

Arkady Shevchenko

From Chapter 1 of KGB Colonel Igor Peretrukhin's *AGENT COVERNAME - TRIANON*



Arkady Shevchenko and Strobe Talbot

Just as work on this book was close to being finished, news arrived on March 10, 1998, from the US that two weeks earlier a most famous and equally significant defector, Arkady Shevchenko, had died of a heart attack. He was one of the favorites of Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Gromyko.

Assertions in the mass media by some irresponsible opponents of state security organs periodically prompted the author to return to this theme. These people criticize security work for any reason, including such actions as uncovering traitors to their Motherland and the other criminal elements within their purview, and are not squeamish in making various insinuations.

It was not without perturbation, for example, that I heard on Central Television that the reason for the tragic death of Arkady Shevchenko's wife Lengina and the misfortune of their son Gennady, who was fired for an understandable reason from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs system, was hounding and intrigues by KGB organs. You know, the KGB guys (kagebeshniki), famous for their beastliness, drove Lengina Shevchenko to suicide.

Similar maxims, as they say, are a dime a dozen.

In fairness I must tell how the affair actually happened and, in this regard, bring in several facts known to few people plus details that have already been mentioned.

Arkady Shevchenko, who was awarded American citizenship for his treason, lived alone in one of the New York suburbs, and for a long time still no one would have known of his death if his daughter, upset at her unsuccessful attempts to reach her father by telephone, had not personally gone to his apartment.

The American press in practice got by with a rather short reference to what occurred. It cannot be excluded that since Shevchenko's immoral and amoral behavior was widely known by the American public it would not arouse a lot of interest and, much less, sympathy for him.

Our Central Television devoted significantly more attention to this matter. Newsreels were shown on TV screens where it was easy to spot Arkady Shevchenko among the entourage surrounding Andrey Gromyko, his photographs with his friendly blond wife Lengina, even in a home environment with the Gromyko couple. Meanwhile, as I had also pointed out in the past, one of the correspondents asked the minister his opinion of the desertion of one of his assistants who held the rank of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador named Shevchenko. Without a moment's hesitation he answered that he did not remember any such person since he had so many assistants of various types. The minister, of course, was in his role! How was he supposed to remember some "assistant," especially of such a rank?

In this connection I recall an incident that became well known many years later.

During the Caribbean Crisis, when the deployment of Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles to Cuba became known to the Americans and had been authenticated by numerous photographs of her territory by reconnaissance aircraft, in a private conversation US President John Kennedy, not having referenced the confirmations he possessed, asked Andrey Gromyko directly about it. The minister gave a negative answer. From eyewitness accounts, when Gromyko left the meeting and talks with J. Kennedy, he muttered under his breath "Lying bastard!" in the presence of his entourage. Perhaps in a way he was correct.

I should point out that the MFA USSR Security Service also had occasion to participate actively in the traitor Shevchenko's case, but only in Moscow. We immediately received all the necessary information on his desertion and

the prior period from the Directorate of Foreign Counterintelligence of the FCD KGB. On that long-ago evening of March 31, 1978, on the eve of his desertion, Arkady Shevchenko sat in his easy chair after dinner in the spacious living room of his apartment in New York and glanced through the evening newspapers. Lengina was busy with house work. From somewhere in the background quiet music was playing in muted tones. It seemed that everything was quiet, peaceful and homey. Somewhere from the depths of the rooms the calm muse sounded muffled. It seemed that everything was quiet, peaceful and ordinary. But in reality, he did not delve into the essence of what he was reading but feverishly was thinking over the information he had received from his longtime friend "S.," who had just arrived from Moscow, about the increased interest in him from the central apparatus of the KGB. "S." also brought information about the exposure of the CIA agent in the Foreign Policy Planning Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aleksandr Ogorodnik, of which only a narrow circle of leaders knew about from a ministry-classified message. He also became aware of the fact that in the near future a decision would be made to return him to Moscow.

Shevchenko feverishly sorted out in his mind all possible reasons for his so-hasty recall. He did not rule out that the KGB had learned that Lengina, who had been friends with Lidiya Dmitriyevna Gromyko, had been engaged in speculation for a long time. She bought women's furs and antiques in New York, brought them in herself or more often sent them through others to the minister's wife for resell in Moscow for greatly increased prices. The diplomat repeatedly warned his errant and flighty wife about this. But she, not endowed with a great mind and not knowing her limitations, did not want to hear anything. She was absolutely certain that all wives, without exception, cash in on their husbands' tours abroad. It was completely impossible to convince her otherwise, and a certain amount of unpleasantness in this connection and reproaches, but no more, could be expected at any time. He already had enough of this and in many ways he himself was not sinless.

