

K.G.B. Told Tall Tales About Dallas, Book Says

By JAMES RISEN

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — The Soviet K.G.B. fabricated evidence linking the Central Intelligence Agency to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and passed the material to unwitting conspiracy theorists in the United States, according to a new book based on K.G.B. files brought to the West by a defector.

According to the files turned over by a former K.G.B. archivist to British intelligence and detailed in a new book, Moscow's cold war spy service took several steps designed to link the C.I.A. to the Kennedy assassination.

These steps included forging a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald to a C.I.A. 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 K.G.B. officer, Vasily Mitrokhin. The book is to be published by Basic Books this month.

The Oswald letter was supposed to have been written about two weeks before President Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, but was actually created by the K.G.B. in the mid-1970's, after E. Howard Hunt's name had surfaced in the Watergate investigation, according to K.G.B. files copied by Mr. Mitrokhin while he served as a K.G.B. archivist.

The letter was then passed anonymously to three conspiracy buffs and entered circulation in the United States when it was picked up by one writer, of self-published assassination books, the authors report.

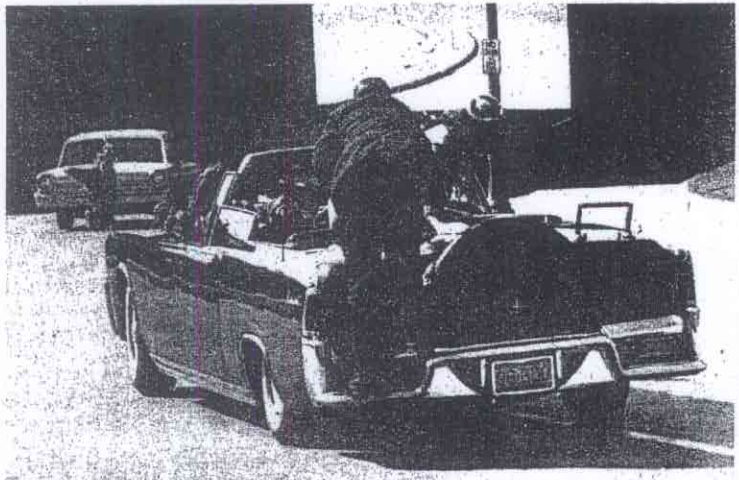
The letter led to a brief flurry of interest when a Dallas newspaper reported that a handwriting expert declared it to be genuine, but a Congressional panel that reinvestigated the Kennedy assassination in the late 1970's later concluded that the letter was probably a forgery.

The K.G.B.'s clumsy propaganda campaign never had much of an impact on the debate over the Kennedy assassination in the United States. But the archives splited out of Russia by Mr. Mitrokhin appear to support the longstanding assertions by C.I.A. officials that the K.G.B. conducted disinformation campaigns designed to raise dark suspicions about the United States Government and prominent American leaders around the world.

The book also suggests that those efforts were amateurish and often silly. In August 1967, for instance, the K.G.B. authorized a plan to discredit the Rev. Martin Luther King by planting articles in the African press portraying him as an "Uncle Tom" who was secretly being paid off by the Government so that he would make sure the civil rights movement would not threaten President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The K.G.B. was apparently frustrated that a moderate like Dr. King had emerged as the most influential voice in the civil rights movement, but Moscow's comical propaganda revealed the K.G.B.'s lack of understanding of American politics and society. The K.G.B.'s propaganda campaign had even less impact than the F.B.I.'s separate, but equally tumbling, efforts to smear Dr. King.

"News that the K.G.B. was attempting to plant false stories in the African press portraying Dr. King as an 'Uncle Tom,' at the very time when Dr. King was harshly attacking Johnson's conduct of the Vietnam War indicates that American police agencies were not the only keystones



Snyder Files via Associated Press

Fake evidence linking the Kennedy assassination to the C.I.A. was planted by the K.G.B., a new book asserts. It says that in the 70's the K.G.B. forged a threatening letter from Lee Harvey Oswald to the C.I.A.



The Associated Press

Cops active in the 1960's," said David J. Garrow, a historian at Emory University and the author of "The F.B.I. and Martin Luther King Jr." Mr. Mitrokhin was a K.G.B. 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 a huge cache of notes that he said he had taken based on those files, and turned them over.

Clumsy efforts to link the C.I.A. and Kennedy's killing.

The Mitrokhin files, which the British considered reliable enough to share with the C.I.A. and F.B.I., have offered Western intelligence and law enforcement officials a treasure trove of historical information about K.G.B. operations around the world.

And while the archives quoted in the book contain only limited information about Soviet espionage cases, the archives have already helped identify some spies. In the United States, for instance, the book reveals that the Mitrokhin files helped lead the F.B.I. to Robert Lipka, a former code-clerk at the National Security

Agency, who worked as a Soviet mole in the 1960's. Mr. Lipka was arrested in 1986 and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit espionage. Information about other open spy cases contained in the archives were withheld from the book, including on the case of a former State Department official, Felix S. Bloch, who was suspended in 1989 and resigned in 1990 but was never charged or arrested.

Mr. Mitrokhin first attempted to defect to the United States but received a lukewarm reception from a C.I.A. officer when he approached the agency in a Baltic country soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Officials say that the C.I.A.'s Soviet/East European Division had decided that the K.G.B. was no longer a threat and had instituted a controversial new policy that led C.I.A. officers in the field to turn away many defectors. Paul Redmond, who was then the C.I.A.'s deputy chief of counterintelligence, said in an interview that he sought to take over the Mitrokhin case after other officials had failed to show interest, but by then Mr. Mitrokhin had turned to the British.

Mr. Redmond now argues that the C.I.A.'s diffident handling of Mr. Mitrokhin's efforts underscored a larger problem, which was that the C.I.A. decided "naively" after the collapse of the Soviet Union to scale back its espionage operations against Moscow. ABC News reported on this controversy Thursday.

The C.I.A. apparently did miss a good bet with Mr. Mitrokhin, since his archives seem to reveal a wide array of intriguing insights into K.G.B. operations against the West. Among other things, according to the book, the files show that the K.G.B. planted secret caches of weapons in Europe and probably in North America as well, apparently for use in the event of war.

They also appear to show that the K.G.B. sought to blackmail Chancellor Willy Brandt of Germany in the 1960's by alleging that he had spied for Moscow during World War II.

While Mr. Brandt was living in exile in Sweden during the war, he had provided information about Germany to the Soviets as well as the

British and Americans, but never committed espionage, the files show. But in 1962, the K.G.B. attempted to blackmail Mr. Brandt by threatening to use evidence of his dealings with the K.G.B.'s Stockholm residency against him, according to the Mitrokhin archives. The attempt failed.

The book says that Mr. Mitrokhin's files also pointed to the existence of a previously unknown British agent who was recruited on ideological grounds by the Soviets during the 1930's, but who survived the collapse of the famous Kim Philby spy ring. Melita Norwood, code-named HOLA in the Mitrokhin files, remained in place after the others in the Cambridge spy ring were identified or forced to defect to Moscow.

The book says that, after being recruited to the Soviet cause in the 1930's, she began to spy for Moscow after she started working in the British Non-Ferrous Metals Association in 1945, providing information on Britain's project to build its first atomic bomb. She spied for the Soviets for decades, and in 1958 Moscow secretly awarded her the Order of the Red Banner.

The book states that her "ideological commitment seems never to have wavered over more than forty years." Now 87, she retired without being arrested and is still living in England.

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