

***The Real James Bond***

Presented by Judge James G. Adams Jr  
to the Athenaeum Society  
September 7, 2017

**Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, Fellow Presenter Mr. Denison, Members of the Athenaeum Society:**

**I have a confession to make tonight. One I am sure I share with several of you and know at least ONE...James G. Adams III. I am a died in the wool, over the top, fan of James Bond!**

**I do not apologize that I am a child of the sixties when James Bond first appeared on the silver screen. I have seen EVERY movie MULTIPLE TIMES and can quote many lines and many scenes!**

**When a new Bond movie comes out, I am one of the first there, dragging my wife with me, knowing full well I am probably going to have to attend a "Chick Flick" to appease her, though, I WILL say that in almost thirty years of marriage, she has become a Bond aficionado as well.**

**The title of my paper tonight is "The REAL James Bond: Dusko Popov.**

**As you probably know, the author of the James Bond books upon which the films are based was Ian Fleming. Fleming was a commander in the Royal Navy during World War II and was the personal assistant of Rear Admiral John Godfrey, Director of Naval Intelligence.**

**While Fleming was not a covert spy, he certainly, knew or knew about those that were agents of MI5 and MI6 of His Majesty's Secret Service. In fact, he personally knew the subject of this paper and as we will soon learn, personally observed an incident involving Popov that Fleming incorporated in his very first novel, *Casino Royale*.**

**Dusan "Dusko" Popov was born to a Serb family in Titel, Austria-Hungary on July 10, 1912. His parents were Milorad and Zora Popov. He had an older brother Ivan (Ivo) and a younger brother Valadan. The family was extremely wealthy and owed its fortune to Popov's paternal grandfather, Omer, a wealthy industrialist and banker who established factories, mines and retail businesses. Popov's father expanded the family business to include real estate holdings. When Dusko was an infant, the family left Titel and permanently relocated to their summer residence in Dubrovnik, which was their residence for most of the year. The family also had a manor in Belgrade which served as their winter residence.**

**Popov's childhood coincided with much political upheaval following World War I, as Austria-Hungary Empire was broken up into smaller states and its Balkan possessions were incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929, which was again dissolved in the '90's leading to war, genocide and ethnic cleansing.**

**However, Dusko and his family, because of their wealth were far removed from the political turmoil in the region. They boasted a sizeable collection of yachts and villas on the Adriatic Sea. Dusko and his brothers spent much of their formative years on the coast and**

**all became avid outdoorsmen and able athletes. The family was attended to always by stable of servants, even while on vacation.**

**Milorad Popov indulged his son's by having a spacious villa constructed for their exclusive use, where they could entertain their friends and host lavish and expensive parties. But, Milorad also insisted that they all receive a quality education at some of the finest private schools in Europe. Apart from his native Serbian, Dusko by his teenage years, was fluent in Italian, French and German.**

**At the age of 18, he enrolled at the University of Belgrade to pursue and undergraduate in law. Over the next four years Dusko became a familiar face in the café's and nightclubs of Belgrade and had a reputation as a lady 'man. London Times columnist Ben Macintyre reported, "Women found him irresistible with his easy manner, loose sensual mouth and green bedroom eyes."**

**In 1934, Popov enrolled at the University of Freiberg in Germany, intent on securing a doctorate in law. Germany had only recently come under the rule of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis and Popov paid little attention to politics. He had chosen Freiberg because it was relatively close to Yugoslavia and he wanted to improve his German language skills. As he progressed in his studies, Popov began showing a greater interest in politics and voiced his opinions more vigorously. About this same time, Popov became friends with a fellow student, Johnny Jepsen, the son of a German shipping magnate. The two grew close due to their raucous lifestyle and mutual love of sports cars.**

**In 1936-37, Popov began participating in debates at the Auslander Club, which were held every other Friday evening. He was disappointed that many of the other foreign students appeared to be swayed by the pro-Nazi arguments being espoused. Popov discovered that the pro-German debaters were all handpicked Nazi party members who chose the topic for debate beforehand and rehearsed Nazi talking points. He persuaded Jepsen to inform him of the topics ahead of time which he passed on to the American and British debaters. Popov gave two speeches at the club in defense of democracy. Popov despised Nazism and since he wasn't German, he believed no allegiance to Hitler or the German state.**

