
A few weeks ago newspapers revealed the disappearance in Vienna of Nicholas G. Shadrin, a double agent working for the FBI. Shadrin is believed to have been kidnapped by Soviet intelligence agents and taken to Russia. All efforts to obtain his release have been unavailing. The full love story of Shadrin and his wife and her efforts to bring him back to their American home have never been told.

Jack Anderson has known the story for more than a year and held it up for fear that publicity could cost Shadrin his life. But now that some of the details have been published, Anderson can for the first time divulge the whole dramatic story of an unusual romance wrapped in international espionage.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

It began as a love story on Oct. 20, 1958, in a remote seaport in Poland. A dashing, young Russian naval captain became captivated by the flashing dark eyes of a winsome Polish girl. They ran off together, fleeing by boat across the stormy Baltic Sea to a tiny Swedish fishing village.

It ended as a spy story on Dec. 20, 1975, on the crowded streets of Vienna. The Soviet defector, now an American double agent, held a meeting with two KGB agents on the steps of a Vienna church. Two days later, although he sensed something was wrong, he kept another appointment with the same men. He disappeared without a trace, to the consternation of FBI agents who had carefully set up the meeting but had failed to have him shadowed for his protection.

Blanka Shadrin reminisced about her missing husband Nick in the living room of her comfortable suburban Washington home. She sat erect, her emotions under tight control, with her hands folded primly in her lap.

Room full of memories

In Nick's empty study are his treasured books and hunting trophies. Signs of his presence abound.

It was painful for Blanka to talk about the life they had shared. Her eyes gave her away, as she fought back the tears of remembrance. Suddenly, they spilled

over. The voice held steady. Then, for just a moment she lost control. "I know he's coming back," she blurted fiercely. "I know he's coming back. I have amazing intuition."

The spy story she now feels compelled to tell the world began not for politics but for love. It began in her hometown of Gdynia, Poland, where the Russians had come with a destroyer and submarine to conduct a training mission. She met the handsome Russian destroyer captain at a party. His name was then Nikolai F. Artamonov. He became Nicholas G. Shadrin after they

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Will the Russians Return the Man She Loves?

by Jack Anderson

arrived in America.

As Nick was to tell her many times during their idyllic, 17-year marriage, her large, dark eyes cast a spell over him. It was love, he said, at first sight. It was three months, however, before they met again. Then they began to attend concerts and operas together.

He was a gregarious 30, she a shy 21. Blanka was enrolled in medical school and working at the Gdynia hospital. Their love affair, she said, was a tender,

mature experience.

There were formidable obstacles, however, in the way of their happiness. He already had a wife and stepchild in Russia. It would not be difficult to get a divorce; the marriage laws in Russia were lenient. But he held too important a rank and had too bright a naval future to be permitted to marry a foreigner.

As they were swept up in their affair, however, nothing seemed to matter. Nick made up his mind to defect to

Sweden, across the dangerous Baltic, in March of 1959. He worked out the details in his head for two months before he disclosed his intentions to Blanka.

They decided to defect for only one reason: to be together. "His love was too strong," she said simply, "for him ever to go back to Russia."

Nick's rank gave him access to the ship's launch. He also knew the Baltic, he assured Blanka, "like the inside of my pocket." Most important, he knew



Blanka and Nick on their wedding day in the U.S. in 1960. Their love affair took them on a perilous journey by boat from Poland to Sweden, and finally to asylum in America.



"I know he's coming back," says Blanka. "I have amazing intuition." At suburban home in McLean, Va., she awaits Nick's return with his faithful German shepherd, "Trezor."

what areas were covered by Russian and Polish radar.

Nick let it be known he was going fishing and ordered a steward to prepare a basket of food. He brought along a seaman, disciplined to obey his superior officer without question, to help man the launch. It was close to 8 p.m. when he picked up Blanka. She left behind a note advising her mother that she and Nick had decided to attend an international fair in Poznan—a small ruse to deceive the police who would be sure to start checking.

They made their way to a lonely spot on the darkening waterfront. She stepped, trembling, aboard the launch.

