The Spy Game

A Lot of Cloak but Very Little Dagger

By Henry Allen

Oh favorite enemy, oh beloved blackguard, Harry Rositzke may not yearn to be grappling with you again, with your dirty-picture blackmail schemes, your microfilms and paranoia, but he cares, that much is obvious.

Rositzke points through a fence at the shuttered windows, the mansard lurk, the Victorian gloom, the television surveillance cameras of the Soviet Embassy on 16th Street.

"The KGB residency in Washington is 30 to 40 guys," he says. Top-of-the-line guys out of Russian engineering schools: smoothies, computer jocks, agents, double agents like the notorious Fedora, unveiled in The Washington Post today, who knows. Not that they need any of them, sometimes. "That lieutenant at the Titan base just walked in," he says, referring to 2nd Lt. Christopher M. Cooke, who is now on trial at Andrews Air Force Base on charges of delivering military secrets to the embassy, in plain view of FBI surveillance.

Rositzke stares at the embassy. It's one of a lot of Soviet embassies he did a lot of thinking about during his career as a Soviet intelligence specialist with the CIA. "Very often in the middle of the building is the heart," he says.

The heart?

"The code room, the file room. The only people who have access to it are one or two clerks, fairly low-ranking — that's why they always go after our enlisted men, because we have the same situation," he says, ticking off some American sergeants who were caught in the web of the Russian spy apparatus, the KGB; Robert Lee Johnson, who was persuaded to break into the vault of the Armed Forces Courier Station at

See ROSITZKE, C17, Col. 1

Harry Rositzke

ROSITZKE, From C1

Orly, France . . . Master Sgt. Roy Rhodes, who was blackmailed in Moscow by a KGB seductress . . .

But it's the Russians Rositzke is talking about just now. He is standing in his raincoat outside the embassy. He is 70, and 11 years retired from a lifetime of Russian-watching for the CIA in Munich, New York, New Delhi and Washington. He is the author of "The KGB — The Eyes of Russia," in which he says that the KGB is the world's best intelligence organization.

He points to the industrial forest of antennas rising over the embassy. If the code room is the heart, these are the ears and eyes of the KGB operation here.

"They intercept microwave transmissions. There's a computer that tells which frequencies to monitor. In the early '70s, they could monitor all the telephone calls to and from the Department of Agriculture, and they ended up knowing more about the American grain market than we did. That's how they got that great grain deal," he says with a bark of admiration in his voice, the sound of a cop who comes to savor the ingenious robbery.

"Now they've built a new embassy, and they've got it on a piece of land that's a little *higher*, yeah," he says. He pads off toward a nearby hotel for a cup of coffee, about a pack of chain-smoked L&Ms (he doesn't inhale, though) and some reminiscing.

He's a Brooklyn kid, he says in the paneled snugness of the hotel bar. Not at all the OSS/CIA type, nothing conspicuously Ivy League or clubbable about him, in his odd combination of clothing — seersucker suit and desert boots — his accent reminiscent of the late Henry Miller's, his earthy delight in a kind of visceral badinage, and the sense that in back of all his sidewalk charm, he is keeping very careful score indeed. It's not surprising, somehow, that he raises calves to be slaughtered for veal on his 350-acre farm in Middleburg, Va. — property he bought for $100 an acre back in the '50s, before Middleburg was fashionable.

He should be George Smiley, the John Le Carré spy novel hero — a little out of the mold, a scholar. Rositzke got a PhD in Germanic philology from Harvard in 1935, but once he joined the Office of Strategic Services in World War II, he never looked back.

"I was just rereading part of 'Smiley's People,' " he says. "The point is, academic training leads you to look at the *facts*, to weigh the *facts*. But Smiley couldn't exist in any real environment."

In 1946, with Russia still our ally, Rositzke asked for a job nobody wanted — studying Soviet intelligence operations. He moved into an office in an old World War I barracks by the Potomac. He writes: "The walls were pockmarked with holes and the ceiling smudged with stains from the rain and snow that leaked through the fragile roof. It had no carpet. It was furnished with one antique green desk . . ." and with a daily companion, "the head of registry, a bright, dignified, precisely articulate lady who smoked cigars. She combed the files for captured documents that might conceivably be useful to me."

Smiley.

From 1949 to 1954 Rositzke was occupied with running agents in the Soviet Union.

"We were sending people into the Ukraine — people forget that there was an active resistance movement there until, let's see, 1953 — that was the last year I sent anybody into the Ukraine. We'd fly them in and parachute them from C47s. We never lost a plane. We were pleased to see how inefficient the anti-aircraft forces were. I'll show you how primitive *we* were. We had word there was some kind of uranium plant, and the only way we could find out was to send a guy in to get a bottle of water downstream from the plant, then bring the bottle of water back out of the country."

Later, back in Washington, Rositzke lunched regularly with Kim Philby, the high-ranking British intelligence officer who turned out to have been a Russian spy since the '30s.

