



John Richard Hawke



Count Henri de Montmarin



Gregory Board

The Case of

THE BUMBLING HAWKIE, THE MYSTERIOUS SPARROW AND THE SEVEN WANDERING BIRDS

Did the CIA mastermind the plot
to smuggle bombers to Portugal? No, insists the CIA.
~~Yes, say the smugglers now awaiting trial.~~

CPYRGHT

Before I plunge recklessly into a wholesale breach of national security by telling all about Project Sparrow, I should point out that the Central Intelligence Agency vigorously denies it played any role whatever in the caper. The CIA's public-relations office—which you can reach at 351-7676 (Area Code 202) in Washington in case you have any questions—has stood firm on that score from the start.

I should add, too, that there is a certain neurotic propensity on the part of many Washington newspapermen to see CIA men under the bed. One CIA man I know attributes this to what he calls "The James Bond syndrome" and deplors the fascination of both the press and public or his spying business. "The press never knows all the facts," he says,

"and it loves to make us look bad. Nothing ought to be printed about the CIA. Nothing!"

My CIA contact also stressed the fact that spying is an amoral business and that when it comes to any moment of truth in a covert operation (as a member of the In Group he called it a "black operation") every good CIA man will lie. He included himself, which did not add to the limited confidence I had in his flat denials about the CIA's role in Sparrow. Still, one must give some weight to the CIA's protestations of innocence, since my CIA man says they came "from On High."

Having thus been scrupulously fair to the much-maligned CIA, and working on the premise that if a newspaperman can find out, so can the

Hawke made

only \$700 profit on each flight

to be antihero Hawke. If it comes to pass Hawke is convicted of being a willful lawbreaker, he certainly will rank as one of the most deftly direct, righteously indignant and increasingly naïve lawbreakers in the annals of espionage flights to Portugal, he insists, were done in name "of your Uncle Sam," and it is very easy to believe him: The CIA man at 351-7676 denies of course, but one can't believe him.

Hawke's tale goes this way:

In London in July of 1963, Hawke met Gregory Board for the first time. Knowing Hawke's reputation as a crack pilot, Board asked him to ferry the U.S. two vintage Messerschmitts which he had bought in Germany. Hawke accepted the job and, after making the proper arrangements with Count de Montmarin (who acted as broker in the deal), he headed off for America. Enough, a pilot whom Hawke had hired to ferry the second plane suffered a broken oil line and landed off Labrador. Hawke delivered his cargo but was penalized half the fee.

Except for a few letters of explanation for the crash, Hawke had no contact with Board until late April of 1965, when Board called Hawke and asked if he would like to ferry 10 B-26's to Mexico. By then Hawke had fallen on hard times and had jet-training school in which he was an instructor had failed. He was selling encyclopedias door-to-door. Hawke expressed excited interest.

"Then two weeks went by and I still hadn't heard anything, so I called Board," says Hawke. "He told me the project would be getting underway fairly soon. He arranged to meet with Board in Florida in a few days." When Hawke and his wife met Board for dinner, Board told them that the 10 planes were to go to Bordeaux, France, then to Lisbon, Portugal, for the Portuguese Air Force. He added that 10 more B-26's might be bought by Portugal. Hawke would be paid \$3,000 per flight, out of which would come expenses, including repairs, fuel, lodging, and airline tickets back home. The net to Hawke would be only \$700. Hawke later found out that the price tag on the entire deal amounted, according to federal officials, to almost one million dollars.

In the third week of May, Hawke left Florida for Tucson to prepare for the first flight. Along there were Count de Montmarin and an airplane mechanic named Keat Griggers, who was to see the repair of the B-26's and then ferry them to Portugal to service the planes.

The day after his arrival, Hawke was shown around the Hamilton Aircraft Co. plant where the planes were being modified and repaired. Gordon Hamilton, the plant's owner and the one who had sold the planes to Board, was his boss. For the next few days Hawke was briefed by Board and de Montmarin on radio frequencies, routes, and routes. "They change the original destination," says Hawke, "from Bordeaux to the Portuguese Air Force Base at Tancos, which is about 90 miles northeast of Lisbon. I was also given crystals for special radio frequencies to use during the flight."

