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The Spy Who Loved Me

By Judy Chavez with Rudy Maxa

The hotel suite was cluttered with empty bottles and overflowing ashtrays. It smelled stale. The living room's centerpiece was a cart of picked-over room-service food. The red carpet was faded, the curtains closed.

I soon learned the curtains were always closed in room 520 of what was then called the Sheraton Park Hotel, now the Sheraton Washington. I also learned that the male "secretary" who greeted me at the door was an FBI agent. And my client was not a French diplomat named André Ringland, as I'd been told, but a Soviet defector named Arkady Shevchenko, hidden away here while the CIA debriefed him.

On that May night seven years ago, I began regularly sleeping for money with the man I called Andy. Today Arkady Shevchenko's book, *Breaking with Moscow*, is a best seller, and Hollywood has paid \$450,000 to buy the rights to his story of spying for the United States before defecting from his United Nations job.

I saw Andy on *60 Minutes* not long ago, and he dismissed our sexual interlude as a two-week aberration. I hope his memory for other events—particularly those detailed in his memoir—was better; I was at his beck and call for seven

months. And in the end I had almost as much difficulty breaking with Andy as he had breaking with Moscow.

May 2, 1978. My beeper went off as I was drinking at the bar of Anna Maria's Italian Restaurant on Connecticut Avenue. I called my escort service. In the Yellow Pages, my employer advertised under two names: Foxy Lady and—appropriately, as it turned out—Mata Hari Escort Service. I was wanted for an all-night job at the Sheraton Park Hotel, room 520. I'd already seen two men that evening, and I hated all-night assignments; I could never fall asleep lying next to a stranger.

From the moment I arrived in the hotel's parking lot, I felt I was being watched. Paranoia comes with the territory when you're a prostitute, but there was something different about this job.

The escort service said the client, supposedly a French diplomat, had hired two girls previously, and they'd reported no difficulty. One of the women was there at the bar with me, and she confirmed what I'd learned on the phone. But she didn't tell me about the male secretary at the diplomat's door.

"Are you the girl we're waiting for?" he asked.

"Are you a cop?" I answered.

He told me he was Mr. Ringland's

secretary and that Mr. Ringland was very distressed this particular night, so I was to make sure he had a good time.

Anyone would have been depressed in those slovenly surroundings. The radio droned Muzak-style music; my client looked tired and old. He mumbled something about a drink. He was sipping Cointreau, so I did, too. I collected \$250 for the escort service and asked for \$500 for my time. I would have settled for \$400, but he padded into the bedroom and came back with the cash. The next morning, he uncomplainingly gave me another \$100 when he wanted to have sex again. And he told me he'd like to see me regularly.

What the hell, I thought, I might as well be taking his money as anyone else.

Who can say why Arkady Shevchenko fell in love with me? Of course, he was emotionally vulnerable. He had defected from his post as undersecretary general of the United Nations in early April of 1978. On April 20 he was brought to Washington for protection and debriefing. He began seeing prostitutes almost immediately. Six days after my first night with him, Andy learned that his wife, who had returned to Moscow after his defection, had committed suicide, though he was convinced she'd been murdered.

Judy Chavez on the fire escape of her New York co-op, which she helped finance with proceeds from her fling with Soviet defector Arkady Shevchenko and a subsequent book about it. She lives in the loft with her Yugoslavian husband.

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But I should have been the last candidate to see him through his tough times. I was hardly the sweet, cuddly type—quite the opposite. My specialty was “English,” the domination of men. And while Andy didn’t have a taste for that specialty, I worked hard to retain control of our meetings. I wouldn’t see him as often as he demanded. I rarely let him kiss me on the mouth. I tried to keep sex to a minimum; whatever kind of spying he may have performed for the CIA when he was still a Soviet citizen attached to the United Nations, he was no James Bond in bed.

Perhaps it was my aloofness that created the fixation Andy had on me. When we were together, he focused entirely on me and was oblivious to other company and surroundings; I couldn’t read a book or listen to a tape without his interrupting. He was always touching me, something I loathe from clients. To satisfy him and minimize my irritation, I had him massage me for hours. It kept his hands busy and allowed me to day-dream.