Nick nosed the launch away from the pier and steered an erratic course to avoid patrol boats and radar sweeps. The voyage had all the elements of a Hollywood suspense film. About four hours out, high winds began kicking up whitecaps, and flashes of lightning silhouetted them against the sky. One of those blinding flashes could reveal them to a Soviet warship.

Once, Nick froze as he swept his naval binoculars across the darkened horizon and spotted the silhouette of a destroyer. He stared into the darkness and then relaxed. "West German," he said. The flight across the Baltic lasted a harrowing 20 hours. They never opened the food basket. "Our hearts were in our throats the whole time," said Blanka.

Tongues loosened

They finally approached a small Swedish fishing village in the quiet of late morning. Nick and Blanka waved urgently at some Swedish fishermen tending their nets. "Police! Police!" they shouted. "Take us to the police!" The Swedes shrugged, uncomprehendingly. Then Nick, with sudden inspiration, produced a bottle of cognac from the food basket and passed it around.

This seemed to improve the fishermen's comprehension, and they began to communicate through sign language. They summoned a taxi, which drove them to the police station.

They were greeted with smiles, and they smiled back. For lack of better facilities, they were offered separate jail cells for the night. The next day a Swedish official, fluent in Russian, heard their story and took them to Stockholm for debriefing.

Swedish idyll

It was the beginning of the Swedish summer, and the couple spent the next three months in ecstasy. (Nick advised his seaman, incidentally, to return to Russia.) By early August, it began to dawn on Blanka that the friendly Swedes, nonetheless, were a homogeneous people with tight cultural ties.

"In Europe," Blanka explained, "if you are not a native of the country, you don't really belong. You are considered a second-class citizen. So I began telling Nick that we should go to America, where all races blend together."

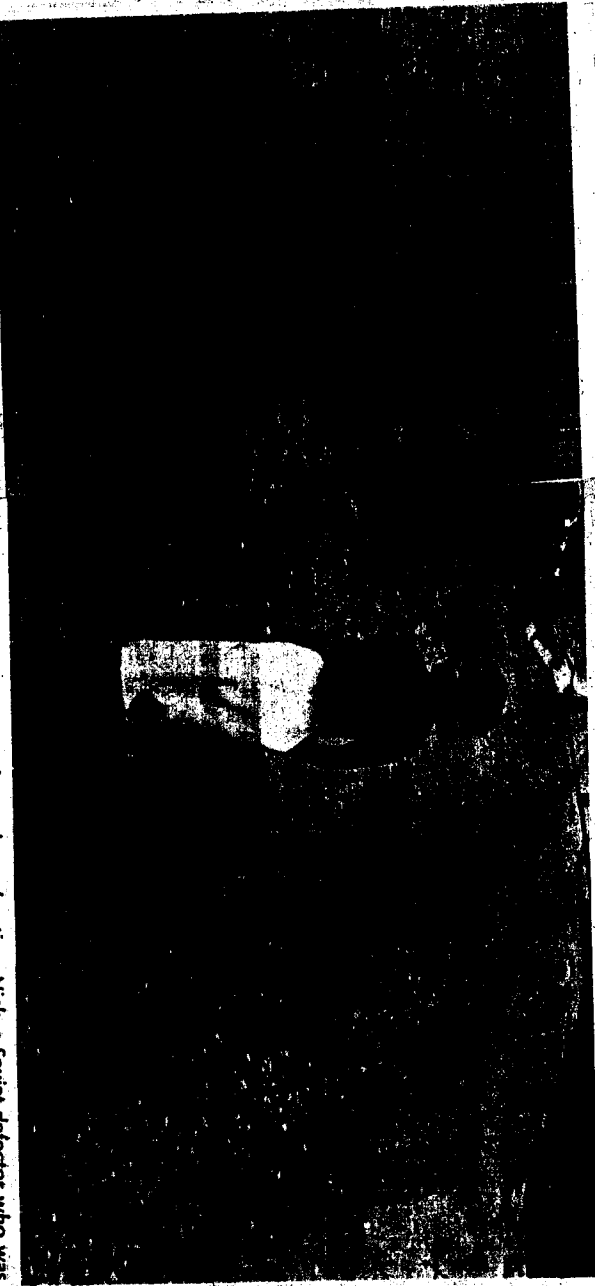
Nick was now a celebrated figure, one of the most important defectors to leave the Soviet Union. He had been sentenced to death in absentia by a Soviet military court. The couple were convinced that KGB agents were on the prowl for him. They decided, therefore, that Blanka would be less conspicuous in approaching the U.S. embassy.

