



0. RUDOLF ABEL and HIS AMERICAN LIFE - Story Preface

1. RUDOLF ABEL - A SPY BORN in ENGLAND

2. RUDOLF ABEL MOVES to AMERICA

**3. RUDOLF ABEL and HIS AMERICAN LIFE**

4. RUDOLF ABEL at RISK

5. ARREST of RUDOLF ABEL

6. JAMES DONOVAN and RUDOLF ABEL

7. TRIAL of RUDOLF ABEL

8. FRANCIS GARY POWERS and the U-2 INCIDENT

9. TRIAL of FRANCIS GARY POWERS

10. JAMES DONOVAN and the MYSTERIOUS LETTERS

11. ABEL and POWERS - A SPY for a SPY

12. JAMES DONOVAN GOES to BERLIN

13. JAMES DONOVAN and WOLFGANG VOGEL

14. GLIENICKE - BRIDGE of SPIES

15. DONOVAN, ABEL and POWERS after the BRIDGE OF SPIES

On August 23, 1957, officials allowed journalists into the studio apartment of Rudolf Abel. Located at 252 Fulton Street, in Brooklyn, the flat contained some of Abel's paintings, as well as his spying materials. Image by an unnamed photographer working for Wide World Photos.

Setting up a spy network in America was no easy task for Rudolf Abel. One thing, however, was useful for this Brooklyn resident. He could speak Yiddish.

Using yet another code name—"Mark"—he worked, in the shadows, with contacts he did not initially know. This led to many worrisome issues:

- Were such people trustworthy?
- Were they reliable?
- Were they mostly sober?
- What would he do if his contacts drank too much liquor?
- How would he secretly communicate with his contacts?

One way Abel could communicate with other spies was via short-wave radio. He'd developed this skill soon after he moved to Russia with his family (as he later discussed in a 1966 magazine article):

*In our free time many of us diverted ourselves as radio amateurs. That was the time of detector receivers, spark transmitters - we only heard of radiotelephony as something that was in its infancy. It would be hard for today's youth to conceive of the inventiveness of amateurs of that time.*

*We obtained the wire for coils by removing it from old apartment doorbells that did not work. We found the crystals used for detectors in rocks or in geological collections. The condensers for tuning were of all sizes and shapes.*

*I remember how I managed in 1923 to obtain an R-5 lamp that took an incredible amount of energy to heat up. I remember how we had to improvise to make the wet cells feed this lamp, which shone while in use no worse than any good burner. (Quoted in a [CIA article](#), about Rudolf Abel, entitled "A Stone for Willy Fisher.")*

Another way Abel, and other spies, used to pass information was to hollow-out things like nails and American coins. A [hollowed-out nickel](#) ultimately played a significant role in the life of this famous Soviet spy.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RUDOLF-ABEL-and-HIS-AMERICAN-LIFE-Bridge-of-Spies>

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/RUDOLF-ABEL-and-HIS-AMERICAN-LIFE-Bridge-of-Spies>

## Media Stream

### Rudolf Abel - Inside His Brooklyn Apartment

Rudolf Abel lived in a studio apartment at [252 Fulton Street](#) in Brooklyn, New York. This image depicts an interior view of his home which is located close to the Brooklyn Bridge. Several of Abel's paintings were located throughout the small apartment when investigators first arrived to search the premises.



An unnamed photographer, working for Wide World Photos, took this picture on August 23, 1957. It was the day that journalists were allowed into Abel's flat to view the place, his paintings and other belongings.

Click on the image for a better view.

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