



BEYOND SUBVERSION

For the second time today, I find myself going to the front window and pulling the curtains back slightly, just enough to view the sidewalk and street in front of my house. With one eye I look up and down and around. What am I looking for? I'm not really sure. An unfamiliar vehicle sitting close by perhaps. Maybe a person or two inside looking my direction. Or a stranger walking past on the sidewalk. Someone that knows I live here. I know, I admit, I'm cracking. I walk back to my desk and settle into my chair in front of the computer. My name is Davey Robins and I am a writer. I live in the Pacific Northwest just outside of Portland Oregon. The date is October 3, 2020. I sit and gather my thoughts as I begin to write these sentences. I am in a somber mood. This writing session is different. For

years I have been creating fictional short stories in the form of movie plots. I call them moviestorylines. They are fanciful compositions from the depths of my mind. Love stories, adventures, thrillers and sci-fi, I have written them all and enjoyed doing so. But I find no joy in the story I have most recently written. Apprehension and nervousness would best describe what is inside of me now - I might have made a big mistake. The kind of mistake that can weigh on you and hound your psyche. Even so, I couldn't stop myself. I wrote BEYOND SUBVERSION.

ALEKSANDR - It all started in April 2020. Over the years I have hired an artist in Ukraine to create cover art for my stories. After collaborating 20 times on different projects, we developed more than a working relationship. We became friends. We admire each other's talents and creativity. We exchanged emails and we communicate regularly. Yuri calls me one of his favorite writers. I call him my favorite artist. In one conversation Yuri tells me he has an acquaintance who would like to meet me through email. Yuri explains that this individual is Russian and has a deep interest and respect for America. He especially admires American writers. I explain that I am a humble fiction writer who sells movie plots to Hollywood. I don't consider myself worthy of adulation by anyone. "No," Yuri says, "you are honest and goodhearted, just the type person my Russian friend wants to know." I allow Yuri to give my email to Aleksandr. Within days Aleksandr begins to communicate with me. I have since deleted all the emails, all the correspondence, but I can recall the content well and the sequence of the conversations.

Aleksandr begins with flattery. He has seen my website moviestorylines.com and thinks my work is excellent. He would love to write but has no talent. His brain is a different type. He is a scientist and chemist. He formerly worked in a lab in Russia. What he really likes to talk about is America. He has questions about everything having to do with America. Nothing technical or business related, just extreme curiosity about how we live in America and what it's like to be an American. At first, I keep my

antenna up for any type of scam or information gathering. This - I wouldn't want to be involved with. As time goes by, I realize that he is genuinely enamored with our country and its people. Especially our democracy, liberty, justice, freedom of speech and things like that. It turns out he picked the right American to correspond with. These ideals run very deep inside me. My ancestors came to America in the 17th century. I have an inbred sense of patriotism and devotion to my country that is very strong. I was more than willing to share these feelings and thoughts with my new Russian friend. He seemed so eager to hear every word. I felt great reciting American history and the proud legacy of our nation. Then I realized that Aleksandr had a different situation in his country and in his life. He told me he had to leave Russia suddenly and felt like he had no home. He told me that even when he lived in Russia, it was not a democracy. There was no real liberty. There was no real freedom of speech. "With Putin, Russia has a new type of dictator," he explained, "a fake democracy is not a democracy at all. Slowly but surely Putin has made changes in Russia that brought all power and control to himself and his gang of oligarchs" Aleksandr points out that a true people's democracy is a delicate thing that must be respected and protected. I wanted to hear more from Aleksandr about his home country and its leaders. He is obviously very angry with Putin. What he says is interesting and full of insight. I'm a good listener and I encourage Aleksandr to unload. He begins to list reasons that Americans should consider Putin a formidable enemy. "Remember," says Aleksandr, "Putin and the group that controls the Russian government are long time KGB operatives. They live in a world of black ops and subversion, even to this day. The rest of the world has relaxed somewhat into business competition and stock markets. Russia at this point is a rogue nation, even in the world of business and finance. They compete when they can, but more often find it advantageous to be disruptive and damaging to the rest of the world. In addition, Putin promotes and supports autocratic governments. He takes every opportunity to degrade true democracies." Aleksandr calls Putin a "master of subversion." He says there is a pattern of secretive and sophisticated warlike behavior that many times goes under the radar of Western societies. Other times the aggression is blatant, cruel, and obviously criminal in nature. Such as using chemical weapons in Syria,