But this version somehow did not conform to his position and protection from the minister and member of the Politburo Andrey Gromyko. He had more than two years of cooperation with the CIA, and the reason was, most likely, precisely this. The KGB, perhaps, through their people within the US intelligence services had sniffed out his suspicious contacts. Being in a very

sober state he felt real fear for the first time in his life. After all, in this case, the minister would no longer be a defender. And he knew exactly what he was doing. He had long had conversations on this issue with the CIA staff, but each time they reassured him and persuaded him not to rush with the decision to appeal to the authorities for political asylum. His upcoming recall to Moscow especially alarmed him. He had already agreed earlier this day to an emergency meeting with his "partners" in the safe house apartment there in the same building.

After Lengina fell asleep he suddenly got up and left the apartment. He quickly ran down the stairs three flights down from the twenty-sixth floor and entered the safe house. Here he told the CIA officers who were waiting for him that apparently, his cover had been blown, he had fallen into the KGB's eyesight, and would soon be recalled to Moscow. He was extremely frightened and close to hysterics. After a heated discussion, he again returned to his apartment, and after a few minutes returned with a travel bag. Accompanied by two officers of the directorate, he went to the car waiting below, which flew like a dart out of Manhattan.

They brought him to a cottage where he could get to sleep. Everyone understood that the disappearance of a well-known diplomat would cause a huge sensation in the mass media and prompt the Soviet representation in the UN to officially demand the adoption of urgent measures to locate him.

The next day, seeing early in the morning that her husband was not at home, and making sure later that he had not shown up at work, Lengina, worried about his disappearance, informed the staff of the Soviet mission to the UN about this. On the same morning Shevchenko called home, but, hearing an unfamiliar voice, hung up.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR was immediately informed of the disappearance of Arkady Shevchenko. A similar message was received by the Committee of State Security. Naturally, the necessary information was also received by the leadership of the Second Chief Directorate, and then by the Foreign Ministry Security Service.

As is standard in such cases, in order to avoid "provocations by the US special services who may have kidnapped a Soviet diplomat," Lengina Shevchenko was flown out to Moscow on the next Aeroflot flight. Having finished his trip, "S.", the friend of A. Shevchenko mentioned earlier who was

an officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs leadership, flew together with Lengina from New York. He sat next to her on the flight and they talked about something or other.

Simultaneously, for the same reasons, Shevchenko's son Gennady, who was working in Switzerland, was urgently recalled under a specious pretext by the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the meantime, an official message was published in our press that "the accredited Soviet UN diplomat A. Shevchenko" was a victim of intrigues of the American intelligence agencies and that our responsible organs are taking steps for his release.

But in reality, the USSR Ambassador to the US, Arkady F. Dobrynin, and the Soviet Representative to the UN, Oleg A. Troyanovsky, met with him in Manhattan. But all negotiations ended to no avail: there was nothing other than mutual insults.

On arrival in Moscow, Lengina immediately tried to meet with Lidiya Dmitriyevna Gromyko and even with the minister himself, since, not without justification, she was absolutely confident of his personal sympathy for her. But neither this meeting nor the other took place: in practice she met a blank wall of estrangement. The same thing happened with her attempts to contact other workers at the Ministry with whom she was well-acquainted.

Soon she became aware that someone from the leadership of the Directorate of Affairs of the Council of Ministers ordered that her family be banned from the government polyclinic of the 4th Directorate of the Ministry of Health of the USSR and the distributor in Delicatessen Number 1 (Yeliseyevskiy Grocery Store) which was closed to the public.

In connection with the suspicions increasing daily that Shevchenko had betrayed the Motherland and later information appearing in the American press that he had formally requested US political asylum, the prosecutor obtained authorization to issue a criminal case against Shevchenko and a search was conducted at his apartment on Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya with the expectation that the investigative bodies of the KGB, with the participation of witnesses, would thus be able to obtain additional facts and materials of interest.

