



Pekka Kallioniemi @P_Kallioniemi

Dec 19, 2023 · 19 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1737098400938483735](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce an Austrian fugitive businessman and Russian operative, Jan Marsalek (@derJanMarsalek). He's best-known for the Wirecard scandal, and for funneling money to Russian intelligence agencies and PMC Wagner's operations.

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Fraud in the billions

Public Prosecutor's Office of Munich I, Police Headquarters in Munich and the BKA are asking for your help!

Jan MARSALEK, ex board member of Wirecard AG, is strongly suspected of having committed billions in commercial gang fraud, the particularly serious case of embezzlement and other property and economic offences. He is currently on the run.



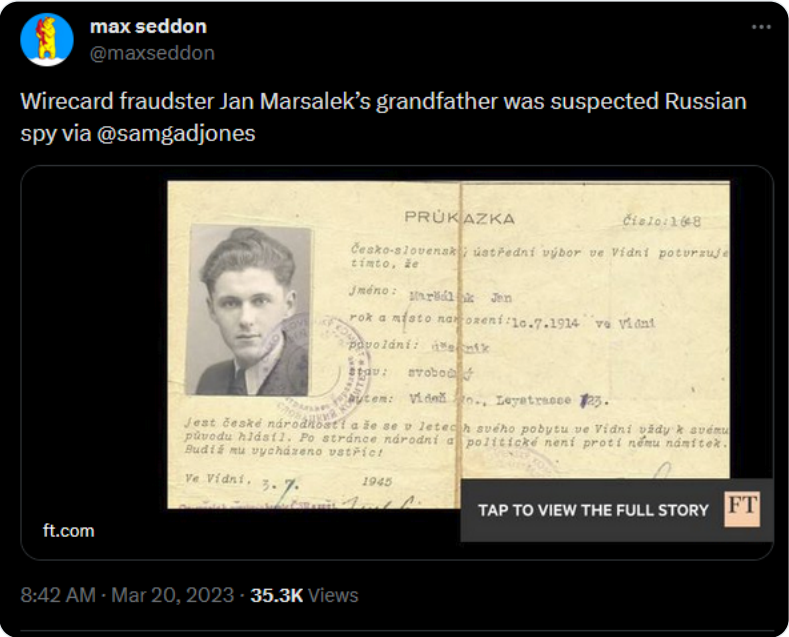
Jan MARSALEK *15.03.1980

Fotos: PP München

Can you provide any information on Jan MARSALEK's whereabouts?

We ask you to give your information to the PP Munich on **+49 (0) 89 / 29 100** or any other police station. You can also use the Bavarian Police contact form at www.polizei.bayern.de.
Your information can be treated confidentially!

Jan's grandfather, Hans Maršálek, was also suspected of being a Russian spy. Allegedly, Hans, a devout socialist, was responsible for assisting the Soviets kidnap at least four people and illegally render them to Moscow for torture and interrogation.



Austria has been generally considered to be a hotbed for Russian espionage, a topic I have covered previously:



Marsalek started working for a company called Wirecard in 2000 & in 2010 he became the firm's chief operating officer. Initially, the company focused on online payment transactions from porn & gambling industry, but eventually expanded aggressively by buying other businesses.

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When the Austrian came to the predecessor company of Wirecard at the beginning of the millennium, the startup threatened to go under in the course of the new economy crash. Braun stabilized the company and focused on the major trend topic with which Wirecard still earns its money today: payment transactions on the Internet. In the early years, customers were mainly from the porn and gambling industry, which is why Wirecard initially attached a dirty image. Later on, more serious industries such as airlines and retailers were added.

Wirecard masked their financial trouble, with organic growth by adding revenues from external sources and with artificial inflation of profit. The company also attacked its critics aggressively, even hiring a hacker to infiltrate companies critical of Wirecard.