invading Ukraine, or poisoning rivals at will. These in-your-face type actions are meant to challenge and frustrate the free world. In this way Putin is always trying to show that he is the strongest world leader. Aleksandr impresses me with his knowledge about Russia and it's current government. I quit looking for any ulterior motives on his part. I begin to believe fully that he is a true Russian patriot, upset with what is happening to his country.

Three months go by with Aleksandr and I communicating almost every day. We have grown to like each other and trust each other implicitly. I feel sorry for his situation. He says he loves his country but can no longer live there. I don't ask why, but I can feel his anguish. I am affected deeply. The next several emails that he sends to me finally reveal his real reason for wanting to correspond with an American writer. He has chosen me for an important task. What he tells me next, over a series of emails, has changed my life. I find myself having the same dilemma as Aleksandr. I cannot unknow what he has told me. Suffice to say, I was unable to rest or have peace of mind until I wrote the following story.

BEYOND SUBVERSION - Moscow, Russia 2014, Dimitri is a prominent Russian scientist in the field of biology. He is 80 years old. He is a product of the Soviet Union era. He has been working in a secret lab outside of Moscow for 52 years. He has prominence among Russian scientists, but is unknown to the public. His lab is secretly connected to the Russian biological warfare unit. He receives an above average salary and lives in a modest apartment provided by the government. These benefits are a reward for his brilliant achievements in biology over a lifetime. On Kremlin orders, over the years he has created and mutated numerous biological agents. These are kept in secret vaults by government and military officials. His most recent assignment, for the last 8 years, has been working with viruses. Since SARS1 and H1N1, Russian officials have had a keen interest in staying ahead in this field. Just like some other countries, Russia has biological labs and is constantly conducting experiments. In Dimitri's lab, he

is allowed one assistant. His assistant is a young scientist named Aleksandr. The two men have been working together for about six years. Aleksandr receives a moderate amount of salary for his work and a small apartment provided by the government. Not long before Aleksandr obtained his position, Dimitri and his lab were given a new directive by the government. It is said that the new mission was ordered by Putin himself. Experiment with viruses, create mutations, explore ramifications of human exposure. Everything was top-secret and was said to be closely monitored by Putin. Every day for weeks, months and then years, Dimitri used his talent and creativity to experiment with viruses. He requested and received wild animals from all parts of the globe. He gave viruses to the animals and took viruses from them. He then studied the viruses and their presumptive effects. Aleksandr was young and appreciated having a government job in his field. He was kept in the dark about the subject of biological warfare. He was fascinated with the idea of helping to prevent plague and disease in society. He thought surely the more the world knew about diseases, the more they could be prevented. He did his best to help Dimitri, although he lacked the knowledge to grasp exactly what was being done. The two co-workers became close friends, and Aleksandr grew to respect and admire his older mentor. They would sometimes share a bottle of vodka after work. Occasionally their off-work conversations would turn to their country, history, or politics. Sometimes Dimitri would stop the conversation abruptly. He would put his index finger to his lips to indicate silence on that subject. Aleksandr would wonder what it was like for Dimitri to spend so much time growing up in the Soviet Union. He asked Dimitri one time about that experience. Dimitri simply said, "for as long as I have been alive, Russia has been in the grip of a few powerful people. The Russian people have never had any true freedom or justice from their government." Aleksandr is saddened and lowers his head. Dimitri remembers himself and puts his index finger across his lips, indicating silence on that subject.

