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On the left side of this image, we see Francis Gary Powers as he appeared during his testimony before Congress on March 6, 1962. On the right side, we see Rudolf Abel (Willy Fisher) wearing his distinctive dark hat with the white band. Online via TASS.

On the 6th of March, 1962, Francis Gary Powers testified before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee. In a public hearing, the U-2 pilot explained what had happened to him on the day his plane was hit by a Soviet missile.

He was cleared of any wrongdoing and received the pay he would have received but for his incarceration in the Soviet Union.

President Kennedy sent Jim Donovan a letter of thanks and personally met with him at the White House.



Among JFK's written words were these:

So far as I am aware, the type of negotiation you undertook, where diplomatic channels had been unavailing, is unique, and you conducted it with the greatest skill and courage. (See March 12, 1962 letter from the President to Donovan.)

Abel gave Donovan a gift of two rare books during the summer of 1962. He sent them - two 16th-century Latin editions, bound with vellum, of *Commentaries on the Justinian Code* - with a letter expressing his gratitude for everything Donovan had done for him.

Jim Donovan - who had courageously endured death threats and faced-down hecklers, demonstrators, picketers and other types of agitators while defending Rudolf Abel - lived until 1970. Beyond his achievements in saving Abel's life and negotiating the Abel-Powers-Pryor exchange, Donovan also:

- Participated in the Nuremberg War-Crimes trial where he introduced historical footage and horrifying photographs of Nazi-run concentration camps; and
- Negotiated - with Fidel Castro - the release of people captured during the failed Bay of Pigs invasion (in Cuba), including: 1,113 prisoners; about 8,500 other Cubans; more than 30 imprisoned Americans; 3 CIA

agents.

Francis Gary Powers worked at Lockheed for a time, as a test pilot, then flew helicopters for KNBC, a television station in Los Angeles.

On the job, in 1977, Powers encountered difficulties with his chopper. He could have landed safely, but to do so would have potentially harmed people on the ground. Instead, he tried to land elsewhere, but the chopper crashed. Powers died in that crash, as did his colleague.

Many years after Powers' death, the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff - General Norton Schwartz - posthumously awarded Captain Powers (his Air-Force rank) a Silver Star. The event took place at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes on the 15th of June, 2012.

The Silver Star recognized Powers' "exceptional loyalty" to his country while he endured harsh interrogation at Moscow's Lubyanka Prison.

The U-2 Incident had been extremely difficult for Powers' family, too. His daughter Dee remembers an especially awful situation when she was in third grade.

Beyond coping with what had happened to her father, and what people were saying about him - including intense criticism for not destroying his plane and being captured alive - her teacher made the comments personal.

Fifty years later, when her father posthumously received the Silver Cross, Dee still remembered those words (and their impact on her):

[A teacher told] *the entire class that my father should have killed himself.*

That was very traumatic for me. And I went home that afternoon and I told my mom that someone had said that Daddy should have killed himself. And of course, my mother was up in arms over that. But that's what they knew then. And things—it took a long time for that to change. (Quoted by Rebecca Berg in a *New York Times* article, "Powers, U-2 Pilot Captured by Soviets, Awarded Silver Star," published on June 15, 2012.)

What about Rudolf Abel? How did his life work-out after his walk across the Bridge of Spies?

He was reunited with Yelena (his wife) and Evelyn (his daughter) soon after regaining his freedom on February 10, 1962. The family flew back to Russia together.

Initially, Abel returned to the KGB working in the "Illegals Directorate." He gave lectures, and visited with students, talking about what it takes to work in the intelligence service.

Abel, however, grew discouraged with life in Russia. According to Christopher Andrew, in *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*:

After his return to Moscow, he was given a chair in a corner of the FCD Illegals Directorate but was denied even a desk of his own. When a friend asked him what he did, he replied disconsolately: "I'm a museum exhibit." (See *Sword and Shield*, at page 175.)

