



## Soviet Espionage in America

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity #2: The Rosenberg Trial

**Directions:** You have been selected to portray David Greenglass, the main witness for the prosecution, for an in-class simulation of the 1951 Rosenberg Trial. Use the material in the following to prepare a five-minute presentation summarizing Greenglass's actual courtroom testimony. To learn more about David Greenglass, visit this site:

[http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/rosenb/ROS\\_BDGR.HTM](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/rosenb/ROS_BDGR.HTM).

From "Famous Trials: The Rosenberg Trial":

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/transcripts/ftrials/rosenb/ROSENB.HTM>

[Greenglass testified that Rosenberg asked David and Ruth Greenglass to visit him in Knickerbocker Village. When they arrived, a woman by the name of Ann Sidorovich was also there. Greenglass said that Rosenberg told him that Sidorovich would probably meet Greenglass in a movie theater in Denver to pick up information that he is able to get in Los Alamos. Because his contact might turn out to be someone else, Rosenberg cut a Jell-O box with a scissors and gave one half to Ruth Greenglass while keeping the other half. He told Greenglass that whatever person he sent to meet with him would carry the matching half of the Jell-O box as a recognition signal. The meeting point was changed from Denver to Albuquerque. Greenglass then testified as to a meeting (also in New York) arranged by Julius, with a Russian in a car. Greenglass described the lenses to the unknown Russian and answered his questions about activities in Los Alamos.]

[Cohn, Greenglass's lawyer, provided Greenglass with a Jell-O box and asked him to cut it in the way that he said Julius had during their meeting at his apartment.]

[Cohn asked Greenglass about his meeting in Albuquerque with Harry Gold, who turned out to be his contact.]

COHN: Would you tell us exactly what happened from the first minute you saw Gold?

GREENGLASS: There was a knock on the door and I opened it. We had just completed eating breakfast, and there was a man standing in the hallway who asked if I was Mr. Greenglass and I said, yes. He stepped through the door and said, "Julius sent me," and I said, "Oh" and walked to my wife's purse, took out the wallet and took out the matched part of the Jell-O box. He produced his piece and we checked them and they fitted, and the identification was made. I offered him something to eat and he said he had already eaten. He just wanted to know if I had any information, and I said, "I have some but I will have to write it up. If you come back in the afternoon, I will give it to you." I started to tell him about one of the people who would be good material for recruiting into espionage work-- He cut me short and he left and I got to work on the report.

COHN: Where did you work on the report?

GREENGLASS: In my combination living room and bedroom.

COHN: Tell us exactly what you did.

GREENGLASS: I got out some 8 by 10 ruled white paper, and I drew some sketches of a lens mold and how they are set up in the experiment, and I gave a description of the experiment.

COHN: Was this another step in the same experiment on atomic energy concerning which you had given a sketch to Rosenberg?

GREENGLASS: That is right, and I also gave him a list of possible recruits for espionage.

COHN: Did Harry Gold come back in the afternoon?

GREENGLASS: Yes at 2:30-- I gave him my report in an envelope and he gave me an envelope, which I felt and realized there was money in it and I put it in my pocket.

COHN: Did you examine the money at that point?

GREENGLASS: No, I didn't. Gold said, "Will it be enough?" and I said, "Well, it will be plenty for the present." And he said "You need it" and we went into a side discussion about the fact that my wife had a miscarriage earlier in the spring, and he said, "Well, I will see what I can do about getting some more money for you."

COHN: How much was in the envelope?

GREENGLASS: My wife and I counted it later. There was \$500--I gave it to her.

[...]

[Cohn asked Greenglass about a visit he had with Julius Rosenberg while on furlough in September, 1943.]

GREENGLASS: He came up to the apartment and he got me out of bed and we went into another room so my wife could dress.

COHN: What did he say to you?

GREENGLASS: He said to me that he wanted to know what I had for him. I told him "I think I have a pretty good description of the atom bomb."

COHN: The atom bomb itself?

GREENGLASS: That's right.

[Greenglass testified that Rosenberg asked him for a written description of experiments underway at Los Alamos. Greenglass said that he would prepare the descriptions. Rosenberg gave him \$200.]

COHN: Did you draw up a sketch of the atom bomb itself?

GREENGLASS: I did.

COHN: Did you prepare descriptive material to explain the sketch of the atom bomb?

GREENGLASS: I did.

COHN: Was there any other material that you wrote up on that occasion?

GREENGLASS: I gave some scientists' names, and I also gave some possible recruits for espionage.

COHN: Now, about how many pages would you say it took to write down all these matters?

GREENGLASS: I would say about twelve pages or so.

[Greenglass testified that Ethel Rosenberg, in his presence, typed the secret information on a portable typewriter while he and Julius clarified ambiguous and ungrammatical language in Greenglass's draft. Greenglass then testified that Julius bragged as the typing was in progress that he had stolen a proximity fuse when working at Emerson Radio.]

COURT: Did he tell you what he did with that proximity fuse?

GREENGLASS: He told me he took it out in his briefcase. That is the same briefcase he brought his lunch in with and gave it to Russia....

[Greenglass was asked if Rosenberg told him how he passed information to Russian agents.]

GREENGLASS: He told me that if he wanted to get in touch with the Russians, he had a means of communicating with them in a motion picture theater, an alcove where he would put microfilm or messages and the Russians would pick it up. If he wanted to see them in person, he would put a message in there and by prearrangement they would meet in some lonely spot in Long Island.

COHN: Did you in the report you wrote for Rosenberg tell him about atomic explosion which would take place at Alamogordo, New Mexico [the first successful test of the atomic bomb]?

GREENGLASS: Yes, in June 1943--

COURT: How long before the explosion did you tell him?

GREENGLASS: About a month before.

[...]

E. H. BLOCH [the Rosenbergs' lawyer]: You knew at that time, did you not, that you were engaging in the commission of a very serious crime?

GREENGLASS: I did. . . .

E. H. BLOCH: Did it occur to you at the time that you finally said to your wife, "I will do this" and then transmitted to her certain information that there was a possible penalty of death for espionage?

GREENGLASS: Yes.

[...]

E. H. BLOCH: And from the time in the latter part of November 1944, during your entire career in the Army, you continued to spy, did you not?

GREENGLASS: I did.

E. H. BLOCH: And you received money for that, did you not?

June 19, 1953

Dearest Sweethearts, my most precious children,



Robert (l) & Michael, ages 6 & 10, 1953 Only this morning it looked like we might be together again after all. Now that his cannot be, I want so much for you to know all that I have come to know. Unfortunately, I may write only a few simple words; the rest your own lives must teach you, even as mine taught me.

At first, of course, you will grieve bitterly for us, but you will not grieve alone. That is our consolation and it must eventually be yours.

Eventually, too you must come to believe that life is worth the living. Be comforted that even now, with the end of ours slowly approaching, that we know this with a conviction that defeats the executioner!

Your lives must teach you, too, that good cannot really flourish in the midst of evil; that freedom and all the things that go to make up a truly satisfying and worthwhile life, must sometimes be purchased very dearly. Be comforted then that we were serene and understood with the deepest kind of understanding, that civilization had not as yet progressed to the point where life did not have to be lost for the sake of life; and that we were comforted in the sure knowledge that others would carry on after us.

We wish we might have had the tremendous joy and gratification of living our lives out with you. Your Daddy who is with me in these last momentous hours, sends his heart and all the love that is in it for his dearest boys. Always remember that we were innocent and could not wrong our conscience.

We press you close and kiss you with all our strength.

Lovingly,

DADDY AND MOMMY

JULIE            ETHEL