In addition, Hawke was provided with copies of a contract between Board and a Canadian middleman, Woodrow Wilson Roderick, who was the middleman purchasing the B-26's from Board. He also had a copy of a contract between himself and Roderick for the flight. "Then I was briefed," Hawke says, "on what to do if there was

up in grubby private deals with either bankrupt tyrants or guerrillas in this hemisphere.

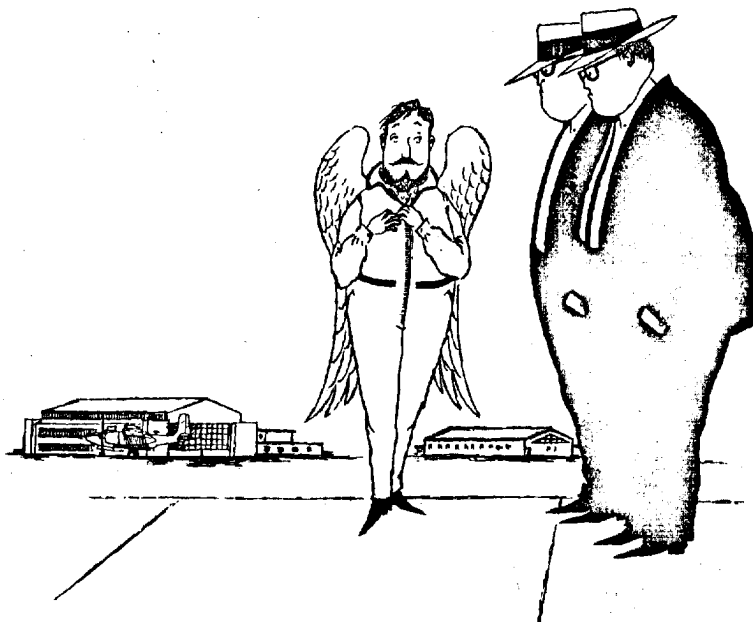
As it turned out, the UPI story had erred in two respects: (1) The country to which the planes were smuggled was really a U.S. ally, and (2) the destination was not Latin American, but European. The planes—it took a few hours to find out that seven Douglas B-26 bombers were involved—had been flown to Portugal, one of our NATO partners. This was in violation of a U.S. pledge in the United Nations that such military aircraft would not be sold to Portugal because she might use them against black rebels in her overseas colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

From all the initial evidence it seemed as if the CIA had pulled an international boner. But while it is relatively easy to uncover clandestine CIA operations in Latin America—a region the CIA regards as bush-league—to do so with a European operation is virtually hopeless. The quality of U.S. spying in Europe is very high.

I did not realize then that John Richard Hawke, the pilot who had flown all seven of the B-26's out of the United States and into Portugal, was taking it all so seriously. He did not like the Dade County jail, even though it is air-conditioned and probably the most comfortable confinement in the country. Neither did I know that U.S. Customs and the U.S. Attorney in Buffalo, N.Y., a pleasant fellow named John T. Curtin, were so serious about pressing prosecution. And nobody knew then that sometime this late summer or fall in U.S. District Court, Western District of New York, the case actually would come to trial.

The case for the defense: Everyone was working, or thought he was working, for the CIA, which gives a man carte blanche to break any and all U.S. laws. The case for the U.S.: The CIA had nothing whatever to do with it.

