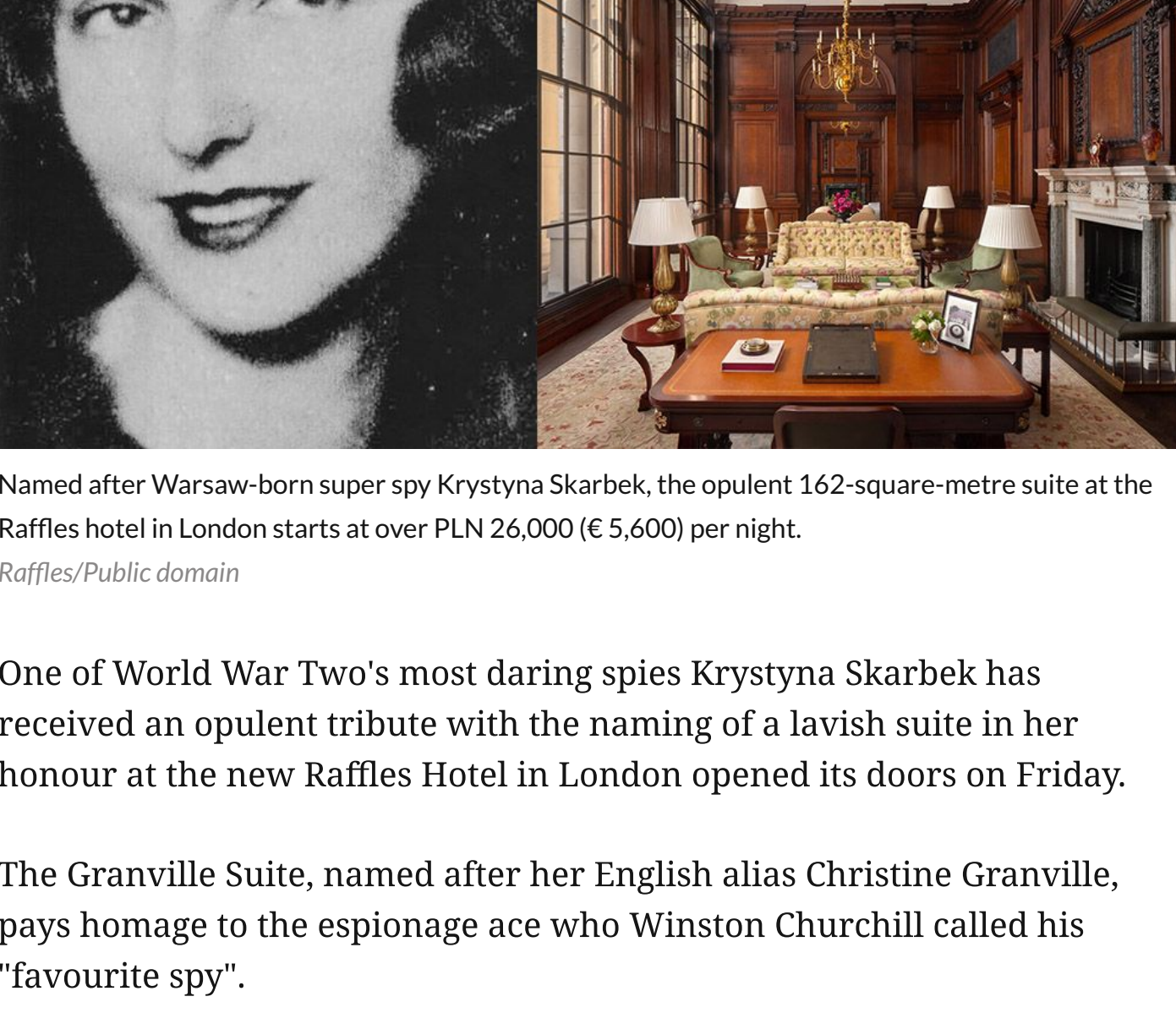


Polish WWII agent who Churchill called his favourite spy has luxurious hotel suite named in her honour

