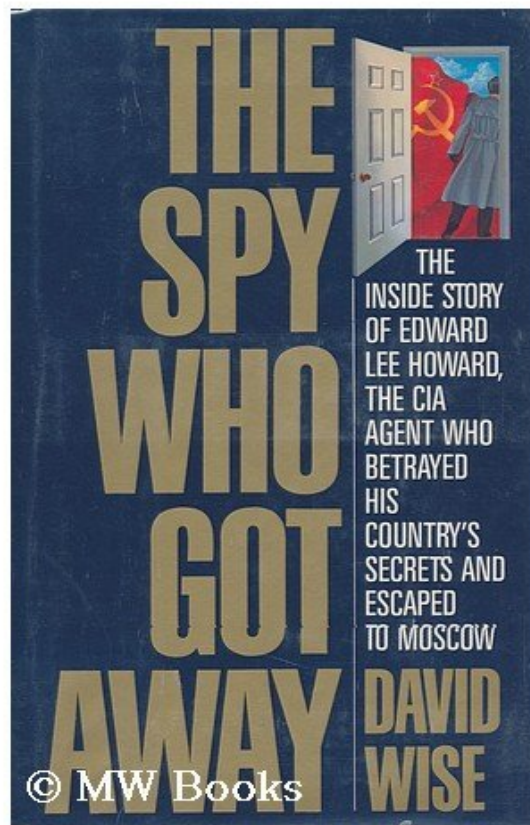
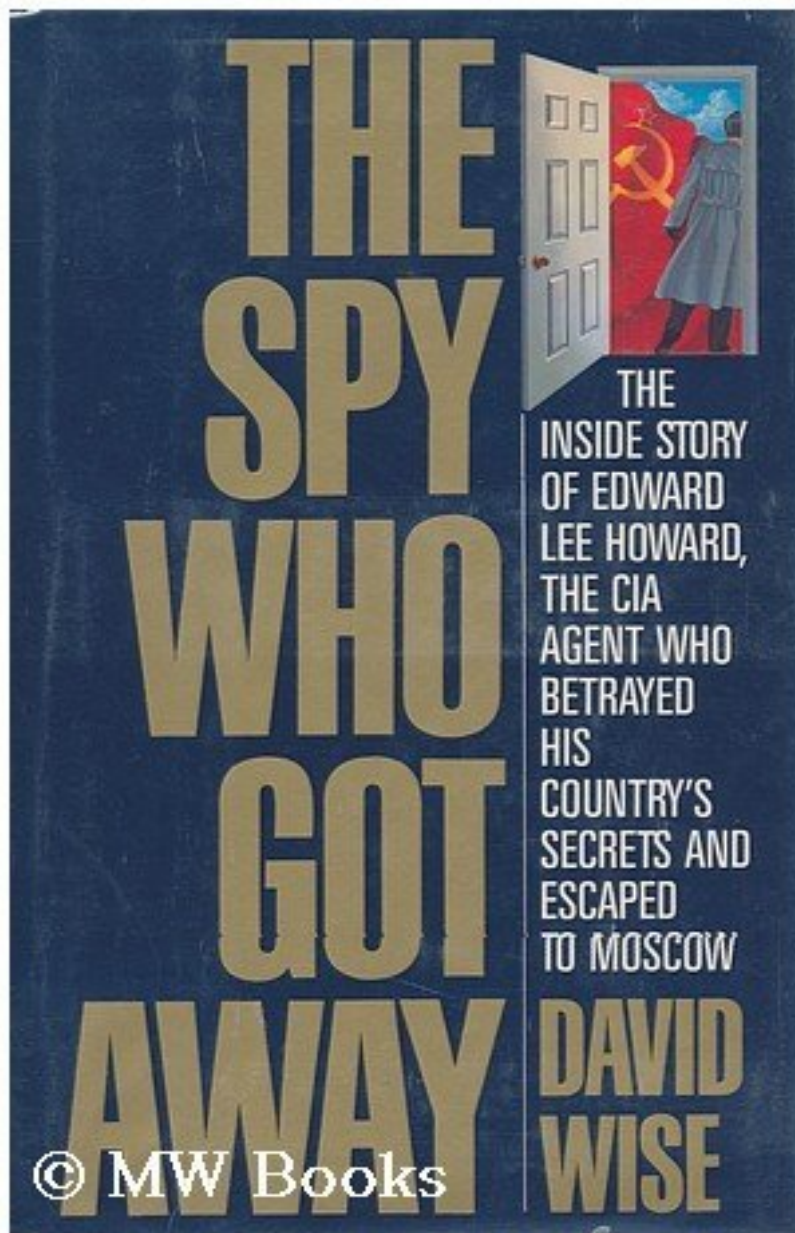


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Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Insights Into Intelligence and Counterintelligence

By LEON L CZIKOWSKY

The book provides much useful insight into the background of the only CIA agent who defected to the Soviet Union. The situation began with a KGB defection to the CIA.

