

# Recruitment in Moscow

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*The remarkable record of a case of blackmail.*

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This is the true story of the recruitment by the Soviet Committee for State Security, the KGB, of a secretary assigned to a Western embassy in Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The foreign diplomatic colony is fertile ground for such activity, but this particular case is unusually interesting because it shows the KGB at its most proficient, and at its maladroitness worst. The timeworn techniques of compromise and blackmail were in the beginning employed with uncommon subtlety and sophistication. When the secretary was reassigned to another country, however, the follow-up was so ham-handed, and so lacking in understanding of how to manipulate her foibles and weaknesses, that she was prompted to report to her own security authorities. We have a remarkably detailed account of the Soviet handling of this case over a period of several years, because the secretary's indiscretions were not limited to her affair with a Russian lay religious leader and her cooperation with the KGB. She also kept a date book in which she noted all her appointments with her Soviet friends.

The victim in this episode, Birgitta Lundberg, was born into a poor family in Ostersund, Sweden. Her parents had minimal education and little interest in the world outside the family and neighborhood. Upon completion of her education and training as a secretary, Brigitta found employment with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She served in several foreign posts and by the time of her appointment to the embassy in Moscow in May 1961, had acquired fluency in German, French, English, and Russian, an interest in art and culture, and a predilection for a rather luxurious style of living.

In Moscow, Birgitta settled into an apartment building largely occupied by members of the foreign diplomatic colony and high-ranking Soviet dignitaries. She lived alone and employed a part-time maid, who also worked at the Swedish Embassy, where Birgitta was a general secretary in the political section. On occasion, Birgitta also worked for the ambassador and the principal political officer.

Not long after her arrival, Birgitta made a bus trip from Moscow to Leningrad in the company of an attaché of the Swedish Embassy who was on a military intelligence mission. When her companion discovered that they were under surveillance in Leningrad, they returned to Moscow without incident. Birgitta had gone along to provide cover for the other employee. She also went twice to a local bookshop which specialized in military publications and purchased several books for the colleague whom she accompanied on the Leningrad trip. It was probably her involvement with the Swedish military intelligence officer and the purchases she made on his behalf that brought her to the attention of the KGB.

In July, 1961, Birgitta was visited by a Swedish friend, a Miss Forsberg, who was in transit from Hong Kong to Sweden. While they were waiting at a bus stop during a sightseeing trip of Moscow, a Soviet officer waiting at the same stop introduced himself, in English, and after a brief conversation invited them to his apartment, saying that he would like to become better acquainted, and that he wanted to show them that personal freedom was not suppressed in the Soviet Union. They accepted this invitation, and the officer, whose name was Sokolov, hailed a taxi. After they alighted from the taxi and were walking to the apartment, someone suddenly took a flash photo of Birgitta and her friend. Sokolov said it was probably the work of hooligans and asked them not to be alarmed. He lived in a well-furnished apartment with his wife, mother, and child. They all spent a few hours discussing Russian history and culture, and listening to the Voice of America and other Western broadcasts. Sokolov asked no questions concerning Birgitta's work, and he invited her and Miss Forsberg to visit him again on 21 July, which they did.

On 30 August Sokolov phoned Birgitta at the embassy and asked her to go out with him, either for lunch or to the theater, but the connection was bad and they were cut off before establishing where or when they were to meet. She made no effort to contact Sokolov.

Birgitta last saw Sokolov at a theater in Moscow about a year later in the company of the woman she had met at his apartment. They had a friendly chat and Sokolov invited her to visit him, but no date was set. This was the last time she saw Sokolov. Birgitta knew no more about Sokolov other than that he was an officer, apparently a gentleman, and spoke excellent English.

During her first year in Moscow, Birgitta met a Professor Engman of Stockholm who was interested in the Russian Orthodox Church and its art, especially icons. Engman was an enthusiastic Russophile and had contacts with Patriarch Alexei and other church luminaries. Through him Birgitta met many church officials and personalities, and she helped him distribute various religious pamphlets and books which were probably printed in Western Europe by émigré circles. The material was strictly religious in content and not anti-Communist. Birgitta also received letters from Engman which she delivered to various Soviet friends of his. The letters, books, and pamphlets she distributed for Engman were usually kept in her apartment and thus were accessible to her maid.

On 2 March 1962 Professor Engman introduced Birgitta to one Oleg Sergejevich Belov at the Hotel Ukraine, and they all went on a tour of Moscow churches. Oleg told her he was an official in the office of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. She also met Oleg in the company of Engman on 8 and 15 March.

