — London Review of Books “A Very Expensive Poison reads like a John Le Carré spy novel, but shockingly it’s all true. Luke Harding has followed the criminality of the Putin regime from Russia to the West and his story leaves us with terrible feelings of dread about what Putin will do next.” — Bill Browder, author of *Red Notice* “An expert chronicler of a sensational but opaque crime...Enthralling.” — A. D. Miller, author of *Snowdrops* “Harding lays out every fact connecting it in thrillerish detail to the dark undercurrents of life in today’s Russia.” — Oliver Bullough, author of *The Last Man in Russia* “Horrific, instructive and, at times, hilarious. He is a masterful storyteller and an impeccable researcher.” — Federico Varese, Professor of Criminology, University of Oxford

Luke Harding is an award-winning foreign correspondent with The Guardian. Between 2007 and 2011 he was the Guardian’s Moscow bureau chief; the Kremlin expelled him from the country in the first case of its kind since the Cold War.

I am not a fast reader and generally have several books going at the same time according to my mood. But I couldn’t put this book down. I was late to the office when I could be. It hooked me from the first page. The most incredible part of the book was the incredibly thorough job that Scotland

Yard did in tracing every movement of the assassins some time after the event. If you ever thought Putin or the Russian state was warm and cuddly this book will certainly reverse that impression. The assassination of Alexander Litvinenko was meant to be undetectable because polonium, the substance used to poison him, does not register on a geiger counter. Nevertheless it was discovered and the assassins' trails tracked with incredible precision. You will not be able to tear yourself away from this story. Luke Harding wrote a gripping tale about an astonishing assassination by Putin's inept agents who were handsomely rewarded while Russia adamantly denied any misdeeds. The overall book leaves no doubt as to Putin's intentions toward the West.

The story of Alexander Litvinenko's assassination at the hands of the Russian government is far more clear than one would have thought. The radioactive trail and the thorough, if not timely, investigation by the British leaves no doubt as to who did it. The "why" isn't pinned down. It could have been for several reasons. In all, for a state sponsored hit, this one was bungled badly. Harding does a great job pulling it all together.

What a good book!!! Well written, informative, excellent!!! Can only recommend it.

If it's an accurate depiction of the rulers in Russia(including that thug Putin), we should all be very concerned. Good nonfiction book, came promptly, and in good shape. Good transaction. Thank you!

Exposes Putin and the Russian State as an essentially criminally driven exploit as opposed to the former Soviet Union ideologically driven enterprise. They appear to be willing to do absolutely anything to keep their power and money.

Sobering and comprehensive account of the dastardly assassination of Litvinenko by bungling Putin stooges. If you have any doubt as to the criminality of the Russian state and it's connection to organized crime (not that we are necessarily any better) this is the read for you. A superb piece of investigative journalism.

The beginning of the book was quite gripping...the poisoning of a former KGB operative who went to England and worked for MI6. I enjoyed the details of the attempts and success in using Polonium 210. Towards the end of the book, I thought it fell a little flat. It described Putin's grab of the Crimea, his so-called ties to oligarchs and interference in Ukraine. I didn't find that as interesting. But all in

all, the book was well written with attention to detail and facts.

A frightening account of the murder of a man who revealed the clandestine and treacherous directives of Vladimir Putin, who is without a doubt the "godfather" of the Russian mafia. Luke Harding presents the best of investigative journalism. A riveting tale of power, greed, and violence. Litvinenko knew that he was risking his life to reveal the truth, and he paid a horrible price. A riveting page turner and a tribute to those who dare to speak against evil.

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