The nicest memory I have of Andy is that he didn’t mind my Persian cat, China Doll, sleeping on the pillow above our heads, even though he hated anything that had to do with China. But his personality wouldn’t win any contests. He was a master at the bluster, and his favorite line was “That is totally unacceptable!” It was a command his FBI bodyguards grew tired of hearing, and so did I.

We soon worked out a financial relationship: He paid me \$5,000 a month for about ten overnight visits. There were bonuses, such as \$9,000 to buy a Corvette, occasional shopping sprees, and a trip to the Virgin Islands.

Most of my clients preferred me in short, black leather skirts and garter belts and stockings, but Andy grew apologetic if I didn’t dress like a “lady.” I had to wear a dress and heels, and my shoes had to match my handbag. Gradually, as I became a regular visitor, the French diplomat’s cover began to crack, and the bodyguards with the guns admitted they were FBI agents.

In a way, I became an ally with the agents, who worried not only about Andy’s security but also about his drinking. The daily CIA debriefings, in another location, drained Andy, and he grew moody. Even in the best of times, he was maddeningly indecisive and pompous and expected everyone to march to his orders. When he was despondent, he was nearly insufferable.

I became a source of information to Andy’s two regular FBI agents. To judge his frame of mind, they would ask

me how many times he had been able to perform. They asked me to try to keep him from drinking so much; I did my part by introducing Andy to marijuana. It was important, the FBI told me, that I make Andy happy because he was meant to be an example to other defectors.

In fact, when news of my monthly retainer became public, the *Boston Globe* opined that “anyone who doesn’t believe we live in a great country should take a good look at Andy Shevchenko—

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he’s absolute living proof that the American dream still exists.”

Andy coveted money and fame, and he thought writing a best-selling book would bring him both. I am a meticulous record-keeper—I keep a diary and, in Andy’s case, kept photocopies of the \$35,000 in checks he gave me. The scene was so bizarre, what with FBI agents and guns and secrecy, that I thought the day might come when I’d need all the proof of reality I could gather. So when he began outlining his book, I memorized his chapter titles six at a time and wrote them down in the bathroom.

There’s been some debate about his memoir. His first publisher, Simon & Schuster, rejected his initial attempt as too boring. Andy and friends, including his Washington lawyer, Bill Geimer, knew they’d have to spice up the manuscript if they hoped to interest another publisher.

When the book was finally published by Alfred A. Knopf, Simon & Schuster was reportedly surprised to read that for two and a half years before he defected, Andy had been spying for the CIA on the Soviet delegation to the United Nations. That morsel hadn’t been in his first manuscript, and it gave rise to speculation that his role as a spy was concocted to hype his book and make the CIA look good.

While I think Andy shaded the truth of his importance throughout *Breaking with Moscow*, I am convinced he told the truth on the subject of spying. Long before his literary problems, he confided to

me in bed that he’d been a spy for the CIA before he defected. And in September 1978 *Argosy* magazine published an article that said, among other things, that Andy had been a spy for the CIA prior to his defection. *Argosy* reported Andy had provided the United States with information on the Soviet strategy during the SALT talks.

Afraid he’d spot the article himself and blow up, the CIA showed him the piece; Andy went crazy and for two days raged against what he perceived as a leak. But no one noticed the article, and not until Andy’s book was published earlier this year did that news make headlines.

At first, Andy didn’t intend to reveal his role as a spy. He outlined 37 chapters during the seven months we were together. There was no mention of his spying, no dramatic car-chase scene that opens *Breaking with Moscow*. He planned a much more cerebral, analytical book than what finally was published. Among the chapters that got left on the cutting-room floor are ones he titled “The Watergate Affair—A Soviet Interpretation,” “Turbulence in the Middle East,” and “Peacemaking in Europe.”

