

Scorpio
CIA 2.02
A Winner, Michael

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High Jinks Around the CIA

By LONDON EXPRESS

Rumours are rampant in Washington that a British film unit has been allowed to wander inside the super-secret headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is the first time in all its bizarre history that the agency has thrown open its doors to cameras, and I gather the whole affair caused some angst at high levels in the U.S. intelligence community.

Michael Winner, the normally witty and talkative director who has been in Washington to shoot his new film, "Scorpio," a spy thriller starring Burt Lancaster, Paul Scofield and Alain Delon, is shrinkingly reticent on the subject. He refuses comment of any kind.

Other sources say the film publicity will not mention the extent of the CIA's hospitality, and the full story of this extraordinary episode may not be known for years.

The CIA until now it has managed to preserve a monastic privacy by tight security and a press office which seems to have taken Trappist vows.

Not long ago the CIA wanted to talk Congress into buying them extra land in Langley, Va., so as to make the headquarters even harder for outsiders to approach. Some agents climbed to the top of a nearby hill and took pictures of the director's seventh-floor office using a telephoto lens.

Then they enlarged the original photograph many times. In the final print the grainy and blurred head of the CIA director could just be discerned, working at his desk. They showed it to Congress which quickly agreed to buy the land.

Now this fabulous Vatican of Western intelligence has been breached by a young English film director.

"Scorpio" is a taut suspense drama in which Burt Lancaster plays an American agent suspected of selling

out to the Russians and Alain Delon is a freelance assassin blackmailed by the CIA into trying to murder him. The script reeks of alienation as do many of Winner's films, but it makes no severe moral judgments about the sometimes ruthless methods of American espionage.

"We only show the CIA killing nasty agents," Winner said leaning back in his director's chair and puffing at a \$3 cigar. "Young people in America think the CIA should not exist, but that is naive."

The abundantly talented Winner, who manages to look simultaneously debauched and cherubic, says he found the CIA officials "terribly charming and cheerful and gentlemanly at all times."

"Scorpio" has created the biggest movie sensation in Washington since Otto Preminger ordered senators around during the shooting of "Advise and Consent" nearly 10 years ago.

One congressman, James Wright of Texas, dressed up as a priest and collected \$25 for a days work as an extra when Winner filmed a sequence at Washington airport. Huge mobs of onlookers assembled in Georgetown to watch Burt Lancaster shoot John Colicos with a gun wrapped in a brown paper bag.

At a roller-skating rink, all sounds drowned by the throb of a mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ, Winner explained that he keeps away from studios wherever possible and takes his cameras among real people in authentic surroundings.

"Its like modern guerrilla warfare," he said. "I go out into the streets and shoot. If I get into trouble in one place, I can move somewhere else. And it saves spending large sums of money on extras. If I need another 10 people I just pull them out of the crowd. Yesterday I pulled out four, found they came from Hampstead and had to put them back again."

The London Express