

The Most Dangerous Game

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Fred Kovaleski and Yuri Rastvorov were secret agents, sworn enemies on opposite sides of the Cold War. When they finally came face to face, a mutual love of tennis spawned the beginning of a beautiful friendship

I first met Martin Simons in the fall of 1973. I was 12, and on the drive from our Manhattan apartment to his woodsy home in Potomac, my father told me a secret. A state secret.

Our host had been a Soviet spy who defected to the United States in 1954, and Simons was not his real name.

The two men first crossed paths that year in a CIA safe house in Maryland. My father, a CIA officer, had watched over the KGB agent, one of the biggest prizes of the Cold War, while debriefers plumbed him day after day for intelligence.

When I asked my father Simons's true name, he gently replied, "It doesn't matter."

Three decades later, I would learn that Simons was born Yuri Rastvorov. The revelation came in his Washington Post obituary. He died in Potomac in 2004 at the age of 82, five days shy of the 50th anniversary of his defection.

I reflected on that weekend more than 30 years past that my parents and I spent with him, his moneyed American wife and their two daughters. He was a hearty Slav with a round face and greenish-blue eyes, and he greeted my father with a huge hug. As the two men caught up, Simons bustled around the house in an apron, preparing savory meals for his three guests and family. "Sergei!" he called me in his booming, heavily accented, baritone. He struck me as a Russian cartoon character, a hulking but docile bear.

Like Simons, my father, Fred Kovaleski, was a former spy. He worked for the CIA in the 1950s, handling defectors and sleuthing in the Middle East under the cover of the international tennis star he really was. In fact, Simons and my father were initially paired by the agency for two shared attributes: They were spies who loved tennis.

For reasons that will become clear, my father probably meant more to Simons than Simons meant to him. But my father felt deeply the significance, and the irony, of their link. They had been mirror images in opposing worlds on different sides of the planet, but both wound up members of the same Bethesda tennis club. They were both heroes for what they did for the United States during a precarious time when the balance of power seemed to hinge on a pin. But Simons, born behind the Iron Curtain, was a defector, or a traitor, depending on one's view. My father, the product of a free society, loyally served the country of his birth, deferring a college scholarship to volunteer as a paratrooper in World War II before moving to the front lines of the Cold War by joining the CIA in its infancy.

Those distinctions would dictate the course of their lives.

During World War II, my father helped liberate one of the largest internment camps in the Philippines. Around the same time, Simons was dispatched to herd ethnic minorities out of the

Caucuses. Simons abandoned a wife and young daughter in Moscow to bolt the Soviet system and the KGB. My father walked away from the CIA when his superiors told him to pick between the agency and marrying my mother, Manya.

Since the espionage years, my parents have lived an extraordinary life in Capetown, Sydney, New York City and now Washington. The serve-and-volley CIA spy easily parted with his aliases and remade himself as an international business executive. But Simons could never shed his cover. Martin Francis Simons was a fabrication. A manufactured man, he disguised his true self from friends and others. He was gregarious but could never escape the fear of being hunted down by a KGB assassin. He rarely went to sleep at night without a gun nearby. Even Simons's passion for tennis slowly gave way to bad knees, while my father went on to win tournament after tournament, becoming one of the premier senior players in the world.

Simons, who came to fiercely love his adopted country, would ultimately feel betrayed by the government that milked him for his secrets and then cast him aside.

The parallels were too striking, the distinctions too sharp, for me to put the story out of my mind. It became my mission to find out everything I could about what brought these two men together, and ultimately, what held them apart.

A 32-year-old Yuri Rastvorov trudged through the snow and biting winds around the Ginza shopping district in central Tokyo to rendezvous with the unimaginable, to do the unthinkable.

He had just left the popular restaurant Suehiro, where he bade farewell to Japan by downing one last sake while geishas danced onstage. It was 7:40 p.m. on January 24, 1954. Now Rastvorov hurried to the designated meeting spot: the entrance of the NYK Building near the Tokyo train station. He had 20 minutes to be in place.

Bundled up in a dark-blue overcoat and wearing leather boots with zippers, he carried a diplomatic passport, about \$100 in yen and photos of his 8-year-old daughter. He had burned most of his personal papers in a fireplace before walking out of the Soviet mission for the last time.

Rastvorov arrived exactly on time, but there was no American car. He would later tell U.S. interrogators that he stood on the sidewalk for 10 excruciating minutes, peering into the dimly lit, wintry distance, fearing that at any minute his superiors would realize his betrayal and send someone to stop or kill him.

Suddenly, a black Chevrolet sedan pulled to the curb. The driver was Werner Michel, a 29-year-old U.S. Army captain who was chief of the Soviet counterespionage section in Tokyo. Rastvorov, a KGB lieutenant colonel, hurried into the idling car. Michel was skeptical.

"How do I know this is not a Soviet provocation?" Michel remembers asking as the two drove off.

"This is no provocation. Let's go!" Rastvorov growled back.

The temperature was in the low 30s, but Michel noticed sweat beading down Rastvorov's face. The defector kept eyeing the back window, as if he were expecting the KGB to be tailing them.

Michel recalls that he wanted to test Rastvorov's sincerity. He demanded the names of three Japanese agents in the Soviet spy network. Rastvorov obliged. One of them happened to be a Japanese security guard for Michel's own counter-intelligence unit.

"I'm not lying," Michel recounts Rastvorov insisting. "I have to get out of here!"

Michel parked the car at a U.S. military installation. Inside, counter-intelligence personnel were waiting for the KGB agent with high anticipation. Rastvorov, ostensibly the second secretary of the Soviet Mission, had been a trusted intelligence officer for 11 years. What they discovered in the debriefings wouldn't disappoint them. Using the alias Uchida, Rastvorov had overseen roughly three dozen foreign agents. Many were Japanese citizens who had been repatriated from POW camps in the USSR, but only after signing pledges to work for Soviet intelligence. A few worked for the Japanese government. He had mostly wanted his operatives to deliver information about U.S. air power in the Far East, the enemy's most dangerous strength. Moscow also wanted to know whether atomic bombs and atomic cannons were being brought into Japan.

When Rastvorov wasn't running spies, his life revolved around the Tokyo Lawn Tennis Club. Its members included a who's who of diplomats and a large contingent of Americans, many of them part of the U.S.-led allied occupation that had followed the war. Rastvorov was a tennis fanatic and a decent player. His superiors had directed him to join the club to recruit Americans and garner intelligence. But he ended up enjoying his tennis relationships at the expense of any recruiting. Around the club, he was courteous and unassuming.

Roger Suddith, an American who managed a Tokyo hotel for the U.S. government, played singles with Rastvorov and sometimes had lunch with him at the club. They would chat over egg or ham sandwiches.

"He never talked about the Soviet Union and never asked about life in America or what I knew about the activities of the U.S. forces in Japan," Suddith recalls.

