

EYES ONLY

DOSSIER



Name: Ethel Rosenberg
Date of Birth: 28 September 1915
Country of Origin: United States of America
Gender: Female
Occupation: Shipping Clerk
Code Name: Ethel

Background Intelligence:

Ethel Rosenberg and her husband, Julius Rosenberg, were members of an international Soviet **spy ring** that passed high level secrets about the U.S. atomic bomb project to the Soviet Union in the 1940s. She was born in New York City and was very smart, graduating from high school at the age of 15. She took a job as a shipping clerk and after four years was fired for organizing a protest strike of 150 women who were being treated unfairly. She became interested in politics and joined the Young Communist League and later the American Communist Party. She met her future husband, Julius at a choral event. They married in 1939 and she stayed home with her two sons, Michael and Robert. In 1946 her husband was fired from his government job as a signals intelligence (**SIGINT**) specialist because of his pro-Soviet opinions. Julius became a spy for the Soviet Union and **recruited** other Americans to steal top secret military information. Ethel assisted her husband on many missions including passing top secret information to and from their Soviet contacts. In June 1950 the Rosenbergs obtained passport photos to escape to the Soviet Union but it was too late. That July, Julius was arrested and in August, Ethel was arrested. Their sons were placed with their grandmother and in March 1951 the Rosenbergs and other Soviet spies were brought to trial. Ethel was accused of passing American atomic secrets to the Soviets. She maintained her innocence but was executed for **espionage** in Sing Sing Prison on 19 June 1953. She was the first woman to be executed in the United States for a federal offense since 1865. Although there was much controversy over Ethel's involvement in actual spying, decryptions of Soviet messages reveal that Ethel was indeed a Soviet spy.

Your Mission: When you go to the Spy Museum, pretend you are this person and imagine that you have been assigned the following:

You must pick up intelligence at a **dead drop** site located on the corner of Fifth and Vine. Decode the message and type it in original text. Use another dead drop site to pass this information to your Soviet handler. Make sure you avoid **FBI surveillance**.



You can find out more about this person at the International Spy Museum in **Atomic Spies** and **Red Alley**.

NOTE: Key terms in this Guide are shown in **bold** and are defined in The Language of Espionage (Appendix).