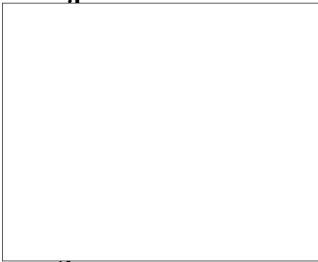


SPY vs. SPY

TWO TALES OF DANGLED DOUBLE AGENTS

STAT 

If 1985 was the Year of the Spy, then 1986 has been the Year of the Spy Trial. The Americans arrested for espionage—prominent among them Ronald Pelton, who betrayed the National Security Agency; the Walker clan that spied on the Navy; Richard Miller, who sold FBI secrets in California—have now been convicted of their crimes. A chapter has been closed, and with it closes the window of publicity through which we saw briefly into the spy game.

The CIA, the FBI and the intelligence branches of the U.S. military must be grateful to be returned to the shadows, especially the counterintelligence, or CI, units of these services. CI specialists are charged with rooting out the spies who work for the other side. (Usually that's the Soviet Union's KGB, though one recent case involved Israeli agents.) Critics see the revelations as proof of CI laxity; the intelligence community, while stung, prides itself on the arrests.

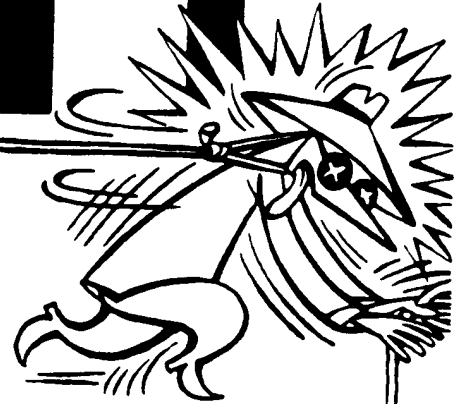
Aggressive counterintelligence tends to clash with civil liberties. The CIA is barred from investigating Americans at home, though many flagrant abuses came to light after the Vietnam years. Domestic CI is the province of the FBI, which can get permission to wiretap and otherwise snoop on U.S. citizens only if they are already suspected of spying. There can be no random probing. Indeed, that would scarcely be practical considering the number of Americans in a position to become traitors. Some 110,000 have access to top secret "code word"

information, while several million more have security clearances of one kind or another. As for the numbers on the other side: In the Washington, D.C., area alone, the Soviets and their East European allies maintain some 250 intelligence agents under diplomatic or other official cover. Their primary purpose is espionage. A larger and more transient body of Communist students, journalists and businessmen is likewise engaged.

The CI forces are considerably outmanned. Their one consolation is that the KGB, whether operating here or abroad, is not entitled to civil liberties. Its agents are guilty until proved guilty. Surveillance, burglary, dirty tricks, disinformation and entrapment are everyday tools brought to bear against them. A favorite counterintelligence ploy of both the CIA and FBI is the "dangle," the proffering of a double agent whose "secrets" confuse, disrupt and distract the spies and CI experts on the other side.

In real life, of course, spy vs. spy operations are rarely pulled off with the precision they enjoy in novels. They are subject to the same pratfalls and misunderstandings that they set out to cause. On the following pages LIFE pulls back the cloak on two CI dangles in action. One, engineered by the FBI against the Soviets, had the qualities of a schoolboy's prank. The other case, more ominous and still very controversial today, involved a KGB officer who was apparently sent to sting the Americans.

Continued





HOW THEY TRICKED US

Vitaly Sergeyevich Yurchenko was dead. He was secretly executed by the KGB in Moscow. That was what an official of a U.S. intelligence agency told a LIFE reporter early this year. When the story was floated in the press some weeks later, Yurchenko's execution was said to have been by firing squad. Supposedly, his family was even charged for the cost of the bullets.

The 49-year-old counterintelligence officer with the military swagger had come to the U.S. last summer as a defector, but then had voluntarily returned to the Soviet Union. In the uproar that followed, questions were raised, even by the President himself, about whether American intelligence had been duped. Yurchenko's alleged execution was therefore very important to the CIA. If he had been killed, it would tend to prove, at least in the court of public opinion, that he had indeed betrayed the Soviet Union rather than having come here on an authorized mission—a dangle.

