

I Spy, You Spy

Written by Garry Lee Wright
Tuesday, 27 February 2001 18:00

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“Hello again, Comrade Ivantyutubuzzoff.” “Shhhhh! Keep your voice down! And remember, call me Brad.” “What are you so jumpy about? Were you up late drinking that pepper vodka again?” “Nyet. And — wait — do not hand me that package yet. I think we are being watched.”

“Watched? What makes you say that?”

“That man over there in the trench coat keeps talking into his fountain pen.”

“Oh, relax. My bosses don’t suspect a thing. The Cold War’s been over for years! Besides that, the U.S. gives your country half a billion a year in foreign aid. Who would think you’d be spying on us, too?”

“Nevertheless, my superiors at the KGB — I mean, the Moscow Fish and Skeet Club — are concerned.”

“Not to worry. We have a saying at the Bureau: ‘Why do they call it counterintelligence? Because if you have any brains, they’re against it.’”

“I understand. But my superiors are also concerned about the information you’ve been giving us.”

“Well, let me just look inside this envelope and — hey, what’s this? I told you I wanted cash and diamonds. There’s nothing in here but some magazine. ‘Beautiful Russian Girls Who Want To Meet American Men.’ What’s going on?”

“My superiors believe you are — how do you say? — ‘trying to pull a fast one.’”

“What are you talking about?”

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“They think you have been giving us disinformation. For example, that last document you sent us.”

“‘Top Secret Policies of the American Military’?”

“Yes. Just listen to this: ‘And if you really want to impress out-of-town visitors, let ’em push a few buttons on a real, live submarine!’ You expect us to believe this?”

“I know it sounds crazy, but that’s really how they do things.”

“A likely story! And how about this profile of your outgoing president. You say he pardoned federal fugitives, steered \$400,000 in legal fees to his brother-in-law, and took the White House furniture with him.”

“I know that seems hard to believe, but...”

“You insult our intelligence! No country would tolerate such leaders. Just because we Russians still make pocket calculators the size of a sofa bed, you think we are simple-minded.”

“No, no. Listen, you have to understand that—”

“Enough lies! My superiors say no more cash and diamonds until you start — how do you say? — coming clean.”

“But I’ve done everything you asked! I left a laptop full of sensitive data lying around at the State Department. I helped plant listening devices. I even forwarded those pictures of Anna Kournikova.”

“Not good enough! You are trying to make fools of us. If we didn’t watch American TV, we wouldn’t even know that you faked the moon landing.”

“But I need the cash and diamonds! My kids are in college and the tuition is killing me.”

“All right, we will give you one more chance to help us. We are afraid that one of our moles is about to be unmasked.”

“A mole?”

“Yes, a person who infiltrates the enemy at an early age, gains everyone’s confidence, attains power, and then — boom!— brings down the whole system from the inside.”

“Fine. What’s his name?”

“Alan Greenspan.”

“All right, nobody move! This is the FBI! Everyone stay where you are!”

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“Wait! My name is Brad and I work at a — how do you say? — Starbucks.”

“Okay, you can go. But the other guy, keep your hands where we can see them.”

“But—”

“And look toward the camera. We’re filming this for *COPS*.”

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