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Movie stars get hung up on KGB's anti-hangover drug

Nick Paton Walsh
in Moscow

A drug created by the former KGB to keep its agents sober so that they could drink opponents under the table before stealing their secrets is being sold on the internet to Hollywood stars as a defence against hangovers.

The drug, known as RU-21, is

made in Russia and sold as a natural remedy on the internet. Hollywood actors are said to be fond of the fix, called after the American legal drinking age, which enables them to make the most of LA's party circuit without red eyes or pounding headaches detracting from their delivering the goods on the film set next morning.

Its makers claim that it stops the body making an enzyme which turns alcohol into acetaldehyde, a toxic chemical which can damage tissues.

The pill lets you get drunk, but indefinitely delays the hangover and damage to the body's organs.

A little less convenient, the makers say that you have to take two pills before or during

every two drinks — a suspicious activity in trendy watering holes.

The KGB invented the drug just after the second world war.

The secrets of the pill were declassified in 1999, and it was developed into a market commodity by scientists at the Russian Academy of Sciences as part of an extended study of

alcohol's effects on the body. Its makers and Californian marketers say it is selling to the tune of \$10,000 (£6,000) a week.

"Russians can out-drink anybody in the world anyway," said Emil Chiaberi, head of Spirit Sciences, which sells the pill in the US.

"I don't know why they needed a pill."

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6733 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 108 - Los Angeles, CA 90045 - Tel: (310) 568-1030 Fax: (310) 861-5612
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