There was something else Rastvorov never mentioned to Suddith: his wife and child in Moscow. "He tried to pass himself off as a bachelor," Suddith says.

U.S. Army intelligence had been tracking Rastvorov since 1951. That was when he started taking English lessons from an American teacher who worked at the U.S. Army education center in Tokyo. At first, Maude Burris, a bespectacled, middle-aged Oklahoman, was reluctant to associate with the Soviet. But the Army told her to start the lessons and that she would be regularly contacted for information about Rastvorov.

Despite Burris's concerns, teacher and student became friends. Rastvorov told her she reminded him of his late mother, whom he had trusted above all other people. He said several times that he was determined to be free and would refuse to return to the Soviet Union. He was showing interest in American life and during one English lesson had become transfixed by the array of products offered in a Sears catalogue. Burris reassured him that when he was ready to make a move, U.S. authorities would help him.

Rastvorov's reasons for wanting to defect ran deep. They were rooted in years of resentment over the injustices his family suffered during the quarter-century that Joseph Stalin ruled the USSR through suspicion and terror. Rastvorov had also been seduced by the Western lifestyle he devoured in Tokyo. And he had formed a warm view of Americans through his friendships at the tennis club.

But his most urgent reason was his sudden recall to Moscow. Rastvorov could only assume it meant he was to be imprisoned or executed. He had good reason to be afraid. A brutal purge of the security ranks had been underway since Stalin's death in March 1953. And Rastvorov was a protege of Lavrenti Beria, the director of the secret police and Rastvorov's occasional tennis partner in Moscow.

Beria had been arrested in July 1953 and was found guilty of crimes against the state. He was shot to death in December.

The day before his scheduled flight back to Moscow, Rastvorov called Burris from a U.S. Army library, sounding shaken. She told him to come by. When he arrived, he told her he suspected he was under surveillance and that it was imperative he flee Tokyo at once. He said he would stand in front of the NYK Building at 6, 8 and 9 o'clock that evening, ready to defect.

There was a snowstorm that night. After Rastvorov was picked up by Michel, he was whisked to a CIA safe house and then to Tokyo's airport, where a U.S. military C-47 aircraft was on standby to fly him to Okinawa. But the storm would not let up, and the crew decided to wait for the weather to clear.

Taking Rastvorov off the plane was too risky. CIA officer E. Howard Hunt, who was on board the cold, grounded plane for about four hours, recalled the tension in an interview: "Rastvorov was especially ill at ease, saying he shouldn't have made the decision to defect, that it wasn't working out, that the Japanese could come onboard and take him off, handing him back to the Soviets." Around 3 a.m. January 25, the snow relented enough for the flight to depart.

The interrogation on Okinawa lasted more than a month. It was conducted by a joint team of CIA and military intelligence officers, who were quick to note that a rejuvenated Rastvorov knew a lot and was eager to share.

Dipper 19 lived for the lunchtime tennis breaks with "Ted." Two or three times a week, 19 would don his tennis whites and grab his Dunlop Maxply racket, all courtesy of the CIA, and eagerly wait for the short ride from the safe house in Potomac to a private court.

"When it came time to play, 19 was like a horse bounding out of the starting gate," Ted recalls.

For 19, the outings were a respite from the monotony and cold calculus of his confinement at the house. He spent his days at a dining room table with teams of CIA officers pumping him for intelligence.

"The debriefers arrived in the mornings in suit and tie, and there was no slapping him on the back and asking if he had slept well," Ted says. "It was all business. It was stern and sterile. The attitude was that this is an enemy officer, and we owned him now, and we were going to squeeze all the information possible out of him."

Ted's role was to live with 19 and play the good cop, the compassionate, casually dressed CIA handler who was a contrast to the steely interrogators. Ted was to make sure 19 was living comfortably.

The two started playing tennis together about three weeks after arriving at the safe house in the spring of 1954. They were sipping chilled vodka in the living room one evening when 19 complained that he felt physically stiff and emotionally stressed. To cope, 19 said, he needed serious exercise. And he mentioned his love of tennis.

This is just what the Americans had been expecting from Dipper 19, Rastvorov's CIA cryptonym. Tennis was one of the reasons Ted had been chosen as his minder. Ted was my father, and he was perfect for this assignment. Not only was he a Russian-speaking officer, but he was one of the highest-ranked American tennis players of the day.

"It was a great setup because Yuri was itching to play all the time," says Dick Kovich, the CIA officer who oversaw the debriefings.

Many years earlier, Fred Kovaleski had caught the eye of his gym teacher in grade school when he easily won a handball tournament. She encouraged the son of struggling Polish immigrants to take up tennis as a way to get out of the Hamtramck enclave, near Detroit, where he lived. A new tennis racket cost about \$10 then.

"When I asked about the racket, my parents looked at me like I was on another planet. I think this might have been the first time they heard the word 'tennis,'" he recalled. "And when I mentioned the price, they said, 'Forget it.'"

But the gym teacher, Jean Hoxie, found a used racket, with green strings. She had a white line painted across a brick wall in the school gym at the height of a tennis net. Using a garbage can full of threadbare balls, she taught my father the basic strokes. He went on to play well enough that he was selected for the U.S.

Junior Davis Cup team in 1942, at age 17. This got him an invitation to play at Forest Hills in New York City in the U.S. National Tennis Championships, where he suffered an early round defeat.

But that same year, Hoxie landed my father a full tennis scholarship to the College of William & Mary in Virginia. After dropping out to serve in the war, he returned to help the school claim the NCAA tennis championships in 1947 and 1948. He graduated and went on to win five international titles and was a finalist for four others. He reached the final of the U.S. National Indoor Championships in 1949 and the final 16 at Wimbledon the following year.

He was playing in the Egyptian international championships in Cairo when he met U.S. Embassy counselor Joseph Sparks at a reception. As they sipped tea and ate finger sandwiches, Sparks asked the 26-year-old tennis player about his career aspirations. After all, tennis was an amateur sport in those days.

"You're not going to play tennis all your life, are you?" Sparks asked. He told my father he could arrange some introductions at the State Department. My father moved to Washington, where "I soon start getting calls from men with surnames like Brown, Jones and Smith, who are arranging to meet me in motels and restaurants."

Several months later, he met with a distinguished, bespectacled gentleman at the man's home in Montgomery County. "You probably have been wondering who you have been meeting with all this time," the man said. "Now, I feel it is time to ask you whether you have ever considered being a spy."

After joining the CIA in 1951, my father was sent to "the Farm," the agency's training facility at Camp Peary near Williamsburg. He was taught espionage tradecraft and paramilitary techniques. He learned how to recruit agents, hand off secret documents and blow up enemy installations.

Now, three years later, the spy was being asked to play tennis again.