The biggest problem for the prosecution is going



with the Customs, particularly in Canada. Given the name of a customs broker in St. Newfoundland, and I was to call him after at Torbay, Newfoundland. Approved For Release 2000/08/27 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000300510087-1

asterly point in the province and the per- ce to jump off on a long Atlantic flight." ke insists that he and the mechanic, Grig- were convinced that the contract was "gov- nt sponsored—in effect a contract between S. government and the Portuguese govern- But it was arranged in such a way as to no public interest, for political reasons I ed were valid." Remarks by Board, Hamil- de Montmarin reinforced their conviction e flights were CIA-sponsored.

the Memorial Day weekend of 1965, Grig- rd Hawke flew to Rochester, N.Y., where a ange fuel tank was to be fitted on the B-26. ank turned out to be old, rusty and leaky, took five days to repair and install it. Mean- Griggers got a call from Board to return to . Hawke was on his own.

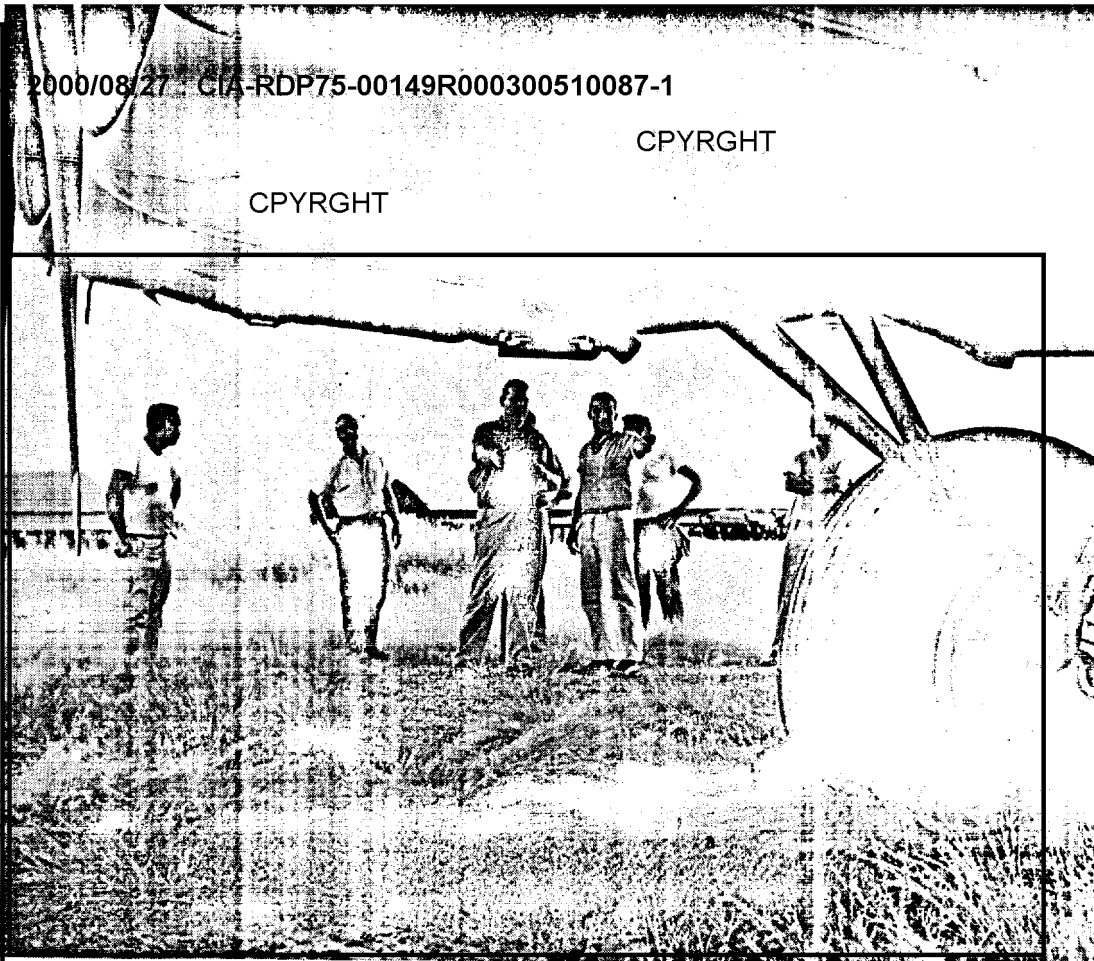
at 4 P.M. on June 3—after checking with eather Bureau and getting a clearance from Customs to Torbay—Hawke filed his flight d took off. Canadian Customs was waiting n when he arrived four hours later; with e filed a general customs declaration. There -trouble at all with Canadian Customs, and t morning Hawke was on his way.

