

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A22NEW YORK TIMES
6 October 1985

SPY SUSPECT SEEN AS A HARD WORKER

By WAYNE KING

Special to The New York Times

SANTA FE, N.M., Oct. 5 — There were some odd things about Edward L. Howard, a 34-year-old financial forecaster for the State of New Mexico, but to the people he worked with he was the quintessential bureaucrat, a bit laconic, perhaps, but smart, wise in government affairs and hard-working.

"Basically, as far as the guy is concerned, he was real nice, got along with the staff, did a good job, sang happy birthday at occasional office parties along with everybody else," said his former chief, Phil Baca, director of the Legislative Finance Committee for the New Mexico Legislature.

The odd things were that he made occasional telephone calls from a coin phone halfway around the rotunda from his office and he was involved in a drunken shooting scrape a year and a half ago, for which he was put on probation.

He was treated for alcohol abuse, and in Washington, a Congressional source said Mr. Howard was asked to leave the Central Intelligence Agency in 1983 after a polygraph, or lie-detector, test suggested that he had taken drugs and had engaged in petty theft. Mr. Howard had been an employee of the intelligence agency for two years before moving here to work in July 1983.

He Disappeared 2 Weeks Ago

Two weeks ago, after inquiries by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mr. Howard quietly walked away from his job. He left his office key in an envelope, a mysterious note of resignation that cited unexplained "personal reasons" for his departure, and a request that any severance pay be given to his wife, Mary, in Santa Fe.

He left her a note, asking her to tell their 2-year-old son, Lee, "I think of him and you each day until I die."

Edward Lee Howard, born Oct. 27, 1951, the son of a retired Air Force master sergeant who called him "a boy to be proud of," is being sought on a Federal warrant charging him with selling intelligence secrets to the Soviet Union.

As the son of a career military man who enlisted, Mr. Howard lived a life on the move. He graduated from an American high school in Branden, England, then returned to the United States almost immediately to enter the University of Texas at Austin, in September 1969. He graduated with honors with a degree in business administration and soon joined the Peace Corps, serving two years in Central America, from August 1972 through August 1974.

He continued to work for the Peace Corps, as a recruiter in Dallas, and in 1976 he married Mary Cedarleaf.

Mrs. Howard, who works part time in a dentist's office in Albuquerque, refuses to talk to reporters.

Howard Obtained a Master's

After his marriage, Mr. Howard went to work for the Agency for International Development in Peru as a loan officer in project development. He continued with the agency until 1979, then attended the American University in Washington and obtained a master's degree in business administration.

Shortly thereafter, in January 1981, he took a job with the Central Intelligence Agency and remained with the agency until June 1983. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has said Mr. Howard had access to "highly classified information concerning United States intelligence matters."

In an affidavit filed in support of the charge of espionage against Mr. Howard, the F.B.I. maintains that he was paid by the Soviet Union to provide classified information "relating to United States intelligence sources and methods."

When Mr. Howard came here, he said he had worked for the State Department but had resigned because the department wanted to post him to Moscow and he did not want to go.

In his job as an economic analyst, he earned \$33,012 a year. He prepared forecasts of the state's economy, and his co-workers said he was very good, not particularly outgoing but hard-working and seemingly dedicated.

After his sudden departure, a member of the state's executive branch said that the state had lost an extremely effective peacemaker between the executive and legislative branches.

Roy Soto, deputy commissioner of the state land office, said he knew Mr. Howard fairly well and was so impressed with Mr. Howard's knowledge of state government that he offered him a job with the land office. Mr. Howard turned him down, saying he wanted to stay with the legislative committee, Mr. Soto said.

Mr. Howard worked often and well with reporters, and one of them recalled him as being candid and occasionally helpful with a news tip. But the same reporter said that he had noticed that Mr. Howard occasionally left his office to make calls at a pay telephone well away from his office, even though he had his own telephone and the use of a telephone credit card.

Also unusual were his arrest and resulting guilty plea to a charge of aggravated battery after an incident on Feb. 26, 1984, when he got into a drunken fight with three men on a Santa Fe street and pulled a gun, which discharged, apparently accidentally, into the roof of the automobile one of the men was driving. Mr. Howard was sentenced to five years on probation with the stipulation that he undergo treatment for alcoholism.

As part of the court proceeding in that case, Mr. Howard presented a number of letters from state and Federal officials attesting to his good character. An official for the Agency for International Development, for example, described him as "a hard-working and effective representative of the U.S."