My father took Rastvorov's tennis request up the chain of command and got the go-ahead. The agency's concerns about Rastvorov leaving the safe house were allayed by a serendipitous development. A CIA officer who lived within two miles of the place, and had a court at his home, agreed to let my father and Rastvorov play there. CIA security would monitor the area while the spies hit for an hour.

My father could easily have upstaged the Russian on the court, but instead he focused on building rallies so Rastvorov had a hard workout.

"I never hit a winner against him," he said. "The idea was to make him feel better about himself, to soothe his ego. And I think the tennis was real therapy for him."

My father had worked with other Soviet defectors. In 1953, he lived in a CIA safe house in Maryland with two Soviet soldiers who had defected in what was then West Germany. He trained "Boris" and "Peter" in weapons skills and Morse code. The two were preparing to reenter the Soviet Union clandestinely via submarine with new identities to gather intelligence.

Of course, Rastvorov knew none of this. Even my father's tennis level was hidden from him. But my father knew much of Rastvorov's story, which was contained in CIA dossiers.

Yuri Aleksandrovich Rastvorov was born on July 11, 1921, in the rolling hills of central Russia. His father was a Communist Party member and a veteran of the revolution who served in the Red Army from its founding in 1917 until a heart problem forced him to retire after World War II. Rastvorov's mother, a physician, died of breast cancer in 1946, two weeks before her son's 25th birthday.

As a child, Rastvorov spent time on his paternal grandfather's farm, where he built a strong bond with the man -- a struggling peasant with two cows and two horses. But at 10, Rastvorov saw up close the brutality of life under Stalin. During the busier harvest season, Rastvorov's grandfather hired two helpers. Because of this, he was accused of being a kulak, a prosperous farmer opposed to collectivization. His land was seized, and money from the state was cut off. The fear of guilt by association was so great, not even Rastvorov's father would help him. His grandfather starved to death during the Great Famine of 1932-33. Rastvorov would tell his CIA debriefers that until he defected, he had kept a small saw his grandfather gave him as a keepsake.

Rastvorov was conscripted into the Red Army in November 1939. With a friend's help, he got himself transferred to the NKGB-- the precursor of the KGB -- in part because he wanted assignments closer to Moscow. But in 1944, Rastvorov was detailed to carry out Stalin's orders for the deportation of an estimated 400,000 Chechens and their Ingush neighbors to central Asia and Siberia. The charge against them was mass collaboration with invading Nazis.

Rastvorov later wrote that he would never forget "the screams of the villagers as they were shoved into the boxcars in which thousands of them were to die on the interminable journey to Asia, or the eeriness of their dark and deserted homes afterward."

When Rastvorov returned to Moscow, he married an attractive ballerina, Galina Godova. In October 1945, she gave birth to their daughter, Tatyana. Three years later, Rastvorov was assigned to recruit Japanese prisoners of war to work as Soviet operatives once they were repatriated. He used persuasion and blackmail to get them to sign pledges. In 1950, his Tokyo assignment came through. He departed the Soviet Union without his wife and child.

The first time they met, the CIA agent and the KGB spy greeted each other in Russian in the living room of the Potomac safe house. Rastvorov was already looking like an American, in khaki trousers, a sport shirt and brown loafers provided by the agency. He was lean and groomed. My father detected wariness on his face.

The safe house was a gray, two-story residence on a hill. It was set back from Travilah Road, beside a stream in the horse country of Montgomery County. There were few neighbors to worry about. Two CIA security men guarded the home. The agency knew that once the Soviets determined

Rastvorov had defected, they would sentence him to death in absentia. No one ever used the regular phones at the house, relying on a special line that patched into CIA headquarters. The debriefings ran from about 9 a.m. until late afternoon. My father spent his days drafting reports on Rastvorov and discussing him with superiors. Rastvorov was shown several thousand pictures of known or suspected Soviet intelligence operatives and told to provide detailed information about them.

"Right away, he was able to identify hundreds of people who were KGB worldwide," Kovich says.

Even though doubt was a guiding principle for handling defectors, it did not take long for the debriefers to conclude that Rastvorov was for real.

At the end of a day, Rastvorov would wash up and head for the bottles of vodka kept in the house on his behalf. "Na zdorovye!" he and my father often toasted with their shot glasses -- "To your health!"

"There were many nights when we got nicely loaded," my father tells me.

After 10 days in seclusion with Rastvorov, my father sensed the Russian was opening up. But that was not an option for "Ted."

"He would test me: 'Where are you from?' or 'Where did you learn Russian?'" my father recounts. "I would fabricate an answer, like, 'I'm from the Midwest.'"

"You talk Russian with a Polish accent," Rastvorov pressed.

When the subject of family came up, my father remembers Rastvorov saying that deserting his wife and child in Moscow was tough because he figured they would be punished. But the Russian did not seem remorseful.

"Yuri would talk about it as if implying that he himself had made a huge sacrifice," my father says. "I think he was trying to build credits by saying he gave all that up."

There were, however, pained, drunken nights for Rastvorov in the first weeks of his confinement. My father recalls him demanding: "What am I, an animal? Why can't I have some more pleasures, more freedoms?"

One night over drinks, Rastvorov bluntly told his minder that he needed a woman after being at the safe house for more than a month. My father went to work.

"That sounds okay. But of course we will have to clear the girls," his supervisor told him.

CIA security handled the arrangements and hired two prostitutes for Rastvorov to ensure a memorable time. Security found the women with the help of local law enforcement. "Oh, that's wonderful!" Rastvorov exclaimed when he heard the plans.

The CIA stocked a motel room with cheese, crackers, beer and vodka. The women were waiting there when Rastvorov ambled into the room.

Four hours later, my father called from the room next door. Rastvorov merrily estimated he would be wrapping up in another hour. On the ride back to the safe house, he was in high spirits and kept mentioning "how very nice the girls were."

"I don't think that this is going to happen every week, but I'm glad you enjoyed it, Yuri," my father says he told him.

Over the next few months, the pair made three trips into Washington to bars and restaurants. On one of those outings, the spies enjoyed drinks at a club while listening to Cole Porter favorites. Around midnight, they set out on the drive back to the safe house. They were moving at about 45 mph on a winding rural road when the car rammed into a stray calf. The impact was so jarring that Rastvorov, in the front passenger seat, wound up under the dashboard with bruises and cuts. The car was totaled, and the calf died after shrieking for several minutes. A small crowd had gathered, including the teenage girl who owned the animal. My father remembers her screaming, "Oh my God, my 4-H prizewinning calf!"

Rastvorov had no identification, and his handlers were not going to risk exposing him, with onlookers around and the police on the way. My father told Rastvorov to crouch behind some bushes.

"After the scene was cleared, I went into the bushes, 'Yuri, Yuri, it's okay now.' And there he was, hiding in the dark," my father recalls.

Not long after that, he told Rastvorov during their cocktail hour that he had been reassigned and was leaving the safe house in a few days. The two spent the night reminiscing.