On 11 April Birgitta met Oleg alone for the first time. She went to his office and gave him a small package she had received from Engman, and he made a date with her for the following evening at her apartment. Thus began her romance with Oleg, and during the period from April 1962 until August 1964 she had 100 meetings with him, either at her apartment or in restaurants and cafes. To cover her meetings with Oleg, which were illegal since members of the embassy staff were forbidden to have social contacts with Soviet citizens, Birgitta always told her ambassador that she was delivering materials for Professor Engman. The ambassador finally forbade her to have further contact with Oleg or Orthodox priests. Birgitta's reaction was to stop reporting such contacts to the ambassador.

Oleg told Birgitta that he was married to a woman with an education and an intellect inferior to his and that he had nothing in common with his wife. He lamented his unhappy marriage and apparently found an easy and welcome refuge with Birgitta. Oleg was about 35 years old. He said

that he had attended a seminary for four years, was one of six children, and that his father was an engineer who had died when Oleg was very young. Oleg said that he intended to write a book on the Orthodox Church in China, and that he would like to become a priest when he was 50 years old. Birgitta did not know where Oleg lived, but said he sometimes slept at his office. Oleg spoke some English and always appeared to have plenty of money and lived well. He said he received a bonus of 300 rubles a month from the Patriarch because he worked so hard. He claimed to be known as anti-Communist and pro-West. Birgitta sometimes purchased western clothes for him from her colleagues at the embassy, and gave him an occasional bottle of liquor, but never money.

On 17 January 1964, almost two years after their first meeting, Oleg took Birgitta by taxi to a woods where there was a lovely small church. He told the cab driver to wait, and they walked to the church, which unfortunately was closed, so they took a stroll through the woods instead. They walked about for nearly two hours. Upon their return they found the taxi surrounded by soldiers. An army major approached them and announced that they were under arrest for trespassing on a military reservation. (There is in fact a large reservoir in the vicinity.) The major interrogated them on the spot, took their names, places of employment and so forth, and announced that he would send reports of the incident to the Patriarch's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that the Swedish Embassy would be contacted on the case. Oleg became terribly upset, lamenting that his life would be ruined. Birgitta was concerned because her contacts with Oleg had been against the ambassador's orders. She felt more sorry for Oleg, however, and held herself responsible for the incident. In the taxi on the way home, Oleg suggested they go to the house of a friend of his who might be able to help them. The friend, Ivan Basilyevich, had a private apartment which he shared with his mother. He was employed as an economist. Oleg and Birgitta told Ivan the story of what had happened in the woods, and on the basis of his friendship with Oleg, Ivan said he would try to help them, that he had a friend who was with the KGB. He then phoned this friend, Andre Popov, explained the case, and Andre was heard to say over the telephone, "If these people are your friends, if they are 100 per cent faithful, then I will help." Ivan assured him they were his friends and were trustworthy.

In about 30 minutes Andre arrived. He appeared to be about 45 years old, corpulent, almost six feet tall, with dark hair, small teeth with silver

dental work, a generally unpleasant, ugly face. He indicated that he spoke only Russian.

Andre asked Birgitta and Oleg to repeat the entire story of their arrest, and when they finished, he promised he would help them as much as he could because they were friends of Ivan's. Andre asked Birgitta what she did at the Swedish Embassy and followed this up by asking her to write out the facts of the incident in her own handwriting in Russian. Birgitta continued to plead with Andre to help them because she did not want Oleg to get into trouble. Andre told them they were not to discuss the incident with anyone, that if they did he would be unable to help them. They promised this in writing. In their presence, Andre telephoned the arresting officer's superior, an unidentified general, and asked that he take no action on the reports and send them to Andre's office. Andre again stressed that the affair was a very serious one because the area where Birgitta and Oleg had trespassed contained a large reservoir. They could easily have poisoned the water.

While Birgitta was writing her account of the incident, Andre asked her also to include her impressions of the Soviet Union and its people. Ivan advised her to say that she approved of everything she saw in Russia. This she refused to do because she didn't like the political system, although she did like the people and the country. The report contained only her favorable impressions. When Birgitta had finished, they had vodka and snacks to celebrate the "settling" of the incident. Before they left Ivan's apartment, Andre told Birgitta and Oleg to meet him the following evening in Ivan's apartment when he would let them know if he had been able to stop an investigation.

The next evening Oleg and Birgitta took a taxi to Ivan's apartment. Andre was already there when they arrived. He produced the report submitted by the major and told them to read it and check to see that it was accurate. They both agreed that the report was correct and Birgitta asked Andre to tear it up. He said that he couldn't do that, but that he would keep it in a safe place in case anyone ever asked for additional details. Perhaps he would be able to destroy it later. Andre asked Birgitta to sign a paper to the effect that she would not discuss the case with anyone.

