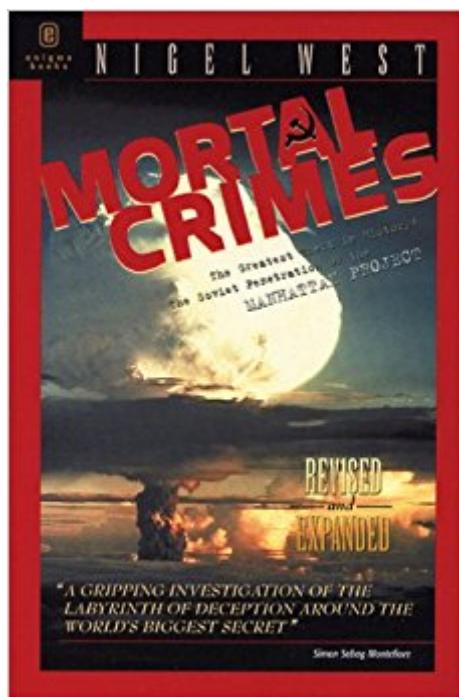


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# Mortal Crimes: The Greatest Theft In History: The Soviet Penetration Of The Manhattan Project



## **Synopsis**

Nigel West has studied the recently revealed documents about Soviet espionage against the Western Allies during and after World War II and has for the first time painted the complete picture of how the Soviet Union stole the secrets of the atomic bomb. The investigations by the British, Canadian, and US Military counterintelligence services through the Venona intercepts are placed in proper context and made intelligible by a master espionage history writer. What is revealed is the extent of the penetration by the NKVD and KGB of the most secret technologies of the era and how the West protected itself. A new and revised edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is not the book to start with for an understanding of the fascinating Soviet intelligence attack on the American/British atomic weapons program. It does fill in some blanks for readers who understand the background but it is easy to get lost in the changing code names and variety of agents and handlers. For example: "While there was to be a vital clue in the change of HURON's codename to ERNEST, ERIE is more difficult, as the unrecovered group is most likely either GEORGES or LEADER ." Nigel West does provide some appendices with tables tying code names to people. Before reading this book, some background would be helpful. Start with Rhodes' "The Making of the Atomic Bomb" for a great history of development of the bomb. Other works such as Lamphere's "The FBI-KGB War" and "Bombshell" by Albright and Kunstel will give some insight into

the personalities and motivations that the Soviets exploited. Some background on the Venona intercepts would be helpful such as the presentation on PBS's Nova.

Let's get the bad stuff out of the way at the begining: *Mortal Crimes* is poorly organized. The endnote numbers were left out of the text, and there weren't many of them to begin with. It's sometimes rambling and repetious. It's indexing of Soviet covernames is pathetic. And sometimes, I think West's conclusions are seriously askew, as when he identifies codename VEKSAL as Fermi rather than Oppenheimer. And there are a number of small, annoying mistakes (such as getting years wrong). None of that matters very much, though they did cost the book its fifth star. What matters is that in *Mortal Crimes*, Nigel West has pulled together huge amounts of material, including FBI files, VENONA decrypts, and recently released intelligence files from the former Soviet Union (OOH! I just LOVE to type "former Soviet Union!"). The KGB and GRU (as they are usually known) penetrated the U.S. government and scientific reasearch to an extent hard to grasp. There were about 200 active information sources in the U.S. at the end of WWII, and they supplied incredible amounts of information to the Soviets. I've been following the story of Soviet Espionage against the Manhattan Project for over ten years, and I found some new and important information about every other page: reasons to suspect Hans Bethe of espionage; possible identification of spy RELAY as Phillip Morrison; evidence of hard left associations of Ernest Lawrence(!); connections between spies William Weisband and Julius Rosenberg; the difficulties imposed by the way counter-intelligence was compartmentalized; the flood of atomic information from Britain; partial confirmation of Sudoplatov's charges against Robert Oppenheimer. There's some very good coverage of the Canadian phase of the espionage as well. I read this book in two days, and will soon reread it, indexing some of the information it contains. For any serious inquirer into Soviet Espionage, this book is a must.

Nuclear traitors, an infestation of spies within and surrounding the Manhattan Project. The book has a lot of facts that will make you angry. It's a choppy read, but the story is there. So many of these American and British spies were the same sort of misguided ideologues who migrated to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s to help build Socialism, or fought with the communists in the Spanish Civil War.

Newly revised and expanded is Nigel West's coverage of the Manhattan Project, the greatest heist in history. *Mortal Crimes: The Greatest Theft In History: Soviet Penetration Of The Manhattan*

Project presents the latest known facts on how Soviet spies stole the secrets of the atomic bomb are revealed, following the recent declassification of documents in Russia and the U.S. New details update this truly classic survey of the evidence.

Incredible, the infiltration penetration

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