Vitaly Yurchenko, who led all KGB operations in the US and Canada defected. This happened at a time the CIA image had been faltering. The CIA had mined harbors in Nicaragua, which Sen. Barry Goldwater and others noted was an act of war. Congress was glad this secret CIA action had not led to war and the Senate, by an 84-12 vote, had condemned the CIA. The Yurchenko defection bolstered the CIA at a critical time.

CIA counterintelligence agents wanted to learn intelligence from Yurchenko. Ordinarily, the best method was to get information from a KGB mole who reported inside information while still working at the KGB. Yet information from a defector such as Yurchenko could still be useful. One thing the CIA wanted to know from a defector is who within the CIA was providing information to the KGB.

It was critical for the CIA to verify that Yurchenko's defection was real and not part of a KGB plot to provide misleading information. This could involve the defector providing correct and verifiable

information yet later providing false intelligence that would prove more disruptive than any gain the CIA had from the correct intelligence. The CIA looked to see that true and valuable information was provided, even though doing so also increased the suspicions that an even larger, more disruptive KGB plot could be underway.

A CIA agent, James Jesus Angleton, had previously kept a Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko drugged and in solitary confinement for three and a half years. The CIA was divided on both whether the defection was real and whether the techniques were appropriate. Ultimately, CIA Director William Colby fired Angleton. Yurchenko was treated better, in hopes of attracting more defectors rather than discouraging them with harsh treatment.

The first bit of intelligence CIA debriefers asked of Yurchenko was if he knew of anyone within the CIA who had provided intelligence to the KGB. Yurchenko told he knew of two people. One was a National Security Agent employee. He didn't know his name but provided a description and an approximation as to where he lived.

The second CIA mole Yurchenko knew of was an agent who had been taken off of assignment to Moscow. This agent had provided agent code names and intelligence to the KGB that allowed the KGB to identify CIA operatives. This was disturbing to the CIA as this mole had provided knowledge of the most sensitive section of the CIA. This confirmed that someone had let the KGB to arrest a CIA contact Adolf Tolkachev and cause a diplomat Paul Stombaugh, Jr. to be expelled for espionage. Adolf Tolkachev was executed by the Soviets. There were fears this CIA agent had endangered all CIA operations in Moscow.

Yurchenko provided the CIA with some useful information. Yurchenko claims he defected because he was tired of the KGB system. Yurchenko claimed the CIA offered him \$1 million plus \$62,500 a year and \$48,000 worth of furnishings. Yurchenko later walked out on his CIA guard and disappeared. Yurchenko had complained he was alone and not allowed to speak to his family. Yurchenko returned to the Soviet Union. Officials are divided whether his initial defection was real or not.

The CIA determined the agent who compromised their Moscow operations was Edward Lee Howard. Howard had been dismissed for failing a polygraph test regarding petty theft. The CIA had already considered Howard as a security risk and Howard had even admitted to the CIA he had considered selling secrets to the KGB. The CIA then concluded Howard really had sold secrets. The CIA claims Howard's information provided to the KGB "wiped out" the Moscow station.

The CIA began and for several decades, recruited almost all employees from Ivy League colleges who knew each other from prep school. Admiral Stansfield Turner, CIA Director in 1977, removed 820 Clandestine Services employees. The CIA culture rapidly changed as employees were fed into the CIA from colleges from around the country. Even this was difficult, as the CIA paid college graduates less than did the private sector, and CIA work was more dangerous.

Howard worked for the Peace Corps and had left that employment six years before joining the CIA. The CIA would not hire someone from the Peace Corps for five years after their Peace Corps service.

Howard admitted to past drug use while undergoing a polygraph administered to applicants. The CIA would hire past users but would not allow drug use afterwards. The CIA used to not hire drug users, but reality that there were insufficient applicants led to a change in this policy.

Howard trained for the CIA at Camp Peary, which the CIA does not admit exists. While there, Howard saw

where Yuri Nosenko was held in a house bordered by barb wire. Howard found the house "eerie".

Howard's wife Mary worked for the CIA as a Secretary. The CIA planned that both would be spies in Moscow. They figured two people could better keep an eye on matters. Howard was a rush replacement for Moscow duty when a previously selected person failed a psychological requirement. It was soon observed, but not officially noted, that Howard drank heavily.

The CIA often sends people with little experience to Moscow. The KGB would not have information on them and were less likely to suspect they were CIA agents. Howard had a background with the Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development, and thus did not appear to be a traditional CIA spy.

By agreement, the KGB and CIA are told whose each other's station chiefs are, and each approves the other's choice. The American public, though, is not told.

CIA contacts some agents only a few times a year. The meetings are brief with the agents usually passing information on microfilm.

Howard read the cables from the Soviet desk to D.C. for 15 months. Howard thus knew a lot about Moscow CIA programs. Howard worked overtime on Saturdays to learn more about what the CIA was doing in Moscow. Howard knew code names of agents and where their meeting places were.

