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Spy Life Uninspiring, Former Hill Aide Says

By Warren Brown

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Kenneth R. Tolliver said yesterday he learned during seven years as a self-described double agent that some Soviet spies are also thieves.

"My Soviet contacts always took, for themselves, \$500 to \$600 off the top of any payments they were supposed to give me," Tolliver said.

Tolliver, 42, an advertising executive in Greenville, Miss., is a former staff aide of Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.). Tolliver said in a telephone interview yesterday that he began working as a double agent for the FBI and Soviet intelligence officials in the fall of 1967 while still a member of Eastland's staff.

Eastland, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which handles most Justice Department and FBI legislation, said Thursday he dismissed Tolliver in 1968 at the urging of the FBI. But the senator said he had no knowledge of his aide's spying activities at the time of the dismissal.

Tolliver said yesterday that Eastland purposefully was kept ignorant of his double agent role. He said the FBI "arranged" for the dismissal to get him out of Eastland's office because his spy duties were potentially embarrassing to the senator.

Eastland said the FBI approached him with a police record showing that Tolliver "was involved in the unauthorized use of a boat in California during his younger years." The senator said the "bureau suggested that I discharge him, so I did."

"Actually, Eastland treated me very well," Tolliver said. I stayed on the

payroll for about a month after I left."

Tolliver's story first came to light in a new book entitled, "FBI: An Uncensored Look Behind the Walls," by Sanford J. Ungar, Washington editor of The Atlantic magazine. The book referred to him only as a one-time staff aide to Eastland, but his name was disclosed Thursday by the Associated Press.

Ungar wrote that "both L. Patrick Gray III and Clarence Kelley, on taking over the FBI ... were shocked to learn ... that a staff aide to a powerful conservative member of Congress, Senator James O. Eastland (D-Mississippi), passed information to the Soviet Union for years without being detected ..."

But Tolliver said yesterday that he never passed information to the Soviet Union without first checking with the FBI.

Tolliver's spy life had an inauspicious beginning.

"It was at a consular luncheon," he said. "I believe it was in Arlington. I just happened to sit at a table with Soviet diplomats. Several weeks later, a Russian called me up and asked me if I would like to have lunch."

Tolliver identified the caller as Yuri Mostinsky whom he described as "A Russian diplomat" with the Soviet Embassy here.

Tolliver said he notified the FBI within an hour of the call. The bureau told him to "play along," he said.

"The FBI told me that the Russians thought I had access to documents that I didn't have access to, Tolliver said. He said the bureau wanted him to pretend to provide the Russians with valuable information in an attempt to gain information, in return, about Soviet intel-

ligence agents in the United States.

That arrangement began what Tolliver described as a "rather lengthy, uninspiring pean capitals and behind epic" that took him to European capitals and behind the Iron Curtain and that netted him "maybe about \$12,900 in Soviet payoffs.

The payoff money was turned over to the FBI, Tolliver said, adding that much of the money due him was pilfered by his Soviet contacts before it reached his hands.

"If anyone thinks he can get rich by working [as a recruited spy] for the KGB [the Soviet secret police], he's crazy," Tolliver said.

He said that in 1968, several months after his initial contact with the Soviets and his departure from Eastland's staff, he established "pre-arranged singals" with the Soviets for future contacts, then returned to his home town, Greenville, Miss.

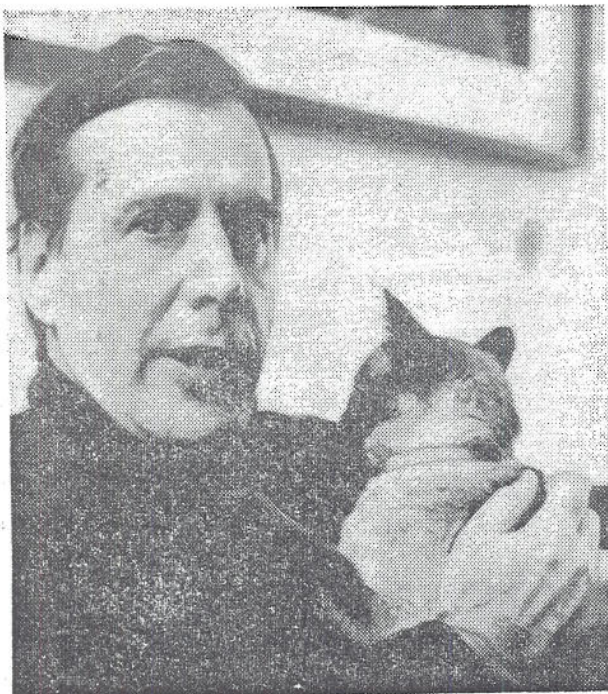
In mid-1969, Tolliver said, he made contact again with the Soviets.

"I was contacted [in Greenville] by a guy named Hoffman, who said he was a friend of George," Tolliver said. "In Russian, 'Yuri,' means George. That was the signal," said Tolliver, referring to Yuri Mostinsky.

Tolliver said the Soviet contact arranged a meeting in Mexico City, where numerous other espionage meetings were to follow.

A Russian in Mexico City "gave me a list of [American] names that he wanted me to check out," Tolliver said. "I passed the list on to the bureau and that's why they [FBI officials] became very interested in using me as a double agent."

Tolliver said that between 1969 and 1972 he went to meetings with the Soviets in



Associated Press

Tolliver says double-spy life was "uninspiring" epic.

Mexico City and New York City, another contact point. "I was getting bored," he said. "But the FBI told me that the game is patience."

In 1972, Tolliver said, the Soviets "slipped" him into East Berlin. He said he was housed in an exclusively Russian district in East Berlin in a "safe house."

There, he was confronted by Soviet intelligence officers who asked, "Why were FBI agents discussing you in a Georgetown restaurant?"

"For three bloody days, we discussed that single bloody incident," Tolliver said. "I figured that I would never get out of there alive."

He said that he finally convinced the Soviets that the FBI agents probably remembered him as an Eastland aide and probably were discussing his dismissal from the senator's staff.

Tolliver said the incident was not really a slip-up on the part of the FBI. He said

that the discussion overheard by the Soviets had occurred before he became a double agent.

Tolliver said that he managed to identify a few Soviet spies for the FBI during his life as a double agent. But he said that he accomplished little else.

Tolliver said he never provided the Soviets with information that wasn't readily available in a Congressional Directory. "I was a kind of a tour guide," he said. "I think they began to realize that I wasn't much use to them."

Tolliver's spy career ended in 1974 when, at the direction of the FBI, he refused to meet with the Russians in any place except New York City. They wanted to continue meeting in foreign capitals," he said.

"This whole thing has changed my outlook on life," he said. "Now, I feel a little used up . . . I can understand what it means to come in from the cold."