

CPYRGHT

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CIA v. FBI

President Johnson had barely stepped back from the launching pad himself when his recent attempt to apothosize CIA agents as unglamorous grinds was blown up on the ground.

The President's remarks were delivered on the occasion of Richard M. Helms's formal accession to the directorship of the agency, vice Admiral William F. Raborn. Both Mr. Helms, who had been deputy director for a number of years, and Admiral Raborn, who had been in the top spot for all of 15 months, were praised for contributions to the preservation and extension of Western civilization comparable to those of Charles Martel and George Armstrong Custer.

In his two-and-one-half years as president, Mr. Johnson said, he had yet to meet a CIA staff type who even remotely resembled the "Agent 007" of the James Bond saga. Rather, "their most significant triumphs come, not in secrets passed in the dark, but in hours and hours of reading and analyzing documents." CIA men, without exception, were moved and motivated only by "the highest purposes." Even so, they are "more often damned than praised," and he, the President, never picks up a morning paper without seeing the agency's work "distorted" by critics.

We are happy to note the reliance Mr. Johnson places upon morning papers, but if he had happened to pick up a copy of the Washington Evening Star one afternoon a few days later he could have read an account of the CIA's methods, which, if it wasn't exactly "critical," was most revealing. Ernest A. Ostro, a reporter on the Evening Star, wrote the inside story of how he had almost been signed on by the CIA, only to be passed over when he refused to lie and say that he had an unhappy home life. Mr. Ostro's end impression was that he would already have been in a wagon lit on the Simplon-Orient Express if he had been able to swing a quickie, Mexican divorce.

The popular legend is that the CIA was invented in the first place as a polite means of preventing J. Edgar

"This fact, which, if true," as McC... used to say, seems even more interesting after the Evening Star article and the light it sheds on how sharply the home life (or lack of it) required of our overseas counter-intelligence agents differs from that required of our domestic counter-intelligence agents. J. Edgar Hoover approves of conjugal love, though we suspect that if the race of FBI men could be perpetuated by some form of parthenogenesis he wouldn't argue. Mr. Hoover professes to approve of conjugal love so much, in fact, that we can't imagine anybody's getting very far in the Bureau with two or three divorces hung on his record.

For our part, if we are going to have to put up with a CIA, we should greatly prefer that its agents actually be "007" types, footloose themselves, and with an eye for a pretty foot—and not the workaday groundlings that President Johnson has made them out to be.

We might go a step further: The very best Intelligence agent of all would be neither a divorced person nor a doting husband, but the married philanderer, who always has to keep in practice.

Americans make the sneakiest philanderers in the world, so there is no reason why they should not make the best Intelligence agents.

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