The death report was false. Soon afterward Yurchenko reappeared and made himself available in Moscow for an interview on German television. He was "alive and kicking," as he explained in English. He also said he was in the process of writing a book about his experiences with the CIA. This dramatic resurrection was hardly noted in the U.S. But it gave the Year of the Spy an entirely new and unsettling meaning.

The story begins in mid-1985, with the loss of one of the most valuable agents the CIA had ever acquired in the Soviet Union. He was A. G. Tol-kachev, an electronics expert employed by an elite Soviet think tank that researches military aviation and space-based detection systems. Recruited for the CIA in Moscow

Epstein's books range from Legend, a study of Lee Harvey Oswald, to The Rise and Fall of Diamonds. His next, Deception, will report on the ways governments and intelligence agencies fool one another.

in the early 1980s. Tolkachev was unlike most of the West's other intelligence sources, such as diplomats or attachés, whose access to technology is limited. He was in a position to pass on to the CIA hard data on the extent to which American submarines and planes were vulnerable to detection. For some three years until that spring, his microfilms of Soviet military secrets were left for an American courier in "dead drops," hiding places that make face-to-face contact unnecessary.

Abruptly, the deliveries from Tolkachev ended. When the American courier, who had diplomatic immunity, went to check the drop site, he walked into a trap. He was seized by waiting KGB officers and then expelled from the Soviet Union. It was clear to the CIA that despite all its precautions, Tolkachev had been compromised and captured by the KGB. But how?

In the spy war the question of how an agent is compromised can be as important as the loss itself. In this case there were only two possibilities: Either Tolkachev, through some slip on his part (or his courier's), had been caught by the KGB through routine investigative work or he had been betrayed by someone privy to the operation inside the CIA. If the former, the entire affair could be chalked up to a tragic accident. But if it turned out that Tolkachev had been compromised by a mole, all the other CIA agents in the Soviet sphere would be in extreme jeopardy.

This possibility is the nightmare of every CIA director. The suspicion of such a "penetration" would not only serve to paralyze ongoing operations, it also would call into question the validity of the information already received.

The nightmare seemed more and more reality in light of other developments: One after another, spies for the West were coming in from the cold claiming that they had been compromised and were on the verge of being arrested by the KGB. A diplomat from the Soviet embassy in India, whom the CIA was secretly developing as a mole, defected from his post in March 1985. In May a Soviet military intelligence officer who has provided the CIA with valuable insights about Russian efforts to infiltrate the Greek military, sought protection at the American embassy in Athens. He claimed that the KGB had placed him under surveillance. His fear was so great that he left his wife and seven-year-old daughter behind. Finally, in England, Oleg Antonovich Gordyevsky, a KGB officer at the

YURCHENKO REVEALED A MYSTERY AGENT NAMED 'ROBERT'

Soviet embassy, also found himself being questioned and watched. He had been selling Soviet secrets to British intelligence for years. Now he hastily organized his escape, also without his family.

While these defections could be trumpeted from a U.S. public relations perspective as "victories" that had been secretly won long ago and could now be revealed, they actually constituted defeats in the ongoing spy war. Spies are most valuable when they are in the enemy camp and have access to its secrets. The moment a spy defects, he negates his value. Not only does he lose his access, he exposes the fact that he has stolen secrets in the past, which often allows at least part of the damage to be remedied.

Just as the CIA began to investigate this rapid succession of losses, the agency received an astonishing message from Moscow. It was from Vitaly Yurchenko, offering his services. Yurchenko was no stranger to the agency. He had been the chief security officer and a KGB operative at the Washington embassy from 1975 to

1980, when he was reassigned to Moscow. Before he left, the CIA made its own approach to this KGB dangle man—he was given the opportunity to become a double agent. This was the sort of gambit that is commonly made by the CIA on the chance that a KGB officer at some future time will run into difficulties that will cause him to accept.