She took the Stockholm subway to the embassy and asked to speak to someone who understood Russian. She requested American asylum and was told the embassy would first have to cable Washington for approval.

The following day, Nick and Blanka were whisked from the embassy in a big American car to a waiting CIA plane (it had no markings). The plane was small, and they sat on uncomfortable wooden benches. It flew them to Frank-

Blanka Shadrin gazes wistfully at the waters of the Chesapeake Bay where she and her hus-

band, Nick, spent many happy hours boating. Nick, a Soviet defector who was an American double agent, disappeared in 1975 on an FBI mission in Vienna.



furt, where Nick was interrogated for three weeks. Then they boarded another CIA plane for Washington's Andrews Air Force Base. They spent the next nine months in a "safe house" in Virginia.

The years that followed, according to Blanka, were routine on the outside but joyous and fulfilling in their devotion to each other. "He is the most intelligent, the most wonderful person I have ever known," she said, the mist again overflowing her eyes.

Devoted to her

As she talked, a portrait took shape of Nicholas Shadrin. He was an ingratiating, gregarious man whom almost everyone liked, a man of furious physical energy and capacity for work, an outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish. Yet he was also a devoted husband.

By day, Nick was a consultant on Soviet naval matters; at night, he attended a local university and worked toward an engineering master's. He settled finally into a middle-level, low-security job with the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency.

Blanka, meanwhile, studied English and dentistry. She worked for awhile in a dental clinic and then opened her own dental office in their McLean, Va., home. Nick built the office and installed the equipment.

Then the terrible chain of events began. Nick carefully protected Blanka from the knowledge, but in 1966 he was visited by two KGB agents who pressured him to spy on his adopted country.

Nick immediately notified the FBI. After some reflection, the FBI came back with a proposition. Would Nick pretend to accept the KGB offer while he actually spied on the KGB for the FBI? Blanka has since learned that Nick refused for a year to become a double agent because of the tremendous risks.

But the FBI brought pressure on him through the Pentagon. In the end, he could no longer resist the request. So he began cautiously to provide his KGB contacts with documents prepared by the CIA. He appeared to be making progress with the Soviets. They asked him to come to Montreal in 1971 and to Vienna in 1972 for KGB training. The FBI instructed him to play along. He used a pretext to take his beloved Blanka with him on both trips.

Mysterious calls

She was told nothing of his real mis-

sion. In retrospect, she can now recall small occurrences that should have alerted her. There were telephone calls from men with grim Russian accents. But her husband knew several Russian emigrés, so she dismissed any suspicions that may have flickered in her mind. One summer night in 1974, she answered the telephone several times, but the caller kept hanging up.

Then came the fateful trip to Vienna in December 1975. The FBI in Washington notified the CIA station chief in Vienna of the preparations to send Nick and Blanka to Vienna, with a skiing trip as their cover. The CIA chief protested that the risk was too great.

The FBI was insistent. The CIA then proposed a counterplan. Let Nick meet with his KGB contacts in Vienna, and the CIA would keep him under surveillance. Too risky, said the FBI. The KGB would discover he was being watched. He would have to go alone.

Blanka knew none of this. She settled with Nick into suite 361 of Vienna's posh Bristol Hotel. They'd stay a few days, Nick said, long enough for them to shop and for him to complete some business with Russian acquaintances.

KGB promises

It is known that on Dec. 18 Nick met on the steps of the Votifkirche church with two KGB agents. He gave their names to the FBI afterward as Oleg Kozlov and Mikhail Kuryshev. He reported that they had praised his work and told him he would be promoted to a lieutenant colonel in the KGB. He said this made him nervous because the KGB was known to give reassuring news to potential victims to lull them into a false sense of security. He said they had also asked for a second meeting at the same location two nights later. Nick's "control officer" told him to keep the appointment.