The apartment, for those times quite large, consisted of four rooms with a total living area of 120 square meters. There was a rich library in the house,

a large part of which included numerous subscription publications. There was a striking abundance of antiques and other similar things, such as, for example, a white marble bust of the French Emperor Napoleon of the finest work or a panel of semi-precious stones of Western production. Apparently, they were shipped to the family by Arkady Shevchenko's mother-in-law, Anna Ksaveryevna, whose husband worked for an extended period at some Soviet organization in Austria associated with accounting for and the acquisition of war booty after the defeat of Fascist Germany.

One of the rooms was almost totally filled with suitcases stuffed to the maximum with miscellaneous "rags" which had been brought in from time from abroad. In the bedroom in a large cabinet built into the wall hung ten or twelve personal sheepskin coats and stacks of cardboard boxes with women's boots and other shoes. A refrigerator and kitchen cabinets were stuffed with imported products which were scarce at that time.

As was to be expected, neither a search nor conversations with members of the family deserving operative attention provided results. But formality, however, was respected. Treatment of family members was key and polite and just as correct. Arkady Shevchenko's wife, mother-in-law and son behaved likewise towards our officers. The only exception, perhaps, was the sixteen-year-old daughter who showed a rather negative attitude to everything that was going on.

It was quite possible to understand the state of Lengina Shevchenko, who began to fully understand the tragic situation she and her children were in. And all of this after years of a carefree and rich life filled with various experiences and impressions in which everything came together as if by magic!

The situation was further complicated by the fact that the son Gennadiy was dismissed from the Foreign Ministry. Soon after that, his wife left him, and her parents broke off all relations with him.

It was not difficult to explain their behavior. To have a family relationship with a traitor of the Motherland, as Gennady's father became, did not bode well in personal life or in official affairs, although in theory it is assumed that the son is not responsible for the father. Too fresh in memory were the days of Stalin's repression.

If we talk about the past, Gennady's parents back then found out, with no special delight, about his intention to marry the daughter of a colonel who was serving somewhere on the periphery of the country's air defense system. Attempts to dissuade him from this so non-prestigious--in their understanding--marriage were not crowned with success so they were forced to give consent, and the wedding took place. Soon, however, his father-in-law, either thanks his personal qualities or for other reasons unbeknownst to us, was assigned to the Moscow Military District*, received an apartment in the capital and a while later was awarded the rank of Major General.

*[Translator comment: probably means the Moscow Air Defense District]

His parents were somewhat satisfied with this. In any case, he was a general, not some colonel, even if he was from the boondocks!

Seeing no way out of the current situation and being completely incapable of overcoming difficulties and lacking the strength to survive all that had happened, Lengina decided to commit suicide. Her mother tried to dissuade her from this, but she remained adamant. The argument that it would further complicate the situation in which her elderly mother and children found themselves had no effect. For some strange reason Anna Ksaveryevna did not inform us of the expressed intention of her daughter.

Two or three days after the May Day holidays Anna Ksaveryevna called our officer, V. V. Molodtsov, who had been maintaining contact with members of the Shevchenko family, to say that Lengina had disappeared. She left a note on the desk in the living room addressed to her daughter, "Dear Anyutik! ... I could not do otherwise ... Doctors will explain everything to you ... It's a pity that my mother did not allow me to die at home... "

In connection with the message received, it was suggested to Anna Ksaveryevna, as is appropriate in such cases, that she report the incident officially to the district militia office in her place of residence. After a while an officer came to the apartment from there, examined it briefly and compiled an appropriate protocol. The Security Service also joined the search for the missing lady. It should be noted that the mention in the note: "It's a pity that my mother did not allow me to die at home ..." immediately sent us down a false trail. One of the young case officers came up with the idea that she may have drowned in the Moscow River. To which I half-jokingly, half-seriously

replied that in my opinion, at this time of year she wouldn't crawl into cold water under any circumstances, and they should look for her where it was sufficiently warm and dry: in cellars, in an attic, or places such as this.

Victory Day was approaching, and with permission from the authorities for the weekend and with a perfectly calm conscience, I went with my sons by car to our favorite place on the Protva River in the Kaluga District, which is about 120 kilometers from Moscow.

The next day, and it was already May 9th, one of our relatives joined us. He had come by car from Moscow. He told me that my wife had told him that they were waiting for me on an urgent matter at the Department. It was necessary, as they say, to reel up the fishing rods. Two hours later, thanks to a relatively early time, a good road and almost no traffic on the highway, I made it home and I found out from the Department duty officer that the corpse of Lengina Shevchenko had been discovered by her son by smell in the closet built into the bedroom wall. At the time, no one paid any attention to the empty mug on the table in front of the mirror that stood opposite the cabinet in a somewhat unusual place for such a thing. In addition, everyone was sure-after all, it was said in the note-that the suicide had to take place outside the apartment and did not consider that the circumstances had changed: the grandmother and her granddaughter had moved to another part of the city for a time, where they were living with their distant relatives.

