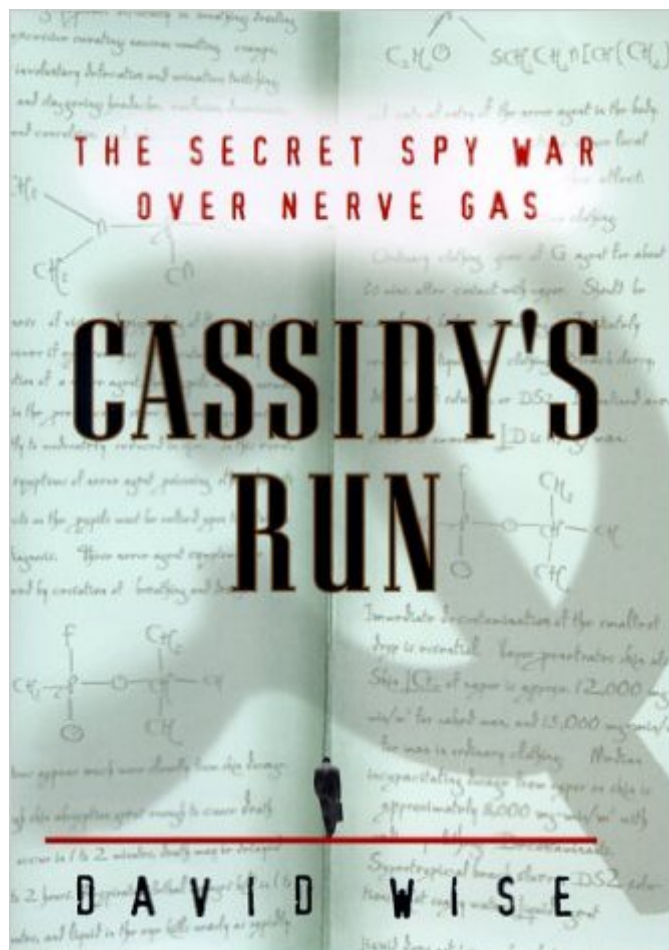


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Cassidy's Run: The Secret Spy War Over Nerve Gas



Synopsis

Cassidy's Run is the riveting story of one of the best-kept secrets of the Cold War—a espionage operation mounted by Washington against the Soviet Union that ran for twenty-three years. At the highest levels of the government, its code name was Operation Shocker. Lured by a double agent working for the United States, ten Russian spies, including a professor at the University of Minnesota, his wife, and a classic "sleeper" spy in New York City, were sent by Moscow to penetrate America's secrets. Two FBI agents were killed, and secret formulas were passed to the Russians in a dangerous ploy that could have spurred Moscow to create the world's most powerful nerve gas. Cassidy's Run tells this extraordinary true story for the first time, following a trail that leads from Washington to Moscow, with detours to Florida, Minnesota, and Mexico. Based on documents secret until now and scores of interviews in the United States and Russia, the book reveals that: more than 4,500 pages of classified documents, including U.S. nerve gas formulas, were passed to the Soviet Union in exchange for hundreds of thousands of dollars—an "Armageddon code," a telephone call to a number in New York City, was to alert the sleeper spy to an impending nuclear attack—a warning he would transmit to the Soviets by radio signal from atop a rock in Central Park—two FBI agents were killed when their plane crashed during surveillance of one of the Soviet spies as he headed for the Canadian border—secret "drops" for microdots were set up by Moscow from New York to Florida to Washington. More than a cloak-and-dagger tale, Cassidy's Run is the spellbinding story of one ordinary man, Sergeant Joe Cassidy, not trained as a spy, who suddenly found himself the FBI's secret weapon in a dangerous clandestine war. ADVANCE PRAISE FOR CASSIDY'S RUN "Cassidy's Run shows, once again, that few writers know the ins and outs of the spy game like David Wise. . . his research is meticulous in this true story of espionage that reads like a thriller." —Dan Rather "The Master has done it again. David Wise, the best observer and chronicler of spies there is, has told another gripping story. This one comes from the cold war combat over nerve gas and is spookier than ever because it's all true." —Jim Lehrer

