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# ENGLAND BOO A U.S. REPORTE

## Article On Electronic Intelligence Led To Unusual Deportation

### British co-author of spy expose arrested and jailed.

BY MARK HOSENBALL

With all the might of Britain's legendary intelligence services backing them up, the police should have been better informed. I had already gone off to work when they arrived at my home in North London last November 16. Life on the *London Evening Standard*, like life on evening newspapers around the world, begins early in the morning. By 7 a.m., most of the *Standard's* 16 general reporters are in the paper's gothically antiquated newsroom or on the streets; there is just an hour to the first-edition deadline. I had left home at 6:15, as had been my normal practice since joining the *Evening Standard* five months earlier. Her Majesty's not-so-swift messengers did not arrive for another two hours.

On November 16, 1976, the biggest story in Britain's morning papers was a charge, by a publicity-seeking Tory MP named Sproat, that there were at least 13 crypto-communists in the Labour Party's parliamentary contingent. This was not the most original allegation of all time. And the morning papers offered no names. But the story had not been played for a few months, and Sproat was at the time a media favorite for his frequent and virulent attacks on welfare "scroungers." As there was little other news on the morning of November 16, the *Evening Standard*, a paper which usually took the Right point of view on such matters anyway, decided to examine in detail Sproat's declaration. Several reporters, including myself, were assigned by news editor Stuart Kuttner to seek out this Sproat and get him to name the terrible thirteen. Having previously worked on a leftish London weekly, *Time Out* magazine, and having occasionally used *Time Out* sources for stories for the *Standard*, it was thought I might be particularly useful in the chase.

When Sproat was eventually located, he was only too willing to come forward with the names of his dirty baker's dozen. I was deputed to contact several on the list whom I personally knew to ask for their reactions. Without reactions, the *Standard* could not name names, for to do so without rebuttal would constitute gross libel. I was about halfway through my list—having successfully coerced a few outraged howls from my pinko friends—when I received the call from my landlady. Two policemen, she said, had just been round the house looking for me. They were from the "deportation branch," and wanted to deliver a letter to me "regarding my continued stay in the country."

Stuart Kuttner, the news editor, was surprised, but not overly alarmed, when I told him the police were after me. I said I didn't know

what it was about. Maybe unpaid parking tickets. Or the fact that I had recently moved and neglected to inform the police of my new address. This was a requirement for all foreigners living in Britain, and the threatened penalties for failure were high. Stuart dashed off to consult the paper's lawyer. There was always a lawyer on hand to read copy for libel, and he had a special cubicle in a corner of the newsroom. Stuart later told me that one of his earliest surmises, in talking to the lawyer, was that the government wanted me out because I was in some way "subversive."

After 45 minutes of agitated, but unanswered, phone calls to a number the police had given my landlady, I managed to reach the main immigration inquiry desk at the Home Office, Britain's Interior Ministry. I gave them my name and birthdate, and they promised to find out what was going on. A couple of minutes passed, and the woman came back on the line to say I should wait until I saw the police. I asked for further information. What was going on—was I being deported or something? The woman vanished for another couple of minutes. When she returned she said yes, I was being deported. When I asked why, she told me to wait until the police arrived; all would be explained in the letter they had been given to deliver to me.

At 10:30 a.m., two plainclothesmen belatedly arrived at the *Evening Standard*. They were shown into the lawyer's cubicle. I felt this venue would be more intimidating for them. They pulled out an official Home Office envelope, addressed to me at my new address, of which they had not officially been notified. The letter, two sheets of official note paper, explained that my continued presence in Britain was "not conducive to the public good as being in the interests of National Security" and therefore the government wished me to get out. The Home Secretary, the letter said, had considered information that "while resident in the United Kingdom, in consort with others, you sought to obtain and obtained for publication information harmful to the security of the United Kingdom and that this information included information prejudicial to the safety of servants of the Crown." The letter added that I had no legal right to contest the Home Secretary's decision, but, if I desired, I could make "representations" to a three-man advisory panel, appointed by the Home Secretary to study such cases. I had 14 days, the letter said, to either decide to take up this offer or vanish from British shores, indefinitely.

My first reaction was to dance about the lawyer's tiny cubicle screaming "Political, Political." The news editor said "Shut up." The cops were ushered out. There followed an intense round of high-level *Evening Standard* conferences, first between the news editor and the distinguished, but rather magisterial, editor, Charles Wintour, then the editor and his deputy, then the deputy, the editor, and me. They asked me what I had done. I said I hadn't a clue, except that while at *Time Out* magazine I had written a few stories about the CIA and British Intelligence, to which nobody took exception at the time they

Mark Hosenball is an American reporter who first went to England in 1969. He worked for *Time Out* and the *London Evening Standard* before being deported in May of this year. He is currently the Trenton correspondent for *The Dispatch of Ocean City, New Jersey*, and continues to write for the *British press*.