Now, five years later, Yurchenko alleged to the CIA that he had had a meteoric rise and was a general-designate in KGB headquarters at Dzerzhinsky Square. He had been promoted to the chief of the fifth counterintelligence department, where he was responsible for, among other things, investigating the credentials of foreign agents recruited by the KGB. Then he had been elevated to deputy chief of the department responsible for organizing espionage operations against the United States and Canada. If this self-reported career was authentic, Yurchenko was one of the highest-ranking KGB officers ever to volunteer his services to the U.S., and a man uniquely qualified to answer the CIA's burning ques-

tions about its compromised spies. He could also explain the other side's "wiring diagram"—the Communist bloc apparatus for recruiting and servicing its agents in North America. Most important of all, he could identify any moles that had been infiltrated into American intelligence.

Though his motive was not clear, Yurchenko's offer to talk could not be refused. In the initial interrogation, which took place in a safe house on the outskirts of Rome, the Russian told the CIA what it most wanted to believe: All the attempted recruitments of CIA personnel that came under his purview had failed. There was no active mole in the CIA. He could personally attest to it. Then he sprang a surprise. Rather than returning to Moscow, as had been expected, he announced that he wanted to defect to the U.S.


On August 1, Vitaly Yurchenko applied for political asylum at the U.S. embassy in Rome. The next day he was bundled aboard a military courier plane and flown to Washington. Settled in a safe house 60 miles from the capital in Coventry, Va., he at once began to undergo his debriefings.

Yurchenko talked about a mystery agent named "Robert," an ex-CIA officer. He said Robert had contacted the Soviet embassy in Washington and had subsequently traveled to St. Anton, Austria, for a meeting with the KGB. These details immediately focused suspicion on one ex-CIA employee—Edward Lee Howard.

Howard had joined the agency in 1981 at the age of 29. He was groomed over the next two years for an embassy job in Moscow, but before his posting, he made damaging admissions during a lie detector examination about drug-taking. In June 1983 he was fired by the CIA. Embittered, Howard went to the gates of the Soviet embassy in Washington but decided at the last minute against going in—or so he later claimed. Shortly afterward he moved to New Mexico.

Yurchenko's tip prompted the FBI to grill Howard extensively. He acknowledged that he had met with Soviet officials in Austria on the date in question. It was clear that he was indeed Robert.

The CIA then jumped to the conclusion that Howard had betrayed Tolkachev. When Howard left the CIA in 1983, he was hardly more than a trainee and not privy to such closely held "need to know" secrets as the identities of top agents. But it was always possible that he could have picked up and passed on some telltale

WANTED		BY THE	
		FBI	
ESPIONAGE; INTERSTATE FLIGHT - PROBATION VIOLATION			
EDWARD LEE HOWARD			
FBI No. 720 744 CAZ			
			
Photograph taken 1983			
Aliases: Patrick Brian Patrick M. Brian Patrick M. Brian Edward L. Houston Roger H. Shannon			
DESCRIPTION			
Date of Birth:	October 27 1951	Race:	Brown
Place of Birth:	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Eyes:	Brown
Height:	5 11	Complexion:	Medium
Weight:	165 to 180 pounds	Hair:	White
Build:	Medium	Nationality:	American
Occupation:	Economic analyst; former U.S. Government employee		
Remarks:	Last known date in the U.S. at Houston		
Scars and Marks:	7 inch scar over right eye; scar on upper lip		
State Security Number Used:	457 92 0276		
NCIC:	00540710191100101410		
Photograph Classification:	4 8 1 8 70 10		
	5 17 0 0		

Fingered by Yurchenko, Howard gave the FBI the slip. The fugitive is said to have fled to either Moscow or Central America.

Continued

procedures that two years later would have led to Tolkachev. Before this crucial question could be resolved, however, Howard disappeared from his house in Sante Fe, escaping FBI surveillance. He evidently boarded a flight to Austin, Tex.—and vanished.

Yurchenko also furnished leads pointing to Ronald Pelton, an ex-employee of the National Security Agency, who, like Howard, had given secrets to Soviet intelligence in Austria. The FBI had tapes from 1980 of phone conversations between Pelton and Soviet officials—one was Yurchenko—at the embassy in Washington. Matching Pelton's "voice prints" to the tapes completed the identification. After questioning by the FBI, Pelton was arrested last November.