HISTORY | HOTELS | LIFESTYLE

STUART DOWELL, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023



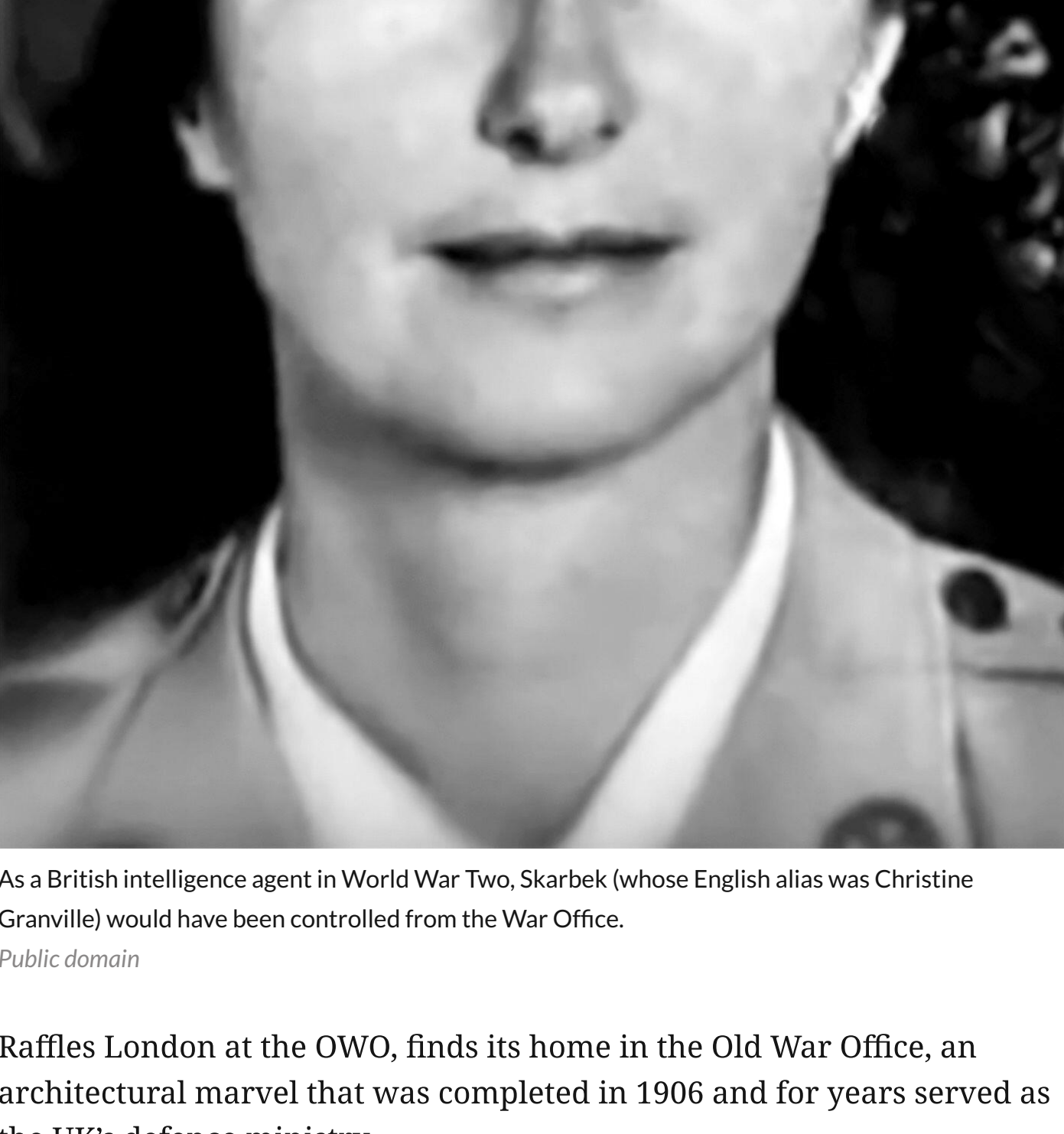
Named after Warsaw-born super spy Krystyna Skarbek, the opulent 162-square-metre suite at the Raffles hotel in London starts at over PLN 26,000 (€ 5,600) per night.

Raffles/Public domain

One of World War Two's most daring spies Krystyna Skarbek has received an opulent tribute with the naming of a lavish suite in her honour at the new Raffles Hotel in London opened its doors on Friday.

The Granville Suite, named after her English alias Christine Granville, pays homage to the espionage ace who Winston Churchill called his "favourite spy".

Grand beyond belief, the suite occupies a staggering 162 square metres and with an eye-watering nightly rate in excess of PLN 26,000.