"I felt we had been through something extraordinary together," my father says. "That night, Yuri thanked me a lot. I had become his advocate in a way. I felt it was almost an act of humanity."

In August 1954, a stolid Rastvorov stood before a crush of 200 journalists called to an evening news conference in a State Department auditorium to meet the latest major catch in the espionage tug of war between Washington and Moscow.

The Communists, Rastvorov stated, had turned his country into "a concentration camp."

"I wanted to live like a decent human being. I wanted to be treated decently, and I wanted to be able to treat other people decently," he told the gathering, reading from a statement. "I hope I can become an American like other Americans."

U.S. officials announced that the Soviet spy who had disappeared off the Kremlin's radar nearly seven months earlier had been granted asylum in the United States. But a news conference was the last thing Rastvorov wanted. He had implored his handlers not to publicize his defection, so he could vanish and embark on a fresh start in the West without calling attention to himself and worsening the situation for his family in Moscow.

But the Americans decided the most effective propaganda move was to go public. And that wasn't all. By the end of 1955, the CIA had arranged to publish four lengthy Life magazine articles about the inner workings of the Soviet Union that carried Rastvorov's byline, but were written with the unmistakable input of the agency. Kovich says Rastvorov was paid about \$25,000 for the stories, which added to the \$25,000 he had received from the CIA as seed money to help him build a life in the United States. In the mid-'50s, that was a respectable nest egg.

The Life articles detailed the Kremlin infighting after Stalin's death and Moscow's role in encouraging the Korean War. Rastvorov was among the first to write about the machinery that tightly controlled Soviet sports as a means to world supremacy.

In the years after his defection, Rastvorov worked for the CIA as a contract officer on Soviet intelligence, politics and culture, subjects in which he believed the young agency sorely needed his guidance. But Rastvorov was not allowed to work inside CIA headquarters -- he had not been granted the required clearance -- a slight that made him feel undervalued.

The Kremlin, however, was well aware of Rastvorov's value to the United States. Former KGB major general Oleg Kalugin points out that the Soviets were forced to roll up networks of exposed agents around the globe even as they publicly claimed Rastvorov had been kidnapped by the Americans.

What's more, Rastvorov "not only knew the structure of the Soviet system, but the mood of a nation in transition from Stalin to Khrushchev," says Kalugin, who served in the KGB from 1958 to 1990.

On March 12, 1956, Martin Simons was remarried in Arlington in a civil ceremony. His new wife, Hope Macartney, had worked as a CIA analyst on the German desk in Washington. The 27-year-old blonde was a classic American beauty from the Midwest who had a Grace Kelly air. Her reserved demeanor was a contrast to Martin's loud vivacity.

But one issue had to be resolved before Hope would exchange vows with Martin. "I won't think of marrying you unless you get a divorce from Galina," Hope told him. Apparently, his first marriage hadn't seemed like a dealbreaker to Martin. The CIA arranged for him to secure a divorce from his Russian wife in Mexico.

Hope and Martin met at a CIA party at another safe house where he lived for a time, an apartment off Wisconsin Avenue in Northwest Washington. The CIA was gradually giving the Russian more freedom, including permission to entertain.

"We started talking, and I thought he was sort of odd and exotic at the same time," Hope says. "I did not particularly like him. I thought he was a bit too forward."

His CIA handler introduced him by his new alias: To the outside world, he was now Martin Francis Simons, the name Rastvorov chose from a list of five. He picked the name in honor of a U.S. Army chaplain whom he had admired and befriended in Tokyo. The fictive Simons was born September 1, 1924, about three years after Rastvorov's real birthday. According to Simons's CIA legend, his father hailed from Holland; the accent was explained by a Russian mother. Martin Simons supposedly grew up in Tehran before coming to the United States after his parents' death.

Six months after they were introduced, Martin called Hope to ask her out, even though she had turned him down before. Hope had a hunch he might be one of the Soviet defectors who had come to the United States in recent years. She mentioned him to her CIA analyst roommate, who looked up the Life magazine articles. A photo of Martin confirmed Hope's suspicions. She was intrigued and started to date him. But when it became serious and she agreed to marry him, Hope had to quit the CIA because of Martin's non-cleared status.

And there was the issue of her taking his phony CIA name, which she did. "It was all pretty weird," Hope recounts. "Since he had been in the unique position to actually pick a name, I thought he could have taken something more attractive."

But in 1956 and '57, Martin Simons used his original Russian name when appearing on Capitol Hill to testify about the Soviet Union's covert intelligence activities. Journalists were barred from taking photos of him at the proceedings. Among other things, he revealed that Soviet intelligence had two bases of operations in the United States -- the Soviet Embassy in Washington and the Soviet section

of the United Nations in New York. Soviet spies included an ambassador to the United States. He also testified that up to 90 percent of Soviet news agency Tass correspondents worked for Soviet intelligence.

By the fall of 1957, CIA officials felt they had gotten what they could from Simons, and they offered him a new career and a move to Scottsdale, Ariz. Hope was enthusiastic. She thought her husband would enjoy the year-round tennis. But the family lasted only about six months in Arizona.

First, according to Hope, Simons's CIA handler failed to get him a job. Then the CIA officer blew the defector's cover while talking with a state official about possibly hiring Simons. That was the end of Scottsdale. Simons feared a Soviet assassin could slip through the porous Mexican border. When Simons returned to Washington in the spring of 1958, the CIA agreed to renew his contract.

Simons had begun to show the strain from years of living between two realities, say those who were close to him then. He grappled with fits of paranoia. He kept a CIA-issued .38-caliber handgun under his mattress and was hounded by a recurring nightmare in which he was abducted and hauled on a train across Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union, presumably to be executed.

Not all of Simons's paranoia was irrational. After he and Hope had taken in a movie at a crowded Bethesda theater one night, a man who had been standing in the back of the room followed them outside. Hope kept an eye on him by watching his reflection in the store windows. The couple decided to cut through a drugstore and exit out the back instead of turning the corner ahead. Suddenly, they found themselves behind the man. Startled, he tossed something in a trash can before running off. The couple called the CIA, which later retrieved a revolver from the garbage. The Simonses suspected a possible KGB plot.

In 1957, Simons joined the Edgemoor Club in Bethesda. He built a circle of friends at the club -- a rat pack of a half-dozen or so men who not only loved tennis but indulged in saunas, drinking and fine food. To some members at the club, Simons was blunt to the point of rude. "Hey, you son of a bitch," became a common Simons greeting. One of his closest friends from the Edgemoor was Renato "Venti" Ventura, who noticed that his buddy did not reveal much about his past and would take umbrage if anyone inquired.

"Invariably, somebody would be interested in the origins of his accent," Ventura says. "That's when he would become hostile."

The mystery surrounding Simons led to a legendary locker room exchange. When a tennis pal asked him where he worked, Simons replied, "Son of a bitch, for the government."