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The Big Read **Wirecard AG** [+ Add to myFT](#)

Wirecard's suspect accounting practices revealed

FT Investigation: internal documents from the payments company point to a concerted effort to fraudulently inflate sales and profits

Dan McCrum in London OCTOBER 15 2019



Financial services [+ Add to myFT](#)

Executive at Wirecard suspected of using forged contracts

Internal presentation pointed to possible 'falsification of accounts'



WORLD

Israeli Gets U.S. Prison Time for Hacking Scheme That Targeted Climate Advocates Fighting Exxon

Other victims included government officials, companies critical of defunct German-based payment processor Wirecard

By [James Fanelli](#) [Follow](#) and [Erin Mulvaney](#) [Follow](#)

Updated Nov. 16, 2023 4:31 pm ET

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In 2019, the Financial Times published a series of investigations along with whistleblower complaints and internal documents, exposing the company's long-term fraud. In Jun 2020, Wirecard filed for insolvency after revealing that 1,9 billion EUR had gone missing.

Technology

Germany's beleaguered Wirecard to proceed with business after insolvency

Reuters

June 27, 2020 8:07 PM GMT+3 · Updated 3 years ago

Aa



FILE PHOTO: The headquarters of Wirecard AG, an independent provider of outsourcing and white label solutions for electronic payment transactions is seen in Aschheim near Munich, Germany April 25, 2019. REUTERS/Michael Dalder/File Photo [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

Soon after this, Marsalek was fired and immediately fled. He lied to his colleagues that he was going to the Philippines to prove his innocence, before going missing. An investigation by @bellingcat, @derspiegel and @thisisinsider indicated that Jan flew to Minsk, Belarus.


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Business


Wirecard ex-COO Marsalek's entry into Philippines was faked, minister says

Reuters

July 4, 2020 9:34 PM GMT+3 · Updated 3 years ago



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Christo Grozev
Christo Grozev is a member of Bellingcat Productions, which looks to translate Bellingcat investigations into a range of new media products. He was the Lead Russia Researcher at Bellingcat until February 2023. His investigations into the identity of the suspects in the 2018 Novichok poisonings in the UK earned him and his team the European Prize for Investigative Journalism.

World's Most Wanted Man Jan Marsalek Located in Belarus; Data Points to Russian Intel Links

July 18, 2020 FSB Germany

It can safely be assumed that Jan Marsalek is currently one of the most hunted-for persons on earth. The company he oversaw operationally, Germany's Wirecard, collapsed overnight last month after auditors brought attention to a nearly 2 billion Euro gaping hole in its balance sheet. The hole was the result of the recognition that cash of the same amount – which was thought to be sitting in third-party trustee bank accounts in the East Asia – a coding and processing hub for Wirecard – was in fact not there. The 40-year-old Austrian citizen **Jan Marsalek**, COO of Wirecard since 2010, was in charge of the company's Asian operations.

On 18 June 2020 the management team – including Jan Marsalek was fired. He told his colleagues that he was going to the Philippines to chase and find the missing billions, in order to prove his innocence. Later that day he went missing as well. While airline bookings and immigration records showed he had made his way to Manila on the 23 June

In Jul 2020, Handelsblatt reported that Marsalek was suspected to be in Russia, where he was believed to live under supervision of the Russian GRU in a mansion near Moscow. According to Die Welt, Marsalek was at a Russian FSB training center in Balashikha, a suburb of Moscow.



Ex-Wirecard manager on the run Marsalek is to be near Moscow

Marsalek is to cooperate with the Russian secret service. After his escape, he is no longer suspected in Belarus, but near Moscow.