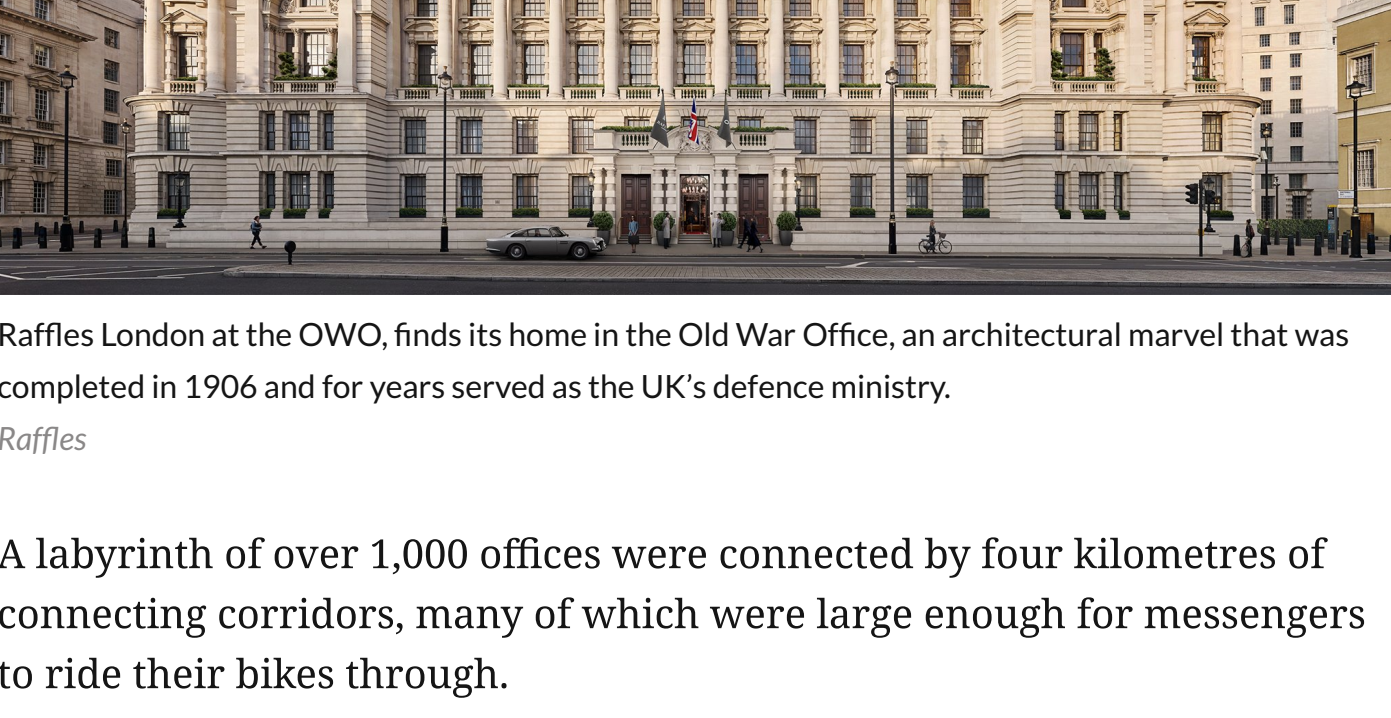


As a British intelligence agent in World War Two, Skarbek (whose English alias was Christine Granville) would have been controlled from the War Office.

Public domain

Raffles London at the OWO, finds its home in the Old War Office, an architectural marvel that was completed in 1906 and for years served as the UK's defence ministry.

Built in the Edwardian Baroque style with elaborate turrets, it is a place steeped in history on the site of the original Palace of Whitehall, home to Henry VIII and other monarchs, and Winston Churchill's headquarters during World War II.

