...RK POST
CPYRGHT Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300370004-1

My Trial in Russia

An American Tourist Is Accused of Spying

The author, who teaches the Russian language at Purdue University, just three weeks ago was languishing in a Russian jail, wondering whether he would ever see a fellow American again. This is the fourth of five articles by the first American to return from Russia after being tried and convicted of espionage.

By MARK KAMINSKY
As Told to Peter Hahn

Copyright 1960 By The Bell Syndicate

I WAS SITTING in the soundproof interrogation chamber of the KGB (Russian secret police) headquarters at Kiev, stunned by what my questioner, Colonel Lysenko, had just told me: I was suspected of having violated Article 2 of the Soviet Criminal Code, dealing with "especially dangerous crimes against the state."

It was the article dealing with espionage.

I had just been flown to Kiev "for further investigation" of my case. The interrogators wanted to find out more about why I had tried to take the wrong checkpoint to leave the country, and why I had kept a notebook and diary during a month-long motor trip through western Russia. My friend and traveling companion Harvey Bennett was being held as a material witness, confined to his hotel room.

Now I was informed that the Soviet government had ordered my arrest.

In addition to Colonel Lysenko, a lieutenant colonel from the Red Army's judge advocate general's office had been assigned to investigate the "military aspects" of my case. His name was Arakchayev. He, too, was present, together with an interpreter named Adamski.

My questioners asked me whether I wanted to speak English or Russian during the interrogation. I said I would just as soon speak in their language, and would need an interpreter only for the clarification of the fine points of Soviet law.

Lysenko said that what was happening now was an "official inquiry," and that everything I said from this moment on would be considered evidence, and could be used against me.

I Learn My 'Rights'

Then Arakchayev pulled out a gray-bound copy of the Soviet Criminal Code and began to read to me my "rights" as a suspect. Among them were:

¶The right to answer all questions. But no mention was made of a right to refuse an answer.

¶The right to admit my guilt. When I asked about the Fifth Amendment, or a similar provision under Soviet law, my question was brushed off as "capitalist nonsense."

¶The right to complain about unfair treatment by the interrogators. But their previous attitudes already had demonstrated how much good this "right" would do me.

I then asked about my right to counsel, and about my right to see a representative of the U. S. Embassy.

Lysenko answered: "You have a head on your shoulders. You are your own counsel in this investigation. And as for seeing someone of your embassy, the answer is—no!"

This opening exchange, and a repetition of my personal history, all strictly for the record, took up most of my first afternoon at KGB headquarters. At 7 p.m., Lysenko asked me whether I was tired, and when I told him that I was physically and mentally exhausted, he said: "It's been a long day, and we will let you rest." But there was a lot to be done before I could go to bed.

A sergeant was ordered to the interrogation room. He told me to put my hands behind my back, but did not handcuff me as I had expected. Then he walked me downstairs to an enclosed courtyard at the back [illegible] the headquarters building. We crossed the yard [illegible] approached another building with small barred [illegible]dows and a heavy door. My escort pushed a [illegible]r, and a peephole opened at eye level. Then [illegible] door was opened and I was led across the [illegible]old. I was told to wait in a small anteroom [illegible] the door, which seemed to be the day room [illegible] guards.

[illegible] one of the guards put on a black duster and [illegible] me to follow him. He took me down a short [illegible] lined with heavy doors on either side. He [illegible] one of them and led me into a small cubicle [illegible], furnished only with a wooden bench and [illegible]

[illegible] me to take off my clothes. As I stood [illegible] and shivering, he looked at my feet. I asked whether he was looking for athlete's foot, but his only reply was a grunt. Then he said that prisoners are not allowed to speak.

The guard gave me the most thorough search I have ever been subjected to. He went through my hair, looked into my ears, under my tongue, examined every inch of my body.

Another guard arrived, tossed me a bundle of prisoner's underwear, and told me to put it on. He and the other guard then started to go through my belongings.

After taking everything from my trousers, they returned them to me, along with my socks. The prison underwear, incidentally, looked like American longjohns, with pieces of string to tie around the ankles.