irst crisis arose about 500 miles out when s high-frequency radio quit working. Since I filed a flight plan to Santa Maria in the and then to Paris (for, as Hawke puts it, al reasons again"), he was expected to n contact with Canadian Air Traffic Con- the control center in New York. When he o make contact, a general alert across the Atlantic was put into effect.

ent Hawke military tender at Santa Maria, superintendent of the airport was furious Hawke's "violation" of air traffic regula- He insisted on impounding the B-26 until gh-frequency radio was fixed. "I understood little problems like that would not hinder Hawke says, "and after I talked to the man's or I got all the proper clearances in a hurry." e filed a new flight plan for Lisbon—and d for the airfield at Tancos.

out four hours later," he says, "I landed at s and was greeted by a multitude of digni- including a man I now know to be the t of Beaumont (Antoine de Beaumont, a ct man with Luber Inc., a small Swiss arms hemical dealer handling the Project Sparrow -for the Portuguese), another who is the chief tuguese military security, a colonel in charge force matériel, and the head of the civil secret . They were all terribly glad to see me and rplane. After chatting about the flight, I ted the special VHF radio crystals—which of no use to me since I was never contacted y of the special frequencies—and I was taken air force staff car to Monsanto air base, near n, where I was put up in officers' quarters." e Portuguese Secret Police wanted Hawke to for the U.S. by way of Zurich or Paris be- Hawke's flight plans said that was where he eaded. But Hawke insisted on returning the est way possible. He eventually talked the -police agents into letting him fly straight o New York. Two high-ranking secret police- scorted him to the Lisbon Airport, whisked hrough all the formalities and helped him ase a ticket on a commercial flight.

he drank in the Lisbon Airport lounge, e amused over the ins and outs of the conve- tion business. During his sessions with the guese secret police he had been given a new powerful code word—it was Sparrow—"which



Two cast members check out B-17 in Arizona in 1961. They are Board, second from left, and Griggers, third from

would open air doors, close air mouths, and smooth over just about anything. This seemed a little melodramatic, but I accepted it."

His trip home to Ft. Lauderdale was eventless. Then, about June 18, Hawke flew to Tucson to get ready for flight No. 2. He complained to Board and Hamilton that everything had not gone smoothly as far as the airplane was concerned and he also rapped the airport controller at Santa Maria. That mixup, Hawke was told, would be taken care of promptly. He also talked to W. W. Roderick, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Hawke says that Roderick assured him that Sparrow would now settle any such future mishaps. Then, says Hawke, "I met with a gentleman whose name was sort of Polish—like 'Cenevsky' or something like that—and he briefed me again. He was cognizant of what had happened throughout the flight. He told me he was from the U.S. Government, and he showed me a credential which I did not photostat in my mind but which looked very impressive."

The mysterious gentleman, Hawke says, told him that the United Nations would be most upset if it was found out that the B-26's were going to Portugal. The State Department once had been asked by the Portuguese government if it would approve the sale of the planes outright; the U.S. had refused, but there was considerable sympathy with the request and—according to the mystery man—another agency took over the job of getting them to the proper people. That was the end of the session. Was "Cenevsky" a CIA man? Hawke is not certain.