In both cases, however, Yurchenko had told U.S. intelligence only what he and the KGB assumed it already knew. As his embassy's security officer, Yurchenko certainly was aware that Soviet telephone lines were tapped by the FBI, and that visitors like Pelton and Howard would be photographed. In addition, the KGB could have learned from Howard himself during its questioning of him that he had been suspected and had made a limited admission to the CIA's Office of Security. And even if they had not been compromised from the beginning or tracked down soon afterward by the FBI, in 1985 Pelton and Howard were "burned-out cases"—sources of no further value to the KGB.

In any event, Yurchenko became progressively less forthcoming after delivering these initial messages. Instead of revealing the much sought after KGB wiring diagram of spies, he was stonewalling questions on the subject. Moreover, his repeated claim that the KGB had made no other recruits in the U.S. or Canada during the five years that he was in charge of the counterintelligence unit was becoming increasingly less credible. The CIA, after all, had offered its own dangles to the KGB during this period, and the Soviets had accepted some of them. They included American diplomats and intelligence officers under cover who passed disinformation and tested KGB interrogation procedures. Since all these agents would have been known to Yurchenko if he had held the position he claimed, his failure to name them, even when led in their direction by his case officer, raised serious questions about his authenticity.

To the CIA's frustration, the interrogation was drying up. When

WE CAUGHT A RED HERRING INSTEAD OF A MOLE

Yurchenko asked to see the wife of a high-ranking Soviet diplomat in Ottawa, with whom he said he was having a romantic liaison, the CIA acquiesced. They escorted him to Canada for a meeting with her. (Presumably she was his contact for further instructions from the KGB.) The agency even offered him a million-dollar contract to reveal the KGB network, but he could not be moved. The more he was pressed, the more recalcitrant he became.

The game finally drew to an end on November 2, exactly three months to the day after Yurchenko's arrival in America. It was a suitably cold, rainy Saturday evening. If his CIA case officers did not actually return their charge to the Soviet embassy, they certainly facilitated his "escape." First they took him out to buy a hat and coat. He was permitted to make two phone calls to his embassy, and in one he told the officer on duty he was coming in. Then he was left in the hands of a lone CIA agent, who took him to a restaurant a few blocks from the embassy compound. The two had dinner, and Yurchenko got up and walked out the door. After he was gone, the CIA officer called neither the FBI nor the Washington police, who could have intercepted the Russian at the gates of the compound.

The affair might have ended

then and there if Yurchenko had quietly returned to Moscow—as expected—on his diplomatic passport. But that Monday, November 4, reporters received an invitation from the embassy to an afternoon news conference. The star was none other than Yurchenko, who, as far as was publicly known, was still the CIA's prize defector.

Mocking the agency at every turn, Yurchenko claimed that he had been kidnapped in Rome, drugged and held prisoner for the past three months. The next day he went to the State Department to demonstrate that he was returning to the Soviet Union without coercion. He met with a psychiatrist and a half dozen CIA and State Department officials, who agreed that he was acting voluntarily. As he left, he jauntily clasped his hands over his head in a victory sign. By Wednesday the Soviet dangle man was on an Aeroflot plane headed home.

Stunned, as many were, by these developments, Senator Patrick J. Leahy, the vice chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, concluded that Yurchenko was a double agent whom the KGB foisted on the CIA. President Reagan voiced the same suspicions, adding, "The information he provided was not anything new or sensational." "This whole thing was very good theater," a high-ranking National Security

Council source told *The New York Times*. "And, to me, theater is something that is staged."

There were good reasons for such a conclusion. The first is that the Soviet Union has no history of forgiving intelligence officers who betray state secrets. Pointedly, the acronym for its counterespionage arm, SMERSH, stands for its slogan, "Death to the Spies." As a 25-year veteran of the KGB, Yurchenko certainly knew the fate awaiting him if he had passed secrets to the CIA without proper authority.

