

Lovestruck US Airman Admits Leaking Ukraine Secrets

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A retired United States Army lieutenant colonel who later worked as a civilian employee for the United States Air Force has pleaded guilty to sharing highly classified military secrets with a woman he met on a dating app.

David Franklin Slater, 64, of Nebraska, admitted that his feelings overrode his duty to protect national security. Slater held a Top Secret clearance (including SCI access) and was assigned to U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base from approximately

August 2021 until April 2022. His role gave him access to detailed intelligence briefings about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Despite signing non-disclosure agreements and knowing the grave risks of mishandling classified information, Slater began passing sensitive data to a woman who claimed to be a foreign national. According to court documents, the woman identified only as “co-conspirator 1” regularly contacted Slater through email and messaging platforms. Their communication began in or around February 2022, shortly after Russia began its full-scale invasion, and continued through April 2022.

Prosecutors revealed that Slater's online companion flattered and cajoled him into revealing information that included military targets, troop movements, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) activities. She often used affectionate language, calling him her “secret informant love” and her “secret agent,” while asking for details about classified meetings.

In one message, she wrote, “Beloved Dave, do NATO and Biden have a secret plan to help us?” In another, she praised his access: “You are my secret agent. With love.”

United States Attorney Lesley A. Woods emphasized that Slater's decades of military experience should have made him more cautious. “Access to classified information comes with great responsibility,” Woods said. “David Slater failed in his duty to protect this information by willingly sharing National Defense Information with an unknown online personality.”

Slater now faces serious consequences for his actions. The charge of conspiracy to transmit national defense information carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, and up to three years of supervised release. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for October 8.

This case highlights the dangers of romance scams and the lasting damage that even brief lapses in judgment can cause to national security.

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