

For Your Eyes Only: Royalty & Espionage

Contributed by Dr. Janice Seto
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This has been a week dominated by headlines involving the murky world of espionage, from the royal premiere of the new James Bond movie, *Casino Royale*, to today's astonishing reports alleging a former KGB spy has been "poisoned" at a sushi bar in London.

As Dr. Janice Seto reports, for centuries even some of the world's most senior royals have been accused of betraying their homeland.

This weekend thousands worldwide have flocked to cinemas to enjoy the latest installment of the James Bond film franchise (and from the previews we've seen already, female moviegoers might be especially keen to see rather more of the sixth 007, actor Daniel Craig, emerging from the waters!).

Audiences will see a novice Bond shredding his cynical view of love ("preferring married women because it keeps things simple"), open his heart, and trust a female with his soul: "I have no armour left. You've stripped it from me. Whatever is left of me — whatever I am — I'm yours."

When

it is revealed that Bond's great love, Vesper Lynd, is in fact an agent for the enemy under orders to work on Bond. Before committing suicide, she claims to have seduced Bond for the sake of her Algerian lover and now has truly fallen for 007.

Stabbed in the heart, Bond ultimately and coldly declares: "The bitch is dead." (Bond's comment likening the possible love of his life to a female dog resonates with the opposition displayed against Marie Antoinette, who was born an Austrian archduchess, (French "autrichienne"). "La chienne" also refers to a female hound, or a bitch, hence to her detractors, the Queen of France was both a traitorous foreigner and a fey woman.)

When

you manipulate someone's feelings and gain their trust for ulterior motives, you earn every word of reproach. As Immanuel Kant states in his practical imperative: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end."

In

short, using people for selfish purposes is an act of disrespect. How can you ever again trust someone who has betrayed you?

But from where

do traitors come? The answer: a common source — divided loyalties — or perceived by others as having the potential for clouded intentions and actions.

In times past, questions have been raised as to whether royals put 'my country' first. Three

Elizabeths illustrate three reasons for suspicion:

1. Loyalty to Birth Family: Elizabeth Woodville

Although she was the widowed Lady Grey upon her secret royal wedding, the consort of Edward IV — later mother of the two princes in the Tower and of Elizabeth of York, whose marriage to Henry VII ended the War of the Roses —

Elizabeth will always be known by her birth family name, Woodville. Because that is where her loyalties always lie during her 20 years as consort.

Most dowager queens would have lived their lives in quiet splendour and honour. Unfortunately this wasn't to be in Elizabeth's case.

The Woodvilles had profited too ostentatiously from their kinswoman's marriage. Through tributes, favours at court and in church, her sisters gained noble spouses and her 20-year-old brother a wealthy widow, Lady Katherine Neville, who was almost 80 years of age.

In comparison, Queen Elizabeth (The Queen Mother's) Bowes-Lyon family gained very little.

King George VI did give the Strathmores a

UK title by creation, to supplement their Scottish titles. For the late Queen Mother's favourite brother, David, the King gave him an ambassadorship in the

US and knighted him.

Meanwhile, Anne Bowes Lyon, the divorced Viscountess Anson, became a princess by marrying Prince George of Denmark through the influence of the King on the Danes ("If a Bowes Lyon is good enough for me, it is good enough for you)."

A non-Elizabeth example is Lucrezia Borgia, whose role of family pawn precluded any possibility of transference of loyalty. Until her family was deposed, she remained a Borgia despite three marriages.

In the same way, Marguerite de Valois is rarely viewed as Queen of Navarre. Portrayed by the stunning Isabel Adjani in the film *La Reine Margot*, she is seen as an impulsive, morally ambiguous royal compelled by her debauched brothers and ruthless mother, Catherine de Medici, the Queen Mother, into a political marriage to the protestant Henri de Bourbon, King of Navarre.

Lured to the wedding festivities in Catholic Paris, hundreds of Protestants fell prey to the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. Henri de Bourbon, later known as *le vert galante*, converted to Catholicism to save his life, and later switched back, and forth, as was expedient.

In the end, he made the final change to Catholicism as the Valois men died without heirs. As he said: "

Paris vaut bien une messe" (Paris is worth a mass), and he and the childless Margot divorced with a handsome pension, she living it up to an old age, surrounded as always by a bevy of young male admirers, with the title of Duchesse de Valois.

Fitting indeed.

2. Loyalty to Home Country: Queen Elisabeth of the Belgians (nee Duchess in Bavaria)

Due to their proximity to power and information, during wartime members of royal family's drew accusations of spying for their birth country. In effect, they were accused of being blue blooded 007s passing along state secrets!

In

France, the finger of suspicion was pointed at Marie Antoinette and later her niece, Marie Louise, the Hapsburg consort of Napoleon. Both were accused of being traitors to their adopted home.