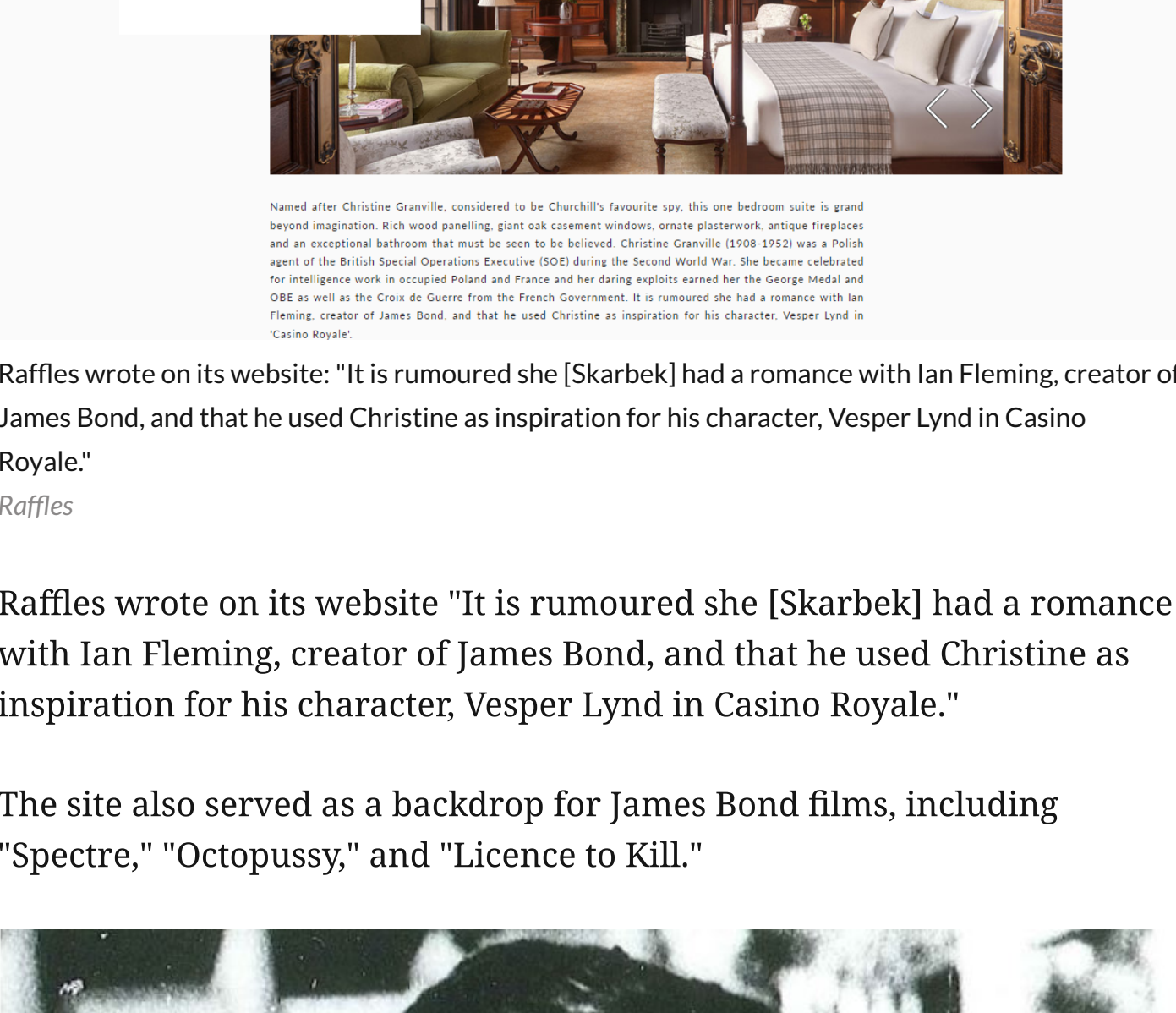


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Raffles

A labyrinth of over 1,000 offices were connected by four kilometres of connecting corridors, many of which were large enough for messengers to ride their bikes through.

It was here that Ian Fleming came up with the idea to create the character of James Bond. During World War II, Fleming worked for at the war office as a British naval intelligence officer.