It is possible, of course, that the defector's mind could have snapped under the pressure of his confinement, and that he acted irrationally in putting himself in the hands of the KGB. But that does not satisfactorily explain the Soviets' decision to send Yurchenko to the State Department for the interview. The embassy could have kept Yurchenko indefinitely. It was under no obligation to give him another opportunity to save his life. Moreover, if Yurchenko had actually given away important secrets, then the KGB would have had to guard him tightly until he was squeezed of every drop of information about the extent of his betrayal. Indeed, the Soviets could be confident that Yurchenko would return from the State Department only if he was a well-disciplined KGB officer who had already demonstrated his loyalty by carrying out a provocative assignment.

At another press conference, on his return to Moscow, Yurchenko said that while in CIA custody he had used the debriefing sessions to learn the agency's major areas of interest and to study its interrogation techniques. Nevertheless, the CIA steadfastly clung to the line that Yurchenko's defection had been sincere. It even awarded him "bona fides," a term signifying that he had absolutely proved his authenticity.

While Yurchenko's startling reemergence last spring should end that myth, it hardly answers every question about this astounding affair. What is certain is that he was a human monkey wrench sent by the KGB into the inner workings of U.S. intelligence. Whether by design or by accident, Yurchenko acted as a red herring that confused the CIA's investigation of the betrayal of Tolkachev and the other agents. Although the information he provided may have been accurate, it pointed the CIA to the wrong trail. The Year of the Spy is over, yet the chilling possibility still exists that there is a mole in the CIA.



In June Ronald Pelton was convicted on two charges of espionage. He had talked with Yurchenko on the telephone in 1980.

Continued



HOW WE TRICKED THEM

April 16, 1983. Night on a deserted road in rural Maryland. A blue Chrysler stops, and a heavysset man in jeans and a red windbreaker gets out cautiously. He walks into the weeds, picks up a plastic garbage bag. At that instant, nine FBI agents break from the bushes, their searchlights blinding him. The Russian whirls and flips the bag—containing Star Wars secrets—high into the air. It hits the road like a wounded bird.

"You are under arrest for violation of the espionage statute. Do you understand that?"

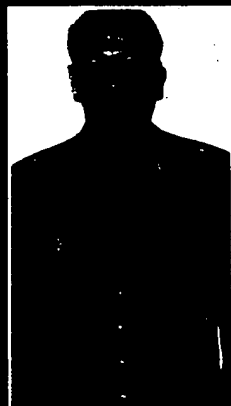
"What are you doing?" the Russian cries. He is pale with panic. "I am lost my way."

"What did you pick up back there?" an agent demands.

"What? I peed. I look for the rest room." Indeed, the agents notice that the man has wet his pants. When they take his I.D., they see they have caught Lt. Col. Yevgeny Barmyantsev, a high-ranking Soviet military attaché.

For Bill O'Keefe, the 37-year-old FBI agent who planned the operation, the arrest was sweet revenge. His job, then as now, is to monitor and impede Soviet intelligence activity in the Washington, D.C., area. "The walk-in spy traffic was getting out of hand," he says. In broad daylight Americans were going into the Soviet embassy and Soviet Military Office, sanctioned diplomatic outposts, with offers to sell U.S. secrets. "It was ridiculous how easily they were accepting them, as if the order was, 'Hey, even if a wacko comes in, talk to him. It's more information than we've had before.'" O'Keefe hatched a plan for a "controlled walk-in" to the SMO. The operation was code-named Jagwire (the pun on "jaguar" suggested a pounce). The idea was to recruit, train and dangle a civilian—something the FBI had never tried in its counterintelligence war with the Soviets. Now, for the first time, the FBI reveals the covert methods it used to entrap a Russian spy.

Yevgeny Barmyantsev, shown below in his Soviet Army officer's uniform, collected military intelligence in the U.S. until he was seized by the FBI (right) as a spy.



Finding the human bait for Jagwire wasn't easy. For seven weeks Bill O'Keefe called on executives of the Washington area's defense firms and think tanks, making a pitch for an employee who would pretend to steal classified information for the Soviets. O'Keefe struck out 18 times. None of the companies would go along. Indeed, the FBI agent couldn't blame them. The risks were too great and there was little in it for them if the plan succeeded.