**In the summer of 1937, Popov completed his doctoral thesis and decided to celebrate with a trip to Paris. However, before he could leave he was arrested by the Gestapo who accused him of being a communist. His movements had been tracked by undercover agents and his acquaintances questioned. He was incarcerated at Freiburg Prison without formal charges. When Jepsen received news of his friend's arrest, he called Popov's father and informed him what had taken place. Popov's father contacted the Yugoslav Prime Minister who contacted Hermann Goring and after eight days of incarceration, Popov was released with orders to leave Germany within 24 hours. Not to waste time, Popov collected his belongings and boarded a train for Switzerland where Jepsen met him at the train station and informed Popov of his assistance. This knowledge further strengthened the bond between Jepsen and Popov.**

Upon his return to the family home in Dubrovnik in the fall of 1937, Popov began practicing law. In February, 1940 he received a message from Jebsen asking to meet him at the Serbian King Hotel in Belgrade. Popov was shocked to find Jebsen a nervous wreck, chain smoking and drinking heavily. He told Popov that he had joined his family's shipping business and needed a Yugoslav license to evade the allied naval blockade at Trieste. Popov agreed to help Jebsen and Jebsen traveled back to Berlin to collect the required documentation.

Upon his return to Belgrade, Jebsen informed Popov that he had joined the Abwehr, the German Military intelligence service as a researcher. Jebsen's ability to travel to all his business contacts all over Europe would remain unimpeded if he reported to Abweher. The news devastated Popov as Jebsen had previously expressed anti-Nazi views. Jebsen told Popov he did it to keep from being drafted into the German Army as he had varicose veins and service was not an option for him.

Popov informed Clement Hope, a passport control officer at the British Legation in Yugoslavia. Hope enrolled Popov as a double agent with the codename SCOOT. Later in his career his codename was changed to TRICYCLE by MI5 and MI6. He was advised to stay in close contact with Jebsen and to fully cooperate with him.

Once accepted as a double agent, Popov moved to London, His international business activities in an import/export business provided cover for visits to neutral Lisbon, Portugal which during the War was a hotbed of espionage and intrigue.

Popov used his cover to report periodically to Abshir in Portugal codename, IVAN. Popov fed enough MI6 approved information to the Germans that kept them well satisfied and well paid. The Germans were totally unaware of his double agent status. The assignments given to him were of great value to the British and the Allies in assessing enemy plans and thinking. He came to be considered the greatest British double agent.

The head of MI6, was Major General Stewart Menzies. The first director was Sir Mansfield Cumming who was known as C and signed all documents simply "C" and his successor, Admiral Hugh Sinclair followed the tradition as did Menzies. Hence the M in the Bond novels, in reality, was C. Popov was dissected by Menzies upon their meeting thusly:

"One man out of a thousand has the talent to play the fiddle. One out of a hundred thousand has the capacity to be a virtuoso and one out of a million becomes one. My capacity is to assess values and measure them. If I do that properly, I have fulfilled half of my duty.

You are honest but without scruples. Your instincts and intuition are stronger than your Intelligence, which is far above average. Your conscience never bothers you and you are mentally short-sighted and long-sighted at the same time. You are ambitious and ruthless and you can be cruel. But when you are cruel, it is with an animal cruelty, not a sick cruelty. You like to hit back but you are not in a hurry to do so. When you are frightened, you don't panic. Danger is a stimulant for you. You think more clearly and make better decisions when pushed by the instinct of self-preservation than by contemplation.