"We know that, but for which one?" his friend retorted.

In 1961, Simons, a cooking enthusiast, opened a restaurant in Georgetown. The Captain's Table served continental cuisine and featured a satirical musical revue. But the restaurant was a money loser despite Simons's hard work, and it closed after about nine months. Simons also owned some coin-operated laundromats for several years that merely broke even.

Hope, however, had wealth from her Minnesota family's ties to the timber industry. Simons, his wife and their two young daughters moved from Bethesda to a larger home on 10 acres of land in Potomac. While Simons had his tennis, Hope raised Arabian horses, Burmese cats and Old English mastiffs on the property.

Martin Simons had landed a life of American prosperity. He was a gourmet and drove BMWs. The man who grew up waiting in long lines for basic items developed a ravenous appetite for extravagant shopping. He was fond of expensive Italian suits and once owned a full-length beaver fur coat.

Ventura says of Simons's tastes, "It was top-of-the-line everything."

After leaving the Potomac safe house, my father prepared for his next CIA assignment. By the fall of 1954, he was told that he was going to Cairo. Details of the mission would come later. But one critical aspect was made clear.

"My bosses said, 'You are going over undercover as a tennis player,' and they asked whether it would work," my father recalls. "I was confident I could live that life easily."

My father was willing even though working under non-official cover meant that if he was caught he would not have diplomatic immunity and the U.S. government could disavow him.

My father built his cover by playing with members of the Egyptian Davis Cup team at the posh Gezira Sporting Club. At the same time, he went to work on his assignment: tapping the Soviet Embassy's phone lines. His job was to translate the tapped conversations while another CIA officer, Peter Niblo, undercover with the U.S. Agency for International Development, would handle the technical aspects.

Niblo needed to dig up the phone lines to place a tiny condenser on the wires used by the Soviets. To pull this off, Niblo says, he wore a turban and work clothes each day and teamed up with four technicians from Egyptian intelligence who identified the correct phone wires. After a week of toiling in the withering sun, the team got the tapping operation up and running.

Several months later, my father, armed with a .45-caliber handgun and phosphorus grenades, helped spirit another Soviet defector across a moonlit Sahara Desert from Alexandria to an awaiting U.S. aircraft in Cairo for transfer to a CIA post in West Germany. Soon after my father arrived in Cairo, a socialite friend introduced him to an exotically fetching Egyptian woman of White Russian parents. He started to court Manya Jabes, even though she was married to a wealthy Egyptian banker, Rene, and devoted to her young son and daughter, who were at school in Europe.

"I was no longer in love with Rene, but I had fallen in love with Fred," my mother says. "I met Fred when I was very vulnerable. I was not happy with my life, and I was crying all the time because my kids were away. I insisted my children not leave. But this was the only thing Rene refused me."

My mother, whose father was a classical conductor, was well known in Cairo for her beauty. Even King Farouk would joke with her by saying hello in Russian when they saw each other at social occasions. To be inconspicuous, she and my father would meet at his apartment, take drives outside of Cairo or have drinks at a bar on a Nile house boat. After knowing her for two years, my father asked my mother to marry him. She said yes and divorced Rene several months later. She has seen her other children -- my half siblings -- often over the years.

My father was exalted about marrying my mother, but apprehensive. He knew how the CIA felt about agents wedding foreigners, especially a foreigner whose father had returned to the Soviet Union. His fears were justified. In March, 1957, his boss received a cable from Washington: If my father married Manya Jabes, he would have to resign.

On April 1, my parents were married at the American University Alumni Club in Beirut. Until that moment, my father had not told my mother about his secret work. When he revealed that he had

been a spy, she grew pale. But when my father explained that he had been an officer with U.S. intelligence, she sighed with relief. Her concern had been that he spied for the Soviets.

Now out of the CIA, my father found civilian work with Pepsi, which sent him to Khartoum, Sudan, for training at a local bottling plant. Ironically, it wasn't long before he got a call from the CIA chief of station there who offered him a job translating tapes from taps on Khartoum's Soviet Embassy. My father declined, but said he knew someone for the job: his new wife, who spoke six languages, including Russian.

Somehow, the necessary clearances were arranged, which both pleased and perplexed my father. A safe was installed in their home so my mother could leave her translations in it for pickup several times a week by the CIA.

"Think of this," my father recalls telling the chief of station, "I had to give up my career because Manya was a security risk, and within a matter of months she is cleared to handle these tapes."

When Pepsi transferred my father to Aden, a British protectorate on the Red Sea, a CIA officer stationed in Beirut again offered him a covert assignment. "We know the unions in Aden are full of Communist members," he said.

He wanted my father to penetrate the labor unions and build a file on their leaders and activities. My father asked him how they would communicate. The answer: letters written in invisible ink.

The agent gave him the equipment and a post office box in Beirut where he was to send the information. My father put together two letters with invisible ink messages before he decided it was too time-consuming.

In 1960, the couple was relocated to South Africa, where my father was assistant manager of Pepsi's Capetown bottling operations. A year later, on April 8, I was born in Capetown. Now that he had a family, my father decided to end his relationship with the CIA. His private career was taking off. We moved to Australia, where my father was a regional executive for Pepsi. Within six years, he was hired away by Revlon and became the cosmetics giant's top executive in Sydney. His espionage days seemed like a distant memory until one Aussie night in 1968.

A cryptic, handwritten letter had arrived at our home that day. At first, my father puzzled over it as he sat back on a couch in our poolside living room, sipping a Scotch and soda. He did not recognize the Potomac address on the back of the envelope. And he had never heard of the name signed at the end of the correspondence: Martin Simons.

He then started to read.

"Dear Mr. Kovaleski, I saw your picture in World Tennis magazine in which it said you won a 40 and over tennis championship in Sydney. You look very familiar to me as a friend I had named Ted. I think we played some tennis together in 1954 on a private tennis court."

My father now knew who had written the letter. He kept reading.

"We shared some experiences together, and one that happened late at night on a country road in Maryland. I would appreciate it if you can describe the event. If you can, then you are my friend of many years ago."

And my father could, like it had all happened yesterday.

"Armani! Armani!" Simons bellowed as he strode into my parents' Park Avenue apartment, clutching the lapels of his chic suit proudly. It was 1972, 18 years since the two men had last seen each other at the Maryland safe house. I was at a friend's home for the night. As they sat drinking champagne, my father recalls, Simons expounded on his love of stylish clothes and shoes and his passion for high-end, sports cars. He and Hope had driven up from Potomac in his latest black BMW, which he had parked in front of the building to show off. The two men inevitably talked tennis, as well. Simons mentioned he belonged to the Edgemoor Club, where my father had been a member in the early 1950s. Today, my father, at 81, is still a member.

"You've gone from being a proletarian to a capitalist," my father recalls telling him in Russian.

Simons laughed and said in English, "It's a good life, Fred."