Dimitri is excited, Aleksandr can tell. They have been working on Corona viruses and may have a breakthrough. One virus sample seems to be a new mutation and quite unique. It's different than anything they've seen before.

Dimitri has ordered new and improved hazmat suits for himself and Aleksandr. “That must mean it is a particularly potent virus,” Alexander remembers thinking. Dimitri spends hours peering into the electron microscope, occasionally stopping to write on an official report sheet. Government workers come to check the integrity of the security systems and seals in the room containing the lab. “This discovery must be important,” Alexander says to himself. Then workers arrive and begin building another sealed room down the hall from the lab. Alexander asks Dimitri if they are constructing a new lab. Dimitri just shakes his head and says he doesn’t know. Then bonuses arrive in the paychecks of Dimitri and Aleksandr. It’s really quite a large amount, considering their pay grade. The two scientists go out after work to share two bottles of vodka. They celebrate in true Russian fashion. After they are thoroughly intoxicated, Alexander again wants to ask too many questions. What is so important about this new virus sample? Will it help to develop cures in the future? What is the name we will call this important one? Aleksandr watches his friend’s face sadden and drop. Dimitri is just drunk enough to spit out these two words, “Putin’s bug,” he says softly. If Alexander had looked closely, he would’ve seen tears in the old man’s eyes. Alexander doesn’t know it, but Dimitri has recently gained knowledge about important events that happened when he was a child. These events shaped the course of his life in its entirety. They involve the death of his mother and father when he was 13 years old. This new information has brought pain and doubt into Dimitri’s soul. His life’s work is no longer the source of pride that it once was.

DIMITRI – He was born in St. Petersburg in 1934, to parents Nikita and Natasha Bogdanovich. Dimitri had a relatively normal and happy early childhood. Then came World War II. He was six years old. It became a time of hardship for all Russians. Dimitri’s parents were lucky however, they both worked for the Russian government in Moscow. Nikita was one of the first nuclear physicists in the Soviet Union. Natosha was a high level personal assistant in the Communist Party. She worked for Stalin himself. They both held top-secret security clearances. At the end of World War II, the Communist Party and all Russians were jubilant about their great victory.

The Stalin regime became less jubilant when they learned that America had developed and used the first atomic bombs against Japan. The communists had known about the American nuclear program for years, and had a robust program of their own, but they were behind. Stalin ordered a nuclear weapon to be developed at breakneck speed and at all costs. This involved the department in which Nikita worked. Nikita found himself working feverishly with German nuclear physicists that had been captured during the war. The Germans were advanced in their knowledge and proficiency, but Nikita could barely stomach working with them. Like many other Russians, he had family and friends that died in the war. He had witnessed German cruelty and atrocities. To his core he did not trust them. He had a theory that the German scientists may steal valuable scientific data for use in the rise of a new Germany, stronger than ever. He also felt that the immense power of nuclear technology should be used for the benefit of humanity and not for weapons. These views and his reluctance to work with many of the other scientists made Nikita look like a troublemaker. A report was made against Nikita and sent to Stalin. The report reached the desk of his personal assistant, Natasha Bogdanovich. To protect her husband, Natasha hid the report and later destroyed it. When she told her husband, he knew it was a mistake, but the deed was already done. Sure enough, one day Stalin found out what she had done. Another report about Nikita had reached his desk and it referred to the first report. He called Natasha into his office and locked the door behind her. He hadn't decided what to do with Nikita yet, but felt betrayed by his personal assistant. He called her act treasonous behavior. She admitted it could be considered that, but she acted out of love for her husband. Stalin however was a dictator. Being such, he required ultimate loyalty and respect for his power. In his mind, Natasha and Nikita belonged to him in every way. Natasha happened to be a beautiful woman. Stalin decided to exact a penalty in the form of sexual dominance. He called her over to the chair where he was sitting. He pulled her onto his lap and began to grope her while she protested. "You do wish to be forgiven, don't you?" He kept saying. "You do want to show me loyalty, don't you?" This continued for several minutes until Natasha slapped him across the face as hard as she could. This stunned Stalin momentarily, and gave her a chance to run for the door. She unlocked it