"We used to go to the old Martin's together. God, to work 10, 12 years under the kind of pressure he did, and never make a slip — and he was quite a heavy drinker. I think he started out as a believer. You know, you're 21, 22, 23, whatever he was during the Spanish Civil War, and obviously the Loyalists are on the right side. But after a while I think he had to keep telling himself he believed, because by that time it was too late, they had him."

This is the KGB style, after all. You sign a receipt for cash, you are photographed in bed with the KGB partner of your particular taste, or in search of some egotistical satisfaction you offer your services to them, and soon you're hooked — and the more you're hooked the more they have to blackmail you with.

Rositzke says: "They also understand the importance of money in our society — they know that a man's status is determined by how rich he is. An FBI friend was telling me the other day about them giving $20,000 in cash to one American. When his wife opened the bathroom door, she found him sitting in the bathtub throwing $20 bills in the air. Usually, though, the rule is not to pay so much money that it makes their agent conspicuous. There was a sergeant at the Pentagon who got caught because he went out and bought a Cadillac."

Rositzke says that we don't use the sexual gambit against the Russians.

"We got pictures of a high-ranking Russian in South America who was quite a ladies' man. We had him with the wives of officials. We showed him the pictures and he just laughed. He didn't care. Then we tried it with a homosexual, and he just said 'My boss knows already.' That's the difference between the two societies — they don't have that puritan thing that we do. There are no good female targets on the Russian side because they keep their women more secluded. But they're always after our secretaries. Girl, abroad, single, lonely . . . ," he says, lapsing into a curt jargon he enjoys, such as the KGB instruction to its officers: "Make purposeful acquaintance . . ." and "Spot and study."

There are about 350 KGB men in this country, he estimates, most of them involved in gathering scientific and technical data. There may be a lot of cloak, but very little dagger. "They haven't targeted anyone for assassination since 1962," he says. "And before that it was only defectors or high-ranking émigrés."

and the Spy Game

Washington, he says, is a terrible city for them: It's too small, and people are too security-conscious. "The KGB residency here is probably no more than 30 to 40 guys. New York is where they do well. They have all those subways, they have crowded streets with lots of people talking in foreign accents, and they have all those United Nations contacts. My idea of a vacation would be to be a KGB man in New York."

Why not throw them all out?

Well, they have a certain value to us as well as to their bosses. Rositzke writes: "Spies in the right places can induce a feeling of security by negative reporting or guarantee no strategic surprises by positive reporting. Their value in reducing the (normal) paranoid tendencies of the Soviet mind should not be underestimated."

He dismisses the fears of journalist Claire Sterling that the Russians are behind world terrorism. "As you know, we're in a 'Soviet menace' stage of history. She uses all those umbrella terms that don't mean very much." And he dismisses the novel "The Spike," in which Arnaud de Borchgrave warns of Soviet infiltration into the media, among other places. "This is shoddy — de Borchgrave isn't willing to name names. Maybe he *ought* to, if agents are working against American interests, huh?"

In fact, given the great competition between the first and second worlds, Rositzke isn't sure that spies are terribly important. "What role do they play? It's way down there."

So it's hard to imagine, for a moment, why Rositzke has felt his life's work was important until he starts describing the "bread and butter" of recruiting agents, of dealing with them. It's not money that counts, really, he says. It's not ideology, either. He thinks back to all the contacts he made in New Delhi, in New York, and a little lopsided wise-guy smile starts working around the corners of his mouth.

"It has to get more personal, you have to find out the guy has a problem. Look at Shevchenko, that guy at the U.N., he didn't like his wife. Or maybe you're worried about your career, or you've got a mistress and you need some money for her, or you're a Polish intelligence officer and you have a brother who emigrated to South America. Maybe we get something going with the brother, and one day he shows up for a surprise visit. Personal stuff. That's how it always happens. Anything to have a relationship. But all the time, both sides know exactly what's going on, but you can't say so."

And Rositzke seems to take a sudden, sly step backward to look at the journalist he's been chatting with, and the old instincts take over, a delight in the caginess of the KGB, his lifelong interview.

"Journalists," he says, with a throaty laugh full of cynical satisfaction. "They like journalists. Journalists know people that they want to know. Say I'm the KGB guy, and I've got cover as a diplomat. We get to know each other, and one day I say, 'I've got a friend who edits this magazine in Moscow, why don't you write something for it?' And you write it, and I say, 'Very interesting. Can I pay you for this?' And I give you, you know, nothing, just $25 or so. But you're on your way to being had."

The real heart of a KGB operation would seem to be not the code room, but . . . the human heart. Rositzke stares, nods, and thinks about it. Human frailty, and all that. The KGB gave him a lifetime to study it, fight it, exploit it. Why shouldn't he be grateful in an odd sort of way?

"What you're always looking for is a personal bond with a slight element of obligation," he says, a phrase which also describes the usual atmosphere of a newspaper interview, as it happens. And this discovered, a certain steel behind Rositzke's rumpled exterior begins to shine through. Somehow, for a couple of hours it's possible to forget that he's all business, but the interview is over now, and in his anonymous raincoat and gently eccentric desert boots, he picks up his briefcase, shakes hands and walks out the door.