Barely one week after his "arrest," Oleg travelled to the United States as a member of the Grand Patriarch Alexei's delegation. He explained to Birgitta that he had been unexpectedly selected to accompany the

delegation since two other men originally scheduled to go had been hurt in an automobile accident, and that he had not originally been chosen because he was known to be pro-West and antiCommunist.

Near the end of April Andre phoned Birgitta at her apartment at lunch time and asked her to join him at a restaurant for lunch the next day. She agreed. There had been no contact between them for about three and a half months, since the last meeting in Ivan's apartment, and Birgitta had not expected to see Andre again.

The next day Birgitta went by taxi to the restaurant where Andre awaited her. They were served lunch in a private room, and it was apparent from the deference shown to them that Andre was a privileged patron. During lunch he talked pleasantly about many things, without mentioning Birgitta's work. When they had finished lunch, he gave her a brief newspaper article in English and asked her to translate it into Russian. Birgitta said it was difficult for her to do without a dictionary, but that she would attempt it. The article concerned book printing. When she finished, Andre remarked that she had done a good job, although she was unable to determine from his comments whether he could read or speak English. Andre said he would like to meet her again, but that restaurant meetings were difficult because he was well known to many higher ranking employees of various diplomatic installations in Moscow. He asked her if she would meet him elsewhere and she agreed. Andre told her he would phone her at a later date, would send a cab for her, and then instructed her not to discuss her meetings with him with anyone, not even Oleg. Birgitta agreed to keep their meetings secret.

About a week later Andre phoned, again at lunch time, and made arrangements for dinner the following evening. He told Birgitta he would send a cab which would pick her up around the corner from her apartment at seven in the evening and gave her the number of the taxi. He told her the cab driver would deliver her to the meeting place and that she would not have to pay the fare. After this phone call Birgitta began to think that the entire affair was rather strange, but decided to go along with the plan because she had given her word that she would meet Andre. Her affair with Oleg was not affected by the meetings with Andre, nor did Andre appear to have any interest in a more personal relationship with her.

Birgitta was picked up at the designated time and place by a new, very clean cab. The driver opened the door from within and drove her around

Moscow for at least 45 minutes and then stopped suddenly in front of a large apartment complex with a center courtyard. Birgitta has no idea of the taxi's route, but remembers passing the Ukraina Hotel and the Sokol Metro Station.

Andre was waiting for her at the entrance to the courtyard. Birgitta told him she was frightened as a result of being driven aimlessly around the city, but Andre told her not to be alarmed, since he was her protector and safeguard. She then said that she would not go with him unless he told her where they were going for dinner. Andre again said he was too well known to be seen in public with her, and that it was in her best interests to go to private places. He was therefore taking her to dinner at the apartment of an uncle who was away on holiday at his country dacha. Andre said he always looked after the apartment when his uncle was absent. Birgitta accepted this story and went with him across the courtyard to a ground floor apartment. The apartment was well-furnished and in one of the rooms a sumptuous dinner had been readied. Birgitta wanted to know if anyone else was in the apartment and Andre suggested she make a search and see for herself, which she did, finding no one. They consumed much vodka and had a delicious meal. Birgitta is unable to remember much of what was discussed, but she was impressed with Andre's good manners. She thinks they talked about the theater and art, and says that Andre did not ask questions concerning her work.

After dinner Andre served coffee and brandy. He then asked Birgitta if she would do a favor for him and translate something from English to Swedish. She did not want to do it, but agreed after Andre said, "I helped you. Why don't you do me one small favor?" Although Birgitta was vaguely aware that this was probably the beginning of a change in her relationship with Andre, she protested no further. The article concerned economic relations between West Germany and Indonesia and she remembers that it was not a newspaper article.

During the evening Andre stressed that his only aim was to help Birgitta and Oleg out of their difficulties, but that occasionally he would ask small favors of her. Birgitta in turn told him that the only reason she was maintaining contact with him was to prevent Oleg from getting into any further difficulties. She thus played directly into Andre's hands. The dinner party lasted two and a half hours and the cab took her home. At the end Andre again warned her not to discuss their meetings with Oleg.

