



By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

Michael Morrissey operated business called B. R. Fox from this laboratory after the death of his partner.

Assassin's Tools Made In Area Lab

By ^{11/24/75} Laura A. Kiernan
Washington Post Staff Writer

Last spring, Michael Morrissey and an unidentified man laid out a collection of "assination devices" on Barbara Fox Spindel's kitchen table in Fairfax County and took pictures of them for a catalogue of explosive hidden in unsuspecting places like cigarette boxes and flashlights, according to Mrs. Spindel's children.

Richard Spindel, 18, said one of the devices was a tennis ball rigged like a hand grenade and set to explode 90 seconds after its pin was pulled.

Richard Spindel said he never saw the explosive devices again. According to the catalogue, they were code-named "Astro" equipment and consisted of everyday items like cigarette boxes, flashlights and telephone receivers, which were designed to hold and trigger explosives.

See EXPLOSIVES, C6, Col.

Assassin's Tools Made at Lab in Area

EXPLOSIVES, From CI

Assorted mechanisms were available to set off the bombs — mechanisms that could be triggered by movement, time, pressure light or sound, the catalogue said.

According to the catalogue, the devices were for sale "to authorized agencies of the United States government . . . for application outside of this country."

Also last spring, Morrissey demonstrated the devices for two officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration. According to a spokesman, no devices were purchased but the officials found the demonstration "very interesting."

Barbara Spindel had been Michael Morrissey's business associate since the death of her husband, Bernard, once widely considered an expert in the art of wiretapping.

After Spindel's death, Morrissey operated the business from a white brick laboratory in the rear of the Spindel home near Alexandria. The Spindel children said he came and went from the laboratory and through the house without the family's knowledge of exactly what he was working on.

According to the Spindel children, Morrissey, an elec-

tronics engineer now in his early 30s, met their father in the early 1970s and he became closely associated with the family business known as B. R. Fox, which sold bugging devices to police and trained them in their use. Spindel and Morrissey conducted a one week school for policemen every three to four months according to Natalie Spindel, 22.

Morrissey became known as a bugging expert himself and was quoted as such in newspaper articles at least once testified as an electronics expert during a local murder trial.

In March, 1974, Barbara Spindel pulled herself out of the business, according to her children, because she differed with Morrissey over its management and had become suspicious of some of his activities.

Morrissey's access to the laboratory was on a rental basis, Natalie Spindel said, but she said Morrissey never paid any rent to her mother.

While he operated the business, Morrissey apparently attended and recently graduated from American University Law School, according to the Spindel children. He is employed by the Washington law firm of Leon B. Zeigler and John T. Reges. Contacted yesterday

at the firm, Morrissey said "I don't want to comment on it" when asked about the catalogue he showed the DEA officials.

John Reges, who said he is Morrissey's attorney, refused to comment on the reports. When asked to comment on the Spindel children's statements he said "I'm not interested in those" and said he knew all the family members.

Last fall, the Spindel children said Morrissey came to the house and the workshop and removed all business and personal files and assorted equipment from the Spindel laboratory.

According to Natalie Spindel, "all the stuff" is now stored in a rented house at 4228 N. Glebe Road in Arlington where Morrissey lives with a roommate.

Mrs. Spindel went to the house and tried to get Morrissey to return the files and equipment, but he refused, the children said. They said they were unaware why he had taken it from their house.

According to Mrs. Spindel's lawyer, Philip Margolius, she is now in a legal dispute with Morrissey over his role in the company and his possible ownership rights.

In an early afternoon con-

versation, Margolius said Morrissey "completely took over the company" during most of 1974. Mrs. Spindel, he said, "had no idea of these explosive devices."

Assassinations (gen) and federal government; Lucien Conein; Michael Morrissey HW 1/25/75

Laura Kiernan's follow-up story on Morrissey's use of the Spindel company for the manufacture of assassination devices lacks quotes of indignant officials or prominent citizens that federal officials would even look at such equipment. (WxPost 1/24/75)

It also lacks reference to WerBel, which you mentioned 1/23.

I had thought that Spindel lived and specialized in the New York City area.

That he moved to the Washington area would seem to indicate specialization there.

The accompanying pictures shows a number of packing cases on three of which what appears to be "INTERARMS" is stencilled. There was, in Alexandria, an Interarmco, as I recall the name, run by a guy named Cummings, to whom CIA connections had often been attributed. He is well known, as is the company, for the sale of all kinds of weapons. To hobbyists, the revolutionaries of the right, etc. Cannons, too. Almost anything.

Perhaps the widow Spindel found no significance in the name. However, if she knew nothing about Cummings and his company, I would think that she could make out the possible significance of packing crates with a name including the word "arms" in it.

As I remember it, Spindel had quite a sophisticated shop where he had lived.

He got into some kind of trouble over tapping and/or bugging.

I had not known that he had moved.

I find it a little farout that Morrissey would have expected to sell assassination devices to drug-enforcement people and exceptional that of all the people so employed he demonstrated to Conein.

Conein, long-time CIA man, might have been expected to be interested for spooks more than drug-law enforcers, though.

That Morrissey could expect to recover the cost of developing such devices in itself seems unlikely. Unless he is some kind of nut.

I would expect, however, that if the CIA were interested it would develop this kind of device for itself.

Little of this story as it has appeared in the Post makes sense.

My recollection is not clear, partly because WerBel has never been a major interest despite his revanchist Cuban connections, but I have the impression that not too long ago a reporter told me that WerBel had told him that he works for the federals only now.