

Katya

Review by Stewart Baker

KATYA: What Would You Risk for Half a Billion Dollars?

by David Bickford

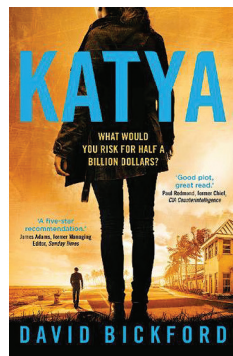
Coinkydink Limited, UK; 352 pgs, 5 July 2023; also available on Kindle 7 July 2023 at <https://www.amazon.com/KATYA-What-would-billion-dollars-ebook/dp/BoC9MTZ5GC>.

A NEW FEMALE SPY SERIES
FROM THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF
INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES MI5 & MI6

There are a lot of spy novels by former intelligence officers, and almost as many legal thrillers by lawyers. And yet there are only a handful of spy novels by intelligence lawyers. In fact, this is a corner of the espionage library that David Bickford seems to have all to himself.

As well he should. David Bickford is a highly distinguished lawyer with a long career providing legal advice to the United Kingdom's intelligence services, both domestic and international. His career advising MI5 and MI6 overlapped with my time as general counsel of the National Security Agency, so I have benefited from his prudence, caution, and wisdom in the law of intelligence.

None of which prepared me for the rampant action and law-breaking in his latest spy novel, *Katya*. Not to mention the women's fashion. David clearly has depths I never appreciated when we were comparing intelligence oversight regimes across the Atlantic.



The title character of the book is Katya Petrovna, a British secret agent whose ruthless use of her femininity and guns in pursuit of British interests is matched only by her attention to name-brand accessories. But unlike her predecessor in fiction, James Bond, Katya in the end is out for herself.

The result is nonstop action, pulling Katya from one exotic locale to another – all captured by Bickford with the detailed eye of someone who's been there. Katya finds herself trying to avoid not only gun-wielding thugs but the details of British anti-money-laundering regulation as she tries to make things turn out well for Britain and even better for herself. As they mostly do, but not until after a shootout on the floor of the House of Commons. Even Ian Fleming never imagined that for his hero.

In short, *Katya* won't just entertain you. It will change forever your view of intelligence lawyers.

Remarkable attention to women's wardrobe (second only to Ian Fleming's love affair with men's fashion).

David Bickford is a British author and former Under Secretary of State and Legal Director to the British Intelligence Agencies, MI5 & MI6. His novels explore the covert world of Katya and the G8 Intelligence Agencies and operatives, who operate in a world of corruption, blackmail, extortion, and murder. More about Bickford and his books are available at: <https://www.davidbickfordcb.com>; <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089721941719>; <https://twitter.com/davidbickfordcb>; and <https://www.coinkydink.co.uk>.

Stewart Baker was the first Assistant Secretary (acting as Under Secretary-equivalent) for Policy at DHS under the George W. Bush administration. He was the former General Counsel of NSA (1992–1994) and author of several books, publications, and articles on electronic commerce and international trade. He is of Counsel at Steptoe & Johnson in Washington, DC. He hosts the weekly Steptoe Cyberlaw Podcast at <https://www.steptoelaw.com/feed-Cyberlaw.rss>. He serves as Chairman of AFIO's Board of Directors.