Finally O'Keefe came to Riverside Research Institute, which studies technical systems for tracking ballistic missiles. Riverside's 45-year-old chief of security, John Stine, agreed to help O'Keefe find an employee to play spy. But as they talked, it struck O'Keefe that Stine himself—a divorcé, a former Navy intelligence officer—fit the bill perfectly. "He was suave and debonair," says O'Keefe. "He had the right personality, the right moves." Just as O'Keefe was wondering how he might suggest it, John Stine blurted, "How about me?"

For the next 11 months Stine

STINE BEGAN TO TRAIN FOR A DANGEROUS DOUBLE GAME

and the FBI rehearsed the roles of the dangle, meeting secretly in the same room of a suburban D.C. hotel. Behind double-locked doors and dark cranberry curtains, Stine would sit at a table, lit dimly by a hanging lamp. Facing him was an agent, playing "the Russian." O'Keefe watched from the shadows. Stine acted the part of a treasonous employee, refining his manner, mastering his cover stories about gambling debts and his need for money.

O'Keefe staged different scenarios. In one session the Russian listened to Stine's pitch, then stormed out, saying, "Sorry, this is a diplomatic establishment."

"That threw him," says O'Keefe gleefully. "We had to coach him to be demanding, to insist that he was for real." The nights would wear on, and when Stine reached his limit of fatigue, the agents would ride him harder. Afterward they would repair to the Madhatter tavern to toss down Russian vodka and let off steam. The secret séances were turning Stine and O'Keefe into fast friends.

Only the president of Riverside Research Institute knew about Jagwire. Stine gave his colleagues and girlfriends a variety of excuses for his after-hours preoccupation. But he was growing impatient with the unending drills. At

last the Pentagon released a batch of Riverside's classified papers that Stine would dangle as bait to the Russians. The papers described a space-based, laser tracking system that would later be part of the Star Wars defense plan.

His fellow employees saw nothing unusual when Stine, who had a top-secret security clearance, took the papers from the company safes. "In fact it was too easy," Stine recalls. "I was copying stuff, and people would come up and offer to help. Secrets were falling out of the copier, and secretaries and senior engineers were pitching in to sort them. I got so much damn help I had to start all over again—the Russians would be suspicious if they checked for fingerprints."

The operation was set for Thanksgiving Day, 1982. Surveillance at the SMO might not be as intense on a holiday; the Soviets would appreciate that caution. The night before, the recruit met with the agents once more for a dress rehearsal, complete with glue-on mustache and itchy



By day John Stine handled security at a high-tech R&D firm; by night he played a debt-ridden traitor who goes to the Soviets in disguise.

Continued

Irish walking hat to obscure his profile. The FBI men then took him out and got him drunk. Signs of a hangover, O'Keefe had pronounced, would make for a more convincing traitor.

Woozy and shaking, Stine spent the next morning fussing with a gray hair tint. As O'Keefe watched from a hotel window, Stine got into a taxi and started for the Soviet Military Office. Strapped around his waist, underneath his sweater, was a corset of documents. A hell of a way to spend Thanksgiving, he thought. I'm wearing a cheap disguise, posing as a guy who would sell out his country.

Lighting Kools one after another, Stine worried that the Soviets wouldn't take the bait. If they did, would they do business with him? If not, would they detain him? Kill him? He took a swig of scotch to taint his breath and shuffled into the SMO, a rather rundown brick building off Embassy Row.

Approaching a clerk behind a bulletproof window, Stine announced, "I want to speak to an Air Force officer." His legs shook as the clerk escorted him inside. "It was very dingy," Stine remembers. "Frumpy furniture, a musty smell, dust hanging in the air. It gave the impression that a bunch of bachelors worked there."

He was handed a registration card, but following O'Keefe's advice, he only fumbled with it; he didn't fill it out. Suddenly a voice boomed, "Can I help you?" This, as Stine would later learn, was Lt. Col. Vyacheslav Pavlov, Yevgeny Barmyantsev's right-hand man.

