

# THE SLEEPING SPY

Herbert Burkholz & Clifford Irving  
authors of *The Death Freak*



a Novel

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***THE SLEEPING SPY***

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## ***THE SLEEPING SPY***

*For BERNIE and ADELE FELDMAN  
who have raised patience from a virtue to a fine art*

*And—with gratitude and affection—to CLEO CROUCH*

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## **OPERATION GUNFIRE**





## CHAPTER ONE

On those spring mornings in the last days of the war the fog came early to the valley of the Elbe, settling down in darkness before sunrise, blanketing the torn and rutted fields, and masking the armies encamped on either side of the river. Those armies, the U.S. First on the western shore and the First Ukrainian on the eastern, were at rest. The meeting of these American and Russian forces had effectively cut Germany in two. The war would go on for a few days more. Hitler would die in his bunker in Berlin, overtures for peace would be made and accepted, but the soldiers encamped on the banks of the Elbe knew that for practical purposes the war was won, and on both sides of the river the Russians and the Americans rested gratefully.

Late that night, on the eastern side of the river, four officers of the Russian secret service, the NKVD, sat in an abandoned barn around a rough-hewn wooden table poring over a litter of photographs and handwritten notes. Three men and a woman, they worked with controlled haste, examining the photos carefully and stacking them in piles. They worked by the light of two kerosene lamps, which gave off a glow that barely reached the nearest wall of the barn. Just within the reach of that glow another officer, a young lieutenant, lazed against a pile of straw reading a book, removed from the activity at the table.

The only other person in the barn was Major Konstantin Grigorian, commanding officer of the Third Battalion, 173rd Regiment of Guards, who had been ordered to cooperate with the NKVD in these, the closing phases of *Operation Gunfire*. Grigorian had been a soldier in the Red Army all of his adult life and so was no stranger to those moments when the political needs of the Communist Party took precedence over

the orderliness of military procedure, but never before in his career had he been called upon, in the name of political necessity, to execute the type of orders he now held in his hand. Those orders, in effect, instructed him to place himself and his entire unit under the temporary command of Captain Andrei Petrovich of the NKVD, the Ministry of State Security.

Grigorian shifted uncomfortably in his seat. The barn was cold and damp, and it stank of horses and piss-soaked straw. His eyes flicked down to the orders in his hand, then back to the four people working at the table. The orders identified them all as officers of the NKVD, with Petrovich in charge, a tall, broad, and ham-fisted man with an air of heavy authority. Across the table sat Boris Radichek, also a captain, but apparently cast from a finer mold than his leader, with a slim, oval face and inquiring eyes. Next to Radichek sat the woman. Her papers identified her as Lieutenant Anya Ignatiev, and Grigorian studied her covertly. Women in the Red Army were no novelty, but rarely was one seen this close to the front. Of course, she wasn't really army, and he decided that this NKVD baby would be able to take care of herself no matter where she landed, notwithstanding a lush body that bordered on the opulent, and lazy violet eyes. He shifted his gaze away from those eyes to inspect the man sitting next to her. Pavel Kolodny, lieutenant. Yes, he knew the type well. Pale, intense, and with the determined lines of a fanatic stamped about his lips and eyes. From Grigorian's knowledge of NKVD operations this Kolodny would be the one to do the dirty work whenever it was required. And enjoy doing it, too.

These four officers working at the table fell into a pattern that Grigorian could understand; they were all familiar types to him, but the young lieutenant lounging against the straw baffled him completely. He had about himself an air of elitism that the major had seen before only in fighter pilots, ski troops, and commandos, a mannered superiority that was the mark of a specialist. Grigorian had to wonder what that specialty might be, and he decided that, whatever it was, it had to be something very special indeed judging by the way the young man held himself aloof, separating himself from his superiors like a treasured pet, a well-trained greyhound about to be put into play. A very young greyhound, the major noted. Eighteen years old, nineteen at the most, but that prideful bearing and the steady, knowing eyes belied the years.

The activities of the officers at the table fascinated Grigorian, even

though he had no conception of the nature of their work. He watched carefully as Andrei Petrovich gathered together the photographs before him and arranged them in neat piles. All the photos were of American soldiers in units camped directly across the river, all of them taken within the past few days by cameramen and correspondents from *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Trud*. The journalists circulated freely within the American lines, trading vodka for whiskey and caviar for K-rations as they interviewed the young GIs and snapped their pictures in an aura of Allied fraternity. Now Petrovich collated those same glossy prints, referring from time to time to the handwritten notes on the table and marking the backs of the photos with quick jottings. The others at the table did the same, working at an even, rapid pace.

They had been working that way for over an hour when Petrovich raised his massive head and said, "Time is short. I want your final lists in the next few minutes."

The elegant Radichek gracefully smothered a yawn and said, "Mine is ready now." The other two only nodded and kept on working. Minutes later the woman handed in her paper, much like a student completing an examination, and shortly after that Kolodny did the same. Petrovich scanned the lists, compared them with his own, and then set to work to make a composite of them all. When he was finished he showed the others the result.

