

Commentary...

Spies, sex and sparrows

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

"In the old days, if an agent did something that embarrassing, he'd have the good sense to defect! Christ I miss the Cold War!"

— *M (Judy Dench), "Casino Royale"*

Ah, the good old days, when operatives steeped in tradecraft stalked their Main Enemy counterparts in labyrinthine high-stakes spy games in exotic locales and "denied areas." Seductions in hotel bars, the cutting edge of technology deployed to surveil and subvert, meddling in elections...

Wait. It's baaaaaack.

When Jason Matthews hit the shelves with his spy thriller "Red Sparrow" in 2013, the novel seemed like a throwback to an early era. Now it seems as current as, well, Vladimir Putin threatening the U.S. with "invincible" nukes. You almost expect to see him pull off a shoe and bang it on a table.

Matthews, a former CIA operative (a "denied area specialist" in fact) was ahead of the curve in 2013, or so it seemed. Russia, of course, has been back in the Great Game for some time, a fact that Mitt Romney tried to raise in the 2012 presidential campaign, to much ridicule. After 2016, "Russiagate," and arms race escalations, Vladimir Putin's ill intentions and direct actions can no longer be ignored, except, perhaps by the President of the United States.

Matthews had simply been paying attention.

In "Red Sparrow," he crafted a compelling heroine and a taut tale, perfectly suited to adaptation to the big screen. In fact, Matthews sold the rights for many, many rubles before the book was even published.

"Red Sparrow" is now screening at Sisters Movie House.

The premise is lurid:

Dominika Egorova is on a trajectory to become a prima ballerina when her career is derailed. She is forced by her uncle into secret service to the State and packed off to Sparrow School, the Russian (formerly Soviet KGB) academy of sexpionage. Seduction — the "honey trap" — was a key tool in the KGB kit, developing kompromat (compromising material) that could be used to subvert targets of espionage.

Human nature being what it is, it remains effective.

Such a premise could make for simple pulp exploitation. In Matthews' hands, it is elevated by Egorova's capability, intensity, intellectual prowess and, shall we say, unique psychological insight. And Matthews' background creates powerful verisimilitude in scenes of surveillance and counter surveillance on the street.

Through Egorova, we get a glimpse behind the curtain at Putin's Russia — the manner in which a mafia state operates, in all of its sycophancy, paranoia, greed and insecurity.

There are three books in



the "Sparrow" trilogy and they are fine reads.

The movie, which stars Jennifer Lawrence as Dominika Egorova and Joel Edgerton as Nate Nash, a young CIA operative who is exceptionally good at counter-surveillance, is brutal both physically and psychologically, as are the novels. Egorova may be beautiful, but the world she inhabits is ugly to the bone. This is not a glamorous, fun-and-sexy spy-romp like, for instance, a Bond film or the brilliantly stylized "Atomic Blonde." But at a time when the Russian eagle is unfolding its black wings in the east, it's a movie worth seeing.

OSP spokesman under criminal investigation

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon State Police spokesman Capt. Bill Fugate has been placed on leave because he is the subject of a criminal investigation.

Deschutes County Sheriff Shane Nelson says his office began the investigation late Tuesday, February 27, after receiving an anonymous tip. Nelson provided no details about the investigation, but said it has nothing to do with

Fugate's conduct while on the job.

Fugate is on paid administrative leave. That would change to unpaid if he is charged with a crime.

OSP Superintendent Travis Hampton says he is confident that Deschutes County investigators will conduct a thorough and transparent investigation.

Fugate has been with the agency for almost 11 years.

SISTERS ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS

WED...MAR. 7

Sisters Saloon Poker Night 7 p.m. Every Wednesday! \$20. For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go online to sistersaloon.net.

THURS...MAR. 8

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Thursday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

FRI...MAR. 9

Hardtails Bar & Grill Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Friday (if no live music is scheduled), no cover! For information call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

SAT...MAR. 10

HarmonyHouse Live Music with Singer/Songwriter Johnsmith 8 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.) Don't miss your chance to see and hear this Kerville New Folk winner at 17518 Kent Road! Suggested donation is \$20. For more info or directions call 541-280-1821 or see HarmonyHouseConcerts on Facebook.

Sisters Saloon Live Music with the Eric Leadbetter Duo 8 to 11 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go online to sistersaloon.net.