Willy Fisher / Rudolf Abel lived until 1971. He was 69 years old when he died of lung cancer on the 15th of November that year. It was the anniversary of the very day—November 15, 1957—when Jim Donovan had successfully convinced the Judge to spare his client's life.



In honor of his position, and the esteem in which he was held, his body lay in state at a KGB hall not far from the Lubyanka Prison. His remains were cremated, at the New Donskoy (Donskoi) Cemetery in Moscow, where his ashes are interred.

After her husband's death, Yelena fought for a year to change the name on the stone which marks his gravesite. She wanted it to reflect his *real*, not his *spy*, name: William Genrikhovich Fisher.



No one really knows, for sure, what Willy Fisher / Rudolf Abel actually accomplished as a Soviet spy living in America. One thing we *do* know, however. His walk across the Glienicke inaugurated that bridge's new nickname: "Bridge of Spies."

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DONOVAN-ABEL-and-POWERS-after-the-BRIDGE-OF-SPIES-Bridge-of-Spies>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DONOVAN-ABEL-and-POWERS-after-the-BRIDGE-OF-SPIES-Bridge-of-Spies>

Media Stream



Powers and Abel - Bridge of Spies

After his release from the Soviet Union and Vladimir Central Prison, Francis Gary Powers testified before Congress on March 6, 1962.

He is depicted, on the left side of this combination-image, at that hearing.

On the right side of the picture, we see Rudolf Abel (Willy Fisher) wearing his distinctive dark hat with the white band.

Powers and Abel, online via TASS.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Powers-and-Abel-Bridge-of-Spies>



James Donovan with President Kennedy

After James Donovan successfully negotiated the spy swap of Rudolf Abel for Francis Gary Powers, President Kennedy invited him to the White House where he personally thanked the Brooklyn lawyer.

This image depicts the meeting of President Kennedy and Jim Donovan.

Click on the image for a better view.

Image online via the Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/James-Donovan-with-President-Kennedy>



Rudolf Abel and His Wife Yelena in 1971

After Rudolf Abel regained his freedom during 1962, in a spy swap between the US and the USSR, he was reunited with his wife Yelena and his daughter Evelyn.

The family flew back to Russia, together, where they lived until Abel died.

For the rest of his life, nearly everyone knew the master spy not by his real name—William (Willy) Fisher—but as Rudolf I. Abel (the name of his deceased friend and comrade which Fisher first used at the time of his 1957 arrest in New York).

Not until Yelena successfully fought for a year, to change the name on his tombstone from "Abel" to "Fisher," did people know who the master spy really was.

In this touching picture, taken in 1971—the year of his death—we see Willy Fisher / Rudolf Abel with his wife, Yelena. It is part of the Ogoniok Archive and was provided by the Fishers' daughter, Evelyn, during a 1997 interview.

Family photo, described above, online via Ogoniok Archive (a Russian-language website).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rudolf-Abel-and-His-Wife-Yelena-in-1971>



Rudolf Abel - Grave Stone Changed to William Fisher

Very few people knew that Rudolf Abel, the Soviet spy exchanged for Francis Gary Powers, was actually William (Willy) Fisher—even at the time of his death in 1971.

Yelena, his wife, heavily lobbied for a year to change the name on Abel / Fisher's tombstone.

As this picture shows, the stone now reads as Yelena wished—with her husband's real name prominently displayed (and "Abel" appearing underneath).

Yelena lived about three years longer than her husband. Her remains now rest beside his at the New Donskoy Cemetery in Moscow.

Image, by unnamed photographer, online via Russian-language website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rudolf-Abel-Grave-Stone-Changed-to-William-Fisher>



Bridge of Spies - Trailer

"Bridge of Spies" is a Steven Spielberg film based on the events of the spy exchange between the US (holding Soviet spy Rudolf Abel) and the USSR (holding U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers) in February of 1962.

Tom Hanks plays the role of James Donovan, Rudolf Abel's attorney.

Mary Rylance portrays Rudolf Abel.

Official trailer for "Bridge of Spies," a Steven Spielberg film. Trailer distributed by 20th Century Fox, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint viewers with the production.

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