

# CIA Traitor Aldrich Ames And The Men He Betrayed

When it comes to notorious spies in American history, few match the significance and level of betrayal exhibited by CIA operative Aldrich Ames. Over the course of nine years, Ames compromised valuable intelligence to the Soviet Union and later Russia, resulting in the deaths of many American agents and sources. This article delves into the story of Aldrich Ames, his treacherous activities, and the devastating impact his actions had on the intelligence community.

## The Rise of Aldrich Ames

Aldrich Ames was born on May 26, 1941, in River Falls, Wisconsin. He joined the CIA in 1962, working as a low-level case officer, but quickly climbed the ranks due to his intelligence and proficiency in counterintelligence. By the time the 1980s rolled around, Ames had become a senior CIA officer, specializing in Soviet operations.

It was during this period that Ames started demonstrating signs of financial troubles, owing thousands of dollars in debts. This vulnerability caught the attention of the Soviets, who were always on the lookout for potential recruitment targets. In 1985, Ames was approached by a KGB agent in Colombia, and thus began his path to becoming one of the most damaging double agents in American history.

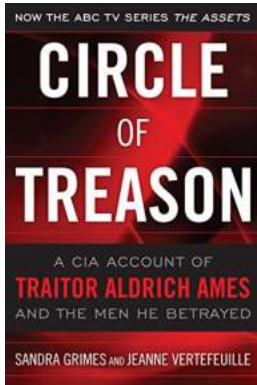
### **Circle of Treason: CIA Traitor Aldrich Ames and the Men He Betrayed** by Caroline Stoessinger (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled  
X-Ray : Enabled  
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Print length : 214 pages



## The Betrayal Begins

Ames began his betrayal in earnest in 1985. For several years, he sold highly classified information to the KGB, pocketing exorbitant sums of money in return. His access to sensitive CIA operations and various agents made him an invaluable asset for the Soviets.

By compromising multiple undercover agents, Ames put their lives in grave danger. The ripple effect of his deception was far-reaching, leading to the exposure and deaths of numerous agents, some of whom were working in extremely secretive and high-stakes operations.

## Motivation and Modus Operandi

One of the most perplexing aspects of Ames' betrayal was his motivation. While financial troubles were a driving force, many experts believe that his dissatisfaction with the CIA and ideological disillusionment played significant roles in his betrayal. Additionally, Ames was known for his extravagant lifestyle, his spending habits often giving away the secret double life he led.

Ames utilized various techniques to extract information from the CIA's databases, often resorting to manually transcribing documents that he later passed on to his handlers. He also used specialized equipment and techniques to identify CIA assets, compromising their operations and eventually leading to their capture or execution.

## **Takedown and Investigation**

The operations to identify and capture Ames were painstakingly carried out by the CIA and FBI. Suspecting that there was a mole within their ranks, they closely examined access to sensitive information and detected several anomalies and irregularities that pointed directly towards Ames.

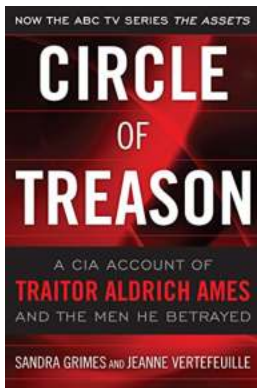
In 1994, Aldrich Ames was apprehended, along with his wife, Rosario. The arrest capped off one of the most destructive periods in American intelligence history. Ames pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

## **Aftermath and Lessons Learned**

The consequences of Ames' actions were devastating and wide-ranging. The US intelligence community suffered a significant blow, as years of painstaking work and valuable assets were lost or compromised. The event also highlighted the need for improved counterintelligence techniques and more stringent vetting procedures within the CIA.

The Ames case served as a wake-up call, prompting intelligence agencies to revamp their internal security measures and reassess existing protocols. Today, counterintelligence efforts have evolved significantly, relying on advanced technologies and more rigorous oversight.

Aldrich Ames will forever be remembered as one of the most notorious traitors in American history. His treachery led to the betrayal and deaths of numerous CIA agents and sources, causing irreparable damage to the intelligence community. The case of Aldrich Ames serves as a reminder of the continuous struggle against espionage and the importance of vigilance within the intelligence community.



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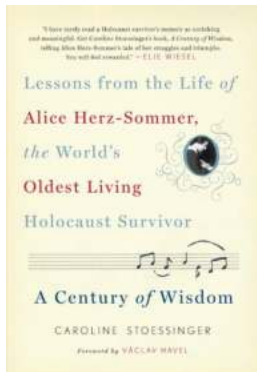


Circle of Treason details the authors' personal involvement in the hunt for and eventual identification of a Soviet mole in the CIA during the 1980s and 1990s. The search for the presumed traitor was necessitated by the loss of almost all of the CIA's large stable of Soviet intelligence officers working for the United States against their homeland. Aldrich Ames, a long-time acquaintance and co-worker of the authors in the Soviet-East European Division and Counterintelligence Center of CIA, turned out to be that mole. In April 1985 Ames walked in to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D. C. and volunteered to the KGB, working for the Soviet Union for nine years until his arrest by the FBI in February 1994.