Hawke left Tucson on June 23 at 4 A.M. after getting \$3,000 in cash from the Southern Arizona Bank & Trust Co. "There was bad weather and I had some radio trouble and the compass was not working too well," he says. He landed at Washington National Airport and leave the plane there overnight for repairs while I caught a commercial flight to Miami to see my

wife on our wedding anniversary. I could get the next morning and still have plenty of t

It is well to recall here that Hawke now is under indictment for illegally exporting B-26's. Why would a smuggler land a B-26 at, of places, the nation's capital, if he didn't really to? The U.S. Customs is constantly on the out for such planes. Countless B-26's are seized annually on suspicion that they might be illegally leaving the country. And yet Hawke flew to Washington—and not without incident.

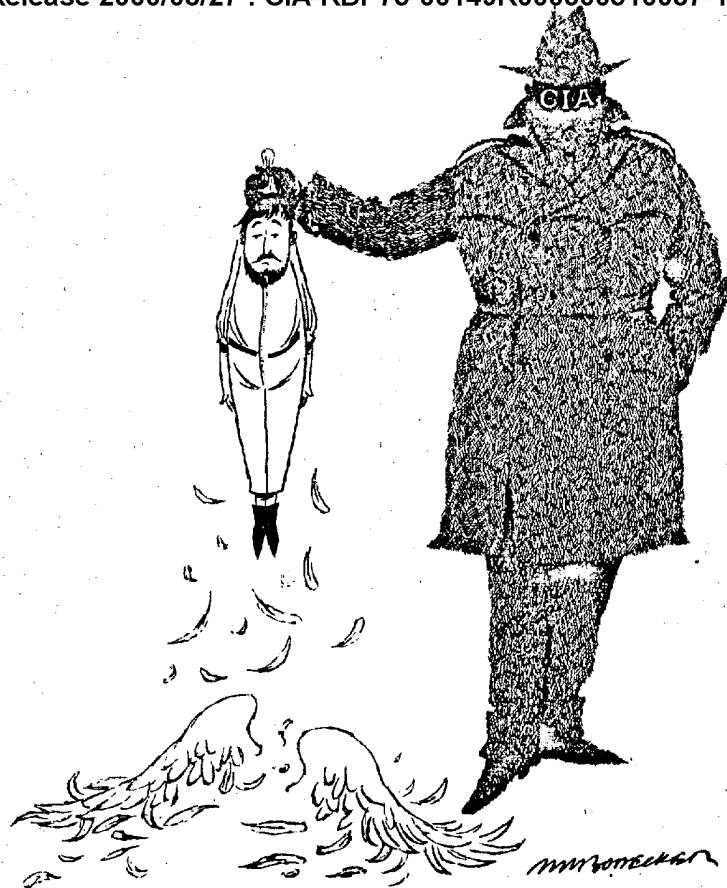
"I found my way through the murky web to Washington," Hawke recalls, "and I was cleared to join the landing pattern with several other aircraft. I was descending behind several other planes when the engines commenced backfire. The trouble was fuel starvation. I ran low on fuel in the tanks I was using and in the scent the fuel was all going to the wrong part of tanks. I switched the tanks, and the engines started again, but that wasn't the end of it."

"Unbeknownst to me I had flown over the White House, which is strictly off limits. And I was at a low altitude. The Control Tower was a little upset. They advised me of this over the radio immediately. They said, 'B-26 flying over the White House please come back to the flying pattern immediately.' This was while I was still having trouble with the engines, I believe, and I told them, 'Shut up, I'm busy.' A few moments later they asked them again what they had said and I told them that when I landed I was to report to the tower because of the violation."

A Federal Aviation Agency car with a pair of FAA agents inside was waiting when Hawke parked his plane. They were duly agitated. "They told me that a violation would be filed and that if I was caught it is a \$1,000 fine no matter what the case. One doesn't threaten the life of President Johnson with a bomber and get away with it lightly, they warned. And they weren't kidding."

