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## 24 Hours

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## Rebel with a Clause



Rebel with a Clause

## Leave Lennikov alone

By ALEX G. TSAKUMIS

Citizenship, for the vast majority  
of us, is our birthright.

Canada is home and we are surrounded with all of her splendid bounty: The majesty of the various landscapes; our regional quirkiness; hockey, lacrosse, curling; maple syrup and long winter walks into vast, pristine forests gently layered in the white of snow; a silent night with a glass (or three) of good rye.

The images and realities are embedded in our minds. It makes for a fertile experience.

But imagine what any of our riches must have looked like to a former Soviet agent, on the run not a dozen years ago, with a young wife and son in tow.

It is, indeed, a very curious case, the one of Mikhail Alexander Lennikov, self-confessed secret agent of what was once the most efficient spy agency the world has ever known: The KGB.

I read, with great interest, the 2007 decision by Madam Justice Anne Mactavish, wherein she painstakingly details her decision dismissing Lennikov's application for judicial review of his denial by immigration officials for landed status.

It read, for some part, like one of the better spy novels I have ever endured.

Lennikov's journey to becoming a 'Captain' in the KGB, even if reluctant, was purposeful. He cannot deny that while having understandable reservations about his employer(s), regardless of minor disagreements, they thought enough of him, in a scant few years, to make him an officer of a menacing and ruthless order.

The success of the KGB was just as much a result of their muscle, as much as their intelligence: They perfected espionage.

And this is perhaps Lennikov's biggest obstacle, and one, which, justifiably, he may not wish to openly muse about.

For if even half of his contentions about possible repercussions to him and his family in returning to Russia are true, then he best commit to earnest prayer in the Lutheran church within which he is currently seeking refuge.

But what should this  
entire matter really tell  
us?

I'll tell you.

Lennikov is a remorseful, former Soviet spy, who has spent a dozen years in Canada, and by all accounts, lived an exemplary life, without even being accused of so much as spitting on the sidewalk.

He and his wife Irina raised a fine son, Dmitri, a recent graduate of

On the path to  
sustainability



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SFU, and as far as their comportment in this country goes, the narrative is compelling to have the Lennikovs stay.

Why? Well, it's not a complicated legal rain-dance, necessarily.

I watched, in horror, as one of two street-racing oblivots that killed Vancouverite Irene Thorpe, danced a jig through the deportation process in this country for eight years. Yet another mockery of the system was the hoax of Laibar Singh, who appeared here with fraudulent documents and told contemptible tales about probable persecution in India, where, mystery of mysteries, he returned after almost a year of trying to milk our consideration to grant him, a fraud, status.

In stark contrast, the Lennikovs have been wholly Canadian: Upright, mindful, decent folks.

Lennikov could have lied to immigration, as Singh did. Lennikov could have committed to a life of crime or even, in our world of instant and easily furtive communications, offered his services to his mother country, who is, still run, despite the moderate successes of Glasnost and Perestroika, by Dmitry Medvedev puppet-master Vladimir Putin - a former chief of the KGB.

Leave the Lennikovs alone. Let them stay. They don't just understand the traditions of this land--they have demonstrated them in spades. Dabro pazhalavat, comrade.

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