One of the guards took my billfold and emptied it on the table. He pulled out the picture of my girl, plucked at it with his dirty fingers, and leered.

Then both guards went through my shaving kit. It proved a wonder to them. Like two country pumpkins, they asked me how to use the push-button shaving cream "bomb" and some injector blades, and then experimented with them. When I reached for one of the articles to show them how to use it, they jerked it away, like possessive children.

The guards finally decided that all the articles in my kit would take too long to list in their labored handwriting, and postponed that chore till the following day.

Then I was led to the prison bathroom in an adjoining building. It was a large room with several metal shower stalls. When taking a shower, the prisoner is locked inside a stall and handed a bar of GI soap, and the guards turn on the water from the outside. As a special privilege, they allowed me to check the water temperature before stepping into the shower. The shower restored some of my self respect, but my first experience with prison had left me feeling soiled, not only on the outside. The Russians had been persuading me I was dirty to the core.

A Clean Cell

After the shower, I was handed a "kit," consisting of sheets, a pillow case and two towels, and led back to the cell block. The guards opened one of the padlocked doors and I stood inside the six-by-10-foot hole which was to be my home for the next 40 days: Cell No. 35, Voldamir St., Third Entrance.

The guard assigned to me, a surly individual, said: "We don't expect any trouble from you," meaning, "Stay in line and you won't get hurt." I looked around. There was a cast-iron cot, a rather ornate affair with lion's claws holding the metal frame, a night table, a stool and some shelves.

My inquiry about basic needs was met with a silent gesture toward a crude bucket standing in a corner. But all told, the cell was clean.

The guard handed me two bowls for food, a tea pot and a metal cup. He also gave me a wooden spoon. Then he left, closing the heavy steel door quietly behind him.

I was alone for the first time since my detention—alone to think, alone to worry, more alone than I had ever been. Moscow, the U. S. Embassy, my family, even Harvey Bennett, only a few miles away, seemed hopelessly removed from the reality of this Soviet prison.

Ten minutes later a small peephole was opened in the door and a woman asked me for my food containers, returning them with a nondescript meal. I cannot remember what I ate. I was nervous and tense as I swallowed a few mouthfuls.

Then I made my bed and went to sleep. I surprised myself by sleeping like a log—once I had accustomed my eyes to the glare of the 100-watt bulb shining straight down.

The Prison Routine

I was awakened by a guard banging on my door and yelling, "Padyom!" ("get up!")

The prison routine never varied: wakening at daybreak, toilet buckets emptied at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., breakfast at 8, an hour's exercise at 9. My exercise was carried out in isolation from other prisoners.

During my entire detention, I never saw other victims of the KGB. But I heard them, pacing above me at night. Sometimes there would be a thudding overhead, as if someone was banging furniture on the floor of a cell. And I don't know whether I imagined them or not, but at times I thought I heard faint screams from nearby.

Each day there were ceaseless rounds of interrogation and "depositions." But now the line of questioning had changed. No longer was I being bullied. My questioners had split into a neat team, tossing the ball of fictional fact and emotional attack skillfully back and forth between them—with me in the middle.

The nine-day ordeal with "Grindstone," my tormentor at Uzhgorod, already had broken down most of my mental resistance and left me confused.

Kaminsky (r) and Bennett at press conference in Vienna after they were released by the Russians.

Colonel Lysenko and Lt. Colonel Arakchayev knew that by now I had been made to feel guilty of a crime I had not committed. And they started dangling the lure of a "glorious life" in the Soviet Union before my eyes.

"You are a fine physical specimen," they would say. "Once you have paid your debt to Soviet society, why not stay here? We shall provide you with a decent job. Wouldn't you like to stay?"

Alone in my cell at night, away from the questioners and their torments, I could think only of one thing: how I could get out of Russia. Would I ever see my hometown, my parents, my girl again?

I even thought of suicide.

Then one day, after a ten-hour interrogation, Lysenko gave me electrifying news. He told me that I was to appear the next day before the prosecutor who would "prepare" my case and who would decide whether I was to be tried for my suspected crime against the Soviet state: espionage.

Continued Tomorrow.

CPYRGHT

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300370004-1