

"Merchant of Death" prisoner swap

The prisoner swap between Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout and U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner failed to include former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan, who was arrested in Moscow in 2018



Brittney Griner – nine-year sentence in Russian prison for drug offence.

Paul Whelan (inset) – 16 years on spy charges. **Viktor Bout** – 25 years in U.S. jail

■ **Jan 13, 1967:** Viktor Bout born in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

■ **1980s:** Graduates from **Military Institute of Foreign Languages** in Moscow – entry point for serving in Russian intelligence. Serves as translator in Soviet Army

■ **1991:** Following fall of Soviet Union, Bout runs network of air cargo companies, transporting Soviet-era weapons to conflict zones

■ **Mar 2008:** U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officers arrest Bout in hotel in Thailand

■ **Nov 2010:** Extradited to U.S. amid protests by Russia

■ **Nov 2011:** Court convicts Bout of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens, delivery of anti-aircraft missiles, and providing aid to a terrorist organisation

■ **2012:** Bout begins 25-year prison sentence at United States Penitentiary Marion in Illinois

■ **Jul 27, 2022:** Biden administration offers to release Bout in exchange for Griner and Whelan

■ **Aug 4-5:** Griner jailed. Russian Foreign Minister **Sergei Lavrov** (inset) says Moscow is ready to discuss prisoner swap

■ **Dec 8:** Russia and U.S. exchange Griner for Bout at Abu Dhabi airport – swap does not include Whelan



Ilyushin 76 used by Air Cess and Air Pass, both companies run by Bout

■ **1990s:** Bout sells planeloads of arms to warlords across Middle East, Asia, Africa and South America

■ **2000s:** So-called **Merchant of Death** arms both **Taliban** and pro-Western **Northern Alliance** following U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Supplies weapons to groups in Africa, including Libya