Except for a few rare words, Simons would never again speak Russian with my father. During that visit, Simons expressed his gratefulness for the only human kindness he felt he'd received in the early days of his defection, but also his admiration for my father's achievements. Now, my father was overseeing Revlon's operations in 10 European countries. He also had a glamorous wife and a fashionable Park Avenue home decorated with touches such as Pucci wallpaper, and he had friends such as designer Oleg Cassini and tennis greats Tony Trabert and Dick Savitt.

Life at the Simons household in Potomac was less flamboyant, but fortune was evident. Simons relished the sauna he had built in his house and took ski trips to Zermatt, Switzerland. He doted on his two daughters, who attended the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda and rode horses on their property.

It was not until the girls were 11 and 13 that they found out about their father's history. Hope sat them down one morning and told them their father had two birthdays. Then she explained why.

"I was blown away," says one of Simons's American daughters, Jennifer Walther.

Martin was upset that Hope had blown his cover, even to their kids. A secretive man, he often retreated for hours at a time, reading voraciously in English and Russian and listening to classical music. The other American daughter, Alexandra Simons, believed her father used those solitary periods to ponder the complexities of his life.

"For somebody who took the steps he took in the '50s, and not knowing what happened to his Russian family, there had to be some reflection and reexamination of those decisions," she says. "There had to be some second-guessing."

But Hope says that Martin showed no regret for deserting his wife and daughter in Moscow. She says he told her he had married Godova as a career move. He thought he could impress some of the country's top leaders by schmoozing with them at the Kremlin parties she was invited to as a well-known dancer.

"He never felt for a minute that [defecting had been] a mistake," Hope says.

Galina Godova is 89 and lives in Moscow with daughter Tatyana. Godova is in frail health from a bad heart. She says that after Simons's flight, she was charged with failing to report an intended betrayal of the motherland and exiled to Siberia for five years.

Godova did time at a "settlement" and was then assigned to work at a dance ensemble in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk. Tatyana, who had been staying with relatives, lived with her mother in Krasnoyarsk for a while.

"I worked very well, and they let me move back to Moscow half a year earlier," Godova says.

All these years after her ex-husband's defection, she says, "I have never been able to fully comprehend it."

But Tatyana would rather not dwell on those times. "Any memories of the past are very painful," the daughter says. She and her mother have since met Walther in Moscow.

By the time we visited the Simonses in 1973, I knew my father had been a spy. There had not been a dramatic moment of disclosure, rather casual mentions over the years. Unlike Simons, my father had no reason to conceal his espionage past from me.

Martin looked thrilled when he greeted us. But my parents noticed that Hope seemed distant from her husband. The following year, the couple separated. They were divorced in 1977. About three years later, Hope married a CIA officer who was one of Martin's closest friends. Martin was devastated and felt knifed.

Hope blamed Martin's explosive temper for her disaffection.

"He had the habit of overreacting to everything," she says. "It was like living with a volcano. With very little provocation, he would erupt into a temper tantrum . . . He would pound his fist on the dinner table, and glasses would jump all over the place."

When Simons again visited my parents in New York in 1978, he seemed different. He drank about five scotches at the apartment and became unruly.

"Martin was no longer well groomed. He was looking more rumpled," my father says. "At this point, he was buying secondhand cars."

And Simons had become looser about the details of his CIA persona. He told some people he was Dutch or Danish, others that he was from Czechoslovakia or Hungary. But he still wrestled with bouts of paranoia. Simons suspected the KGB was monitoring him at his Bethesda apartment, so he moved to Northern Virginia. He was spooked by the September 1978 murder in London of Bulgarian emigre writer and journalist Georgi Markov, who had defected to the West nine years earlier. Markov was poked in the thigh by a poison umbrella while waiting at a bus stop.

Simons began a relationship with Anne Garnier, an ice skater who was nearly 12 years his junior. For more than a year, Garnier did not know Simons had been a Soviet spy. Then one morning, she came across three old Life magazines in his apartment. At first, Simons reiterated that he was Dutch and denied that the magazines had anything to do with him. But a day or two later, he admitted that he had written the articles. "Later on," Garnier remembers, "he told me: 'I have reasons for this not to be known. I will never feel safe.'"

Garnier felt compassion for her boyfriend. She could only imagine how difficult it must have been for Simons to be unable to fully explain himself all these years. And his hearing had been deteriorating, adding to his sense of isolation. To Garnier, Simons could be a "terribly charming and kind" man, who bought her gifts on a whim. But he could also be maudlin and mercurial.

Over time, his abandonment of Godova and Tatyana seemed to weigh on him more. To Garnier, Simons appeared to struggle with guilt: Here he was living a good life, and he had no idea how his Russian wife and daughter were holding up, or if they were even alive. At times, she says, she saw it eating away at him, especially when he drank.

"Sometimes I would look at him and wonder how someone could leave their daughter. But I didn't want to know," she says.

Simons was also embittered that the CIA was no longer giving him work. "They used me and squeezed me like an old worn lemon," he often told Garnier.

In 1979, Simons hired a lawyer to try to secure a better compensation package for him from the CIA. As the attorney, Durke Thompson, recalls: "I asked him, 'How many people were you able to identify for the CIA?' He sort of paused and said, 'Three or four . . . Three or four thousand.'"

Thompson, now a Montgomery County judge, says he couldn't believe how indifferently the CIA had treated a man who had dined at the home of then-director Allen Dulles and won an agency award for outstanding service. Around 1982, the CIA agreed to give Simons a retirement annuity that was enough for him to live on comfortably. To maintain Simons's cover, the CIA paid the annuity through an insurance company.

Simons continued to play tennis at Edgemoor, though his knees were failing, and to fall in love with younger women. His final relationship was with a woman almost 27 years younger, Debby Anderson. In 1990, Anderson learned she had breast cancer. He was anguished about her health, making her homemade soups and surprising her with gifts such as jewelry and sweets to lift her spirits. The disease eventually spread. After Anderson had a seizure in an elevator at Sibley Memorial Hospital, her condition became so grave that a priest was brought to the emergency room for last rites.

Suddenly, a distraught Simons burst into the room. "Get the [expletive] priest out of here!" he yelled. "She is not going to die!" Anderson passed away on March 14, 2002, a victim of the same disease that stole the life of Simons's mother.

"When Debby died, it tore him apart," his daughter Walther says. "He would sob, and after a few rum and Cokes, tell me it was not just Debby, 'It brings back my mother.'"

That year, Simons had knee-replacement surgery so he could play tennis again. But five days after the operation, he suffered a stroke. When the hospital called one of his daughters, he got on the phone. "I'm dying. I'm dying. Come quickly!" he told her. By the time she arrived, he yelled again, "I'm dying," and then started talking to her in Russian.

His daughters and friends visited him at the hospital and a convalescent home over the next year. Martin started asking about Godova. Tatyana had also been on his mind late in life. He had gotten three old photos of her from the CIA that he had displayed in his apartment.

