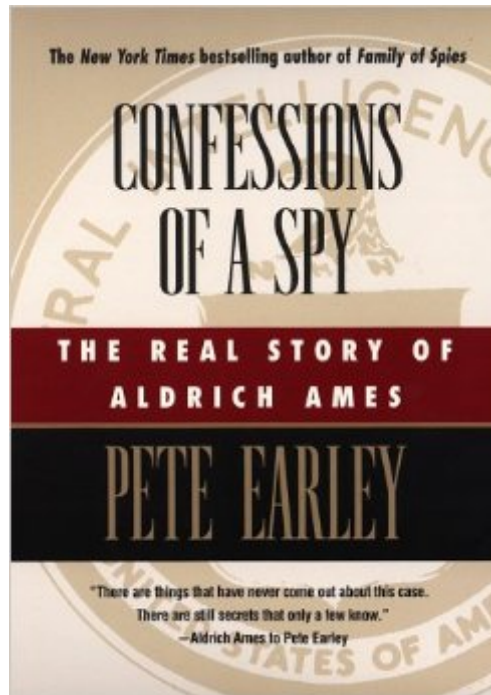


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Confessions Of A Spy: The Real Story Of Aldrich Ames



Synopsis

For nine years he fed highly classified information to the KGB. Russia paid him millions of dollars-and promised millions more. He betrayed the identities of the United States' top agents. An act that led to their executions inside the Soviet Union... Never before in American history has one man done so much to sabotage our national security. Pete Earley is the only writer to conduct fifty hours of one-on-one interviews with CIA mole Aldrich Ames, without a government censor present. He is the only writer to have traveled to Moscow to speak directly to Ames's KGB handlers and with the families of the spies he betrayed. And he is the only writer to have had access to the remarkable CIA mole-hunting team that tracked down and stopped Aldrich Ames.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having borrowed a copy from a colleague, whose book contained signatures of all those who took part in this long-lasting investigation on behalf of the CIA, I wrote to a friend, who some thirty years ago occupied the same position as Rick Ames, i.e. he was a CI chief at the SE Division. His answer may be interesting not only to Mr Earley but to many readers of this well written and useful book. My friend permitted me to quote him and I do it with pleasure. 'Hard to know where to begin to comment on the despicable Aldrich Ames. First, his actions. His was the particularly venomous form of treason that doesn't just expose hidden details of science or industry or political planning--which some rationalize as spreading necessary knowledge or improving the prospects of peace. What he was doing, instead, was destroying the day to day work of his own colleagues and friends, murdering individuals as selectively as if he were aiming a gun at each of their heads, and clearly

and directly diminishing the security of his own country (moreover, a democracy no more imperfect than any other). That he did such a colossal thing simply for money suggests not just disloyalty but an extraordinary, almost inhuman, lack of conscience, decency or morals. In other words, a monster. By the way, I don't accept justification by comparison with similar revelations from the other side in the Cold War. There was not only the difference in regimes east and west, but especially in punishments. Certain execution (and punishment of families) cannot be compared with a few years in a Western prison. I suppose one could also comment on the degree of Ames's access.

At the time of this book's publication (1997), Earley was the only writer to interview Aldrich Ames, the CIA agent and KGB spy. Earley did more than 50 hours of interviews with Ames before the CIA got wind of things and whisked Ames off to federal prison. When I first started the book, I had barely heard of Aldrich Ames, so I suppose I was as open-minded as one can get. The results are less than revelatory--but that's not due to Pete Earley's writing. It's natural to want to know why someone would commit treason. Did Ames compromise more than 100 operations and turn over to the KGB twenty to twenty-five names of KGB agents who were working for the CIA and FBI because he no longer believed in the principles for which the CIA fought? Or, more accurately, because he believed the CIA no longer believed in them? He cites this in his interviews, but it feels perfunctory. Really, he did it for money. Initially he convinced himself he was desperate for cash due to his divorce from his first wife. He waltzed into the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C.--without even being recruited!--and started turning over information. Besides the damage he did to CIA operations, he was responsible for the executions of no less than ten Soviet men who were helping the CIA. (One other committed suicide.) Most often noted is General Dmitri Polyakov, who was a CIA spy for 18 years. He was already retired when Ames gave the KGB his name. Though hindsight is always 20/20 in these situations, it's hard to fathom how the CIA could have missed a mole in their ranks when twenty to twenty-five Soviet agents went missing in 1985 over a period of just a few months.

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