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The careful CIA student must pause and ask himself: Why, if the export of B-26's was without restriction, didn't the FAA, the U.S. Customs, Secret Service from the White House, FBI or somebody stop Hawke right? Had Hawke invented the whole bird thing? That's what I thought. I got a copy of the FAA report which was sent to Hawke last March at the FAA installation at Washington National Airport. It read in part: SUMMARY OF INCIDENT: Approx. 2120Z ["Z" means Greenwich time—4:20 P.M. EST] N9422Z reported miles northwest of the airport and was directed to report downwind west of the airport. Approx. 2123Z a B-26 was observed westbound, north of the Washington Monument in P-56 [the prohibited zone over the White House]. Approx. 2127Z White House called in reference to a two-engine silver-colored aircraft in the same position and same heading. Approx. 2130Z, N9422Z landed on runway 18. Washington weather at 2127Z: ceiling broken, visibility eight miles. The report was signed by Facility Chief Glen Tigner, and the date of the filing was 10/2, 1965. It took eight months for the report to reach Hawke, and during the interim every FAA official I questioned said that Hawke must have cooked up the whole affair; no such violation was on record.



A CIA source swears Hawke got ensnared in a masterful non-CIA hoax.

The FAA agents questioned Hawke nearly three hours and Hawke invented the word "Sparrow" several times. He still doesn't know whether the code word is responsible for his being permitted to leave. Hawke managed to catch a plane in Miami and spent what must have been an excitingly fleeting hour or so with his wife. He got back in Washington by 10 A.M. the next day, October 24, and he has the airline tickets to prove he actually made the trip. Hawke spent an hour dickering over the cost of gasoline and finally managed to wheedle four cents a gallon off the usual rate. "Every penny counted," he says. "I had to scrimp here and there, and the trip to Miami had cost me good money. You can certainly see that if I had been arrested about going to jail for twenty years for doing something illegal I bloody well wouldn't have bothered about the price of petrol." He gassed up the bomber and revved up the engines. Then Hawke was startled to see "two men in dark suits—and I always worry about men in dark suits"—waving at him to stop the engines. They turned out to be FBI agents. "What are you planning to do with this military airplane?" one asked. "I'm taking it to France," Hawke said. "What are the long-range fuel tanks for?" the other FBI man wanted to know. "So I can fly over the sea," Hawke said. "How far can it fly with those tanks?" Hawke told them, and they realized that the range was not enough to avoid U.S. radar and fly undetected to the strife-torn Dominican Republic, which was, as Hawke puts it, "a place they said was in the height of fashion for smugglers."

of going first to Rochester, N.Y., as he had originally planned. He filed his general declaration through Canada to the Azores to Paris, and finally got ready to take off, when the weather went bad for two hours. That night fog forced a very frustrated Hawke to land in Portland, Maine. And again he was stopped, this time by two FAA men who wanted to know where he intended going with a military airplane. "I told them, and I also mentioned the code word Sparrow. One of them made a few calls, and when he came back he said I could be off without any more trouble."

The rest of flight No. 2 was pretty routine. Just to be sure there was no repetition of the first flight's delay at Santa Maria, he overflew that airport and went directly to Tancos's airfield, where he again was welcomed. Hawke was driven to Monsanto, slept at the officers' mess, and flew to New York on a commercial liner.

A week or so later, on flight No. 3, bad weather forced Hawke down in Detroit, where he cleared U.S. Customs, again without incident. Then the plane's brakes stuck and Hawke spent an hour roaring up and down the taxiway trying to ungun them. Bad weather forced him down again in London, Ontario, where Canadian Customs seized the bomber because they claimed he was carrying cargo. The "cargo" turned out to be a modification kit for the B-26, and Canadian Customs soon realized their error and let Hawke go.

In Lisbon, Hawke met with a partner of de

country with or without the airplane. Board Hawke assured agent Johnson that they would plan to go anywhere but to Miami, and added they would leave all their cargo in Ocala. That was what was bothering Customs. Johnson allowed them to leave the next day.

Although more Customs agents met the plane at Miami International Airport and made a complete search of the plane, no arrests were made. The case, according to federal officials who were not named, still had not jelled.