Five days later, on May 12, Andre phoned Birgitta at her apartment during lunch and made arrangements for dinner that evening. She was picked up by cab at seven o'clock at the usual corner, and again a long, devious route was followed to the same apartment complex. As before, a feast had been prepared before her arrival in Andre's "uncle's" apartment, and during dinner the conversation again revolved around art and culture. During dinner Birgitta gave Andre a letter she had written in Russian in which she explained that she was an employee of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that she had taken a secrecy oath, and that it was forbidden for employees of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to have uncontrolled social contact with Russians because the people in Western countries believed that the Soviet Union was a hostile country. Andre read the letter through and put it in his pocket. He then said that the Soviet Union was friendly towards Western countries, and pointed out the benefits of living in the USSR. He asked Birgitta about her family, her relatives, her personal life and about her financial status. She answered all his questions freely and truthfully. Andre said that what she did at the Swedish Embassy was of no interest to him. The meeting lasted until 11:30 p.m. and Birgitta was taken home by cab.

On May 20, 1964, Birgitta and a Swedish colleague at the embassy, a Miss Larsson and her mother, went by train to Leningrad on a three-day Intourist excursion. When Birgitta told Oleg of her plans he said that he too would be in Leningrad on May 21. As Birgitta was to be staying at the Hotel Astoria, they made plans to meet in the lobby there at five o'clock on that date.

When Birgitta and the Larssons arrived in Leningrad via the night train from Moscow, they found that the Astoria was fully booked and that they were to be billeted at the Hotel Yeuropeyskaya. Although Birgitta waited for Oleg at the Astoria at five o'clock he did not appear. However, he phoned her at seven saying he had traced her whereabouts by inquiring at the Astoria. He also had a room in the Yeuropeyskaya on the same floor at the end of the corridor. That evening and the following day Oleg accompanied Birgitta and the Larssons on sightseeing trips about Leningrad.

On May 23 Oleg told Birgitta that he had to fly back to Moscow that evening and invited her to his room to say goodbye at four p.m. They had wine and cheese. Suddenly Oleg said, "Let me make love to you." Birgitta objected, saying that she was afraid of hidden cameras and concealed



microphones. To reassure her, Oleg suggested that they search the room. This they did, but found nothing. They drew the curtains, but not the drapes, locked the door and remained together for about two hours. Oleg left for the airport soon thereafter, and Birgitta and the Larssons returned to Moscow that evening by train.

A week and a half later, Andre phoned Birgitta at her apartment and invited her to dine. The evening followed the now familiar routine of the rambling taxi ride, and an elaborate meal with vodka followed by coffee and brandy. Andre began to question Birgitta about her work at the embassy and about the other Swedish employees there. Birgitta is unable to recall what she told Andre because she had had so much to drink. She does remember that he asked if other women at the embassy had Russian boyfriends and that she replied affirmatively. Andre then began asking more specific questions about Birgitta's work, about her ambassador's reporting, and whether he sent secret reports to Sweden on his discussions with his West German, American and British counterparts. Birgitta became angry at this line of questioning and refused to answer. Andre arose and left her alone for about 15 minutes. When he returned he told her she should consider his questions in light of the help he had given her and Oleg, that it was assistance between friends, but that he would never ask her such questions again. He cautioned her again not to discuss any of this with Oleg and gave her his private phone number, but did not permit her to write it down. As she was leaving, Andre gave her a silver vase. Birgitta at first refused to accept it but he insisted, saying that she had given him so much of her time. He also gave her a sealed envelope and told her to open it when she arrived at her apartment. When Birgitta arrived home she opened the envelope and found 200 Swedish krone. She kept this money.

A week later, on 10 June 1964, Oleg phoned Birgitta at home at lunch time. He sounded extremely nervous and said he had to see her because something terrible had happened. They met on a street corner after work that evening because Oleg said he could not go to her apartment. He said that that morning he had been picked up on the street by three men who pushed him into a car and took him to an Office of the Ministry of Interior and interrogated him for three hours about his trip to Leningrad. He was shown a photograph of himself and Birgitta walking on a street in Leningrad but his interrogators told him they had much more information regarding his Leningrad trip, including compromising films. He wailed that he would probably lose his job and appeared to be completely distraught. According to Oleg, his friend Ivan,

who had interceded before, was ill in a hospital about 200 kilometers away. Since Birgitta had promised Andre not to reveal his private phone number she suggested to Oleg that they call Ivan's mother to see if she knew how they could get in touch with Andre. This Oleg did and about 10 p.m. reached Andre who told them to meet him at a nearby restaurant. Oleg repeated to Andre the tale of his encounter with the three unknown men and of his interrogation. Andre asked Oleg to describe the office he had been in, and then said that the situation was very bad, because the office described handled all the sensitive cases and that it would be difficult to stop the investigation. He promised to do his best, telling Birgitta, not Oleg, to phone him the next day at his office.