But despite the fact that the Soviet Union now only lived in the history books, his paranoia raged, worsened by spasms of dementia. "They are trying to murder me!" he shouted from his hospital bed.

A year and a half after the night I saw Martin Simons's obituary, I'd learned pretty much everything I could ever hope to know about his life, which was really the life of Yuri Rastvorov. I'd also learned a little something about my father. Not so much any salient facts -- I'd already known the outline. It was more of a dawning appreciation for the magnitude of the events that he had played a part in, and

a perspective on the fearless way he had leapt into the most daunting conflict of our time, yet still managed to maintain a very human compassion. As for Rastvorov, I realized that the man I'd always thought of as an amusing bon vivant who lived an extravagant life also represented in many ways a tragedy that stretched not only across his life, but the lives of his Russian wife and daughter, and in fact, much of a continent, which had suffered the very real and intricate tyranny of totalitarianism.

The last time my father and Simons saw each other was in 2001 at Edgemoor, 11 years after my father had retired as a top executive at Nabisco.

My father, who was practicing for a tournament, looked up from a forehand and saw Simons sitting in a green lounge chair watching. My father gave him a big wave with his racket.

Simons lumbered over to the fence. My father opened the gate, and they hugged.

"You still play elegant. You are maestro," Simons told him. My father asked if he had been playing. But Simons lamented that he had pretty much given up the game because of his knees.

"I said we had to get together, but he was noncommittal," my father recalls. "As Martin limped away, he moved like an old, tired bear."

Hosted by Serge Kovaleski
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, January 17, 2006; 1:00 PM

Fred Kovaleski and Yuri Rastvorov were secret agents, sworn enemies on opposite sides of the Cold War. When they finally came face to face, a mutual love of tennis spawned the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Serge Kovaleski, whose article about his father and his KGB friend appeared in Sunday's [Washington Post Magazine](#), was online to field questions and comments. Serge F. Kovaleski is a Washington Post staff writer.

Serge Kovaleski: Good afternoon to everybody. Hope you all had a wonderful MLK holiday! Now, let's talk spies, tennis and the game of Cold War espionage!

Philadelphia, Pa.: Although it seems unlikely that enemies could become friends, isn't it also true that they may have had a better understanding of each other? Like soldiers from different sides who see each other after the war, there often is a mutual respect and understanding of what each had to go through. Do you think this had a part in their friendship?

Serge Kovaleski: Absolutely, Philadelphia. You've hit on a great point! The two men, certainly early on in their relationship, existed on a more intuitive and empirical level than most people do. They were both very savvy spies and keenly understood what it meant to be on the front lines of the Cold War. At the same time, my father had a lot of compassion for Yuri, knowing what he had gone through in terms of his defection.

Alexandria, Va.: Wow, what an interesting but sad story. It sounds like in the end, "Martin Simons" died a lonely and frightened man. -- But I would be fascinated to know Galina and Tatyana's story. I wonder what it took for Galina to have escaped a worse punishment (as her husband assumed she might even have been killed). She might have her own very interesting story to tell, though Tatyana's demurrals speak volumes (they obviously went through hell). Did you not tell us more out of respect for their privacy?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi, Alexandria. Both Galina and Tatyana were very gracious and sweet in their dealings with us. We talked with them several times over the course of two months and their comments in the story are basically the extent of what they said in the interviews. Initially, they were reluctant to talk with us, and I certainly can understand why, given the trauma they have experienced in their lives. I think everybody's hearts go out to them. But they are real survivors. Here's to Galina and Tatyana!!

Lexington, Va. : Fascinating article--esp since I grew up playing tennis at the Edgemoor Club and remember Mr. Simons from those days. I wonder if you could say more about his two American daughters: how well you knew them, how cooperative they were with your project, and how much involvement they have or want to have with their Russian relatives.

Jeff

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Lexington,

I have met Yuri's American daughters just a couple of times over the course of our lives. They were helpful, as was his ex-wife, Hope, who was especially helpful. One of Yuri's American daughters, Jennifer, seems to have developed a strong relationship with Galina and Tatyana in Moscow.

Albuquerque, NM: It seems to have been CIA policy to treat defectors harshly. Granted, the point of view we hear most often is that of disgruntled defectors, but they're consistent. I recall a case in the 1980s of a Soviet defector changing his mind and returning home, and later saying that the Agency's uncaring treatment of him had convinced him he'd made a mistake.

Was the problem really pervasive, or has it been exaggerated? And was it a considered policy, or just an artifact of Cold-Warrior mindset?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Albuquerque,

For a long time there was no defector policy in the CIA. But by most accounts, Yuri's defection and his life after that was certainly happier and more fortunate than a lot of other Soviet defectors. But he had to face the harsh realities of being a defector: namely, that the CIA would use him until they felt that had gotten what information, analysis that they wanted.

Fairfax, Va.: A little off the subject but, you mention your father was a NOC agent for the CIA. Have they ever officially acknowledged his relationship with them?

Serge Kovaleski: Great question. His former bosses etc. have, but not the agency itself.

Virginia: Did your father ever visit the old Soviet Union (before and after retirement)?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Virginia,

No. He never did. And I'm sure he would have liked to test out his Russian over there.

Maryland: The KGB is known for killing KGB defectors. Anything happened?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Maryland,

Well, Yuri was sentenced to death in absentia by the Soviet Union, something that understandably haunted him for decades. Could you even imagine living under those circumstances, no matter where you are.

Ruckersville, Va: Yuri frequently left Tokyo for several days at a time to interrogate Americans being held as prisoners during the Korean War. (This from Maude Burris, who adored him and shared with me details of Yuri's defection.)

Maude kept a framed picture of him on the dresser in her small BOQ room when I worked for her in Vietnam in 68-69.

That same picture was on her dresser in Seoul when a friend of Maude's, Helen Rosser (a missionary in Korea who had been taken prisoner and eventually repatriated via Siberia and Moscow then returned to Korea) saw the picture and told Maude she recognized that man. Maude told Helen that she was mistaken, she could not have known him. Helen said Maude was wrong: that man had interrogated her from time to time when she was held as prisoner.

My wife and I met Helen Rosser later when she had retired to Lynchburg, Virginia. She confirmed Maude's account of Yuri's picture and his having interrogated her in prison camp.

Maude was working in Pusan, Korea in 1974 when she was med-evacuated stateside to die shortly thereafter. I saw her when she passed through the 121st Med Evac Hospital in Seoul.

Maude was a workaholic whose one passion was reading Russian poetry and fiction...in Russian.

Serge Kovaleski: Like Jean Hoxie was a huge force in my father's life, Maude Burris played a major role in Yuri's life. She sounded like an amazing woman. Yuri placed a lot of trust in her. They would also exchange Xmas gifts. Let's talk later off-line about her. Anyone can call me at 202-334-5391.