19.07.2020, 10:08 pm

Ex-Wirecard Exec Still in Moscow After Year On the Run – Reports

June 15, 2021

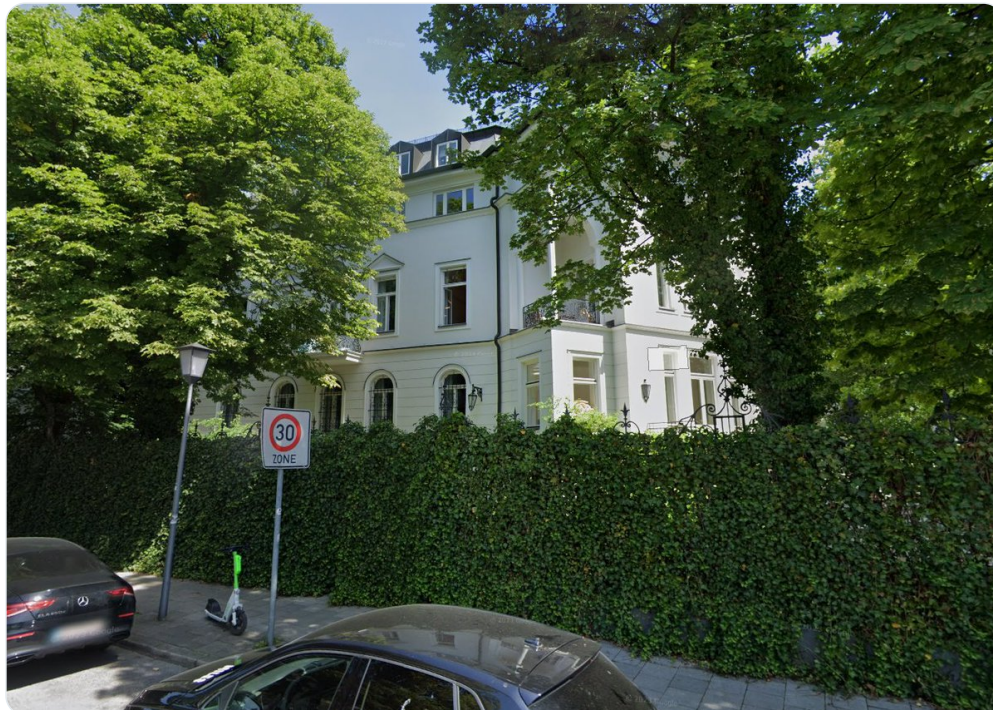


Jan Marsalek fled the European Union after Wirecard admitted to "elaborate and sophisticated fraud."

EPA / TASS

As of 2020, Jan was a person of interest to many Western intelligence agencies due to his businesses with the GRU. In Munich, he lived opposite the Russian consulate. Allegedly, Marsalek made contacts with Russian intelligence through the Austrian-Russian Friendship Society.

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Intelligence officials stated that Wirecard's services were used to finance Russian covert operations, pay informers or military contractors and fund classified projects and arms purchases. Jan also asked Wirecard Bank employees to breach data-protection rules.

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Western intelligence and security official sources told the Journal that Jan Marsalek used his position as Wirecard's COO from 2010 to 2020 to illegally fund Russian spy agencies' covert operations around the world, as well as provide assistance to the Russian mercenary group Wagner.

This involved helping to pay Russian intelligence officers and informants and funneling money into conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa, sources told the newspaper.

Marsalek seems to enjoy the Russia, as he's visited the country over 60 times in the last 15 years. According to @bellingcat, his immigration dossier has almost 600 pages. His trips usually lasted less than 24 hours, suggesting that he was not there for sightseeing.

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To Russia With Love

According to immigration data reviewed by Bellingcat, Marsalek was a frequent visitor of Russia, with over 60 trips to the country in the last 10 years. His immigration dossier numbers 597 pages, much more than any foreigner's file we have come across in over five years of investigations.

His initial trip was back in 2004, but after a six-year gap, he resumed visiting the country in 2010 when he joined the management board of Wirecard. His trips accelerated in 2014, when he traveled to Moscow 10 times, usually flying in and out within a day. The next year he traveled 7 times, again usually staying less than 24 hours in Moscow, with the exception of a one-week visit in February 2015 to Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Marsalek traveled to Russia on 6 different Austrian passports – not unusual given the stretch of time and the fact that Austria allows ownership of several passports, while disallowing dual citizenship. However, in addition to passports of his native country he appears to have flown in on other, less obvious identity documents too. Notably, all of his trips under these other documents have been purged from the border-crossing database – which is different than the migration dossier database.




Three passport photos from Marsalek's Austrian passports

Since 2015, Marsalek has also been operating in Libya, allegedly trying to launch a mercenary force to protect commercial interests in the country devastated by a civil war since 2014.

As we now know, Russia uses PMC's like Wagner to make money in countries like Libya.