When Birgitta phoned Andre he said that he had all the files and would meet her the next day, June 12, at 7 p.m. at the apartment where they regularly met.

Accordingly Birgitta was picked up on June 12 by cab and taken to the uncle's apartment, where Andre awaited her. The usual dinner had been prepared. During coffee and brandy, Andre brought out some files which he showed to her and said they concerned not only Oleg but her too. He also handed her a sealed package of film and told her she could open it, that he was not interested, but he advised her to look at about one meter of the film. She looked at the strip of film and saw that it depicted everything that had occurred in Oleg's hotel room in Leningrad. According to Birgitta, the films were of excellent quality. After scanning the films, she admitted everything that had happened. Andre then handed her another small package and told her to open it. Wrapped inside were transcripts of all her phone conversations with Oleg in Leningrad and also a reel of tape. Andre told her the tape was a sound recording of everything that occurred in the hotel room. Birgitta did not wish to hear it. Andre then asked her what she thought of the "entire ugly affair" and she agreed that it was a terrible mess, especially for Oleg, who was married. Andre countered that it was also very bad for her, but that she of course could always leave Russia and start life anew, whereas Oleg could not get away. Birgitta pleaded with Andre and promised that she would do anything she could for him if he would help Oleg. Andre thought this over a long time and finally said that he would try. He told her all the files, films and tape would be transferred to his safe on condition that she write in her own handwriting the following letter in Russian.

"Dear Mr. Andre ... :

I thank you for all the help you have given me and I promise you that I will not divulge our contacts to anyone, neither the Ambassador, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Swedish intelligence service, and that I will help you in the future in your work."

Birgitta signed this note in her true name.

After this, Andre was very friendly and assured Birgitta that he would help her. She returned to her apartment' about 11 o'clock by cab.

The next day Birgitta phoned Oleg and invited him to her apartment that evening, to tell him what had happened and what was in the files Andre had shown her. Oleg appeared to be completely flabbergasted. He got very drunk, but said nothing.

Several days later, as a result of the strain of her involvement with Oleg and Andre, Birgitta went to see an embassy doctor who advised her to go on leave. She spent three weeks at a health resort about 200 kilometers from Moscow. A few days after returning from the health resort, Birgitta flew to Sweden for a short holiday with her family and friends.

She returned to Moscow on July 28 and met Oleg for lunch on the 29th. She mentioned that she had discussed their relationship with some of her friends in Sweden. Oleg was obviously disturbed by this information and said that he wanted to talk about it in greater detail in the evening.

When Oleg arrived at her apartment, he said he had phoned Andre and told him about Birgitta's conversations with her friends in Sweden and that Andre was furious and said he never wanted to see her again. However, Oleg was able to persuade him to meet Birgitta just one more time and he had agreed to come to a dinner arranged by Oleg that evening at the Hotel Praga. Birgitta also agreed to attend but told Oleg that she would do the talking, that he was to keep silent.

When they met Andre appeared to be angry with Birgitta. She explained that she had discussed Oleg with an old girl friend and her husband who were sympathetic regarding her difficulties and merely advised her

to be careful. Andre then asked the identity of her Swedish girl friend and husband and wanted to know if they were members of the Swedish intelligence service. He was assured they were not. Andre then wondered aloud if Birgitta might go to her ambassador with the entire story. She replied that she was brave, but not that brave and promised that if she ever intended to do such a thing she would tell Andre at least three days ahead. By this time Andre probably believed with some justification that he could talk her out of anything, provided he had sufficient warning.

In response to a question from Andre, Birgitta said that it was possible that she would soon be transferred to another post because she had been in Moscow quite a long time, but that she had no idea where she would be sent. When she said she would like to remain in Moscow, Andre promised that if she gave him the name of her replacement he would see that she would not be issued a visa. Birgitta brushed this aside as improper. They parted in a friendly manner and in the presence of Oleg, Andre made a date with Birgitta for August 5 at the Sovietskaya Hotel.

When Birgitta arrived at the hotel Andre was awaiting her in a VIP suite which consisted of several elaborately furnished rooms. There was a cold buffet. Andre repeated the points covered in his previous talk, emphasizing that Birgitta was to notify him, in advance, of any intention to talk to her ambassador. He questioned her again on the kinds of reports the ambassador wrote and asked her if she had any contacts with the Swedish intelligence service. She replied that she knew no one in that organization. Andre told her that if she needed financial assistance he would help her. She declined his offer. She did say that Oleg was now afraid to come to her apartment because someone might see him and report his visit and asked Andre if he could help. He told her that he would arrange with the concierge for Oleg's freedom of entry and exit to her apartment. Birgitta then asked him if her apartment was bugged and her phone tapped, and he assured her he would have everything checked. He asked her if the Swedish Embassy had its own technical sweepers and she replied she didn't know, but that she was certain that some of the embassy offices and residences had been examined. Andre again asked her if two of the other embassy secretaries, whom he named, had Russian boyfriends, to which she answered affirmatively. He did not ask for the names of the boyfriends, but warned her not to discuss their relationship with the other women.

