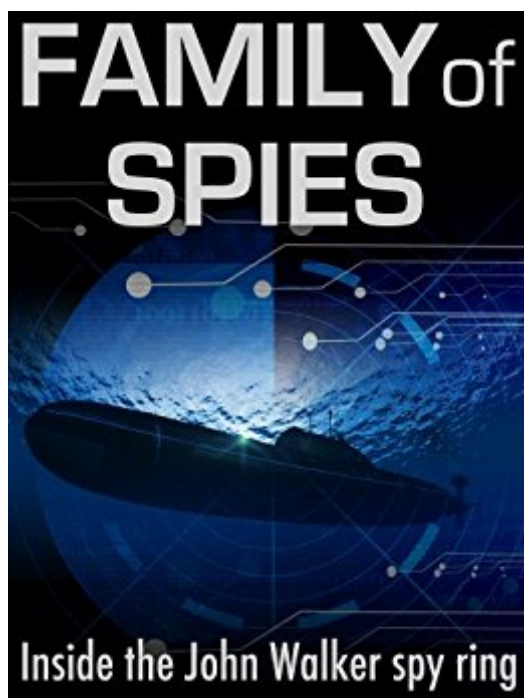


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# Family Of Spies: Inside The John Walker Spy Ring



## Synopsis

"The greatest case in KGB history. We deciphered millions of your messages. If there had been a war, we would have won it." - Russian KGB officer Vitaly Yurchenko

On the night of May 19, 1985, John Walker, Jr. deposited documents containing 129 stolen naval secrets wrapped in a plastic bag at an isolated KGB dead drop near Poolesville, Maryland. Then he drove on to another designated drop point to pick up the bundle of cash, more than \$200,000, that was to be his payment. There was nothing there. Disturbed, Walker went back to retrieve the plastic bag. It was gone. He reluctantly returned to his Rockville motel room, convinced he had at last been discovered by the FBI - but when there was no effort to stop or arrest him, it seemed likelier that the Russians had simply screwed up. In his nearly twenty years of treason, of spying for the USSR, this had happened twice before. But this time John Walker was wrong. When he left his room to hide the maps and photographs of the drop sites, handgun at the ready, two FBI agents leapt out at him. What The New York Times was to call "the most damaging espionage operation in American history" had been disarmed at last.

Pete Earley's gripping book is shocking in its revelations. The tale of master spy John Walker, Jr. and his ring - his Navy seaman son, Michael, who had supplied that night's documents from his ship, the nuclear aircraft carrier "Nimitz"; Walker's gullible brother, Arthur; and Walker's best friend, retired naval communications specialist Jerry Whitworth - is dazzling in its detail and especially appalling in the portrait it paints of the amoral, egocentric mastermind of the ring. For two decades John Walker fed secrets absolutely crucial to America's national security to the KGB. Incredibly, for two decades, his treason remained undetected. He grew increasingly more sophisticated with time - far different from the naive Navy watch officer who, in December 1967, simply walked into the Soviet Embassy in Washington and said, "I want to sell you top secrets." But his womanizing, his free-spending lifestyle, his boat, his plane, his cars, his frequent trips to Vienna and his discordant family life were more than enough to generate suspicion. However, tips from his wife, Barbara, were repeatedly ignored by the FBI.

Pete Earley conducted more than one hundred interviews for this book, including twenty-three separate interviews with John Walker, Jr., lasting an average of seven hours each. He spent several hundred hours talking with ten other members of the immediate family, and many more with the other eighty-seven people interviewed. Out of this extraordinary firsthand access, as well as essential documents, telephone transcripts and FBI files, comes this riveting story of what KGB officer Vitaly Yurchenko called "the greatest case in KGB history. We deciphered millions of your messages. If there had been a war, we would have won it." Family of Spies is as compelling as a superlative novel of international intrigue and suspense. But because it is fact, not fiction, its lessons are frightening. How could this have happened? How can

we prevent it from happening again? What can we learn from John Walker's story to ensure that our nation's secrets remain inviolable in the future?

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Pete Earley is a storyteller who has penned 13 books including the New York Times bestseller *The Hot House* and the 2007 Pulitzer Prize finalist *Crazy: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness*. After a 14-year career in journalism, including six years at *The Washington Post*, Pete became a full-time author with a commitment to expose the stories that entertain and surprise. His honest reporting and compelling writing helped him garner success as one of few authors with the power to introduce new ideas and give them currency, according to *Washingtonian* magazine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a great read about the John Walker spy ring! The author writes in such a way that the narcissistic, deviant, sociopathic personality of Walker clearly jumps off the pages. Due to the many interviews the author had with Walker, he was able to fully capture the sick, twisted, manipulative person that Walker was. The author does a good job of reviewing Walker's early years and family

history. His relationships are described in detail and help you to understand how Walker was such a manipulative presence who chose his "victims " and seduced them into betraying their own country. For those who like spy books that really delve deeply into the personality and inner thoughts of the traitor....this book is for you.

I had a special interest about the spy, John Walker. I served with him on the USS Johnnie Hutchins. It doesn't show his best side, if he had one but it made me wonder about how easy it was to have access to secret stuff and how he ever got a clearance for such. He was the most damaging spy ever. Even though I knew him and sort of liked him, I wondered why he didn't get the death penalty. he sure earned it. John passed away last year in Federal prison in Missouri. John maintained that his spying for Russia actually helped stop the Vietnam war and he deserves credit for that????He for sure, hurt our efforts in Vietnam. The North knew our military plans (especially bombing) before our command on the ground did. Shame.

Historical and mind-blowing! You won't be able to but this book down. I found myself reading it around the clock and google fact checking as I read, and the worst part is that all of the facts checked out! John Walker Jr. could have singlehandedly taken down the greatest nation in the world! Getting to know him on a personal level, Pete Earley gives us a bird's eye view of the narcissistic brain. I was in shock the majority of the time I was reading because it is so hard to fathom an American so willing to put us all in danger for minor material things.

This book reads, at first, as though the author is making Walker into a hero. However, as you read through it, the true picture of what a terrible human being he was, emerges. The author sums up his opinion of Walker at the end and redeemed the book. It is a really interesting read and points out how corrupt an influence Walker was on his family and country. Highly recommend.

This is the eighth true story spy book I have read in recent weeks, including two each about spies Robert Hanssen and Aldridge Ames. The other reviews of this book on .com give a very good sketch of the book as well as how it compares with other books on the Walker spy ring, so I won't repeat that information. I just want to say that I found the book extremely riveting. More than any of the other books, when reading was interrupted by work or family, I could not wait to pick it up again and resume reading. The writer maintained my interest from start to finish. I loved it.

I was a navy officer during this period, and in some of my assignments responsible for communications security. This book is absolutely authentic. I could picture every situation and every piece of equipment described by the author. It was also somewhat depressing because it reminded me of how hard life in the surface navy could be at the time (under the Carter military draw down moving into the excellent Reagan navy), and how hard we worked to maintain communications security. Knowing now that all that security work was wasted because of this greedy loser who thought he was James Bond and his highly dysfunctional cohorts and family made me a little tired. I highly recommend it to anyone who is curious about how this type of thing can happen.

The Family of Spies was suspenseful and couldn't put it down. A different story than many of the other spy stories I've read. Many spies kept their secret to themselves, not their family. However, John chose a different tactic.

This book made me sick. It wasn't the fact that it was about a spy, but how incompetent can the Armed Forces be that they would not find out about this TRAITOR sometime before he actually and finally retired! Since I spent 12 years in the military, I find it inexcusable, on the part of his supervisors. Spies should be shot or hung, no matter in or out of the military...

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