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Customer Reviews

I do not remember much of my father. Most of my sentiments have come from stories told by my mother, grandma, aunts and uncles. My whole life I have known that my father was involved in something honorable and patriotic, but until "Cassidy's Run" I was without understanding of the details, depth and nobility of it all. David Wise has unfolded a story that is worthy of all our family's pride and reverence. It is with extreme gratitude in finally knowing the truth about my father's death that I would encourage all to read this true account. To do so honors those who have given their lives in the service of ours. It is a story worth being told, and one that every patriot should be proud of. Perhaps it is because of my closeness to the subject matter, but I for one have felt a stronger obligation to be the "good man" my mother swore she would raise at my father's funeral. While I don't think the FBI is for me, the lives of service all those in "Cassidy's Run" displayed are exemplary to each of us.

An excellent book by a well-known reporter and critic of America's intelligence establishment. The book details how for over 20 years, a dedicated group of FBI agents "dangled" and then "ran" US Army Sgt. Cassidy against the GRU (the Soviet equivalent of the US DIA). It is a book about an ordinary soldier's extraordinary dedication to duty and country, and how he helped his country in the darkest days of the Cold War against the "Evil Empire" (and evil, it was). America was very fortunate to have men such as Cassidy and the FBI agents he worked with. None of them did it for money (Cassidy did not keep any of the hundreds-of-thousands of dollars the GRU gave him) or fame -- these men kept secrets, in some cases they even took them to their graves. The book ends on a frustrating note as Washington bureaucrats step in at the end and do not allow the case to run its full course. The only flaw with the book is that I would have liked to have gotten to know Cassidy a bit better. But, overall, an excellent and well-documented read with some interesting twists-and-turns (e.g., the involvement of a current Mexican Congressman -- read it, you'll see) and

one which shines some light on some of the men who won the Cold War for us and for freedom. The good guys do win on occasion!

Nerve Gas kills by inhibiting the production of Cholinestrase, which keeps the nervous system at a regular and moderate pace. Without cholinestrase, the nervous system goes into hyperspeed, causing a system wide failure the body's ability to breath, pump blood, and in short to live. David Wise has written of a 20+ year effort to mislead the Soviet Union through the use of a remarkable double agent, Joseph Cassidy. This is a book that is frightening- there is inconclusive evidence that information leaked by this agent may have spurred the Soviet's CW industry to create the most powerfull nerve agent known to man- a deadly binary in the tradition of VX. All in all a great read that will bring a neglected aspect of history to light while memorializing those heros who fought in the shadows of the greatest intelligence war to date.

This is an excellent work of journalism; unbiased, found many pieces that fit together to make the entire story which others may have never tried to find. Reading the notes at the end really gives another view of how much of the information was collected. The author tried time and again to access certain pieces and hit stone walls of intel classification but somehow was still able to ferret out a lot of surprising details. I had a lot of questions from my own research which this book answered and exceeded my expectations. Excellent work!

Smoothly written and absorbing. Not my usual kind of book, but well worth picking up. In 1959, at the height of the Cold War, the FBI decided to dangle a prospect in front of a Soviet embassy employee named Polikarpov. Polikarpov, a GRU officer, took the bait and enlisted Sergeant Joseph Cassidy as a for-cash agent. The relationship continued for twenty-three years, during which Cassidy solicited information that netted ten other Soviet spies and funneled an enormous mass of true, false, misleading, and trivial intelligence eastward. Much of the intelligence concerned the nerve gas research and production facility at Edgewood Arsenal, and may have led the Soviets into expensive and dangerous blind alleys. Details of the operation, especially the capture and release of two Mexican nationals who were confessed spies, make an interesting account of a US intelligence success not previously publicized.

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