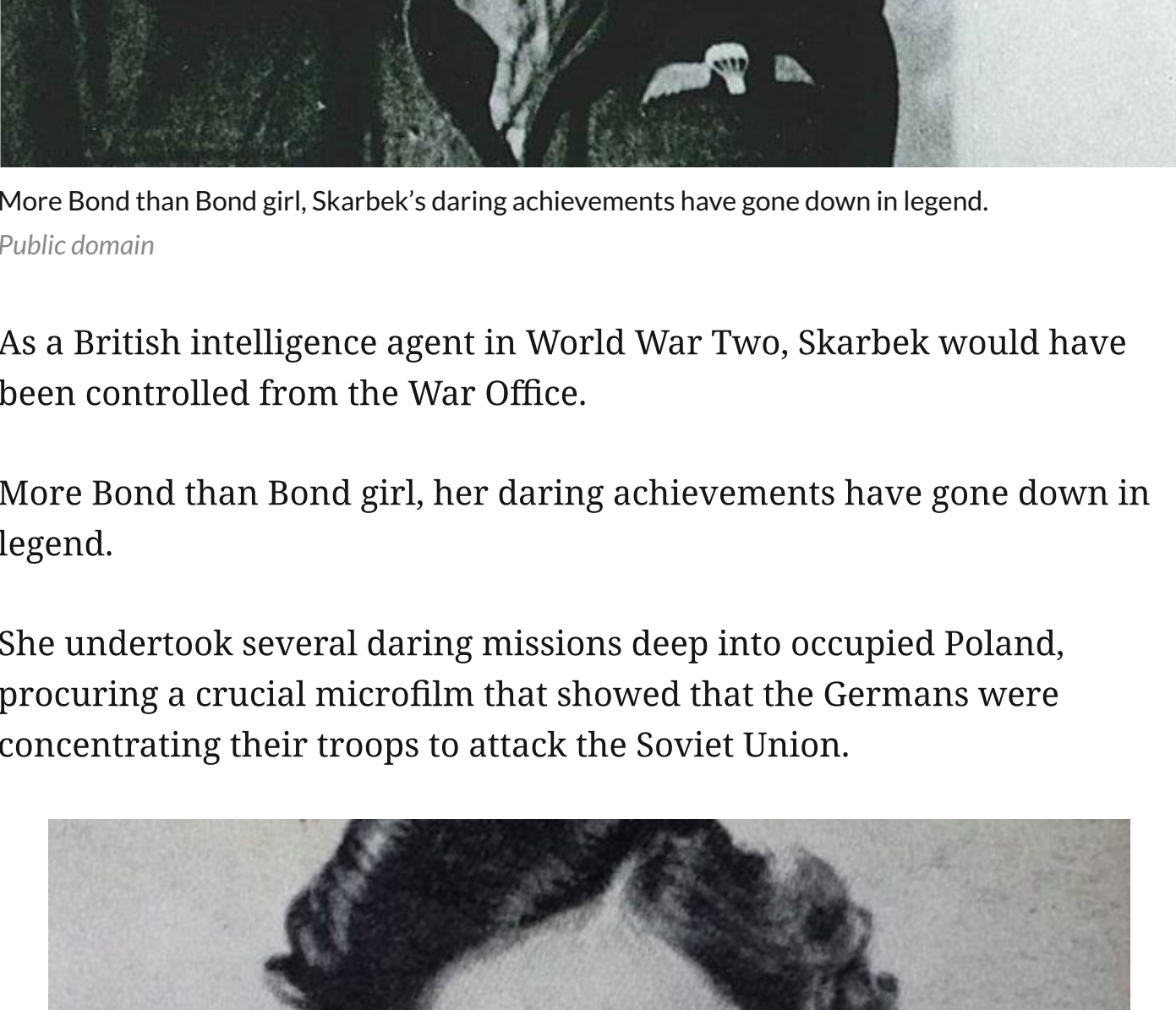


Raffles wrote on its website: "It is rumoured she [Skarbek] had a romance with Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, and that he used Christine as inspiration for his character, Vesper Lynd in Casino Royale."

Raffles

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The site also served as a backdrop for James Bond films, including "Spectre," "Octopussy," and "Licence to Kill."



More Bond than Bond girl, Skarbek's daring achievements have gone down in legend.

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More Bond than Bond girl, her daring achievements have gone down in legend.

She undertook several daring missions deep into occupied Poland, procuring a crucial microfilm that showed that the Germans were concentrating their troops to attack the Soviet Union.

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Captured by German forces on two occasions, Skarbek's resourcefulness ensured her miraculous escapes. Her quick thinking once led her to feign tuberculosis by biting her tongue, convincing her captors of her ailment.

Later in the war, with a bounty on her head, the Warsaw-born agent marched into a Gestapo office in occupied France to secure the release of two British agents.