Cork Cellars Live Music with Jim Cornelius & Mike Biggers 7 to 9 p.m. No cover! For additional information call 541-549-2675 or go to online to corkcellarswinebistro.com.

Hardtails Bar & Grill Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Saturday (if no live music is scheduled), no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go online to hardtailsoregon.com.

MON...MAR. 12

Hardtails Bar & Grill Open Mic & Jam Night 7 p.m. Every Monday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-6114 or go online to hardtailsoregon.com.

Sisters Saloon Painting Party 6 to 8 p.m. \$35, every Monday! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

Events listings are free to advertisers. Submit by 5 p.m. Fridays to teresa@nuggetnews.com

TUES...MAR. 13

Sisters Saloon Trivia Night 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sign-up is at 6:15 p.m. Free, every Tuesday! For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

WED...MAR. 14

Sisters High School Sisters Folk Festival Winter Concert with Darlingside 7 p.m. Celebrating their newest album, "Extralife," don't miss the final SFF winter concert of the year! sistersfolkfestival.org or call 541-549-4979 for tickets.

Sisters Saloon Poker Night 7 p.m. Every Wednesday! \$20. For information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

THURS...MAR. 15

Sisters Saloon Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Thursday, no cover! For additional information call 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

FRI...MAR. 16

The Belfry Country Dance Night with Dry Canyon Stampede 7 to 10:30 p.m. \$10 singles, \$15 couples. For tickets and more information go online to belfryevents.com.

Hardtails Bar & Grill Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Every Friday (if no live music is scheduled), no cover! Call 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

SAT...MAR. 17

Hardtails Bar & Grill St. Paddy's Day Party featuring Live Music with The Bad Cats 9 p.m. Dance to classic rock, blues & soul. Plus green beer, lucky charms and lots of specials! 541-549-6114 or go to hardtailsoregon.com.

Sisters High School 7th Annual Sisters Science Fair 12 to 4 p.m. Free and fun for the whole family. Participate in experiments and more! For info go to sistersscienceclub.org.

Sisters Saloon St. Patrick's Day Party and Live Music with Derek Michael Marc 8 to 11 p.m. No cover! 541-549-7427 or go to sistersaloon.net.

Paulina Springs Books Author Reading with Jacqueline Keeler 6 p.m. The Yankton Sioux/Navajo writer presents "Edge of Morning: Native Voices Speak for the Bears Ears." Free, with refreshments! 541-549-0866.

Sisters MOVIE HOUSE
STARTS FRIDAY
FRI., MARCH 9 – THURS., MARCH 15

A Wrinkle in Time (PG)
Fri 4:30, 7:00
Sat-Sun 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
Mon-Thurs 4:30, 7:00

Gringo (R)
Fri 4:45, 7:15
Sat-Sun 2:15, 4:45, 7:15
Mon-Thurs 4:45, 7:15

Red Sparrow (R)
Fri 4:00, 6:45
Sat-Sun 1:15, 4:00, 6:45
Mon-Thurs 4:00, 6:45

Game Night (R)
Fri 7:30
Sat-Sun 2:45, 7:30
Mon-Tues 7:30
Thurs 7:30

Early Man (PG)
Fri-Thurs 5:00

Dirtdog: The Legend of Fred Beckey (NR)
Wed 7:15

Movie times and titles are subject to change. Visit website or call for latest information.

WWW.SISTERSMOVIEHOUSE.COM
541-549-8800

The Belfry

March 16 / Fri / 7 PM
DRY CANYON STAMPEDE COUNTRY DANCE NIGHT!

April 20 / Fri / 8 PM
BEND BURLESQUE AND COMPANY GRAND

"All 70s Revue" is a celebration of the music, culture, and fashion of the era. Eclectic and vibrant Central Oregon group includes a 9-piece funk rock band, comedians, and dancers.

PUB OPENS 1 HR PRIOR TO SHOWS
BelfryEvents.com
541-815-9122

HARDTAILS BAR & GRILL

ST. PADDY'S DAY PARTY
9pm • MARCH 17
LIVE MUSIC & DANCING with THE BAD CATS
Classic Rock, Blues & Soul!
Green Beer, Lucky Charms, Food & Drink Specials!
175 N. Larch St.
541-549-6114
hardtailsoregon.com