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## Evening Moscow

**The story of a spy. Encryption to the Beyond**

21 January



Snapshot from the TV series *TASS Is Authorized to Announce* (1984)

**In 1974, the KGB of the USSR received a lead that at the Soviet embassy in Bogota American intelligence had recruited a diplomat who received the alias *Trianon* – “Triangle.”**

At the height of the summer Olympics in Los Angeles in 1984, a multi-series spy film *TASS Is Authorized to Announce*, based on the script by Julian Semenov, was released on Soviet television screens. And the agent codename *Trianon*, an

American spy and Soviet citizen-traitor, was etched forever in the memory of many people. An inexperienced domestic viewer was shocked by the footage of four Volgas with identical license plates leaving the gates of a well-known institution and through complex cosmetic procedures making a twin of a certain citizen. "*Trichamon, Trichamon!*"\* Contact us immediately! We will meet in the Building "G"!" the Moscow State University wise guys joked.

\* *trichomoniasis*, a sexually-transmitted disease

And to the legal faculty, foreign language department and MGIMO\*, Building "G" was the well-known beer pub on Metrostroyevskaya. Well, the main character of the series, the Soviet diplomat Alexander Ogorodnik, actually graduated from the Institute of International Relations. And, most likely, hung out at this pub...

\*MGIMO – Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations

...The Turkish bath at the Hilton Hotel in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, was not particularly popular with guests - it was already hot. And so the two men, as if by chance met there and could talk without interference: there was no one else around. And you can't hide a microphone in the bath.

"I will not try to hide from you, Mr. Ogorodnik, that my leadership is extremely interested in contact with you," the American recruiter said.

The Soviet diplomat was silent. He realized that from now on his life would never be the same. What was it like before? He is now 34 years old. A second secretary of the embassy. The post is not that great, but he is young and there is still more to come. Behind him - Nakhimov School, military service, and MGIMO. A beautiful life, undisguised craving for luxury and a Spanish mistress. Here in Bogota. This is in addition to his wife and two or three affairs with bored ambassador matrons from the closed Soviet diplomatic colony.

"Is Pilar aware?" Ogorodnik finally asked.

Pilar was his local girlfriend's name, and she was expecting his child.

"Mr. Alexander," the recruiter lowered his voice, "why these spurious questions?" She has no idea about the existence of these hilarious photos. Photos of your rendezvous. They're in my locker room. Should I show them to you?

The circle is closed. Either a shameful recall to the USSR and secondary work without exit options, a broken career and life "like everyone else" or ...

"Ok," Ogorodnik said. "But before we cooperate, you must provide a comfortable life for Pilar and the child. . . ." Well, he's become a traitor. But you cannot say he has no human feelings.

"For our future work!" The American handed the Russian an ice-cold can of Tuborg beer.

The new spy very soon will begin to learn about where agents get their penchant to hide the most incomprehensible things. The next month at the Hilton work went swimmingly: Ogorodnik had no idea about the specifics of espionage, so he was taught secret writing, the basics of clandestine work, the methods of operational work including the use of caches and containers, the basics of signaling and instant transmissions, car tosses and, most importantly, the skills of using modern special equipment - photographing documents, receiving short-wave radio transmissions, working with one-time pad encryption notebooks and reading microdots - that is, photo images of texts reduced to a size of 1 x1 mm or less. It didn't happen in the pub on Metrotroevskaya.

And yes. Or rather, no. The codename of the new agent was *Trianon*. That is the *Triangle*. But, if the triangle was a love triangle, the word "Parallelepiped" would have come up here more...

CIA officer George Sax was appointed agent-handler for the *Triangle*. He settled in the Hilton without any contact with anyone and, apparently, leading to considerable amazement by the hotel staff - the guy sits in the room for a month! But there was nowhere for Sax to go: Ogorodnik would appear at the Hilton without warning, when he was sure that he had slipped out of sight of his watchful ambassadorial comrades.

"I have fifteen minutes," he said, appearing in the doorway.

And by the end of the training period, the agent extremely impressed his handler:  
- The embassy received a top-secret document on the prospects for the development of relations between the USSR and China.

"Wow!"

"It's designed for a very limited number of people, but I can see it signing in as the cryptographer."

Sax walked around the room in amazement.

"But you need photos, and you're not ready at all!"

"So let's get ready."

The spy used a new T-50 supercamera disguised as a pen. It allowed him to make 50 frames. Sax both wanted them but was afraid: the agent is green, but the document is super-important. And then one day a shining Ogorodnik appeared at the Hilton with the words: "I did it!" Sax left the hotel a minute later. He did not call a taxi: you can be robbed in a taxi. You also should not use public transportation: thieves in Bogota know their business. And Sax walked more than an hour in the heat to meet with the OTS specialist from the technical department sent to help him, drenched in sweat and cursing his fate. The microfilm was in his wallet, the wallet was in the front pocket of the jeans. The technician barely made it to the next flight to Washington, and also on foot ... Well, the information at CIA headquarters was prized.

On the same day, it went "to the seventh floor," which is the highest echelon of intelligence, from where the CIA director personally delivered it to U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who rated the document as "the most important intelligence he had ever read as head of the State Department."

"Dear friend! Please accept our congratulations and a brief report. Two thousand rubles - royalties for the last two months, in addition, the monthly 10 thousand dollars came into your account, the total amount from January to June 1977 - 60,000, and the total is now 319,928.91."

Such a note was found, among other things, after the failure of the *Triangle* in a covert cache.. Such is the price of betrayal, or rather, one side of it.