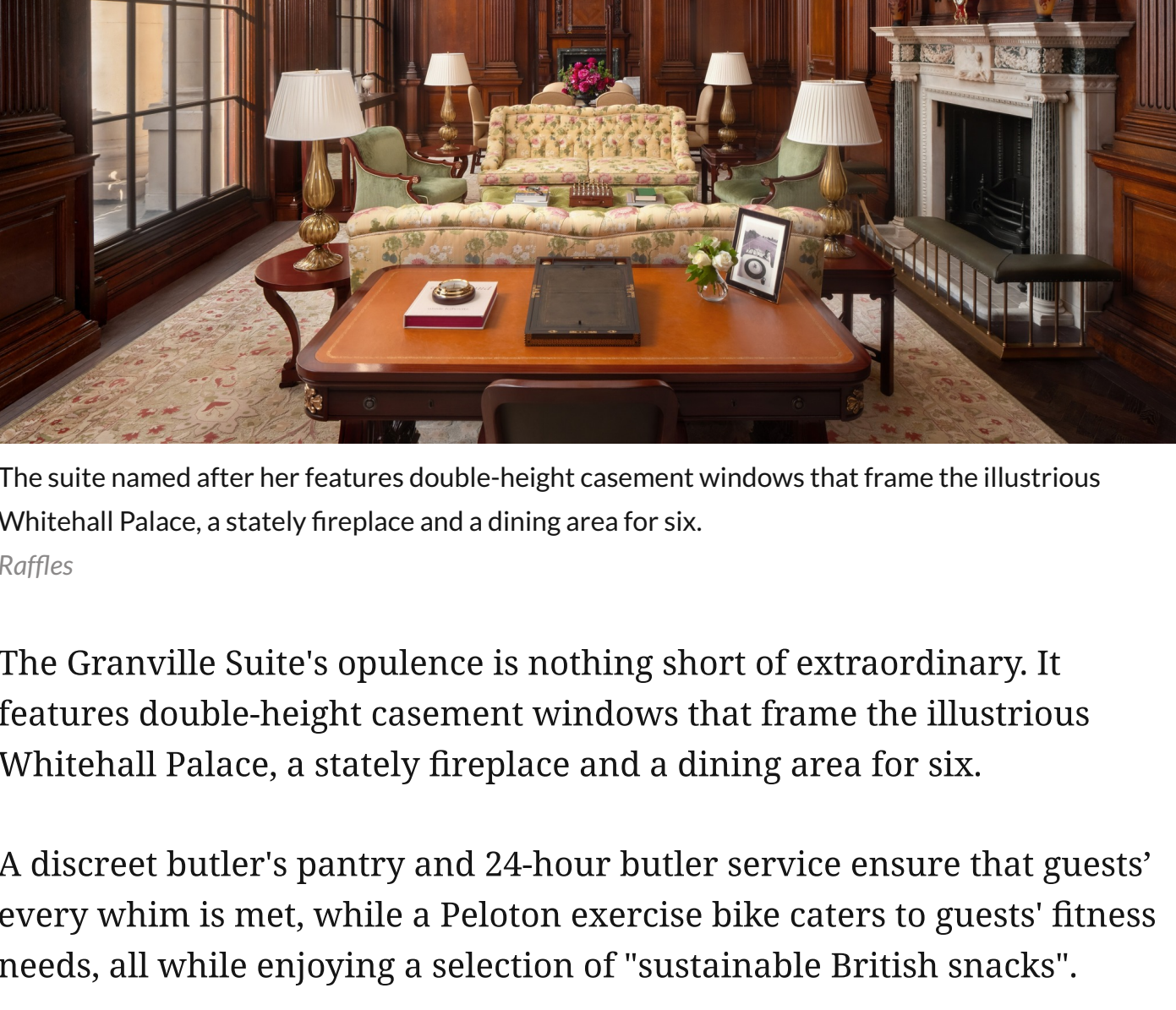


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Public domain

Perhaps her most astonishing feat was convincing an entire garrison of 200 Poles, forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht, to desert their posts on the Italian border and change sides.

Krystyna Skarbek's remarkable life found a grim end. Denied British citizenship, she fell on hard times, residing in a dilapidated Poles-only flophouse in London. Her life was cruelly cut short by a jealous former lover who fatally stabbed her.

