

KGB spread lies linking CIA

By James Risen
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Soviet KGB fabricated evidence linking the CIA to the assassination of President Kennedy and passed the material to unwitting conspiracy theorists in the United States, says a new book based on KGB files brought to the West by a defector.

According to the files turned over by a former KGB archivist to British intelligence and detailed in the book, Moscow's Cold War spy service took steps to link the CIA to the Kennedy assassination.

These steps included forging a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald to a CIA officer, E. Howard Hunt, asking for information "before any steps are taken by me or anyone else," according to the new book, *The Sword and the Shield*, written by Christopher Andrew and the former KGB officer, Vasily Mitrokhin. The book is to be published by Basic Books later this month.

The Oswald letter was supposed to have been written about two weeks before Kennedy was gunned down Nov. 22, 1963 in Dallas. The letter actually was created by the KGB in the mid-1970s, after Hunt's name had surfaced in the Watergate investigation, according to

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to Kennedy slaying, book says

KGB files copied by Mitrokhin while a KGB archivist.

The letter was then passed anonymously to three conspiracy buffs and entered circulation in the United States, the authors report.

The letter led to a brief flurry of interest when a Dallas newspaper reported that a handwriting expert declared it to be genuine, but a congressional panel later concluded that the letter probably was a forgery.

The KGB's clumsy propaganda campaign never had much of an effect on the debate over the Kennedy assassination in the United States. But the archives spirited out of Russia by Mitrokhin appear to support CIA claims

that the KGB conducted disinformation campaigns designed to raise suspicions about the U.S. government and prominent American leaders.

Mitrokhin was a KGB archivist in charge of managing many of the spy service's secret files until he retired in 1984. When he arrived in Britain in 1992 and sought out British intelligence, he brought with him notes that he said were based on those files, and turned them over.

The Mitrokhin files, which the British considered reliable enough to share with the CIA and FBI, have offered Western intelligence and law-enforcement officials historical information about KGB operations worldwide.