Baltimore, Md.: Thanks for your great article. This story needs to be a movie. What a plot!! thanks, Annie

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Annie,

It certainly has the feel of a movie. Where is Hmphrey Bogart?

Great Falls Va: We have a photo of your father, Jean Hoxie, my husband and his mother taken in Hamtramck about 1940. My husband's father was Rudolph Tenerowicz, Mayor of Hamtramck.

Even stranger, Debby Anderson was a friend of mine through Bonnie Kiessling.

Jan Tenerowicz

Serge Kovaleski: What a small world, Great Falls. Maybe we can chat off line later. Jean Hoxie, my father's high school tennis coach, was a huge force in his life. I met her once when she visited us in Australia in the 1960s. She was an amazing woman with a lot of vision and a steel spine.

Madison, NJ: Congratulations on capturing this incredible story and giving it perspective. Both of your parents are amazing people and have truly lived extraordinary lives. Has their spirit influenced the way in which you go about your own life?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Madison!

Fantastic question. Yes, indeed. I have derived a real zest for life and loyalty to the people and things I love from observing my parents' lives. Their sensibilities are similar to those of my in-laws. I would say both my parents and Yuri are an inspiration to all of us.

Williamsburg, Va.: I enjoyed the article. Serge is one of my favorite reporters. Whether it is Riddick Bowe hitting a parking attendant or the DC police handcuffing a woman to a mailbox, Serge always come through. I haven't seen his byline for a while, is he working on a book?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Williamsburg. Your note is very kind and gracious! Thank you. I've been working on the magazine piece and other stories that I do in my capacity as an investigative reporter at the Post. A book may be in the cards. But for the time being, I'm really interested in the public's reaction to this Cold War, human interest tale. By the way, I love Williamsburg: I went to William & Mary.

Bethesda, Md. My family was involved with Edegmoor Tennis in the 70's+. I was blown away when I saw the original article. I remember vividly the gruff guy that used dunlops and never talked to any one. He had a very distinct style, his forehand was like a scoop shot. Always very different, the cars and how he entered and exited the club. He probably bumped me off the court for age many times. Great write up. THA 44841

Serge Kovaleski: Thank you, Bethesda. The cars, the distinct tennis style, that was Martin!

Arlington, Va: what do you think about defectors' fate? many defectors from both sides were very unhappy. Long ago i met KGB defector Saharov and he was full of hate. He did not talk to Russian emigrees, he was very critical of the CIA... Another guy Arkady Shevchenko ended up lonely, broken and sick. On the other hand Edward Lee Howard died in 2002 in Moscow at the age of 50...

Serge Kovaleski: Indeed, history is littered with unhappy and tragic defectors on both sides of the Cold War. But I believe Yuri's tale was one of the brighter spots, relatively speaking, as far as Cold War defections went. He landed himself a nice life and was deeply loved by his two American daughters and others who came to know him.

Arlington, Va: Your father and my husband attended W & M together and were very good friends. My husband would like to get in touch with your dad. We just moved to Arlington 4 years ago, didn't know your dad was in the area.

Last time we saw him was a long time ago at a WM & M Homecoming. He and Manya came by the Chiswell House where we were staying with other Alums.

Cynthia Chandler

Really enjoyed the article so much and it was a real surprise to my husband.

Serge Kovaleski: My father loved Williamsburg and William; Mary. So when he was sent back down there to the CIA's "Farm" for training, he was overjoyed. Also, a tennis photo of my father, which was hanging in a Williamsburg restaurant, gave one CIA officer the idea that tennis was a good reason to pair him with Yuri in the Potomac safe house.

Virginia: I wondered if you have to file FOIA requests from the CIA even though the main character worked for the CIA!

Serge Kovaleski: Hi Virginia,

Yes, FOIA requests were part of the reportage for this story. But it can be a long process when you are dealing with the CIA. But in the end, the agency was quite helpful.

Atlantic Beach, Fla: Amazing and beautiful story. It would be a most compelling book. Thank you.

Serge Kovaleski: Thank you, Fla!. I'm curious: what did you find most compelling?

Washington, DC: A few months ago, there was a lawsuit by two defectors who sued the CIA for forgetting them like no payments. Did you find out more about defectors treatment?

Serge Kovaleski: Hi D.C.,

Let me put it this way: by the time the late 70s, early 80s rolled around, Yuri felt squeezed and somewhat forgotten by the CIA. But due to the great work of Durke Thompson, then a lawyer and now a judge, Yuri/Martin received a more generous retirement.

Munich, Germany: It seems apparent that the CIA and the KGB kept tabs on each agents or suspected agents in Tokyo and other places.

Do you have any idea how the individuals interacted with each other when they met socially, like at a tennis club? Was it a deep hatred or more like a rivalry?

Serge Kovaleski: Fabulous question, Munich.

First of all, in Tokyo, everybody suspected that everybody was involved in some kind of intelligence. But no one messed with each other; it was kind of an unwritten rule.

And after Yuri defected, those former and current CIA officers at the Edgemoor Tennis club--and there were a good number--never brought up anything with Yuri. And some did not talk with him at all, just to be discreet. But a lot was said through eye contact!

Arlington, Va: I think you mentioned that Jury was a KGB Lieutenant-colonel. Is it correct? in KGB this rank was very high and according to your description Rastvorov was not that high

Serge Kovaleski: Yes, he was a lieutenant colonel who knew a lot due to his own smarts and his rank. He had a great mind in that he could make profound sense out of things. He also had a terrific memory.

Atlanta, Ga.: I enjoyed your memoir tremendously. It reminded me of the writing of Len Deighton. I wish I could defect to a 10 acre estate in Potomac.

Serge Kovaleski: Yuri and his American family had a beautiful home in Potomac. It was expansive and rustic-like--particularly for a New York City kid like myself. There is no doubt that Yuri had a fierce lust for life and that he was a hearty and generous bon vivant. But he was also a complicated guy.

Washington, D.C. : What a tale! How was interviewing your father different from interviewing other sources?

Serge Kovaleski: Insightful question, D.C.

It was amazing! We would sit in my study for three hours or so a day for several weeks and just chat, basically. I felt so lucky to be on the receiving end of his words. His memory is so crisp and he was very eloquent and organized. And you know what? He knows a sound bite or a quote. But in the end, the interviews would not have gone the way they did if we were not as close as we are. We learned a lot about each other and we love each other more because of that. Thanks, Dad!

Virginia: Whatever happened to the Potomac safe house?

Serge Kovaleski: Another well-framed question.

I don't know. One afternoon, my father, my mother and I went out to find it. But it looks like it may have been torn down. A lot has been developed in that part of Montgomery County since 1954.

Serge Kovaleski: Well, I want thank you all for sending me thoughtful questions. I hope you all enjoyed the story. And feel free to follow up with me in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Warmest regards and cheers to two American heroes!!