



Spy Dust: Two Masters of Disguise Reveal the Tools and Operations That Helped Win the Cold War

By Antonio Mendez

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The successive heads of the CIA's disguise and technical operations department, who are married to each other, recount their work to protect and rescue a source as they struggle against the Soviet Union in the late 1980s.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Retired CIA disguise expert Antonio Mendez (The Master of Disguise) teams up with his wife, also a former agent, to reveal how they fell in love during a highly critical mission in the waning years of the Cold War. Antonio and Jonna shift back and forth in their account as separate assignments eventually converge in the extrication from Moscow of a high-ranking KGB mole, jeopardized by the traitorous dealings of men like Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen. Fans of Alan Furst's WWII espionage novels will appreciate the subdued nature of this thriller, where the stakes are always high but the individual actions are usually low-key, as well as the details the Mendezes provide on the art of eluding surveillance. The title is a red herring although "spy dust" was a real element of the KGB's operations against foreigners in Moscow, its role in this story is of a background nature. The climax hinges on a much more old-fashioned game of cat and mouse. There are a few weak spots in the narrative, where the authors (or their collaborator, true-crime scribe Henderson) try to recreate scenes at which they weren't present, but for the most part this is an entertaining thriller with the added virtue of being true. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

"Spy dust" is a chemical marking compound developed by the KGB (Soviet secret police) to help track targeted individuals. It is just one of the tools and techniques discussed by the authors, who headed up the Disguise and Documents Division of the CIA's Office of Technical Service and are now consultants for the CBS TV drama series *The Agency*. The authors met in the mid-1980s while helping to rebuild U.S. intelligence operations in the USSR, which had been severely crippled by American traitors selling secret information to the Soviets. Included here are fascinating tales of clandestine meetings, narrow escapes, missed clues, ingenious equipment, and various successes and failures, and the reader soon comes to realize that a lot of professional brain power goes into planning and carrying out this deadly game with the highest stakes imaginable. There is a glossary of spy terms at the end of the book, but a map of Moscow would have helped. This interesting and easy-to-read tale complements Antonio Mendez's *The Master of Disguise: My Secret Life in the CIA* and is suitable for the espionage sections of both public and academic libraries. [Index not seen] Daniel K. Blewett, Coll. of DuPage Lib., Glen Ellyn, IL

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From Booklist

Readers interested in the spy game will salivate at the prospects of reading this insider account of final five years of the cold war. The authors, former CIA agents charged with developing new techniques for keeping the KGB from spying on and recruiting American intelligence personnel, fell in love as they worked to change the rules of espionage; their story is a rare combination of nuts-and-bolts tradecraft and gentle romance. But don't be misled by the love angle; the developing relationship between the spies adds a human dimension to the story, but it never gets in the way of the insider stuff: descriptions of the technology of spying; play-by-play accounts of some major operations; and a wealth of information about Soviet espionage techniques (the book gets its title from a powder used by Russian spies to track American agents without having to maintain visual contact). This is an endlessly fascinating book, one that spy buffs will return to again and again. Spy novelists take note, too: as a research tool, it's invaluable. *David Pitt*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Hansen:

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