On August 11 Birgitta phoned Andre as arranged at the last meeting and made an appointment to meet him at the Sovietskaya Hotel the next evening. In the embassy mail the next day there was a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notifying her that she would be leaving Moscow on 18 August. Andre asked how the letter had arrived and she said by diplomatic courier. He asked her if she had mentioned her impending departure to anyone and she said only to the other secretary in her immediate office. He then wanted to know if she had spoken with anyone from the security section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when she was home. She replied that she had had the normal security interview in which she was asked if she had any contacts with Soviet citizens, to which she had answered negatively. Andre asked for an outline, including personality assessments, of the employees in the security section. Birgitta told him she didn't know anyone employed there. He asked for the name of the person who had interviewed her and was told it was a Miss Ekberg. Andre asked no further questions about this section because Birgitta told him all the people were listed overtly in the ministry personnel roster. He then returned to the subject of the ambassador's reports and pressed her to furnish him with copies. She put him off by promising to bring them to him next meeting. Andre told her the reports were not really secret and that he usually received copies of all such correspondence. However, if she could give him copies, it would save much time since the normal channel required three weeks, and they were further held up because of translation problems. At the end of their chat Andre gave Birgitta an expensive icon as a present. When she pointed out that it was forbidden to take icons out of Russia, he replied that he would arrange everything for her.

Birgitta met Andre the day before she left at the Sovietskaya Hotel for coffee and cognac. Andre was very anxious to know if word had gotten out concerning their relationship and if this had anything to do with Birgitta's sudden recall. She assured him that it was routine and that if there were a problem the ambassador would not be giving a dinner in her honor. This appeared to reassure him. Andre told her that he had no future need of her assistance, but that if he ever did need her help he would contact her by sending a colleague in his name. He said he was sorry to see her leave because she loved the Russian people and country so much. He asked if she intended to remain in contact with Oleg and upon hearing that she would write to him, gave her an address in Moscow to use, to insure that Oleg would receive her letters.

Andre instructed her to write to Oleg in German, and to sign her letters,

"Elsa." He said he would pick up the letters, translate them into Russian and deliver them to Oleg and would do the same with Oleg's letters to her. Andre again assured her of financial assistance if she should need it and promised her transportation and expense-free trips to the Soviet Union. When Birgitta asked if she would be able to see Oleg again, Andre promised he would send him to some western country, such as Switzerland, for a three week holiday whenever she wished it. They parted as great friends and Andre told her he would contact her if he ever needed her help.

Later that evening, Birgitta and Oleg visited Ivan and his mother to say goodbye. Ivan gave her a book as a present. Then Birgitta and Oleg had dinner and Oleg presented her with a beautiful icon, allegedly from the Patriarch's museum. Oleg told her he would not come to the airport to see her off because he was too upset about her departure. Birgitta departed Moscow by air for Sweden on August 18, 1964.

Between 18 August and 30 September 1964, Birgitta was on leave in Sweden. She sent Oleg several post cards to his office address and signed her name as "Juliana Michelovna." It is not clear why she did not use the address Andre gave her. Probably she was under the impression that by not doing so, she could ensure the privacy of her letters to Oleg.

On 30 September 1964, Birgitta arrived in Algiers and took up her duties as secretary to the ambassador. She moved into a small apartment in the Swedish compound and bought a Citroen. Through another Swedish Embassy secretary, whose mother was Russian, Birgitta met a Russian émigré family, the Vinogradovs, who lived nearby. Birgitta enjoyed visiting this family, with whom she spoke Russian and talked about Russian art and culture. She sent Oleg several letters through the Swedish diplomatic pouch, in care of a girl friend at the Swedish Embassy in Moscow who delivered the letters to Oleg at his office. In Algiers, Birgitta became friendly with another Swede who was married. However, it was a platonic relationship, apparently because he wished it to be so. Birgitta received no mail from Oleg.

On 30 November 1965, more than a year after her arrival in Algiers, Birgitta went to visit the Vinogradov family. As she was parking her car another automobile with two men in it pulled up immediately behind her. One of them got out and came over to her car, opened the door and got in. It was Andre. Birgitta was very surprised to see him and asked how he had found her. He said, " I saw you driving by and I never forget

people I like." They made a date for dinner on 4 December.