When I arrived at the Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya, Lengina's corpse had already been taken to the morgue. The following occurred: Lengina poured some water into a mug in the kitchen, went into the bedroom, opened several packages of sleeping pills totaling about sixty to eighty tablets, took them, washed them down with water, put the mug on the table, and put the boxes in the pocket of her silk dressing gown. Feeling faint very quickly, she sprang back towards the closet, the doors of which were wide open. Being of a rather slight build, she fell down, scattered the sheepskins hanging there and leaned against the back wall, and while falling hit the shoe boxes stored on the right side and collapsed. The boxes covered her legs. The doors of the closet closed almost spontaneously. According to specialists, even if she had applied for help to the Emergency Medical Institute at that time, they would not have been able to save her.

Later, when I looked through her letters and something like diary entries, I had a more complete impression of her as a person. She did not shine with great intelligence, but that did not stop her from being pretentious. When analyzing her "archives," attention was drawn to the aphorisms and sayings of domestic and foreign authors written out on individual scraps of paper, borrowed for the most part from V. L. Vorontsov's book *The Symphony of Reason*. The unanimous opinion is that Lengina probably used the sayings of the ancient and later philosophers and other prominent persons at various social functions to make an appropriate impression and surprise the people around her with her extraordinary education, or rather, throw dust in their eyes!

She was buried at the Troyekurovskoye Cemetery. A few relatives of the deceased were present. As a matter of service duty our "authorized representative" V. V. Molodtsov was also there. Not without a sense of humor, he told us later how Anna A. Shevchenko's mother-in-law Anna Ksaveryevna, in a fit of shocked indignation, turned to him in a picturesque way: "Vladimir Vladimirovich, give me a revolver! I'll shoot this scoundrel! He killed my daughter!..." "At that moment, naturally, he did not have a firearm, and he imagined to himself vaguely how one could do this at such a great distance without missing!

We expected that after this all our cares and troubles would subside, but that was not to be.

Shevchenko's underage but physically fully mature daughter was completely uncontrollable. She felt nothing but a feeling of dislike toward her grandmother. Gennady did not take her into account. Somewhat better was her relationship with one of her aunts. She hung out with punks and drug addicts and often came home at night in a less-than-sober state. One late evening, at the very door of the apartment, an unknown man took her imported jeans off (at that time very scarce) and disappeared. We also received information that criminal elements showed interest in the Shevchenko family's apartment.

In this regard, as the Criminal Procedure Code required, I was instructed in the presence of her aforementioned aunt to conduct a preventive-educational conversation with her. This meeting, for some reason unknown to me, was arranged in one of the reception rooms of the Moscow

KGB Directorate in Sretenka. I was alerted about this in advance and arrived there at the appointed time. The atmosphere for the conversation was quite favorable. However, despite the peaceful and calm tone of the conversation put forward to her, in which her relative took part, she behaved boldly, jumped up several times from her chair and ran out into the corridor, from whence a friendly, young warrant officer who was there invariably politely returned her. The girl was really fussy and did not recognize reality at all. I do not remember exactly what kind of agreement we reached with great difficulty based on the conversation, but it was quite clear that she would bring a lot of trouble to her relatives and all those around her.

The situation with Gennady was not easy either. As already mentioned, after his dismissal from the Foreign Ministry, the question arose about his employment. No one agreed to voluntarily hire the son of a traitor to the Motherland: in this case we are talking about so-called foreign policy and other similar institutions. After a series of lengthy negotiations that the leadership of the Chief Directorate held with the leaders of several institutions, who perfectly understood, in their turn, that in any case, the "protege" of the state security organs would be restricted and, in a sense, a burden. Under the circumstances the only right decision in the interests of Gennady was to change his name and some of his identification data, and issue him new documents in agreement with the appropriate authorities.

Soon the Chief of the Chief Directorate asked me to call and arrange a meeting with the Director of the Institute of State and Law of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the famous Soviet lawyer and scientist V. N. Kudryavtsev. The same day, I called him using Kremlin communications and we agreed on a meeting.

