

From Russia with Love

by [G. Murphy Donovan](#) (February 2023)



The Red Dancer of Moscow (State 1), R.B. Kitaj, 1975

For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: It might have been!

—John Greenleaf

Whittier, “Maud Muller”



Anna's FBI Mugshot

Shortly after the New Year, the editors of the *New English Review* received a request from Natalie Mak (probably Makarova), a producer from the *Russian Television* (RT) network, to do an interview with me. My interlocutor was to be the notorious Anna Chapman, armed with wide ranging set of questions, politely provided in advance, on subjects that ran from Ukraine to mundane.

To begin, let's be clear. RT today is no better or worse than American PBS or the English BBC, platforms that spin prevailing if not partisan state narratives daily. But, who doesn't want to chat with a cloak-and-dagger babe anywhere, a comely red head with global reach?

It seems, after coming in from the cold, Anna Chapman still has a soft spot for Intelligence creeps. Recall, that Ms. Chapman (née Anna Vasilyevna Kushchenko) is the winsome and

comely lass who allegedly ran circles around the British SIS and the American FBI for years. If she was ever truly a provocateur, or a threat to the West, this flamboyant redhead was also the most successful honey pot ever—and hiding in plain sight for years in London and New York.

The fact that Chapman thrived for so long in the West says more about moribund Anglo/American counterintelligence than we want to know. Indeed, American security services worry more about Donald Trump today than they do about Moscow, Beijing, or Mecca.

When Democracy dies in the west, an honor guard from the American Intelligence Community will surely be the huckleberries.

Nevertheless, Anna was the Russian spy who loved the cold—and the heat. Eventually, she was rolled up by the FBI only to be returned to the motherland in a July, 2010 prisoner exchange to becoming a time zone heroine with the Russian media whilst, simultaneously, becoming *persona non grata* on at least two continents.

Now at home, Anna has a modeling gig, a retro line of nostalgia frocks, and a very successful television show. Further, we know that Chapman and Vladimir Putin are BFFs, a gal pal favorite at the Kremlin and across 11 time zones; for my money, too many hours in any country's day.

Tempting as it was to do a split screen with Ms. Chapman, that interview request from Moscow, fortunately, was not my first rodeo. Vicariously, Russian media and I have some history that now transcends two centuries. Like American PBS or the English BBC, you can give RT hours of tape where candor might be whittled to minutes of propaganda.

State media platforms control narrative and message. It's what they do; in Moscow, Brussels, London, and Washington. See any Christiane Amanpour or Amy Goodman broadcast on Anglo American

state TV. For these reasons, a live or taped interview with Ms. Chapman, or a glib matron like Maureen Dowd for that matter, is risky business.

Red is the international signal for caution.

Some of you may know that I used to be the Director of Research and Russian Studies at USAF Intelligence under the now infamous General James Clapper. Under Clapper, I ran the Russian (nee Soviet) Awareness Program, which was supposed to provide, in part, the threat rationale for US defense spending, an investment that was supposed to bell the Russian bear. We published an annual unclassified *Soviet Military Power [assessment](#)* which survived until General Clapper arrived on the E Ring.

Ironically, Clapper's last hurrah before leaving USAF Intelligence was to demolish the Russian/Soviet Awareness and military assessments program at Bolling, AFB in 1990—along with my career. Truth be told, I was ready for pasture at the turn of the century. Recall also that as the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 and the Warsaw Pact imploded, Francis [Fukuyama](#) (at RAND Corp, a USAF contractor), the CIA, and the Pentagon all declared a Cold War victory over the Russians.

CIA paramilitaries cabled HQ at Langley, Virginia from Afghanistan in 1989 with the now [infamous](#) capitalized two word gloat; WE WON!

As the 20th Century receded into the “dustbin of history,” USAF's Soviet Awareness Program was still vilified by Moscow, a sentiment that mellowed as the Warsaw Pact collapsed and chaps like Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin put out feelers to the EU, NATO, and the West (see J.J. [Mearsheimer](#)). Kremlin pleas for European integration and border neutrality in the wake of the Cold War, as I'm sure you know, were ignored by American cold warriors right and left.

Subsequently, over the last 30 years, NATO has migrated east to the Russian frontier, sneering at Moscow's appeals for military neutrality, a NATO-free buffer along Russia's western flank.