The CIA has great faith in lie detectors, even though its accuracy is suspect. A University of Pennsylvania study found taking a specific drug allowed 27% of those studied to lie without detection. An Office of Technology Assessment study found lie detectors found 19% are liars who in fact were telling the truth.

The CIA administered four lie detector tests on Howard. The tests suggested deception in some responses. His hard drinking then raised more concerns. Howard's superiors were split over firing Howard or transferring him. Some feared he could provide the KGB with secrets and he would be more valuable to the KGB if he remained inside the CIA. They decided to insist upon his resignation or else be fired. He was allowed to state on his resume he was an Economic Specialist with the State Department. Howard was never told what the problem with the polygraph was.

Howard did not take this failure in life well. He made drunken, strange phone calls to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. He left a message for the Station Chief, who is known to the KGB, which tipped off that he was a CIA employee. This he admits was a vengeful call and Howard admits he knew the KGB would hear it.

The CIA claims Howard contacted a KGB Colonel. Howard denies this. The CIA has no law enforcement authority within the U.S. Yet the CIA did not alert the FBI about the concerns that Howard may be violating security laws. In fact, the course of action the CIA took was to hide these suspicions.

Howard replied to an ad for an Economic Analyst with the New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee. They were impressed a former State Department economist was applying and he was hired. In an irony, the Howard rented an apartment from Santa Fe's FBI supervisor.

Howard was known for performing well at his job with the New Mexico legislature. He did tell one of the staffers, when drunk, he had been with the CIA. Howard drank heavily but it did not affect his work.

When working for the New Mexico legislature, Howard opposed a bill the Governor wanted divesting state investments in South Africa. Howard was known as a good worker yet he pulled some office pranks. Howard

once wrote a false press report stating oil prices had crashed. He was also active with the National Conference of State Legislatures, where he was noted for his knowledge of local drinking establishments.

Howard, while visiting Washington, D.C., considered going to the Soviet Embassy with an offer to sell information. Howard claims he decided not to do so. The CIA states Howard contacted the Soviets and let them know he was a former CIA employee.

As a state legislative aide, Howard visited Los Alamos National Laboratory which researched nuclear weapons. The officials claim Howard did not inquire about any secrets.

Howard, after heavy drinking, pulled a Magnum on two men leading to an altercation where Howard discharged his weapon into one of the men's vehicle. The men got his gun and wallet and reported this to the police. Howard was charged with felony aggravated assault. Howard called the CIA for help. The District Attorney's office denies the CIA ever contacted them. Howard entered himself into alcohol and psychological counseling. He plea bargained a guilty plea for five years of probation.

Bill Bosch, himself dismissed from the CIA, met with Howard. Bosch claims Howard discussed seeking revenge on the CIA and suggested they visit the Soviet embassy in Mexico. Bosch thought Howard wasn't serious and that the trip never happened. The CIA claims Bosch states the Soviets paid for Howard's travel and that Howard had met with them. Bosch denied stating Howard ever or did said anything more than he was contemplating selling secrets.

Howard represented the Legislative Finance Committee (though he claims he paid for the trip himself) at a conference in Milan. The CIA believes it was in Milan when Howard sold information to the KGB. The FBI states Howard sold intelligence to the KGB while in Vienna on this trip. Howard claims he never was in Vienna.

When the FBI was informed of the CIA's suspicions that Howard was selling intelligence, the FBI was slow to act. The FBI placed Howard under surveillance. Howard spotted them. The FBI then approached Howard and told him that he had been named as an informant. Howard refused to take a lie detector test, since he already distrusted them.

Howard's wife refused to tell the FBI whether she thought he had sold secrets to the KGB. She denied having any knowledge he had done so. She later admitted the KGB paid for their trip to Europe. She also told the FBI that Howard had \$150,000 in a Swiss account and also had money buried in the desert. She led the FBI to the buried funds where the FBI dug up \$10,000.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

How is Russia Now?

By John G. Hilliard

The story is about a spy that literally got away from the FBI - right under their noses. He is now (at least one thinks) living in Russia, which I am sure, does not treat him the same way it used to. Overall I felt the story was interesting, but did not come away thinking this guy did that much damage to the US. He just did not hold a very high position and he left after a short period of time. He was no Walker or Ames. Given this was the case my complaint with the author is that he tried to make the spying this lame did as something more exciting than it was, I am assuming to get more buss about the book. Overall the book is a fine effort, Wise has a lot of knowledge about the working of the intelligence agencies in the US and Russia and he likes to display that knowledge in the book. If you are a nut about true-life spy's then this is not a bad little book.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

detailed but fascinating

By jon

Knowing that a book is non-fiction always adds a greater sense of mystery and wonder, which is certainly true about this account of an American intelligence agent who defected to Russia. It is obvious that the author spend a great deal of time researching every aspect of the subject in addition to the intelligence agency in general. There are a lot of amazing details about the CIA, FBI, and KGB that are told through this story. Some of the long descriptions may bore some readers, but I found the novel to be very well written and very interesting.

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