AM: Thank you for joining us. This must have brought back terrible memories, the Skripal attack in Salisbury. Can you tell us how you first responded when you heard the news?

ML: Yes, it was a very difficult moment when I received this news, because I believed it’s never, ever happened again after public inquiry provided all evidence of death of my husband. But unfortunately it did happen, and now I’m reading every day in news from Salisbury and trying to understand what actually happened and who might be behind this crime.

AM: Your husband was murdered 12 years ago, and then you fought very hard for a public inquiry, and after that public inquiry reported, suggested there was probably a Kremlin link, you got a letter, I think, from Theresa May, then the Home Secretary.

ML: Yes, we had a meeting and we had a discussion about what we might achieve after this public inquiry verdict. And after this meeting I received a letter and actually I would like to notice what was said in this letter at the end. ‘I and this government am clear that we must continue to pursue justice for your husband’s killing and that we will take every step to protect the UK and its people from such a crime ever being repeated.’ But unfortunately it’s happened again. It means something was not done. And the lesson that we received after the murder of my husband was not learned.

AM: What more do you think the British government could have done after that inquiry into the murder of your husband that it didn’t do?
ML: We understand relationship between two countries as Russia and the UK need to be on a very high level. But we know Russia never supported the investigation of killing my husband. We know nobody was punished. And people who have been a killer of my husband, they’re not even suspect because the police investigation was provided no evidence. They still be in Russia, and Andrei Lugovoy even, he is a member of parliament, and British parliament still communicate to this parliament where the murderer of my husband is a member.

AM: Going back to the Salisbury attacks, of course at this stage we don’t have any proof of Russian involvement. How sure are you that this was a Russian attack?

ML: Of course Russia has a very bad reputation now, and everything that’s happened in the world, if it’s doping in sport or involvement in election immediately Russia is in the front of all minds. But in this case I would like to be very serious and take all evidence and maybe some time to provide the truth, and was it exactly Russia or any other country behind this crime. For us, it was almost ten years to provide this fact and evidence, and it was all proved. And I want the same case would be made and in the same way it would be not politically motivated. And only after proper investigation we could say exactly who’s behind this crime.

AM: Because there is a sense at the moment that Moscow is almost laughing at Britain. I mean, President Putin talked about his enemies swallowing poison, and then a presenter on one of the Russian television programmes was joking about Britain being a very dangerous place for Russian traitors, they kept falling out of windows and the climate was very bad for them, as if the whole thing was a joke. Do you think Britain is being treated as a bit of a joke by Moscow at the moment?
ML: Of course it’s a very bad joke. But it’s very important British society and government will understand this world and take it really seriously. And all what they’re talking about, sanctions or reaction for what happened in Salisbury need to be very serious. Even now what was said from Moscow, you need to react, and you need to understand is there some kind of message. And you’re just not – just relax and take the result and reaction after that.

AM: So in her letter to you Theresa May said, when she was Home Secretary, ‘we’re going to take every step to protect the UK and its people from such a crime ever being repeated.’ What is your message to Theresa May now?

ML: You need to be very selective who you are friends with. And when you allow people with money to come to your country and make a business you need to be sure what kind of money these people try to bring to your country. Because very often this money was stolen from the Russian people and sometimes it’s a very serious crime behind this money. And I’m absolutely in solidarity with this whole question and asking to unite it with all this action what was already done in United States, in Europe. I think the UK has to do the same steps.

AM: Indeed. You’ve commented already on the amount of Russian money that has gone to the Conservative Party as donations. Do you think the Conservative Party should hand that money back?

ML: I agree with this. Because again you don’t know what kind of money you accept. We’re talking about reputation, and I think this meaning really serious now, your reputation has to be very clear. Particularly in politics.
AM: You’re in Berlin at the moment but you’re a resident of the UK yourself. You live in Britain. Do you yourself feel safe in Britain?

ML: Since what happened with my husband I receive this question almost every interview. You can’t say for 100 per cent, but I would like to feel safe. I would like my son to feel safe, because we are both British, and I would like all British people to feel safe.

(ends)