quickly, and just ran, down the long hallway and out of the building. She waited until evening to go home, where Nikita was waiting. Dimitri wasn't home. He was staying overnight with one of his young friends. Nikita and Natasha knew better than to discuss their problem in the house. It could be bugged, there was a lot of that going on at the time. They left the home and took a ride in the car, where Natasha explained everything to Nikita. They knew they had a problem. No one disappointed Stalin without having a problem. As they drove, an unmarked van drove up behind them with a light flashing. They pulled over to the side of the road. The road ran along a cliff face next to the Moskva River. Two of Stalin's security operatives approached their vehicle with guns drawn. They forced the couple out of their car and into the back of the van. Then one of the men pointed the couple's car towards the cliff edge. He manipulated the gas pedal so that the car went flying off the cliff towards the water below. It quickly sank to the bottom of the river. Then with Nikita and Natasha bound and gagged, the two men began their long journey across Russia towards a remote Gulag in Siberia. Dimitri never saw his parents again. He was told that they both died in an unfortunate automobile accident. Their car was eventually found at the bottom of the cliff in the Moskva River. Sadly, their bodies were never found. Dimitri finished growing up with an aunt who was a loyal communist with no children of her own. They say Stalin was heartbroken to lose his personal assistant. He took an interest in Dimitri's upbringing. He wanted Dimitri to follow in his parent's footsteps and work for the government. In his mind there was no need to waste good genetics that could be utilized for future scientific endeavors. Dimitri was permitted to attend the best schools and universities. He eventually became a scientist working for the state.

For 52 years Dimitri has been a devoted and brilliant achiever for his country. Then he received a letter. An independent researcher had been studying the Stalin era, including the great number of individuals imprisoned in Siberia without trials. These prisoners had no contact with the outside world. He ran across the records of Nikita and Natasha Bogdanovich, who were imprisoned in the late 1940s. Natasha had died of

pneumonia in 1958. Nikita sadly committed suicide in prison in 1959. As Dimitri read the letter, he fell to the floor with grief. "All these years, all these years," the old man groaned. He felt like his life had been stolen. He felt like he had been used and abused by the state since childhood. He was profoundly affected. He didn't know what to do. Then he remembered that he is living under a similar type leader. No matter what he does, he better not say anything.

Dimitri continues to go to work as normal. He also continues to correspond with the researcher and tries to learn as much as he can about his parents. The more he learns the angrier and disenchanted he becomes. He is grieving. His assistant Alexander tries to buoy his spirits. After all, they have just made a major discovery that may help humanity. Aleksandr is also encouraged because they have just received new orders. Their mission is to create a vaccine for the new virus that they had just discovered. This is what the new lab is being built for. It is slowly being filled with state-of-the-art equipment that they will need to accomplish the new mission. Aleksandr sees these developments as being positive and uplifting. Dimitri's mood remains depressed. For the first time, they are given another assistant. Nadia is a young but talented biologist with huge ambitions. She is given the task of arranging the equipment in the new lab. Meanwhile, Dimitri and Aleksandr secure the new and highly potent virus in a container for vault storage. They are told to secure it in a sealed metal container as usual. A military officer comes and retrieves the metal container. It goes immediately to the subzero storage facility. Soon the scientists are working steadily to create the vaccine that has been ordered by the government. Day by day, week by week, month by month, they work continuously on the project. After three years and many failures they believe they have found a good candidate to be an effective vaccine. Dimitri has gotten quite old now. Aleksandr and Nadia are doing most of the work. They are proud of the team's most recent accomplishment. However, Dimitri points out that the vaccine must undergo numerous trials to determine its safety and effectiveness. He privately wonders why they have worked so hard to create a vaccine for a virus that previously didn't exist and is being securely

stored. Aleksandr sides with Dimitri, but Nadia is young and brash. She wants credit from her superiors for helping to create the vaccine they wanted. She writes her own report, stating that the vaccine is a real breakthrough and highly effective. That report makes it to Putin's desk. This is what he's been waiting for.