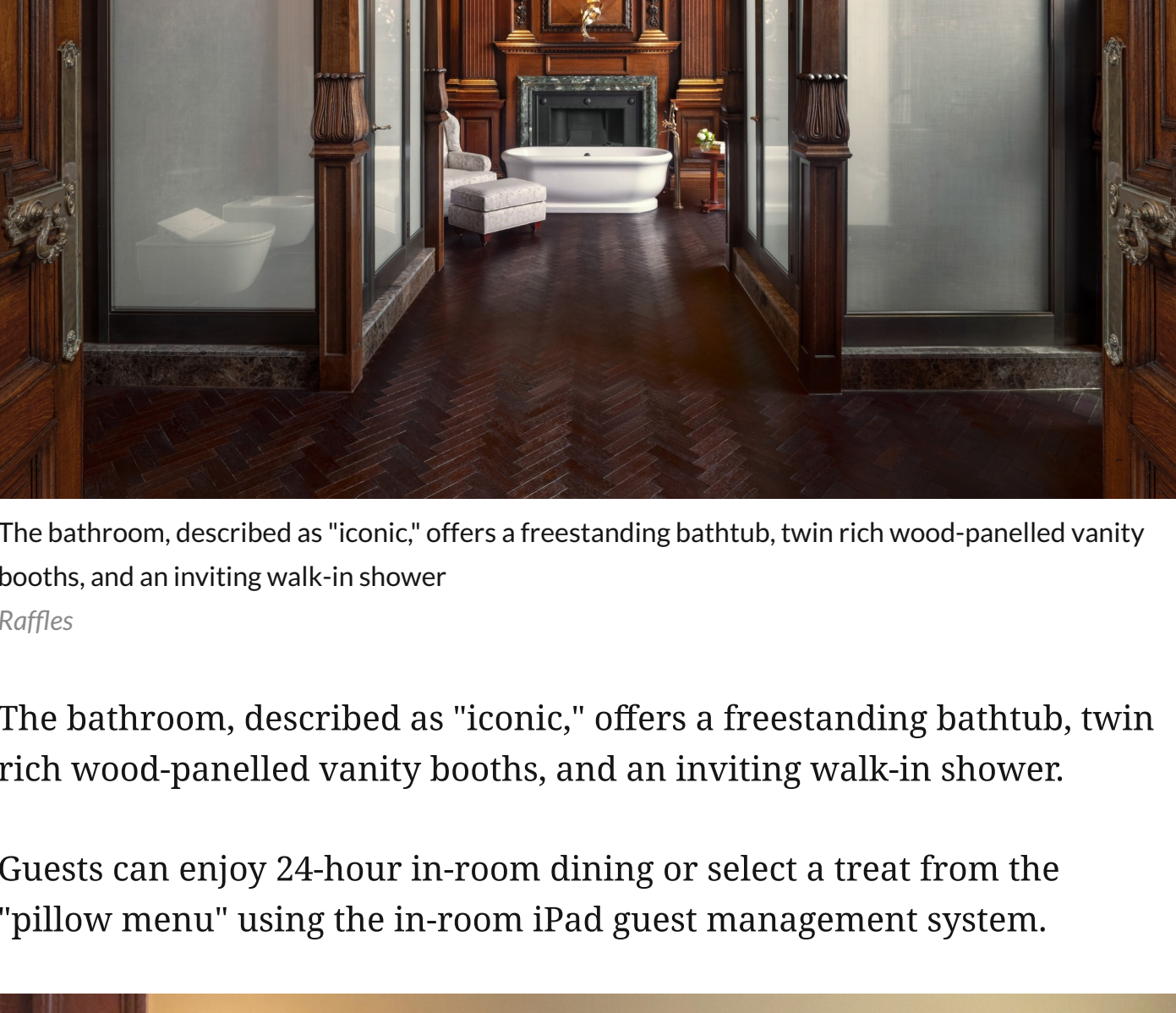


The suite named after her features double-height casement windows that frame the illustrious Whitehall Palace, a stately fireplace and a dining area for six.

Raffles

The Granville Suite's opulence is nothing short of extraordinary. It features double-height casement windows that frame the illustrious Whitehall Palace, a stately fireplace and a dining area for six.

A discreet butler's pantry and 24-hour butler service ensure that guests' every whim is met, while a Peloton exercise bike caters to guests' fitness needs, all while enjoying a selection of "sustainable British snacks".