Pvt. Paul R. Benski (1/plt) . . . . . New York, N.Y.  
Pfc. Alan P. Cohen (3/plt) . . . . . Jacksonville, Fla.  
Pvt. Jose N. Salazar (1/plt) . . . . . San Juan, Puerto Rico  
Pvt. James W. Emerson (2/plt) . . . . . Point Balboa, Calif.  
Pvt. Lionel A. Gooding (1/plt) . . . . . Chicago, Ill.  
Pfc. William X. Cooney (3/plt) . . . . . Boston, Mass.

"Photographs, please," said Petrovich. Radichek handed him six pictures keyed to the names on the list. The captain laid them out on the table.

"Very well," he said, "we now commence phase two of *Operation Gunfire*. As you all know, the *Gunfire* plan calls for a candidate who is eighteen or nineteen years old, is of average build, and has no distinguishing scars or marks. Most important, he must have no close living relatives." Petrovich sat back and wagged a finger at the list. "The last point is imperative to *Operation Gunfire*. The candidate must be not

only an orphan in the technical sense, he must also be truly alone in the world. According to the information gathered by our newspaper people, these six Americans qualify on all counts. I now invite comment on the candidates."

Radichek said quietly, "You can eliminate Salazar at once. His native language would be Spanish."

Petrovich nodded and drew a line through the name.

Anya Ignatiev lit a cigarette and screwed up her eyes against the rising smoke. "There are geographical factors," she said. "The *Gunfire* plan reasons that residents of large cities in the United States are more easily identifiable than others since the urban centers tend to keep more extensive and accurate records than do other parts of the country. On that basis, Benski, Gooding, and Cooney should be eliminated."

"Accepted," said Petrovich. "That leaves Emerson and Cohen. Comments?"

"Eliminate Cohen," Kolodny said promptly. "We don't need a *zhid* in this operation."

"The American won't exactly be involved in the operation," Radichek pointed out.

Kolodny shrugged. "Still, a Jew . . . it's bad luck, you know?"

"There is also the matter of circumcision," murmured Anya Ignatiev.

Kolodny grinned. "Trust you to think of that."

"Enough," said Petrovich impatiently. "Emerson is the one." He checked his wrist for the time. "Let me point out that he belongs to the second platoon of Baker Company, which is due to patrol this side of the river at dawn. That gives us less than five hours, so let's move along. Yuri, get up here."

Again Major Grigorian was intrigued by the way that the young lieutenant, Yuri Volanov, rose lazily from the straw, stretched, and then ambled over to the table. He picked up the photograph that Petrovich thrust at him and studied it carefully. Finished, he casually flicked it back across the table.

"Not much of a resemblance," he said, "but close enough."

Petrovich nodded. "He doesn't have to be your twin, you know." He consulted his notes again. "This Emerson comes from someplace in California. Will that present a problem to you?"

Volanov shook his head. "None at all. As the Comrade Captain knows, I am adept in all accents of American English. There is no

geographical location that would trouble me. I am familiar with every state in the Union."

Petrovich regarded the young man with admiration. Volanov's self-confidence was inspiring, considering that this was his first trip beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. But it was understandable, for he was a graduate of Gaczyna, the massive NKVD training school southeast of Kuibyshev.

From the day that Yuri Volanov had entered the gates of Gaczyna at the age of fifteen he had been totally immersed in the American way of life. During the ensuing years he lived in exact duplications of American cities and towns, speaking English only with native-born Americans hired for the job. He drank milk shakes and ate hamburgers at drug-store counters. He drove a 1937 Ford to school every day, and if he exceeded the speed limit he was bawled out by an American-style traffic cop. He listened to American music, saw American films, and paid for his purchases in dollars. He learned to root for the Brooklyn Dodgers in the summer and Notre Dame in the fall. He also learned to change his shirt and socks daily, to wear sunglasses in July, to stand with his hands in his pockets, and to chew gum naturally. He studied American history, geography, and literature, and took intensive courses in the various regional accents of the country. After three years at Gaczyna Yuri Volanov knew more about America than did most Americans. All this, and a dedicated Communist, ideologically pure. Petrovich regarded him with justifiable pride, then turned back to the business at hand.

"Major Grigorian," he said and motioned for that officer to come forward.

Grigorian stepped off three paces and stood at rigid attention. Although Petrovich wore only a captain's insignia, as NKVD he outranked Red Army officers up to the rank of colonel.

"Report readiness," said Petrovich.

Grigorian said in a monotone, "Third Battalion reports two companies told off for special assignment and armed with captured German equipment, mostly Schmeisser submachine guns."

"*Nu kharasho* . . . very good." Petrovich handed him the photograph. "This is the subject in question. Repeat your orders."

Grigorian glanced briefly at the picture, then returned his eyes forward. "My troops are presently deployed in concealment at the point in the river where the American patrols have permission to land. Once the

Americans are safely ashore they will be surrounded and immobilized. I anticipate no difficulty with this phase of the operation. The Amis will protest, but they will not fire on soldiers of the Red Army. I will then separate the subject, this James Emerson, from the others and bring him here for interrogation."

"And then?" Petrovich asked, waiting.