VLADIMIR - Most people have a role model. Even powerful people in high places have someone that they admire. In Putin's case that role model, that admirable person, is Joseph Stalin. Born in 1952, Vladimir was taught the heroics of Russia's victory in World War II. He learned of Stalin's ironfisted rule during that period. While some people despised Stalin's cruel autocratic reign, Vladimir saw it as the proper way to manage and control the country. This devotion to a dictator shaped his future. He spent years in the KGB serving similar type leaders. When he got a chance, he grabbed the leadership role and became a new type of dictator himself. However, he has always had to feel like he lives in the shadow of Stalin's accomplishments. His special blend of KGB experience, and a vision of grandeur for his "presidential" legacy, causes him to want more decisive victories against real and perceived enemies. This includes much of the rest of the world. Therefore, he is constantly looking for a way to upend the other countries and elevate Russia. With the new virus that his scientists have created, he feels he has a viable plan for disruption. When he receives word from Nadia that a vaccine has been created, he sets the plan in motion. He orders that a sample of the new virus be prepared for storage. He specifies that multiple viruses be sealed in a glass jar container and be ready for pickup.

Dimitri, Aleksandr, and Nadia receive the order for a new storage sample. It seems highly unusual that they are to seal viruses in a glass container. However, they know better than to question this high level order. Soon they have packed the new container of viruses and await pickup by the military. This time is different however, the individual that comes for the sample is a Russian intelligence officer. He works directly under Putin. Dimitri

recognizes him immediately. He has seen him before at a state function. The man looks far too oriental to be a Russian. "Probably from eastern Russia near Mongolia," Dimitri thinks. He is carrying the proper paperwork, so Dimitri hands him the sample. Afterwards, the three lab workers have a more relaxed schedule. The pressure is off somewhat to create anything new. Each scientist receives a modest bonus for their work on the vaccine. Dimitri and Aleksandr continue to assert that the vaccine must have proper tests and trials before its effectiveness and safety can be assured. Nadia privately assures their superiors that the vaccine will be safe and effective.

Xing Lee, the Russian intelligence operative, is carrying a false passport and other matching fake identification. He boards a train from a small city in Russia. He is carrying a metal briefcase. His destination is another small city in China. That small city is within driving distance of Wuhan. He stays overnight in a cheap hotel. Then he rents a car and makes a 90 mile drive into Wuhan. He blends perfectly with the throngs of Chinese citizens on the streets of the busy city. He leaves the metal briefcase in the trunk of the rental car. He is instead carrying a shopping bag that displays the logo of a popular Chinese department store. Slowly but surely, he makes his way to the live animal market of Wuhan. He stops to look in store windows and vendor booths. He behaves exactly like a Chinese consumer on a shopping spree. He keeps walking until he comes to the animals for sale. His heart is beating quickly, this is the critical part of his mission. He reaches into the shopping bag and retrieves the glass jar. He discreetly drops the jar at the feet of a group of people that are gathered in front of a street vendor's display. The jar breaks into many pieces, releasing thousands of Putin's new viruses. Xing Lee quickly walks away, holding his breath. No one notices who dropped the jar. The people quickly see that there's no reason for alarm, it's just a slight accident. The business owner comes running to pick up the glass shards. Two other people bend forward to help. The first cases of the new coronavirus are contracted. Covid-19 has begun its assault on the world. It is the beginning of a worldwide pandemic. Xing Lee makes his way back to Russia, undiscovered and without incident.