Andre picked Birgitta up at a prearranged place near her apartment in a taxi and they went to a restaurant. He gave her some presents from Oleg, a letter from Oleg, three photographs of Oleg and an antique wine carafe. Andre was concerned about whether Birgitta knew anyone in the restaurant and was relieved when she said she didn't. After they had dined, Andre asked her the names of the personnel at the Swedish Embassy in Algeria and about their former posts. She gave him as much information as she could remember, later explaining that none of this information was secret. During this part of the conversation Andre took notes. This was the first time he had ever done so.

On 8 December Andre phoned Birgitta at her apartment and asked her to have dinner with him again. In the restaurant he gave her a present, an egg-shaped cut stone allegedly from the Ural Mountains possessing some religious significance. He also gave her an expensive jewel box. Andre said he was unable to eat much because he was suffering from a stomach ailment, so the meeting was very short. No business was discussed during the meeting and Andre said he would phone later.

On 11 December Andre again took Birgitta to dinner. This time he arrived in a grey Simca driven by a stranger whom he introduced as, "My good friend, Vladilen." Andre said that in the future Birgitta would maintain contact with Vladilen because he had to leave Algiers in a few days. Birgitta was agreeable to this arrangement. During dinner Andre gave her a bottle of vodka and two cans of caviar. In turn she gave him a bottle of Martel cognac, following a pattern she had established while in Moscow. After they finished dinner, Andre said, "I haven't had time to buy you an appropriate gift, so please give me your handbag." He placed an envelope in the bag and returned it to her. Andre said that he would be leaving Algiers soon and assured Birgitta that Vladilen was an interesting man, an engineer by training. Andre stressed that he had to go to Tunisia and asked Birgitta to give Vladilen her phone number, which she did. Vladilen appeared to be reluctant to take it, or at least gave the impression that he didn't know what he was supposed to do with it. Birgitta did not believe that he was a member of the KGB because he did not press her for information, and did not appear to know anything of her background. In any event, they had nothing in common to discuss.

Vladilen phoned Birgitta at her apartment on 15 December and made

arrangements to pick her up for dinner that evening at the place where Andre had met her. Vladilen seemed to have difficulty adjusting to Birgitta and near the end of the meal he suddenly blurted, "Give me a list of all the Swedish people in Algiers." Birgitta answered that she didn't know many people but he persisted and said for her to bring the list to their next meeting. When Birgitta asked why such a list was needed, Vladilen answered that it was for her own security, that he wanted to check the names to see if any Swedish intelligence people were on it. Birgitta told him he could get such a list by writing to the Swedish Embassy and asking for it. He became confused and said that he couldn't do that. Apparently disturbed at the way the meeting was going, Vladilen decided to take Birgitta home. He dropped her off about 11 p.m. in the neighborhood of her apartment and told her he would phone her again.

On 19 December Birgitta received a phone call from Andre who said he was back from Tunisia and would like to see her. She said she was busy and asked him to call the next day. When Andre phoned again on 20 December Birgitta again said that she was too busy to see him, that she would like to but unfortunately she had too much to do at the embassy. This was the last time she spoke with Andre. She never saw or heard from him again.

On 27 December Vladilen phoned Birgitta and she agreed to meet him at the usual place. By this time she had made up her mind to break off the contact. She wrote a note in Russian in which she said she did not enjoy Vladilen's small dinner parties nor the indiscreet questions which followed and that she did not want to see him again. Vladilen read the letter and seemed to be both impressed and embarrassed and said, "Help me please, and go to a restaurant with me." When she refused he demanded that she give him a list of the members of the Swedish colony in Algeria. She refused to discuss it and told Vladilen that he had read her letter and should understand that she did not want to see him again. She left him standing on the street. The meeting had lasted ten minutes.

About three weeks later Vladilen phoned Birgitta at her apartment and said that he would like to see her about the letter she had given him at their last meeting. Birgitta agreed to meet him, mainly because she wanted to see if any mention of Oleg would be made at this time. Vladilen invited her to dinner in a restaurant but she refused to go. She had the impression that he was afraid and didn't know what to do next.



He told her he had sent the note she had given him to Andre and that Andre had been very surprised. Vladilen then asked her in Andre's name to give him a list of her close Swedish friends so that he could check it for persons dangerous to her security. She again refused and told him to ask the embassy. He then asked if she would give him a report about Swedish technological and economic assistance to Africa which she also refused to do. He asked for copies of correspondence which she had access to and was again refused. Every refusal by Birgitta brought a warning from Vladilen that he would inform Andre. Before they parted, Vladilen pleaded for her help and cooperation, and when she continued to refuse he told her goodbye on the street.

