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Libyan plot to blow up New York — maybe

A NEW book that details a Libyan plot to destroy a large section of midtown Manhattan has been dismissed as "comic book stuff" and a "complete fantasy" just as 50,000 copies are about to hit bookstore shelves.

The book, *The Specialist*, written under the pseudonym of Gayle Rivers, purports to be one man's story of his personal crusade against international terrorism.

The author claims to have worked for various intelligence agencies and special forces, including Britain's crack Special Air Services squad. He states in an opening note:

"Every incident in this book is true and the people are all real."

But the *Sunday Times* of London reported this week that the author is actually Raymond Brooks, "who failed to make the grade as an SAS territorial reservist.

"He is now an arms dealer . . . currently

under police investigation for several undisclosed reasons."

The article goes on to dispute several stories in the book, being published in Britain this week by Sidgwick & Jackson and on this side of the Atlantic next month by Stein and Day.

S&D, budgeting \$60,000 for promotion, has already taken out ads for the \$16.95 hardcover carrying the headline: "Does the United States hire assassins? This book is by one."

The London paper disputes that assertion as well as the yarn about a Libyan plan in 1982 "to collect together a massive quantity of explosives on a subway train in New York City.

"The explosives were to be assembled by several different terrorist organizations, each of which believed it was working alone and for its own purposes."

The groups, according to the book, included Puerto Rican Rastafarians ("a splinter group from the Jamaican 'Rastas,'"), the Jewish Defense League, the Black Liberation Army and the Islamic League.

"Each group was to infiltrate a relatively small quantity of explosives into the New York subway system. The concentration was to be assembled finally on one train and detonated at a point in midtown Manhattan where there is a land fault."

"Police and the security specialists lived through some very nasty moments until the plot was unravelled," the author notes.

Sol Stein, of Stein and Day, stands behind the book, never mind the *Sunday Times*. "I spent 7½ hours with the author in London putting questions to him that our lawyers prepared."

Of the two reporters, John Witherow and James Adams, who exposed the author's identity, Stein said, "They're very good fiction writers. I'd be happy to sign them up [for a novel]."

By RICHARD JOHNSON