☰

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadera met in October at the first Russia-Africa summit. RUSSIAN LOOK/ZUMA PRESS

WORLD

Russia Leans on Mercenary Forces to Regain Global Clout

Campaigns in Africa and the Middle East involve private security contractors and business interests with ties to Kremlin

By [Benoit Faucon](#) [Follow](#) and [James Marson](#) [Follow](#)

Feb. 23, 2020 1:29 pm ET

Since 2017, Russia's PMC's have been extremely active in Libya, and the first instance of Russian and PMC Wagner troops in the country was at industrial facilities in Libya that Mr. Marsalek had repeatedly claimed to co-own.

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World

Up to 1,200 deployed in Libya by Russian military group - U.N. report

By [Michelle Nichols](#) [Aa](#) [Share](#)

May 6, 2020 10:38 PM GMT+3 · Updated 4 years ago

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Russian private military contractor Wagner Group has up to 1,200 people deployed in Libya, strengthening the forces of eastern-based military leader Khalifa Haftar, according to a confidential United Nations report seen by Reuters on Wednesday.

The 57-page report by independent sanctions monitors, submitted to the U.N. Security Council Libya sanctions committee, said the Russian contractor deployed forces in specialized military tasks, including sniper teams.

He collaborated with the Austrian-Russian Friendship Society by giving them classified documents obtained from Austria's interior ministry & security service BVT, and provided geopolitical advice and gave classified documents to Austria's far-right populist party, the FPÖ.

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The Friendship Society, which has courted criticism in the past because of its cosy relationship with Moscow, hit the Austrian headlines this week, after it was revealed that its finance secretary had been receiving classified documents from Mr Marsalek – illegally obtained from Austria’s interior ministry and security service – and passing them to the country’s far-right populist party, the FPÖ.



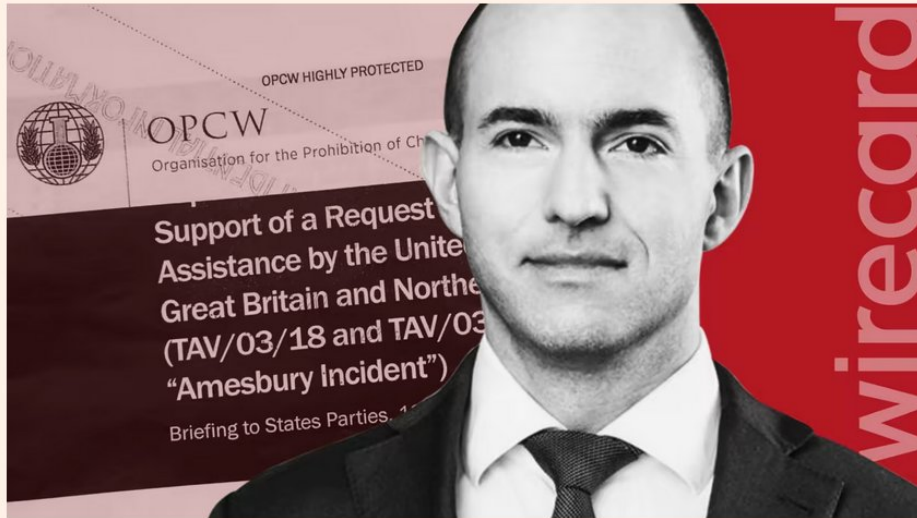
The screenshot shows the top of a news article on the Die Presse website. The navigation bar includes 'News', 'Opinion', and 'magazines'. The main headline reads 'Fugitive Wirecard manager was a secret FPÖ informant'. A sub-headline states: 'The former Wirecard board member who went into hiding had excellent contacts with the secret services and the FPÖ. And he also had a hand in the BVT affair.' The article is dated 'December 22, 2020 at 12:27 p.m.' and is by 'Anna Thalhammer'. Social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, and Print are visible at the bottom right of the article preview.

Marsalek also held highly sensitive, classified reports from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which he disclosed to his business partners in 2018, in the wake of Skripals poisoning in Salisbury. He also claimed to have the formula for Novichok.