Reading *Breaking with Moscow* confirmed the conclusion I’d drawn after listening to his boasting for seven months: He wasn’t all that big a fish. He was basically a speechwriter for important people. His tendency toward self-aggrandizement knew few bounds, and as I’ve watched him make pronouncements on talk shows during his book-promotion tour, I note that he’s changed little. I expected his book to be tougher on the Soviets—perhaps Moscow isn’t as angry over his defection as it once was.

Andy’s obsession with me led to repeated proposals of marriage, despite my businesslike approach to sex. When Andy moved from the Sheraton to an apartment across the street from the Shoreham Hotel on Calvert Street, Northwest, I helped him buy linen and furniture, so I suppose we did transcend the usual hooker-john relationship. But after so many months spent in such close quarters, that was inevitable. Only once did we manage to evade our bodyguards, sneaking out for a private dinner that sent alarm bells ringing; when we returned to the hotel, it was swarming with FBI and CIA agents.

Andy repeatedly insisted I stop seeing other men. By the fall of 1978, I could not handle the pressure. I was now, as far as the FBI was concerned, one of the boys. Andy’s constant orders to me and his concern for my whereabouts were taking their toll. On a trip to the Virgin Islands, he wouldn’t even let me take

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scuba-diving lessons unless he was standing on the dock. I felt trapped. Just as Andy knew there was no return after he began cooperating with American intelligence agents, I was beginning to feel destined to be his mistress forever. And even though he said he'd been paid more than \$70,000 in severance pay by the UN and was receiving \$60,000 a year from the CIA for "consulting," I knew the CIA wouldn't fund his taste for a call girl forever. I wondered what the CIA did with call girls whose presence was no longer required.

In early autumn I arranged through lawyer Jack Buckley to tell my story to NBC reporter Jim Polk. I planned to meet Andy for lunch at the Iron Gate Inn on N Street, where Polk's television crew would lie in wait. I figured that going public was the only way to protect myself.

Andy and his security agent were captured by the camera crew, and that night the network news reported that the CIA had been financing Andy's bedmate. Andy denied it, but the charge stuck.

Asked about my fee during a White House press conference, President Jimmy Carter joked, "If the figures the woman quoted were accurate—which they aren't—it would be highly inflationary and contrary to my policy."

The figures I quoted were, if anything, underestimates. I was asked only once by the FBI what I was charging Andy for sex. I lied and said \$3,000 a month; the agent said as long as it was less than \$1,000 a week, that was okay.

Sarah Bernhardt once described the life of a courtesan as "a lucrative form of slavery," and indeed it was. My fling with Andy and a subsequent paperback book about it allowed me to purchase a loft in SoHo, where I now live with my husband, a Yugoslavian artist.

As the years have passed, I've come to realize how much alike Andy and I were. Seven years ago, we were both professional outsiders, each living underground for different reasons.

We were both separated from our families. Even though my adoptive parents lived in McLean, they knew nothing about my life as a call girl—I'd left home to marry as a teenager, and at age 22 I was living a fast lifestyle fueled by easy money and drugs. Fortunately, we've become closer during the ensuing years.

For his part, Andy had lost a wife and had little hope of ever seeing his son and daughter again.

I used marijuana and rock music to get me through the day. Andy used booze. When we went out on shopping trips or to dinner, he'd slip into the men's room and take a swig from a bottle of vodka.

Once, eating at Napoleon's restaurant near the Sheraton on Connecticut Avenue, he got sick at the table and I nearly had to carry him home.

Betrayal of his homeland, fear of the future, and loss of his friends and family obviously contributed to Andy's depression. But though he was helpless on the minor matters in life—he stumbled around stores and could barely function without his FBI or CIA escorts—he nevertheless envisioned himself as one of

the world's wise men, an international figure whose greatness was not yet recognized.

Six months after I left Andy in a blaze of publicity, he married a Washington woman to whom his lawyer had introduced him. Now that his book has earned him invitations to the White House and the right Washington dinner parties, now that at least a measure of the fame and adulation he so craved is his, I wish him peace. □



Wearing an antique peignoir in her boudoir, Judy Chavez cradles her white Persian, Billy Boy. Gone from her wardrobe are the leather outfits, whips, and handcuffs that she once used to ply her trade in Washington and Manhattan.