Vladimir Nikolayevich greeted me warmly in his office in an old mansion right in the center of the city. In general, he was already in the know. V. N. Kudryavtsev listened attentively to me and after a detailed discussion of all formalities of a legal nature gave his consent for Gennady to work at the institute under his new name. After the end of the interview, he kindly showed me his scientific library, but also, being a lawyer by education, gave me several brochures on criminal law and criminology which he authored. I still have embedded in my memory the meeting with this charming, wise intellectual.

Thusly was resolved the question of the son A. Shevchenko, who betrayed not only the Fatherland, but also his family.

I happened to hear about Gennady Shevchenko many years later, when in one of his interviews with one of our correspondents he tried to make him believe that his father was in reality a convinced fighter with the then existing political regime in our country, in a way that even now it is very hard to believe! Gennady could well have guessed long ago the fact that his father had, as they say, a hidden agenda. The advice of his parent, never to talk about serious things in the room, could not have escaped him: be careful when using the home phone, and when necessary use pay phones for these purposes. The father repeatedly told him about this during periodic walks in the evening on the Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya of the Moskva River. It was impossible not to ponder the question: what was necessary to conceal for an honest man, a responsible official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a beginning diplomat? His father, even before he embarked on the path of betrayal; often had to hide a lot from his colleagues and especially from his wife!

It would be unfair from our side to assert that we all had only positive qualities and did not make mistakes and miscalculations. It's not a secret for anyone that even from good motives you can make gross mistakes that can complicate the lives of many people who do not deserve it at all.

In this respect, the following excerpt from the book of the former Deputy Chairman of the KGB of the USSR, Army General [four-star] Filipp Denisovich Bobkov, *KGB and Power*, Publishing House Veteran MP, 1995) is typical:

"I remember there was a case in which a woman who taught in one of the Moscow higher educational institutions met with Ogorodnik, who was subsequently disclosed as an agent of US intelligence services, and although the investigation found it was no fault of hers, she was not allowed to leave the country. She was also forbidden to work as an interpreter with foreign delegations. Overall, she suffered a lot and once wrote a letter to the KGB with a request not to impose restrictions on her son. "My son has

nothing to do with it!" - I thought and suggested to General Markelov¹ that he take a close look at the request. He accepted it, and the question was resolved positively. But some time later she again appealed to us with the same request. It turns out that our officer, despite this instruction, nevertheless hinted to the personnel department which dealt with employment of the son that the mother of the young specialist had her faults. Of course, the officer acted dishonestly, but he was accustomed to denunciations and believed that he was acting according to instructions and you can never have too much vigilance in such matters."

One must agree with the opinion of the distinguished Filipp Denisovich: the son really does not have to suffer because his mother was "not without sin." The times are still fresh in the national memory when these types of questions were resolved in a diametrically opposite way. And almost the same thing was said openly, but they acted completely differently. Back while I was studying at the Sverdlovsk Juridical Institute, the Komsomol Committee received a list of graduate students with compromising materials from the Human Resources Department. As now I remember some of them: parents were dekulakized, a grandfather had a fish shop, another grandfather - a peasant – suffered from hard labor, a brother served a sentence for hooliganism, fled from the camp and went missing at the beginning of the war, a father in the past had been convicted under Article 58 (10) "Anti-Soviet Agitation" (at that time it could be any expressed disagreement with the policy of the party and government). Of the 220 students around eighty were left without assignments for concealing this information. I do not think that this was due solely to the specifics of the institution: after all, besides prosecutors and judges, there were also notaries, legal advisers, lawyers, judicial executors and so on.

However, let us return to the matter. For my part, I, not without reason, believe that in F. Bobkov's book we are talking about the previously mentioned close relationship of Ogorodnik with Anna Kolotova while studying at MGIMO, who for an unknown reason did not wish to help us in

¹ *In the mid-eighties Major General Ivan Alekseyevich Markelov was the head of the Second Chief Directorate (counterintelligence).

the work of studying and exposing him as an agent of American intelligence, which has caused such tangible damage to our country. And who knows, maybe if she had taken a completely different position, we could have exposed him much earlier and not only reduced the amount of the harm done to us, but also saved the life of the innocent Olga Serova, poisoned by Ogorodnik much later because of the fear of being exposed.

But in history, as we know, the subjunctive mood does not exist. It is very regrettable, however, that we still have many people like Anna Kolotova who know their rights very well, quite often forgetting about their duties - in this case, about the duties of a citizen. Personally, at the very least, such people do not get any sympathy from me.