It didn't take too long for Elisabeth, consort of Albert I of the Belgians, to go public about where she stood. Not for her the fate of other royals with a Germanic heritage, such as Alexandra of Russia, Sophie of Greece, Frederike of Greece, George V of the UK.

This artistic royal declared: "Entre moi et Allemagne, un rideau est tombe" to stake her future defiantly with her Belgian subjects. Alongside her husband, nicknamed le roi chevalier, Queen Elisabeth earned great respect during WWI.

And as we know, Queen Elizabeth I was more married to

England than the possibility of any man.

Unfortunately the perception that royalty will turn traitor against their homeland also occurs during peacetime.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's eldest daughter, 'Vickie', the clever Princess Royal, was too nakedly British, despite speaking fluent German, for her adopted country.

Precisely because her upbringing was liberal, regardless of language, under the progressive influence of Albert, the 17-year-old bride to Frederik William of

Prussia had the cards stacked against her from the outset.

From within the Prussian court to crafty politicians like

Bismarck, Vicky had almost no allies of note, her talents allowed to fallow, an earlier version of Japan's Crown Princess Masako. Fear of Vicky's influence meant her own children were raised without much influence from their mother.

How sad to think that, out of the liberal mind of Vicky and Fritz, sprang Kaiser 'Bill'.

3. Loyalty to Self: Empress Elisabeth 'Sissi' of Austria

Delightfully played by the late great Romy Schneider in the Sissi film trilogy, Elisabeth of the von Wittelsbach dynasty of

Bavaria, "Sissi" decided to live life to the full, according to her own terms. Not for her the life of self-sacrifice and reticence of other consorts,

such as Czarina Marie of Russia who died in a St. Petersburg palace while the racing pattering feet of her husband's children by his mistress Catherine Dolgurky echoing through the halls.

Her choice of her first cousin, Kaiser Franz Joseph II of Austria, over her sister Helene, Elisabeth at age 16 was forced from her cozy family home in Bavaria to the formality of the capitol, Vienna.

Although ostensibly the first lady of the empire (see the gorgeous paintings by Winterhalter), in reality the teenage Sissi found out that her mother-in-law and aunt, Archduchess Sophie, would relinquish her hold neither over her son nor the court. Sissi was quoted as sadly stating: "If only he were not emperor..."

The free-spirited, eager-to-please Sissi, aunt of the future Queen Elisabeth of the Belgians, eventually made the belittling and disrespectful treatment work in her favour.

As the years passed, she no longer fought a battle to be allowed to mother her own children, instead seeking out freedom from domesticity.

Eschewing the bulk of royal duties, she traveled widely and frequently for personal reasons. The court may demand its empress's time and attention, but Sissi decided if she cannot please the nitpickers through trying, then she might as well displease by not even caring about convention and protocol.

Finding herself respected by the Hungarians, she defiantly championed the underdog, supporting the dual monarchy that came to be with a new capital in Budapest.

Sissi's priority was her physical health, following a diet and fitness and sports regime not known in her day but now so prescient in our own.

An expert equestrienne, Sissi also fell under the spell of the ideas of Ancient Greece, hiring Greek experts to immerse her in the language. This intense focus on self could have resulted from marital non-support coupled with the Wittelsbach history of mental fragility (now where have we heard that in recent times?!).

Other royal figures who put loyalty to self over obligations to country and people include a number of wayward sovereign queens who were found lacking and ultimately spent their last days in exile — Isabella II of Spain in Paris and Queen Christina of Sweden.

In more recent times, King Edward VIII put his happiness ahead of the throne by marrying American divorcee Wallis Warfield Simpson.

Today, thanks in part to his extravagant lifestyle and the controversy surrounding his second marriage to former mistress Camilla Parker Bowles, there have been mutterings about the Prince of Wales.

Even now, there are those who believe Charles should have put his loyalty to his people and country before his own private happiness — ironic considering the way in which his predecessor, Edward, was so roundly condemned (and even exiled from his own country) for doing exactly that.

So how does loyalty come to us, as individuals? I think it is to be earned, not offered freely — a mistake too many women make.

Loyalty takes time to develop and mutually nourish, like a hardy tomato plant.

Maybe this is the mistake James Bond makes in *Casino Royale* — unconsciously needing connection, he puts his faith on initial impressions and death-defying incidents rather than the ordinary pace of life.

That is not an advisable way of getting to know someone!

By taking a high-risk chance with his heart on flimsy evidence of character vis-a-vis Vesper Lynd, Bond found himself burnt badly. And the producers would have us believe his heart is scarred and sealed forever, creating a Player,

who refuses to trust or believe again.

All of which may be great for the box office....

In real life, though, savvy men get through
the emotions and move on. Those who won't do The Work, well....tis a pity
that they go through life thinking: "The Bitch is dead".

Those who do
'The Work' have truly earned their double O as survivors in life.

Who
else would you rather have serving on Her Majesty's Secret Service?