

# MEMORANDUM

September 26, 1995

To:           Jeremy Gunn  
From:         Joe Freeman  
Subject:      John Barron, author

## KGB Books

In addition to the book referenced by Russell (*KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents*, Readers Digest Press, 1974), Barron has also written a more recent study, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand* (Readers Digest Press, 1983). **Both of these books have been checked out of the LOC for your perusal.** Barron has written other books which presume serious intelligence sources: a study of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal rule in Cambodia (*Murder of a Gentle Land*, with Anthony Paul) and *MiG Pilot: The Final Escape of Lieutenant Belenko*. He has also written a great many articles on such disparate but intelligence-related subjects as the IRA, the shooting down of KAL 007, Castro, the John Walker spy scandal, Russian involvement in Afghanistan, Yuri Andropov, industrial espionage, etc. A list of some of his magazine articles is attached, FYI. The last I was able to find was circa 1980.

Barron's style is journalistic, as opposed to academic. Moreover, he is clearly a Cold Warrior and on the right-wing side of the American political spectrum. Despite or because of this, his two KGB books seem to have been favorably reviewed, by and large. I've attached extracts of various reviews compiled by the Book Review Digest of 1974 and 1984, respectively.

The review (which I read in full) of his 1974 book by the *The New York Times Book Review* was very favorable. This volume was apparently a best seller (see *Christian Science Monitor* reference in the extract of its review of his second KGB book). In the preface of his first book, Barron claims to have had access at the FBI to DeLoach, at the CIA to William Harvey and to have conducted "extensive" interviews with Nosenko. Appendix D of this book contains an alphabetical listing of KGB agents in the west -- hard to see how he could compile it without substantial inside help.

His second book, interestingly enough, was reviewed for *Commentary* by Edward Jay Epstein (reviewed very favorably, I might add -- I read this one in full). Epstein actually complains in his review that the NY Times and others had chosen *not* to review what Epstein felt was an important

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book. This volume, too, contains a list of KGB agents, as well as a detailed discussion of the agency's bureaucratic structure.

### **The Author**

Aside from additional general references to his background in naval intelligence, I've gleaned no new information regarding when or where he served. I've yet to come across any middle initial (the "M" of J.M. Barron/ONI, for instance) for him. He was born in 1930, and is now retired from *Readers Digest*. He has an unlisted number, but the *Readers Digest* office here in Washington said they would give him the message that I called. Should he call me back, do you have any objection if I just ask him directly whether he might be the "J.M. Barron" of ONI Oswald memo fame (or do you have a suggestion as to how to secure the information by a more circuitous inquiry)? Do you have any other questions you want asked of him (ie, Win Scott)? Would you rather you or Anne talked to him? Please advise.

Freeman e:\wp.docs\092695  
File 4.0.2 Soviet Union  
KGB Files