Grigorian hesitated, then said stiffly, "The other Americans will be shot and killed. Two of the Schmeissers and various other pieces of German equipment will be left at the scene to indicate that the work was done by Nazi guerrillas."

Petrovich drummed on the table with his fingers. "No slipups, Grigorian, no mistakes, and no excuses. If you leave even one of those Yanks other than James Emerson alive on that shore, I will personally put a bullet between your eyes."

Grigorian saluted, turned correctly, and stomped out, his footsteps echoing in the empty barn. Petrovich leaned back in his chair and looked around at the others. "So, it commences," he said. "For better or worse, we are committed. Anya, do you think you could make us some tea?"

In the absolute darkness just before dawn, Anya Ignatiev and Yuri Volanov strolled aimlessly around the yard in back of the abandoned barn, his arm around her waist, her head against his shoulder. They both breathed deeply as they walked, relishing the fresh air. Damp and heavy with mist, it was still a refreshing change from the close, horse-laden atmosphere of the barn. They walked silently, clinging to each other. They had been lovers for a month, ever since Yuri had joined the unit, and they both were aware, without dramatics, that after this night they would never be lovers again.

"Excited?" she asked.

"What a question." His hand slipped from her waist to her buttock and stroked it softly. "You know how you always excite me. All I have to do is touch you."

Anya laughed softly. Her hand reached for his, held it, but did not move it away. "Idiot," she murmured. "That's not what I meant. I was talking about *Gunfire*."

"There is nothing to be excited about," he said sternly. "After all, this is what I've been trained for."

Anya smiled at the gruffness in his voice, her smile hidden by the

darkness. There were times when she forgot how very young he was, only eighteen, and how very much he needed to appear both manly and mature. At twenty-four she felt centuries older than this brilliant and earnest boy, more like an older sister than a lover. She knew what was waiting for him in the next several hours, and in that moment she wanted nothing more than to hold his head to her breast and comfort him. Unable to do that, she did the next best thing, turning to him, pressing herself close, and kissing him warmly and firmly.

"There," she said. "That's what *I've* been trained for."

He responded to her kiss, then drew away slightly. "Do you really mean that?"

"Mean what?"

"What you just said." His voice was low and tight. "Were you really trained to make love to me?"

She was silent for a moment, debating whether to be angry or to laugh. In truth, she was not sure about the answer to his question. She knew how good she was as an intelligence officer, knew that she performed a valuable function within the unit, but she had often wondered if she would have received the assignment if she had not been a young and attractive woman. No one had ever ordered her to make love to Yuri Volanov, no one had ever had to, but everyone had made it quite clear that nothing was too good for the main character in *Operation Gunfire*.

She sighed and said, "I was just thinking how I forget sometimes how young you are. Only a very young and very foolish boy would say something like that. When you grow older you'll know that a woman is always in training for love."

It was Yuri's turn to be silent. Finally, he said, "I'm sorry. You're quite right. It was a foolish thing to say."

"Yes."

"I misunderstood what you meant."

"Yes."

"It's the night," he said, excusing himself. "It's a long night, and when the dawn comes . . . everything changes. Not that I'm nervous, or excited, as you said. It's just that there is so much to do, so much to remember."

"You will do what you have to do, and you will do it well," she assured him. "Everyone knows it. You're the best we have."

"Yes." He said it without pride, simply stating a fact. "I should be.



I've been training for years. Sometimes it feels as if I've been training all my life."

"Then you know how I feel. About training."

"Yes." He looked to the sky. There was still no light in the east. "Do you think we have time?"

She smiled. "For training?"

"For practicing what you've been trained for."

As an answer she took his hand and led him across the yard to the back of the barn and in through a door that hung loose on its hinges. They worked their way silently in the darkness, avoiding a rusty plow, the vicious edges of a spreader, and a pile of ancient harness. From the front of the barn came the murmur of voices and the faint glow of the kerosene lamps. They slipped into an abandoned stall that was half-filled with hay, and once inside they fell upon each other eagerly. They made love to each other fully clothed, unable to wait, driving intensely; and when they were finished Anya had her wish, holding his head against her breast, soothing and easing with soft words. They stayed that way for quite some time, half asleep and half awake, listening for the sounds in the night that would signal the dawn. The sounds came at last in a far-off rumble and the coughing bark of Schmeissers from down near the river. Yuri stirred and moved away from her.

"That's it," he said.

"Come back." Anya reached for him. "Rest with me. We have time until they bring him here."

There was silence in the barn. There was the hissing of the lamps, the burble of the samovar, and the crackle of straw underfoot, but still there was silence. Andrei Petrovich sat at the long trestle table. Opposite him sat a young American soldier slouched in his seat. His chin was on his chest, his eyes were vacant, and his arms dangled loosely. The other four NKVD officers stood with Major Grigorian in the shadows, waiting. Petrovich broke the silence, drinking tea from a glass, sucking it up noisily.

"Emerson," he said. He reached across the table and touched the boy's shoulder. There was no reaction. The young face stayed pale and vacant. "Emerson?"

"It will take time," said Grigorian, stepping out of the shadows and speaking in Russian. "He's upset, of course, at being separated from his