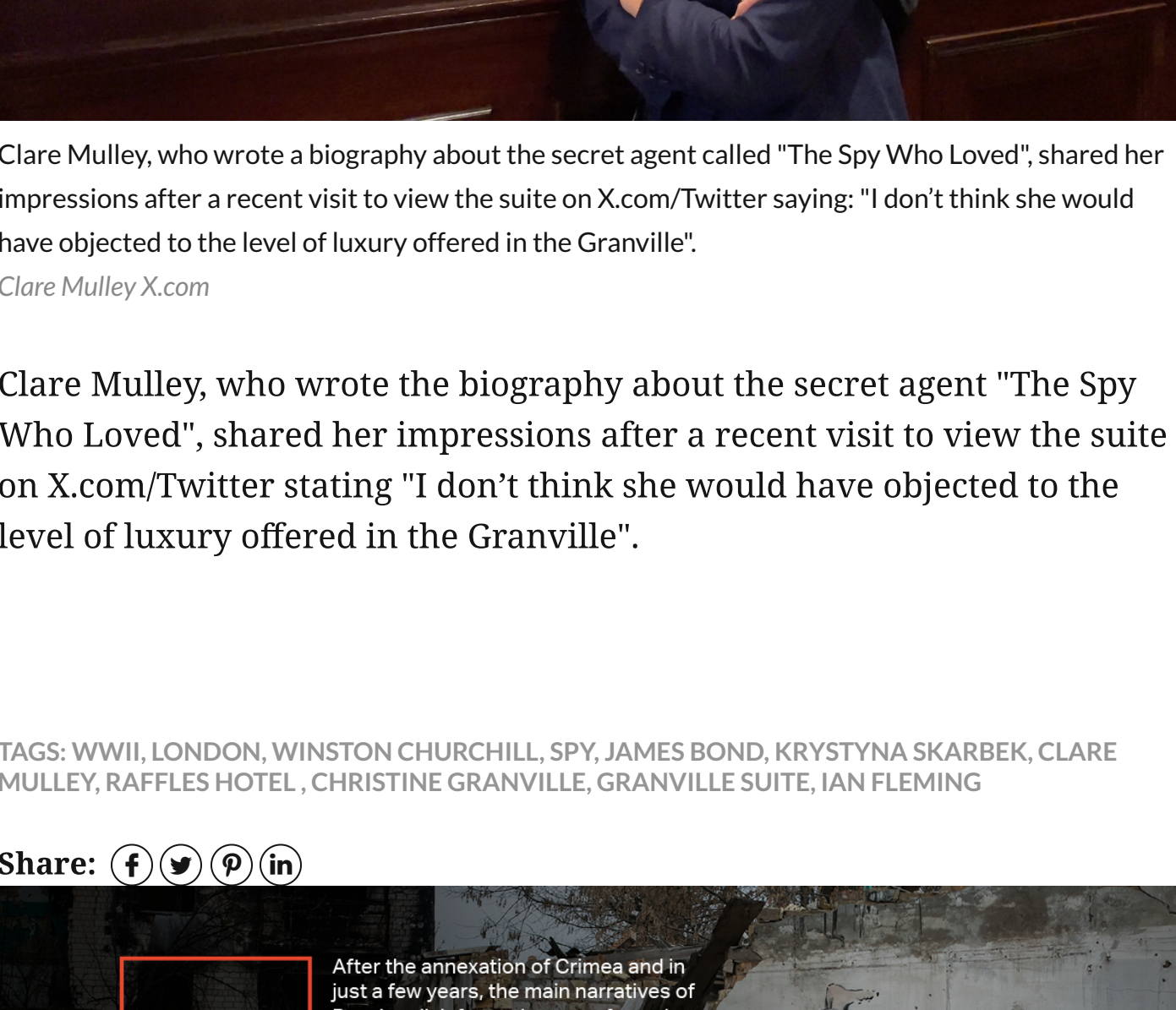


The bathroom, described as "iconic," offers a freestanding bathtub, twin rich wood-paneled vanity booths, and an inviting walk-in shower.

Raffles

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Guests can enjoy 24-hour in-room dining or select a treat from the "pillow menu" using the in-room iPad guest management system.



Clare Mulley, who wrote a biography about the secret agent called "The Spy Who Loved", shared her impressions after a recent visit to view the suite on X.com/Twitter saying: "I don't think she would have objected to the level of luxury offered in the Granville".

Clare Mulley/X.com

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