Today's proxy/surrogate war in Ukraine is the predictable outcome of; let's face it, NATO's imperial push to fill the void created by the bloodless fall of the Warsaw Pact—and the voluntary removal of the Soviet era nuclear arsenal from Ukraine.

Military empire, east or west, abhors a vacuum. And here again, let's not be naïve about Brussels or all those Davos devotees. NATO is the handmaiden of American, not European, foreign policy.

We can mix a few metaphors: Uncle Sam, not the Brussels eurocrat, is the big dog opposite Ivan.

The Maidan [coup](#) of 2016 in Ukraine, sponsored by the US State Department (see Victoria [Nuland](#)) and the [CIA](#), was the final finger to Putin and the Russian General Staff; indeed, first a middle finger to Moscow and now a balled fist to global sanity and stability.

No wonder then that the preferred *demarche* of the US State Department these days is “fuck you.”

Over the years, I have expressed these sentiments in various forums like *American Thinker*, *The Small Wars Journal*, and most notably, on the pages of *New English Review*. My purpose has always been to rationalize, not justify, Kremlin behavior.

Back in that brief period of *détente*, I believed that there was a golden opportunity to bring the Russian people and their great cultural heritage back into the western fold. Then as now, I believed that Americans have more in common with Russians, and their culture, than we will ever have in common with totalitarian Davos globalists, totalitarian Chinese

Communists, or the totalitarian theocrats of the Muslim *Ummah*.

Yet, American foreign policy today genuflects before Beijing and Mecca whilst still demonizing Russia.

No regime, here or there, necessarily represents the people. Sympathy or affection for the Russian people is not an endorsement of their *nomenclatura*.

Alas, when hopes and dreams are fishes, we might all be eating caviar and knishes.



Malkina, age 24, addressing coup plotters in 1991, and today

I came by my optimism for better American/Russian, relations, fortuitously, by the virtues of another Russian lass who dropped into my life back in the halcyon era of *détente*. In those days Tatyana Malkina was a new Moscow State University graduate prorogued to the *Washington Post* and *San Francisco Chronicle* as a journalist intern. After her exposure to the American press, Tatyana went back to Russia to witness and write about the “revolution without guns,” (circa 1991) in Russia, becoming the girl in gingham, [scolding](#) the Russian brass and coup plotters, indeed helping a tipsy Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin take the helm in Moscow. At that historic merge, Tatyana Malkina became, for a decade, the “girlfriend of Russian democracy.”

I thought then, as I still do today, that Ms. Malkina

represented the best that Russians can be—Jewish mom, wife, and journalist—brave, outspoken, and free.

Yet, here we are today, again immersed in another surrogate war holding a bag of questions from Anna Chapman, Russia's scarlet woman, the antithesis of Tatyana Malkina. Like the American State Department said to the EU after the Maidan coup; my first instinct last month was to tell Anna Chapman and RT to "fuck" off.

Albeit, the optimist in me whispered that any conversation with Russians, however modest, might be preferable to escalation or conflagration over Ukraine. With German Leopard (nee Panzer) tanks now motoring towards *Rodina* again as we speak, maybe somebody here or there needs to hit pause.

My sanguine alter ego also tells me that many Russians and Americans, let's call them "the [unheard](#)," would also like to see some sort of unconditional dialogue. The fact that any Russian media forum cares about what any American like me thinks or believes, at this point, is reason enough for a conversation.

So with all that history in mind I approached the lovely and enlightened editors of *New English Review* and asked if I might answer those poignant RT questions on the pages of our fair journal in March; instead of doing a "global" on-camera interview that might/could be abused or misconstrued by either side.

Kendra has agreed to provide the space. So we will return in March with Anna Chapman's national security questions, and our answers in what could be described as the first Moscow/Nashville colloquy; candid questions and answers verbatim, uncensored—written not spoken.

"To Russia With Love," if you will.

To be continued ...

Fashion footnote:

They say “a picture is worth a thousand words.” If you look at Anna Chapman’s line of retro frocks today, you will be struck by the similarity to Tatyana Malkina’s couture as she confronted Russian generals and Stalinists back in the day, giving new meaning to hot flashes of *déjà vu*.

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