Wirecard AG [+ Add to myFT](#)

Wirecard executive Jan Marsalek touted Russian nerve gas documents

Vanished chief operating officer of fraud-hit payments group hinted at secret service links



Jan Marsalek with one of the confidential documents he showed to traders in London © FT montage

Paul Murphy, Dan McCrum and Helen Warrell in London JULY 9 2020



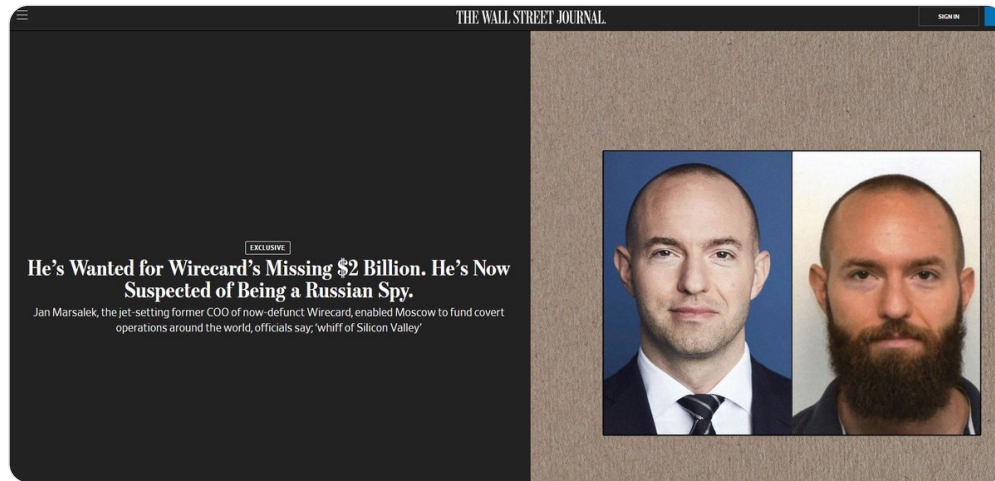
The classified papers held by Mr Marsalek included details of an investigation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons into the attack in Salisbury, in which former spy [Sergei Skripal](#) and his daughter Yulia were poisoned. The British government blamed the attack on two officers from Russia's GRU military intelligence unit.

The Skripals survived but Dawn Sturgess, a woman in the nearby town of Amesbury, later died after coming into contact with a container of the nerve agent.

Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, a former commander of the UK's chemical and biological weapons regiment, said: "These documents would be restricted to OPCW member states and should not be in the public domain."

In Sep 2023, a trial of five Bulgarians accused of being part of a Russian spying network began in the UK, and allegedly, this network had been given tasks by Marsalek. One of them was an award winning beautician, who ran a beauty parlor in London called Pretty Woman.

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The Bulgarians are accused, among other things, of helping the Russian state plan to kidnap people in the UK & for organizing a surveillance operation in Montenegro. An investigation conducted in 2023 concluded that Jan was recruited as a Russian agent for at least a decade.17/18

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Five to be charged in UK with spying for Russia

© 21 September



Allegedly, Mr. Marsalek is currently living in Dubai and is reorganizing Russian operations in Africa. Some have even suggested that he might be taking over late Yevgeny Prigozhin as the director of the mercenary company Wagner.

Heir to Prigozhin? Fuss about ex-Wirecard board member Jan Marsalek

December 17, 2023, 7:20 a.m

From: [Jakob Koch](#)

 Comments

 Press



Putin's chef Yevgeny Prigozhin (left) died in a plane crash. Ex-Wirecard manager Jan Marsalek is apparently supposed to reorganize the Wagner empire in Africa. © IMAGO (2) / ZUMA Wire / Funke Photo Services

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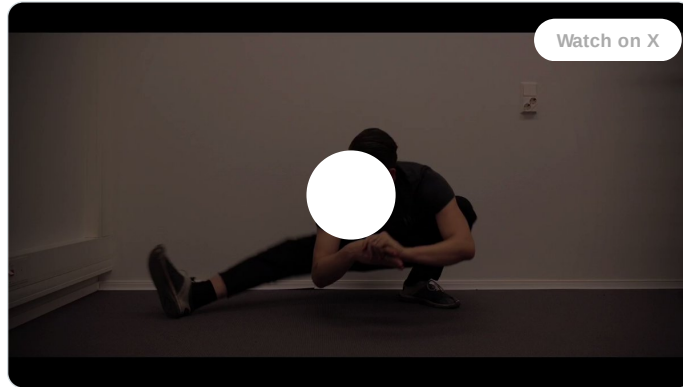


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4:31 PM · Nov 21, 2023



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