

Just your average Rhodes scholar teetotaling Christian Scientist superspy

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When Central Intelligence Agency director Stansfield Turner dropped by the Ohio State campus for dinner in the Faculty Club (steak Diane medium rare, asparagus with Hollandaise), he acted just like any typical admiral, former Rhodes scholar, former head of the Naval War College, teetotaling Christian Scientist, and spy.

Looking quite comfortable among a gathering of professors and administrators, Admiral Turner held a martini glass (straight tonic water on the rocks) and seemed continually ready to stick out his right hand again and ask, "And what's your name?" As the evening buzzed along, a remarkable number of those names

were remembered.

The admiral, who played guard and wore number 66 at Annapolis in the '43 and '44 seasons, wore a dark blue single-breasted suit, black wing-tip shoes and over-the-calf dark socks, a blue shirt with French cuffs and silver disk links, and a medium-width blue-black-and-cream-striped tie. His carefully styled, gray-flecked hair barely touched the tops of his ears, and the deep furrows which occasionally appeared in his brow disappeared when an animated bit of conversation lit a spark in his clear blue eyes and called forth the old Annapolis grin.

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"Controversy? What controversy?" Frown. Pause. Big smile! "Oh!



Peter Maehling/Courtesy OSU Lantern

Stansfield Turner

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You mean those 820 people I fired?" General manly laughter among the professors.

"I intend to fully obey the laws of the United States. I don't want to go to jail." Pause. Eye twinkle. "Of course I can't be expected to obey all the laws of all the *other* countries in the world." Academic chuckles.

Turner seemed genuinely interested in restoring a close relationship between academic circles and the intelligence community, a relationship that was often hand-in-gown in the '50s and early '60s, but suffered much when some of the best and the brightest led us clomping in steel-soled combat boots into the jungles of Vietnam.

"There's no more challenging job for an economist anywhere in government," he shot back at a professor of economics who doubted that any really bright student could build a career by starting with the CIA. The professor countered, to general laughter, that friends of his own generation had gone into the CIA and disappeared. When the chuckling subsided, the economist explained he had meant that the CIA wouldn't let them publish, so they couldn't ease back into academic jobs after their government service.

"That was B.T.," the Admiral rejoined. "Before Turner. We'll let them publish now. Of course they'll have to scrub it. Scrub out the classified. But we're way ahead of State, way ahead of Treasury. We're a great place for a career in economics, because we have the information the others don't have. I guarantee it. You send us your best students. I'll guarantee, we'll give 'em a great opportunity."

Along with his effort to extend a friendly hand and a soft recruiting pitch to academia, Admiral Turner was at pains to emphasize the legal safeguards which bind the CIA. "I don't intend to go to jail," he told 500 students in an evening lecture. When a female demonstrator scoffed at the possibility that the director of the CIA might actually go to jail, Turner shrugged and asserted that events of recent history show nobody in America is beyond the law.

When one academic type asked whether Turner's stated opposition to political assassinations was based on political expediency or moral conviction, Turner said his own moral convictions, he added, "Of course," he added, "I don't see how you could call it an assassination if the two countries are at war."

His fist pressed into his hand as he stated his determination that the CIA would never again involve itself in U.S. domestic affairs, Turner said such activities are "the FBI's job." William Webster, director of the FBI, is an old personal friend of Turner, close in college days and close throughout their careers. "I meet often with Bill for lunch," Turner said. "He's Mr. Inside. I'm Mr. Outside." Turner, who spent two years at Amherst and two at the Naval Academy, was also a college friend of James Earl Carter.

The admiral skipped his Faculty Club dessert (hot fudge sundae, whipped cream, cherry) and sought out a few minutes of solitude to prepare himself for his lecture. When he began to speak, the microphone wasn't working. A man in a gray suit came up and pushed a button. Hot microphone in hand, Turner stepped from the podium and began a casual delivery, well organized but without notes. A student in the back stood up and began to shout about Iran. An audible groan rose from the audience. The admiral moved back behind the podium and went on talking. Later he invited "interrogation" from his audience. There were many questions from friendly students. An ROTC professor joked, "Some of our troops are down there — the ones with short hair."

A good many other students obviously had come from history and political science classes. A group of 14 from The Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade had spread themselves around the auditorium (they stood together in easily countable ranks after the lecture) and Turner sat on the edge of a table and tried to answer their accusations as well as he could. About Chile and the Bay of Pigs he said, "I'm neither here to defend or to wear a hair shirt." He also explained that he could not properly comment on matters of political policy, and on several occasions he listened to long, rambling questions and then answered with a quick, "I can't comment on that."

Only four aides were known to be accompanying Turner, and they stood nervously after the lecture as several dozen students crowded around the intelligence chief. Many asked for autographs.

"Can you imagine the head of Russian intelligence being surrounded by a group of students like that?" one of the aides was asked.

"Not hardly," he replied.

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"Don't you guys ever get nervous?"

"Yeah."

"Are you nervous now?" Faint smile. Suddenly someone said, "Let's go!" The admiral had started up the aisle, and the "horse-holders" moved with smooth, deliberate speed.

Turner had invited a couple of old friends, Jack and Judy Furniss of Lancaster, to join the professors for dinner and the students for the lecture. "We haven't seen him in 30 years," said Jack. "I was a friend of his brother, who died. I saw him last at the funeral. It was just like Stan to

invite us up for this. That's the kind of man Stan is. He's really one heck of a nice guy."

After the tonic water, the steak Diane, the Communist Youth Brigade and the brief reunion with the Furnisses, Turner headed back toward Washington in the security of a "company" plane. It wasn't hard to accept his smiling description of his CIA responsibilities:

"It's my job to do the indecent thing in as decent a way as possible."

—Sandra Fisanick
and Burton Cantrell

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