By this time Birgitta had informed her platonic Swedish friend of her troubles with the Soviets. He told her not to worry, that they would eventually drop the case. There is reason to believe that Birgitta had transferred some of her affection from Oleg to her new male friend, but apparently he did not wish to enter into a liaison with her.

Birgitta met Vladilen again on 18 February 1966 only because he told her he had a letter from Andre. While they were dining Vladilen handed her the following letter which was written in English.

Dear Juliana,

I am very surprised and disappointed with what Vladilen has written concerning your behavior. I don't understand your attitude in view of your excellent help in the past, especially in translating articles concerning Indonesia, the information about the Swedish Embassy personnel in Moscow, the excellent information concerning the Intelligence Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the information concerning Swedish Embassy employees in Algeria. Your information was of great help to me in my work, and I expect you to answer all of Vladilen's questions. If you are unwilling to cooperate, I will then send all the material I have regarding you to Vladilen. You understand quite well what Vladilen will do with this, and that as a result you will be in a very awkward situation.

The letter did not mention Oleg. After reading it, Birgitta asked Vladilen if she could keep it but he said no and told her to give it back to him. She said she would have to have time to think over what to do and explained

that at the moment she was upset because her mother in Sweden was ill, which was true, and that she might have to go home. She asked Vladilen not to press her for an answer but to phone her around the end of February. If she was not at home it meant that she was in Sweden and he should call her later. She promised not to discuss her situation with anyone.

Following this meeting with Vladilen, Birgitta could no longer stand the strain of her mother's illness in addition to her own problems with Vladilen and Andre, and phoned one of her colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sweden to ask for help. The ministry turned the case over to the Swedish security service.

Birgitta was recalled to Sweden for an interview with the service on 27 February 1966 and remained there until 29 February. Arrangements were made for her to return to Algeria to close her apartment and return home permanently.

On 9 March 1966 Vladilen phoned Birgitta at her apartment at 7:15 a.m. in Algiers and asked to see her, saying he had phoned a hundred times before. She told him she would be unable to see him before 20 March because of the pressure of her work, knowing that she would leave Algiers on 19 March. However, she had prepared a letter for Andre which she had planned to give to Vladilen but the Swedish service forbade her to do so. In the letter she had written that she still considered Andre her friend.

Birgitta returned to Sweden 19 March 1966, and was assigned, pending further investigation, to a non-sensitive position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Epilogue**

The Swedish security service described Birgitta as a 52 year old woman who looks about 6(? years old, but who believes she has the charm and beauty of a young girl. She told one of the representatives of the service that she was like a young woman of 25, and she believes it. She is easily attracted to men and falls in love with anyone who flatters her or gives her attention. She told one interviewer that she was still in love with

Oleg and refused to believe he was an agent of the KGB. She asked that this be proved to her, and said that she would leave for Switzerland on a moment's notice to meet him if she knew he was there. The fact that Oleg is 16 years her junior does not appear to her to be unreasonable or cause for concern.

In the opinion of the Swedish service, Birgitta gave them a self-serving account of her relationship with the KGB and of the information she passed to them. Certainly any reckoning of the time, money, and personnel invested in her by the Soviets indicates that they must have received information of far greater value than she has indicated.

Altogether she had about 100 meetings with Oleg in Moscow, about 16 meetings with Andre in KGB safehouses in Moscow, and five meetings with Vladilen in Algiers. To date, no attempt has been made by the Soviets to recontact her since her return to Sweden.

Birgitta's handling by Andre reflected a shrewd knowledge of her character. He catered to her love for fine things, presented her with gifts of "new icons" described to her as antiques, exploited her fondness for gourmet meals, resplendent furnishings and good manners. In contrast, Vladilen's lack of assurance and poor manners repelled her and had much to do with her decision to end the affair. This case illustrates KGB technique at its best and worst. It also exemplifies a very sophisticated maneuver in which blackmail was applied in a backhanded way, deliberately causing the culprit to feel a moral obligation to "protect" the person who was actually primarily responsible for her troubles.<sup>2</sup>

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1 True names, dates, and some nationalities have been altered.

2 For an account of another fairly recent episode illustrative of KGB techniques, see Cdr. Arthur Courtney's *Sailor in a Russian Frame*, London (Johnson) 1968, reviewed in *Studies* XIII 1, p. 87 ff.

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