**You have too many devices on your banner. You have the makings of a very good spy, except that you don't like to obey orders. You had better learn or you will be a very dead spy."**

**While I could go on and on about Popov's exploits, I realize that you have indulged me enough but I want to conclude with three of his most important contributions, two of which were very significant to the success of the Allies in Europe and one that should have avoided a disaster.**

**In 1941, the Germans dispatched Popov to America with a long questionnaire directing him to gather information on a host of topics. Included in the questionnaire was a laundry list of topics regarding Hawaii and Pearl Harbor. This list was given to J. Edgar Hoover in early AUGUST 1941 by Popov. Popov and his British handlers had concluded that this meant that the Japanese were planning a seaborne attack on Pearl Harbor before the end of the year. This was conveyed to Hoover directly by Popov. While portions of the questionnaire were passed on to the military and the White House, inexplicably Hoover deleted the questions about Hawaii and Pearl Harbor! It was not until 1972 when the questionnaire was declassified that this deliberate redaction was revealed! Popov had given Hoover and the FBI clear proof of Japanese plans regarding Pearl Harbor and chose not to pass it on. Hoover had a clear distrust of Popov because of his status as a double agent and thwarted Popov at every step while in America, to the point that Popov's cover was almost destroyed.**

**Popov was so trusted by the Germans, that he passed on information that led the German High Command to believe that instead of Sicily, the Allies were going to invade Greece and Sardinia. By this action many Allied lives were saved and the invasion of Sicily was a complete and rapid success.**

**Clearly, Popov's greatest achievement during the war, was Operation Fortitude. In late December of 1943, the Allies were planning the invasion of Europe. Crucial to the plan was keeping the location of the landing secret. Enter Popov and his network of spies. The Allies had decided that the best location to launch the invasion was Normandy, even though the closest point between England and France was the Pas d' Calais. Popov and others began with misinformation messages and reports suggesting to the Germans that the launch point would be Dover and the objective the Pas d' Calais.**

**This ruse was crucial to the invasion plans as the Allies adversary would be Field Marshall Ervin Rommel, the famed Desert Fox of the North African Campaign. He was commander of German Army Group B, which consisted of the Fifteenth Army 17 divisions strong around the Calais area, Seventh Army, 11 divisions around Normandy as well as nine Panzer divisions scattered around the coast of France. Were the Germans to learn the Exact location of the invasion, Rommel could mass his forces and thwart the invasion and perhaps cost the Allies the war.**

**Included in the deception was the massing of ships, tanks, jeeps trucks and every kind of War material, all made of rubber in the Dover area. The Germans became convinced that**

**the invasion would take place at Calais. It worked as when the invasion was launched on June 6, 1944, the whole of the Fifteenth Army and the majority of the Panzer divisions were stationed in Calais and not in Normandy. Popov and the British intelligence network had succeeded.**

**I have promised to reveal the event, witnessed by Ian Fleming and included by him in the first Bond novel. Popov had concocted a plan whereby the Germans would launder money into US dollars to be used by Popov in his operations. He was in Portugal and there was a very opulent casino on the outskirts of Lisbon, Casino Estoril, operated by two Jewish brothers by the name of Bloch. Fleming was tailing Popov, as at this time British Intelligence was not entirely trusting of Popov. Popov KNEW he was being tailed by Fleming.**

**One of the Bloch brothers was seated at the baccarat table when he proclaimed unlimited stakes. Popov loved to gamble but was a gentleman gambler and took offense to what he considered boorish behavior. Popov reached into his pocket and pulled out fifty thousand dollars of the German's money, easily ten times what most people of that era made in a year! First gasps and then a hush fell over the casino. Dusko glanced at Fleming to see if he was pale. He was not; he was green! Bloch could not match the bet. Dusko asked the dealer if the casino was backing Bloch and the dealer said no. Feigning irritation, Dusko swept the money off the table and said "I hope the management will not permit such irresponsible play in the future. It is a disgrace and an annoyance to the serious players!" Bloch cowered and Dusko peeked back at Fleming. A smile creased Fleming's lips.**

**In a footnote, that scene in the latest version of Casino Royale involves poker, not baccarat.**

**Much of what I have discussed in this paper was unknown until declassified in the early 1970's. There have been at least three books written since then about Popov and his exploits, one of which by Popov himself. The latest of which was published in 2015, by author Larry Loftis and is entitled Into the Lion's Mouth. If the members want a fascinating read with much more detail than I have been able to include in this paper I highly recommend it.**

**Thank You, Gentlemen!!**