



## **The Defector** **Chris Hadfield**

The unmissable Cold War spy thriller from the author of *THE APOLLO MURDERS* (book 2)

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Kaz is back in a “many of these people are real, much of this actually happened” – thriller in the second book of *Apollo Murders* written by astronaut Chris Hadfield.

As almost the entire first group of U.S. astronauts were former military test pilots, Chris is using his familiarity with the test pilot environment to weave another gripping “technical realistic – fictional” test pilot and space –race story into the background of real events during the cold war in the 1970’s. In other words it is a story which if it would have happened, it could have happened as described.

The story is set in October 1973, as the Yom Kippur War begins in the Middle East. The inciting event is that a Soviet MiG-25 “Foxbat” — a very advanced, high-speed, high-altitude fighter/reconnaissance jet — disappears over Israeli territory. The Russian pilot, Alexander Vasilyevich Abramovich, wants to defect to the United States.

Kaz Zemeckis, a former U.S. test pilot and NASA flight controller accidentally becomes involved during a holiday stay in Israel, promptly being tasked Major Philipps, Kaz’s commanding officer within the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) to accompany the defector to America and to find out whether defection is real or whether it might be a deception.

The U.S. and the Soviet Union are locked in technological and military competition. The Foxbat (MiG-25) is almost mythical in this story: it represents a major gap in knowledge and capability for the West, especially in air/space reconnaissance and defense. Whoever controls its secrets has “the high ground”. Because of this, any defection carries enormous risk—for both sides. There’s mutual suspicion, intelligence operations, counterintelligence, and propaganda to consider.

What I found very interesting is the mentioning of the independent Russian and US research efforts for nuclear propulsion systems for space applications, which plays an important role, and the initiation of the Apollo-Soyuz program under President Nixon also is a key event of the story.

All this is seamlessly woven together in a suspense thriller which satisfies aviation- and space enthusiasts as well, and the story hinges on obtaining or denying access to advanced Soviet aircraft knowledge and US space know-how.

Chris Hadfield provides an intelligent and technical-realistic easy reading which brings back the authentically political atmosphere at the time.

I am looking forward to book number three of *The Apollo Murders*!