

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910818506803321
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Titolo	The reader of gentlemen's mail : Herbert O. Yardley and the birth of American codebreaking // David Kahn
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven : , : Yale University Press, , 2004 ©2004
ISBN	1-281-72207-3 9786611722074 0-300-12988-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xxi, 318 pages) : illustrations
Disciplina	940.4/8673/092 B
Soggetti	Cryptographers - United States World War, 1914-1918 - Cryptography
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 291-304) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- A Short Course in Codes and Ciphers -- How Yardley Wrote His Best-Seller -- 1. All-American Boy -- 2. His Life's Work -- 3. A History of American Intelligence before Yardley -- 4. A Rival -- 5. Staffers, Shorthand, and Secret Ink -- 6. The Executive -- 7. Morning in New York -- 8. Yardley's Triumph -- 9. The Fruits of His Victory -- 10. The Busy Suburbanite -- 11. End of a Dream -- 12. The Best-Seller -- 13. The Critics, the Effects -- 14. Grub Street -- 15. A Law Aimed at Yardley -- 16. Hollywood -- 17. China -- 18. Canada -- 19. A Restaurant of His Own -- 20. Playing Poker -- 21. The Measure of a Man -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Illustration Credits -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	One of the most colorful and controversial figures in American intelligence, Herbert O. Yardley (1889-1958) gave America its best form of information, but his fame rests more on his indiscretions than on his achievements. In this highly readable biography, a premier historian of military intelligence tells Yardley's story and evaluates his impact on the American intelligence community. Yardley established the nation's first codebreaking agency in 1917, and his solutions

helped the United States win a major diplomatic victory at the 1921 disarmament conference. But when his unit was closed in 1929 because "gentlemen do not read each other's mail," Yardley wrote a best-selling memoir that introduced-and disclosed-codemaking and codebreaking to the public. David Kahn de-scribes the vicissitudes of Yardley's career, including his work in China and Canada, offers a capsule history of American intelligence up to World War I, and gives a short course in classical codes and ciphers. He debunks the accusations that the publication of Yardley's book caused Japan to change its codes and ciphers and that Yardley traitorously sold his solutions to Japan. And he asserts that Yardley's disclosures not only did not hurt but actually helped American codebreaking during World War II.