Ames was arguably one of the most destructive traitors in American history, and is most well-known for providing information which led to the death of at least 11 Soviet intelligence officers who spied for the West. The authors participated in the majority of these cases and the book provides detailed accounts of the operational contact with the agents as well as other similar important cases with which the authors also had personal involvement. The stories of the brave men who were executed or imprisoned by the Soviet Union include GRU General Dmitriy Fedorovich Polyakov, KGB Colonel Leonid Georgiyevich Poleshchuk, KGB Colonel Vladimir Mikhaylovich Piguzov, GRU technical officer Nikolay Chernov, GRU Lieutenant Colonel Boris Nikolayevich Yuzhin, KGB scientific and technical officer Vladimir Ippolitovich Vetrov, GRU Colonel Vladimir Mikhaylovich Vasilyev, GRU officer Gennadiy Aleksandrovich Smetanin, KGB illegals support officer Gennadiy Grigoryevich Varenik, KGB scientific and technical officer Valeriy Fedorovich Martynov, KGB political intelligence officer Sergey Mikhaylovich Motorin, KGB officer Sergey Vorontsov, and Soviet scientist Adolf Grigoryevich Tolkachev. Other operations include KGB technical officer Viktor Ivanovich Sheymov, GRU Colonel Sergey Ivanovich Bokhan, and KGB Colonel Aleksey Isidorovich Kulak. Of particular note in the preceding list of agents compromised by Aldrich Ames is GRU General Dmitriy Fedorovich Polyakov, the highest-ranking spy ever run by the U.S. government against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Described as the “Crown Jewel”, he provided the U.S. with a treasure trove of information during his 20-plus year history of cooperation.

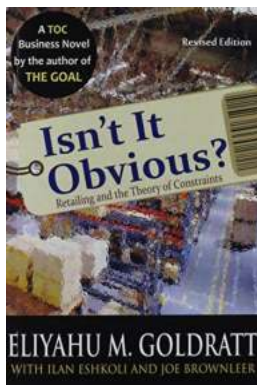
The book also covers the aftermath of Aldrich Ames arrest: the Congressional wrath on CIA for not identifying him sooner; FBI/CIA debriefings of Ames following his plea bargain; a retrospective of Ames the person and Ames the spy; and a comparison of Ames and FBI special agent and Soviet spy Robert Hanssen, arrested in February 2001 and sentenced to life in prison for spying for the Soviet Union against the U.S. for over 20 years. Although not personally involved in the

Hanssen investigation, the two authors were peripherally involved in what became, after many false starts the Hanssen case.



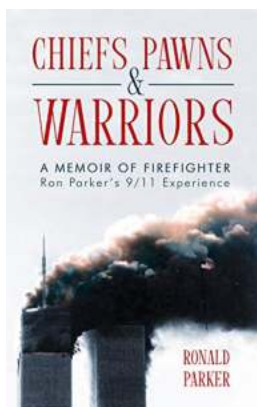
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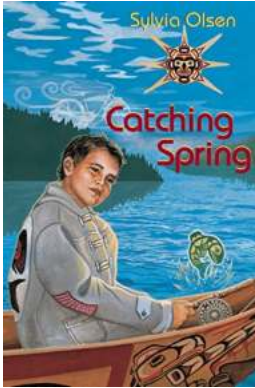
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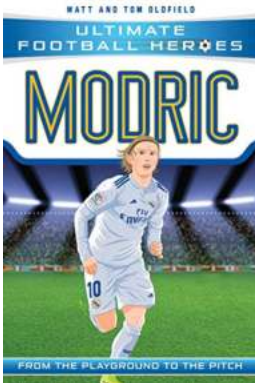
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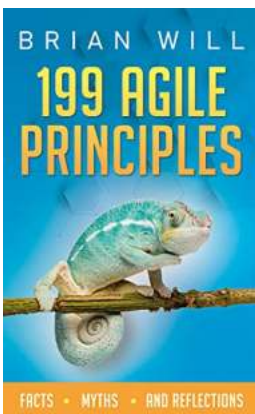
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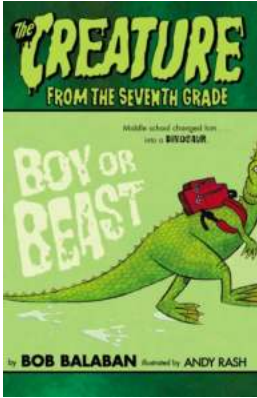
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