Blanka sensed that Nick was ill at ease. He instructed her to write down the names of the two men. They talked expectantly about their skiing holiday, to begin Monday morning. He also took her shopping.

At 6:30 Sunday night, Nick finished a cognac in their suite and said he had a final business appointment to keep. He kissed his wife of 17 years and departed. He passed through the lobby, hailed a

cab and disappeared.

Who's agent was he?

Some believe he is dead; others suspect he was a secret Soviet agent all along. Blanka believes neither. She is convinced Nick is alive, still in love with her and still loyal to his adopted country. She has his room ready, and she checks up regularly on his boat on the Chesapeake Bay. "I know Nick is coming back, and the boat is waiting for him," she said.

Intelligence sources have confirmed this much: Nick was kidnapped by the KGB in Vienna and dragged across the Czech border. We have seen detailed files on his case; they contain no hint that he has ever betrayed the United States. On the contrary, he played the dangerous espionage game for the FBI against his own inclinations. He fell into Soviet hands, apparently, because his superiors used poor judgment.

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Nick was an avid hunter and fisherman in his spare time from the Pentagon, where he held a middle-level position with the Defense Intelligence Agency.

RUSSIANS CONTINUED

The determined Blanka, meanwhile, spent every available minute appealing to U.S. authorities to seek her husband's release. She hired the prestigious Washington law firm of Covington and Burling. Together they called upon anyone who might help from the President on down.

They made repeated approaches to then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. They waylaid then-President Gerald Ford at a White House reception.

But the story was always the same. Back came word from the State Department: "Kissinger believes the situation to be hopeless." Kissinger's assistant, Larry Eagleburger, complained about the FBI and CIA. "They got themselves into this with their harebrained schemes," he fumed. "Now they expect us to pull their chestnuts out of the fire." President Ford's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, telephoned Blanka: "You realize we do not have any leverage." His successor, Zbigniew

Brzezinski, told her: "A lot of U.S. citizens got in trouble while abroad. We have many cases like this."

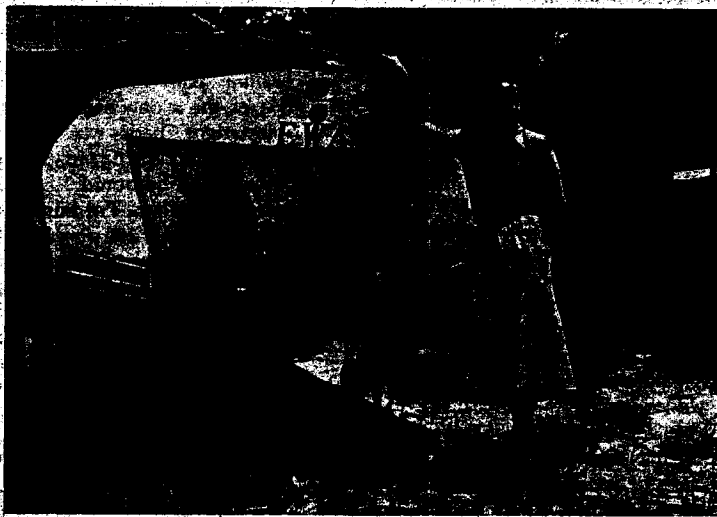
Blanka sat in her living room, absently stroking the ears of Nick's German shepherd, "Trezor."

Nick's case has become both an international incident and an intelligence cause célèbre, meanwhile, with embarrassed intelligence agencies running in all directions and President Carter continuing to maintain a stony silence.

'Return my husband'

"I realize that my husband is no longer of value to American intelligence," Blanka said. "I also realize he has been drained, by now of all he knows by the KGB. He has no value to anyone except to me. But he is an American citizen and a human being. President Carter has made speeches about human rights. I ask the President, and I ask the people of the world, to appeal to the Russians to return my husband."

Will the world listen to one lone woman begging for her man? **P**



"The boat is waiting for him," says Blanka, who takes time from her dental practice to check up on Nick's boat, which bears her original Polish name.