HE WAS TOLD TO CLIMB INTO THE TRUNK OF THE CAR

Stine thought, who would take this nondescript, pudgy fellow for an intelligence officer?

"I'm here . . ." Stine balked. "I want to do some business."

"What kind of business?"

"I'm with Riverside Research. I want to do business with you."

When Pavlov protested that he was a diplomat, Stine cut him off. "I want to talk to you. In private."

The Russian steered his guest to a small sitting room. He introduced himself as "Nick." As soon as Stine began to talk about Riverside Research, Pavlov reached for a radio on the table next to him and tuned to a loud rock station. "Obviously," says Stine, "he was concerned that the room had been wired, or that I had. The radio made it even harder to understand him because his English wasn't good."

Stine began to brag about his access to classified documents. Pavlov insisted again that as a diplomat he didn't have any interest in anything illegal. Then the Russian stood up, saying, "I have to leave the room for a minute." It was Stine's cue to reach under his sweater and wrench loose the sets of documents from his belly. Each

was stamped SECRET. "His eyes really lit up," says Stine. "He looked through them, obviously surprised, nodding, very excited, like he felt he really had something hot running. Then I pulled the other documents out, the ones tucked against my back, and I've never seen a broader smile on anybody's face."

For the rest of the morning the Russian would leave the office and come back again, each time with fresh, concise questions: "How many documents do you have access to? Do you have problems entering? Copying? Are there alarms?" Always the door was left open a crack—Stine knew they were keeping an eye on him.

During one of these interludes Stine peeled off the mustache. Pavlov appreciated the disguise. At another point, Stine asked for a drink and Pavlov brought out a sweet Armenian brandy. "I'd force it down," Stine says, "and he'd put more in my glass." Each time he was alone, Stine gulped some more, hoping to seem an authentically desperate character.

Occasionally Pavlov would ask a question and then stop the American from responding oral-

ly. "He wanted a lot of my answers written out in case we were being bugged," Stine says. "Then he would try to relax things with some more personal conversation. He expressed quite an interest in the sex life of Americans. I fabricated a few stories. He asked me, clearly shocked and intrigued, 'You meet girls in bars? You go home with them?'"

Stine had been at the SMO for six hours and had consumed four packs of Kools. He began to fear they would keep him for the night, or even longer. "It crossed my mind," he says, "that if I misspoke I might be going out in the garbage." Across town, Bill O'Keefe was worried too. There was nothing the FBI could do to help Stine now. Then Pavlov came in with an envelope containing \$500. He produced a map and instructions for Stine to copy. The dangle had worked: Stine was given a time to go to a phone booth in a shopping center in Annandale, Va., and wait for an assignment. "Be there in six weeks," Pavlov said.

Now he led Stine down a hallway to the garage of the SMO. A Plymouth Volare zoomed up, its trunk popping open. "Hurry," Pavlov ordered. Stine crouched down in the trunk, and the car lurched into the streets of Washington. The driver zigged and zagged as if trying to shake any pursuer. Finally Stine was let out on an empty side street. He stood there bewildered and exhausted, very late for his Thanksgiving dinner.

The next six weeks passed anxiously. Stine's meetings with O'Keefe were few and fur-



Lt. Col. "Nick" Pavlov gave Stine money to buy this camera and film for photographing secret papers. Stine's instructions, complete with maps and arrows, were hidden in a crushed soda can and cigarette pack.

Continued

tive—no more hanging out in bars. He jumped when the phone rang, looked over his shoulder wherever he went, slept badly. He was alone with his double game.

On January 12 Stine was waiting in the designated booth. The call never came. Pavlov reached Stine at home the next day. "We had a slight problem," he said. "Do the same thing next week."

January 19 was icy cold. This time the call came through. Pavlov told him to go to another phone booth, outside a dry cleaners some 20 miles away in Maryland. He was given 20 minutes to get there. "Well, hell," says Stine. "I wasn't familiar with the area at all. And as I'm taking the directions, it starts to snow."