Like the rest of the world, Dimitri, Aleksandr, and Nadia start hearing news reports of a new type of flu bug in China. It is said to be a virus and a very potent one. Being biologists, they begin speculating about what its characteristics might be. They are concerned about unsuccessful efforts to contain it by the Chinese. They become alarmed the more they hear details about the outbreak. Little by little their concern becomes dread. They know very well what a pandemic can mean for the world. That's when the Chinese release the genetic sequence for the new disease. Dimitri copies the sequence and runs it through his bank of computers. The results floor him. This is his lab's virus! The dangerous one that they made several years back. He has to hold onto his desk. He feels sick at his stomach like he might vomit. His head is spinning with thoughts of what this means. It can only mean one thing. Putin has released the virus! Dimitri is so upset he has to talk to someone. He asks Aleksandr to have a drink with him after work. Aleksandr comes, but so does Nadia. She says she wants to be part of the camaraderie. After a bottle of vodka, Dimitri voices his fears about the virus. He is so angry, he has spent his life trying to do good work, not to be part of something evil. Aleksandr and Nadia agree. In a quiet booth, at the rear of the establishment, everyone voices their disgust at the idea of the virus being purposely released. They quietly rant and fume over the situation. They don't know what to do next. Dimitri however is past his breaking point. The next day he is required to submit a weekly report on the lab activities. As he begins to put the report in an envelope for his superiors, he suddenly grabs a permanent marker and scrawls across the front page in large letters "Putin-What did you do?" His anger will be apparent to anyone who sees this. He doesn't care. He is 86 years old and is finally making his stand.

A few days later the intelligence officer going by the name Xing Lee is given a new assignment. He spends several days planning his mission and collecting the items he will need to carry it out. On a Friday morning, when most people are at work, he slips a key into the front door lock of an older apartment building in Moscow. He is wearing nondescript work clothing and carrying a duffel bag containing all the things he will need. He takes the old

elevator to the eighth floor. He goes to apartment 816 and quietly picks the old lock on the door. The apartment is empty. He closes the door behind him and securely latches it. He begins to spread his equipment on the floor next to the west wall of the apartment. He takes a drill with a small but long bit and proceeds to drill a hole just above the baseboard. Very carefully he extends the drill bit through the wall on the other side. The hole comes through under Dimitri's bed. He works carefully but quickly. He wants all preparations made long before Dimitri comes home. He inserts a long thin tube through the hole he has drilled. From the duffel bag he pulls out a 5 gallon container of propane. The propane tank has a hose and a nozzle attachment for the thin tube going through the wall. He makes the necessary connections. Then he sits next to the wall and makes himself comfortable. It's going to be a long day and night. About 6 PM he hears Dimitri come into his apartment. A TV is turned on. He hears a clatter in the kitchen and can smell food being cooked. It reminds him that he is hungry. He pulls out a lunch pail from the duffel bag. He sits and eats a sandwich. He has some soup in a thermos. Eventually it becomes late in the evening. Finally, the TV goes off. He can hear the old man come to the bedroom on the other side of the wall. Dimitri settles in the bed. Xing puts his ear against the wall. After a while he can hear the old man snoring. Silently he begins to turn on the valve that releases the propane. Just a little at first, making sure that Dimitri is asleep and doesn't notice. Eventually he opens the valve all the way. It will take a while for all the propane to make its way through the thin tube. Xing settles back and relaxes. He knows his work is well underway to being completed. Slowly but surely the propane begins to fill the bedroom where Dimitri is sleeping. Few people know this, but breathing propane in a closed environment has lethal effects. With an older person especially, it will cause a heart attack and certain death. All night Xing continues to relentlessly pump propane that Dimitri is unknowingly breathing. Very early in the morning, when the propane container is empty, the assassin packs up his supplies and equipment, including the tube through the wall. He makes sure the entire area is spotlessly clean of evidence. Then he slips out of the door, duffel bag in hand. Within minutes he is out of the building and away from the crime scene. Monday morning comes and Dimitri does not show up for work. This is highly unusual. At the

