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4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 (301) 656-4068

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SUBJECT Why Do People Become Spies

ROGER MUDD: On our Special Segment tonight, a question: Why do people become spies? A former FBI agent charged with espionage today testified in court he got involved because he had what he called a James Bond fantasy. Traditionally, people got involved in espionage because of politics. But as John Dancy reports, it's the popular image of adventure and wealth that is motivating modern spies.

CHRISTOPHER BOYCE: Nobody these days is spying to help the Soviet Union or to further their ideology, because their ideology is pretty much bankrupt.

JOHN DANCY: Christopher Boyce is one of a new breed of spies. Like the Walkers, he had access to top secret codes. He sold them to the Soviets and went to prison for life. Not for ideology, but for money and a chance to be somebody.

ADMIRAL BOBBY INMAN: In looking at those cases that have come to light over the last 15 years, I don't know of a single case where ideology played a role at all.

DANCY: When Mata Hari spied for the Germans, and Riley, the so-called Ace of Spies, worked for the British, and the Rosenberg's sold atomic secrets to the Soviets, they did it for ideology. They were believers.

American counterintelligence had always used an acronym to explain why people spy, MICE: money, ideology, compromise, ego. But by the 1970s the "I" in MICE, ideology, had been replaced by the "M," money. Money and fantasy, the spy mystique, adventure, excitement.

RAY CLINE: The profile is Mr. Everyman, Mr. American. The weaknesses of the ordinary American are what make people spy and what leads the KGB and the GRU to their sources.

DANCY: When he was a KGB agent, Stanislav Levchenko tried to exploit those weaknesses that would allow him to recruit a person to spy for the Soviet Union. Levchenko, here in shadow, has been threatened with death. He says his work was harder because there is no profile of a typical spy.

STANISLAV LEVCHENKO: In intelligence business there is no such profile. Because if there would be such profile, then counterintelligence work would be very easy, and you just can prevent any kind of cases of espionage. Anybody can be Soviet agent.

DANCY: Journalists are favorite targets. The KGB twice tried to recruit former Newsweek correspondent Arnaud de Borchgrave in the '50s and '60s to spread disinformation, Soviet propaganda.

ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE: I was wined and dined and massaged by Mr. Kazansky, who was Minister Consul of the Soviet Embassy, who told me I was already one of the world's most important journalists, I could become one of the world's most famous journalists.

I said, "How?"

He said, "By simply developing a social conscience."

I said, "What does that mean?"

He said, "Denouncing the evils of the CIA and American imperialism, and I think we can help you."

In other words, they were trying to use me as a conduit for disinformation. And I reported that to the CIA at the time in Paris.

DANCY: Most spies these days are what the KGB calls in walk-ins, volunteers.

Christopher Boyce and Andrew Dalton Lee, whose story was told in this movie, "The Falcon and the Snowman," volunteered to commit treason.

[Film clip]

DANCY: For two years Boyce sold secrets he had access to as code clerk at TRW, a defense contractor. A child of the

turbulent '60s and '70s, Boyce wanted to make a political statement, ideology, and saw himself uniquely qualified to do it because of his job, ego.

BOYCE: My first political awareness, growing up, of government was Kennedy being assassinated, and then the race riots, and then the war and the napalm on television every night, and then Richard Nixon dragging the government through the mud. And when he went down is when I started. And I thought that I would use the KGB to bash the CIA.

And, you know, with hindsight, I have to look back and concede now it's like drinking cyanide, but it was treason.

DANCY: Friends and acquaintances now say John Walker's ego and lifestyle, like Boyce's, made him ripe for recruitment as a spy. But there was no way to predict it.

We now have psychological profiles to identify in advance serial killers and child molesters. But what the government doesn't yet know, and has to find out, is at what point human weakness leads someone to commit treason.