Forty minutes later Stine skidded up to the booth. "I was about five steps away when it started ringing," he says. "Obviously they had been watching." Pavlov again: "Turn around. Look left . . . Four fence posts from the right, you will find a crushed pack of Marlboro cigarettes."

A note and a map inside the cigarette pack now directed Stine to another shopping center, where he was supposed to find a "crashed" Coca-Cola can. Wearily, he drove off again. Pavlov's directions seemed to swirl like the snow. Park the car. Cross the street. Walk down Atlantic Avenue. Turn left behind the 7-Eleven store. Go along the path to the fourth fence post.

The fence was a 10-foot-high wire mesh surrounding a deserted utility area. Digging bare-handed through the snow, Stine could find no soda can. "It was nearly eleven at night and colder

than hell," he recalls. "I was about to give up when I saw a jogger come by, complete with sweatband. He looked a little funny because he was smoking a cigarette. It was Pavlov." Stine followed the paunchy runner along a path onto a bridge. There in the pitch dark, Pavlov handed Stine a Coke can stuffed with currency.

"He'd thought I was going to come back to the phone to confirm that I'd understood the message," Stine says. "But I'd said I'd come back if I hadn't understood." Pavlov had had no time to plant the can. The Russian asked for the documents. "What documents?" Stine replied. "You didn't tell me to bring any."

Suddenly they saw the beam of a flashlight. It was a policeman. Pavlov sprinted away, leaving his agent holding a bent soda can containing \$4,800 and incriminating instructions.

"Listen, officer," Stine began, his mind racing. "I was visiting a girl. We had a fight. I was taking a walk to cool off."

"Take your hand out of your pocket," the cop said, his flashlight in Stine's face. "Who's the other guy?"

"I don't know. He wanted a light."

"So what were you doing back there by that fence?"

Stine swallowed hard. "I had to take a leak."

"Four times?"

Finally the policeman gave up. Stine beat it, still clutching his Coke can.

His next assignment was to photograph additional documents and to leave the film in a garbage bag near a tree in an isolated section of Rockville, Md. The FBI knew the area as "drop-site country," because the Russians used it so often. But O'Keefe was disappointed to learn that the drop would not take place until April 9, three months away. Jagwire was moving too slowly. The FBI decided to wrap up the operation and seize Pavlov when he picked up the stuff.

On the appointed evening it was raining as Stine left the bag and nine rolls of film. The G-men were spread out in ditches, behind trees, covering all the escape routes. Two hours later Pavlov drove up, but something must have spooked him, for though he cruised the site four times he never got out of the car. Over his field telephone O'Keefe was informed that Pavlov had gone back to

Washington to meet with his superiors, who in turn evidently conferred with Moscow. The FBI agents waited all night in the pouring rain, in case Pavlov returned. "We looked like thugs crawling out of a grave site," says O'Keefe.

The next morning a new voice told Stine on the phone. "There's a problem. Same place, same time—next Saturday." This time Barmyantsev decided to make the pick-up himself. It was a bad mistake: He was charged with spying by the U.S. government, declared persona non grata and shipped home three days after touching the garbage bag. Vyacheslav Pavlov was recalled shortly after.

Hydra-headed, the SMO replaces its agents in the U.S. as fast as the FBI can trap and expel them. Just three months ago, in another part of the Maryland woods, Bill O'Keefe snared Col. Vladimir Izmaylov by dangling an Air Force officer. But do these counterintelligence scams have any long-range value? O'Keefe insists that they make the other side wary of genuine traitors. Why not banish the SMO outright? Because then the American agents at the U.S. military office in Moscow would lose their base as well. It is indeed a double game.

As for John Stine, he got a few unsettling phone calls from the Soviets after the incident—he'd pick up and hear silence. But that didn't last long. He still works at Riverside, and he still socializes with his buddies in the FBI. They look on Stine as an honorary—and unpaid—agent. Stine is proud to have been of service. ♣



Stine and O'Keefe return to the out-of-the-way intersection where Operation Jagwire culminated. The back roads of Montgomery County, Md., are located just short of the travel limit—25 miles from downtown Washington—beyond which Soviet diplomats may not go without permission.