end of the day Aleksandr goes to his apartment to check on him. Dimitri has not been answering his phone. His car is in its parking spot, so he should be home. Aleksandr gets no answer at the door and becomes alarmed. Eventually he has the building superintendent open the door. They find Dimitri in bed and unresponsive. Dimitri has passed away in his sleep. The smell of the cooking odor is still in the air. The propane has very little odor and has long since dissipated. The coroner's report lists Dimitri's death "by natural causes." A heart attack obviously killed the 86-year-old man. Aleksandr however has an uneasy feeling. It has only been several weeks since Dimitri chastised Putin in an aggressive way. Aleksandr begins to wonder if he and Nadia might also be on Putin's enemy list. After all, they had spoken openly about their suspicions regarding Putin and the coronavirus. Nadia has recently been given the task of making the weekly lab reports. That Friday she attends lunch with one of her important superiors. Her prepared report lies on her desk waiting for the courier. Aleksandr opens the report in her absence. He can't believe what he sees. She has written a note detailing some of the private conversations between Dimitri and Aleksandr when they discussed the pandemic. She goes on to say that she doesn't think Aleksandr can be trusted with state secrets. Aleksandr thinks, "this whole time she has been spying on Dimitri and I." Now he is in fear for his life. He puts the report back exactly as it was. He takes his personal belongings from the lab and puts them in a bag. He takes the bag and exits the lab building. He goes directly to his apartment and begins to pack. By nightfall he has his important belongings in two suitcases and a duffel bag. Early in the morning he empties his bank accounts. His car is loaded with his belongings. He begins the long drive west, headed towards Ukraine. He calls his friend Yuri in Ukraine. He needs some help crossing the border, he says. Yuri tells him that with a little money this can be done easily. In three days, Aleksandr has crossed the border successfully.

Months go by and Covid -19 is spreading to every country in the world. Putin misjudged the dangerous new virus. He wanted disruption. He wanted to slow the economies of his competitors in the world. He wanted to cause

fear and havoc in the population of other countries - and also in Russia. His political opponents and dissidents were becoming a problem. You can control people that are fearful. Soon this coronavirus began to take a deadly toll around the world - including in Russia. Putin turned to the vaccine that he had developed as part of his plan. However, Dimitri and Aleksandr were correct to question its safety and effectiveness. Putin had given a press release to the world stating that Russia had miraculously developed an early vaccine. Unbelievably he hoped to profit by having the first vaccine that the world so desperately needed. The vaccine however proved to be overstated and less than effective. Once again, the Russian people and everyone else in the world have had to suffer because of Putin's devilish actions. Such severe actions this time, with horrible consequences for all of humanity.

In America, the death toll rises. Families are losing loved ones at an alarming rate. At the same time, misinformation about the virus is constantly being spread on the Internet. It is being said that the virus is a hoax. Many people have been convinced that they do not need to wear a mask or practice social distancing. Russia is one source of this damaging disinformation campaign. Oh, what a great victory Putin is enjoying this time. In the end, more Americans will be killed by Covid-19 than those that died fighting in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan combined. Stalin would be proud.

I hope that my motives in writing this story are taken as those of an American patriot and a humanist. I have done what I consider to be my duty. Only sometimes, I can't shake the sadness. I am haunted by the fact that, as hard as I try, I can no longer make contact with Aleksandr. I have received no further communication from him. My friend Yuri has not heard from him either. I have visions of Aleksandr being dead or in a secret prison

somewhere. Should I be worried for my well-being? I hope not, but I do carry a constant uneasy feeling. I know I shouldn't. I'm not part of the world of espionage, subversion, or global sabotage. I am, however, a human on this earth, and right now, many humans are dying or going crazy. I need to keep from dying or going crazy. Without thinking, I go back to the front window and pull the curtain slightly for another look outside. I tell myself this behavior has to stop. No one is after me, or even interested in me. I'm just a fiction writer, undiscovered, and that's fine with me.

DAVEY ROBINS

U.S. Copyright 2020 All Rights Reserved Sharing permitted – without changes Writing for you is my livelihood. Donations accepted and much appreciated. Donate easily and securely with PayPal using email moviestorylines@gmail.com

