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How the CIA Trains Its Recruits Down on 'the Farm' in Virginia

Ever since Nathan Hale was caught, Americans have surrounded the "spy game" with a romantic mystique. Miles Copeland describes in his new book, "Without Clank or Dagger," the process by which a redblooded American lad can become a full-fledged CIA "company" man.

By Miles Copeland

When I toured the United States in 1970 to lecture to university audiences, I found that the most vocal students in all parts of the country saw the Central Intelligence Agency as representative of all that is wrong with "the rotten society we live in."

Question periods were all taken up by heated discussions revolving around the agency's supposed intrigues in all capitals of the world, including Washington and London; its backing of right-wing totalitarian regimes; and its working for the large corporations rather than for the American people."

BACK AT THE HOTEL there was another story. I was deluged with calls from students wanting to know how to join up.

Although a high percentage of the students who sought me out to discuss the possibilities of a career in intelligence were straightforward types who thought in terms of practical advantages, either for a lifetime career or as a stepping-stone to something else, even more were roman-

tics — Walter Mittys, in fact. ("See that little man over there?" said Inspector Hargreaves. "You wouldn't think it to look at him, but he has all the secrets of the world in his head.")

Whatever the motives, there are thousands of young Americans who would give their eyeteeth to be employed by the CIA or, simply, to "get into the intelligence business," as one student put it to me, and by "intelligence" he clearly meant the spookier side.

Although every one of the thousands of letters of application that reach the CIA headquarters at Langley, Va., is given serious consideration, the attitude of agency recruiters is generally one of "Don't call us; we'll call you."

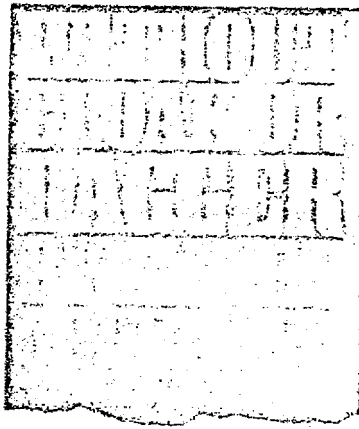
The mere fact of offering one's services to the CIA is regarded as ground for suspicion. And for good reason. An analysis of these letters shows clearly that many of them were prompted by motives other than patriotic ones, a chance to "have a look at the inside so that I can write a book about it later" being a particularly prominent one.

The CIA keeps what must certainly be the largest card file in existence of possible recruits for its organization — university students, members of certain professions and people having certain special qualifications. A person may find himself propositioned by a CIA recruiter because some area division chief has asked for "a man, age early 20s, who has a background in electronics, who speaks Hungarian although is not of Hungarian ancestry, and who can meet the agency's criteria for career officers."

He is more likely to be approached, however, if he is simply a senior in "one of the better American universities" (i.e., one that has a minimum of student demonstrations) with a B average, an absence of left-wing affiliations and a record of sound emotional health. The CIA employs professors and graduate students at "the better American universities" to canvass members of senior classes, either in the name of the CIA itself or through some "front," commercial or institutional.

ONCE YOU GET IN, you will find yourself in a whole new world. The CIA's recruiters do their best to screen out the romantics and to select only young men and women whose motivations are entirely practical; but I would say that 99 per cent of those who join the agency are at least partly attracted by the glamor. Even those few who are entirely blasé when they first get into the agency are certain to be dazzled by the indoctrination.

The first training undergone by young CIA employees who are "officer material" takes place in the modern, streamlined buildings at Langley. Much



of it is concerned with routine matters such as forms for reports, how to grade information, how to use registry, etc., but there are also many exciting exhibitions. Experts put on demonstrations of how to pick locks, plant microphones, steam open letters, forge documents.

Then there is a positively frightening series of lectures, complete with slides, charts, and photocopies of secret official Soviet documents and Communist Party correspondence, which is delivered with such authority that it would convince anyone not only that the Cold War still goes on, but that it holds greater and greater dangers which can be thwarted only by an alert and efficient intelligence system.

FINALLY, THERE IS A DISPLAY of the "national security machinery" — or "the real Washington," as one instructor calls it — which shows how, despite all the bumbling that is inevitable in any large organization, the U.S. government does manage to protect the nation's interests and how, at the same time, it has a system of "fuses" which ensure that no element of the "machinery" can acquire an excess of power. This part of the course is most impressive.

The second part of the indoctrination takes place at a country estate, a few hours' drive south of Washington, known as "the farm." Here the new CIA employee gets a taste of what it is like "out in the cold" — i.e., in the danger areas where persons in clandestine services supposedly operate: on the border between East and West Germany, on the Soviet-Iranian border, in "reception" areas in Communist China.

In one "night exercise" the trainees black their faces and try to cross a border protected by charged barbed wire, dogs, electric eyes, traps, floodlights and bor-

der patrols. When they are caught, as inevitably are, they are put through a interrogation by "East German security officials" played with enormous realism by the training division's actors.

In another "field exercise," trainees go into a nearby town to "cover" restaurants and other places to determine their suitability as meeting places for agents.

SOME OF THE TRAINEES parachute jumps, one in the daytime one at night, after which they have to their parachutes in the approved manner. Only a few of the trainees will ever have to do any of these things in real life, of course, and those few take additional training but they are given a feel for the problems they may later assign others as they comfortably at headquarters planning operations.

These two indoctrination courses are just the beginning of CIA training. A career officer of the CIA spends a good deal of his service in course: "retreading" every year or so to brought up-to-date on recently developed methods, provided with language training, and given courses in political revolution, counterrevolution and counterinsurgency, among others.

The first job of a new recruit to CIA's espionage branch is likely to be assistant to a "desk officer" — at the Desk, the Low Countries Desk or any of 30 to 40 others. His duties will mostly involve servicing requests from "the field" — for a new automobile, for special equipment of various kinds, or for an adjustment in some accounting mistake.

The first step upward of the new officer is not from assistant desk officer to desk officer, but from assistant desk officer to assistant case officer in some field station.

It is in the field that the up-and-comer espionage specialist first sticks his neck out. He will be entirely at the mercy of chief of station, and, as is well known, a good chief of station is a master at the art of taking personal credit for everything that goes right and blaming his subordinates for everything that goes wrong while giving the appearance of doing just the opposite. In any case, the relationship between the chief of station and the new officer will be both close and stormy.

The real ambition of the CIA officer: training is to get bigger and better assignments between headquarters and field, in as wide a variety of places possible.

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