Alexander Ogorodnik returned to Moscow in December 1974. And he turned down a solid position in the Academic Institute of Latin America with a salary of 350 rubles. He preferred quiet service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which brought him half as much. But this post implied access to the reports of the ambassadors of the USSR in all countries of the world. But even in Bogota, Ogorodnik asked CIA to give him something that would allow him to commit suicide at the time of arrest. Langley responded with a categorical rejection.

"Well, that's fine. I don't work for you anymore," the handler's *triangle* said. It was only after a furious exchange of ciphers, after two CIA officers working with Ogorodnik said, "Either the agent gets what he asks for, or the operation collapses," that he received the Parker pen.

In the language of the CIA this device is called an "L-pill." It contains ink. And arrow-poison curare. Alexander Ogorodnik never parted with this pen. And sometimes he used a different Parker - with a T-100 camera.

Why shouldn't a diplomat have a couple of Parkers? It's no big deal!... He was arrested on 22 June 1977. And he managed to use that very pen with poison. This was also shown in the film *TASS Is Authorized to Announce*. But behind the scenes of the series there was a no less interesting story – the adventures of *Triangle's* contact in Moscow.

And here you should call Hollywood - no one else can handle the embodiment of this story. Who could star? Now I don't know. But then Kim Basinger might come... Martha Peterson got off the plane at Sheremetyevo... and immediately wanted to go back: she did not like anything at all. And she did not like the Hotel Peking where she first had to live. Partly because of this suffocating, pervasive smell of creepy Soviet tobacco - it chased her everywhere, like rose oil Pilate. By the way, American diplomats were afraid to touch Soviet cigarettes. Which put them in a difficult position when they had to get a couple of packs of *Yava* to disguise the transmitter. How would you not attract the attention of surveillance officers if in the nearest kiosk you suddenly buy something that has always been avoided?

When Martha Peterson was picked up from Lubyanka in the middle of the night by a representative of the U.S. Embassy, he was shocked: the fact that it was Martha who turned out to be a spy, did not enter his head. However, no one was able to do that, either; that's what the calculation was based on. A blonde, a rowdy party animal, the heroine of amorous stories - Martha Peterson did not resemble a classic spy. Who behaved more happy-go-lucky than anyone at parties in the Restaurant Arbat, the one on the corner of the then Kalininsky Prospekt, where in gloomy Moscow the U.S. diplomatic mission staff lunched, dined, and lived it up to the fullest almost daily? Of course, Martha.

And who photographed the nice Marines of the embassy guard, which was forbidden by all the rules? That's right, Martha. And who... Well, you get it -- of course, it was she. And soon "NN," external surveillance, lost interest in her. And Martha walked freely where she wanted and did whatever she wished.

By the way, Alexander Ogorodnik did not know who his liaison was.

He had no idea she was a gorgeous blonde. The *Triangle*, already divorced by that time, developed another serious affair with the daughter of the assistant General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Konstantin Rusakov.

And this really raised the spirit of his spy handlers at CIA – just imagine the future prospects.

... Martha in vain dug with a sensitive ear, in which a micro-receiver tuned to the frequency of Soviet surveillance was hidden, for the usual conversations. Strict radio silence was observed, and she, who had been circling Moscow for several hours, decided that everything was "OK." She changed clothes in the last row of the "Russia" cinema during a movie and came out of the hall in trousers and jacket. And headed to the Krasnoluzhsky railway bridge. No one really tracked her. A night vision device observed the spot of the future cache drop.

Moscow has not gone to sleep yet, but this bridge was never crowded. Just one movement - and in a narrow gap of one of the arches flew a container in the form

of a piece of asphalt. Martha exhaled - you can relax now - and took another step. And then she was grabbed by several operatives\*. But the pretty and apparently "dumb little blonde" turned out to be a strong professional.

\* [Translator: KGB spetsnaz specialists]

The operatives argued for a long time afterwards over whether she possessed a black belt in karate or green in taekwondo.

The result of the short skirmish was severe injuries to the detainees. And at the same time she, trying to save Ogorodnik, - according to her calculations, he had to be very close, loudly shouted: "Provocation! It's a provocation! I'm a diplomat! Alas, Alexander Ogorodnik was already dead by then. And in the container, among other things, there was a note - in case it is found by an outsider: "Comrade! You've infiltrated someone else's secret! Take the money and valuables, throw the rest into the river and forget about all this."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Igor **Voyevodin** is a writer and journalist who has hosted TV programs "Vremechko," "Today" and "Profession - Reporter." He is the author of several historical books.

## IN LITERATURE AND FILM

*TASS is Authorized to Announce ...* is a novel by Yulian Semenov, first published in 1979. It tells about the struggle between the Soviet and American intelligence services. Semyonov's work is partially based on real events - it was Alexander Ogorodnik who became the prototype of the CIA agent Sergei Dubov, nicknamed "Clever". In the film adaptation of the novel of the same name, filmed in 1984, the real nickname Dubov-Ogorodnik (the role of Boris Klyuev) - Trianon was used.

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A few comments on the article

Andrey Grigoriev 9 months

A dog's death!

Answer

77

Write a message

Nicolai

9 months

It is a pity that the Chekists were questioned when the traitor was detained.

Answer

25

Write a message

3 answers

Alla Bauchieva

9 months

George Sax (Sachs) is a pseudonym of a specialist from the Office of Soviet Russia - the CIA, he noted not only in this intelligence operation, but in general American intelligence managed in the 70s to weave the entire intelligence network in the USSR, and to do it was, oh, not easy.

Answer

14

Write a message

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