But Hawke was growing suspicious, and a good cause. Two days before he was finally allowed to leave, Hawke noticed that two men were following him in a car. "I thought that rather funny," he said. "I played a few games with them, turning them sharply. We eventually stopped at a crossing. I got out and approached them in my car. I was a little alarmed to see a gun in the front seat. I said, 'Who are you and why are you following me?' One of them said that 'We're following you because there's no law against following you.'"

Then Hawke told them that if they did anything to him, he was going to go straight to the FBI. That didn't seem to faze them, and so they did go to the local FBI office.

"Please, sir," Hawke says he said to the agent on duty, "there are two men following me and I want to know who they are."

At that point, one of the two men stepped into the FBI office and asked to use the phone.

On Thursday, September 16, just 48 hours

...atching to get under way, Hawke climbed back into the B-26 and started up the engines again. And then two more men—"in black suits, of course"—popped up and waved for him to stop the engines. They were from the FAA, and they insisted that Hawke check out his engines with an FAA mechanic at the cost of several hours and considerable expense. Meanwhile, Hawke took the suggestion of one of the FBI men and cleared U.S. Customs at Washington National instead

'Please, sir, there are two men following me.'

the scene at FBI headquarters, U.S. Customs agent Wallace Shanley came to Hawke and gently broke the news that he was being arrested. At the time, Hawke was having lunch with the Customs men assigned to tail him. They had become good pals. In early October a four-count indictment was brought against Hawke, Board, Grigori Montmarin, Roderick and Aero Associat

retained a Miami Beach lawyer-pilot
 in Marger and was free under \$5,000
 was becoming increasingly difficult
 the whole affair.

one thing, Board had slipped out of the
 to avoid arrest, and with him, according
 eral authorities, he carried at least \$53,000
 to him by de Montmarin as payment for
 B-26 parts obtained outside the U.S. There
 sign that Board, like Hawke, was going to
 re charges and maintain that it was all a big
 of the CIA would eventually straighten out.
 Board was said by a friend to have protested
 may about the whole mess in an unsigned
 postmarked from Saudi Arabia. Board was
 xious to come home. Why had he been al-
 to flee the U.S.? There are only lame answers
 question. "He got out before we were ready
 ke arrests," is the best any government
 can do.

de Montmarin—who maintains that he
 ively a good broker—languished in jail for
 our weeks before a New York lawyer fi-
 him out. While he was in jail, his wife re-
 in Paris to run EURAFRAIR's odd affairs.
 he urging of lawyer Marger, who worked
 arrangement with U.S. Attorney Curtin,
 returned to the U.S. from Portugal (to
 had gone between flights No. 5 and 6) for
 ment. Then he went home to California.
 s, too, was sure the CIA was going to put
 ing right; he is no longer certain.

a beginner at the game of CIA must have
 aware of the obvious question which arises:
 seven—not one, two, three or five, but
 the bombers leave the U.S. and fly to
 without the vigilant CIA being aware of
 The answer of the CIA, and the other
 agencies concerned, is that "an un-

fortunate mistake" was made somewhere along
 the line. In that case, one must wonder just how
 reliable the CIA's intelligence reporting is when
 a pilot such as agent Mike Hawke can buzz the
 White House with a B-26 and still be in the illegal
 export business five planes later. A CIA student's
 alternate theory: If the CIA was not directly
 involved, then somebody at CIA headquarters in
 Langley, Va., certainly averted his eyes.

There is also the really ticklish issue of justice
 being done. For even if the U.S. mounts a massive
 case for conspiracy against Hawke & Co., how
 can the prosecution remove the nagging suspicion
 that the CIA was actually behind it all? The CIA
 can swear it is clean, but admittedly, that is all
 part of the CIA game.

To complicate matters, Sparrow has become a
 matter of concern in the United Nations. At the
 Trusteeship Committee of the U. N. General As-
 sembly late last year, any chance of getting at the
 whole truth may have been diminished again.

Hungarian Delegate Zoltan Szilagyi had charged
 that the U.S. had instructed the secret delivery of
 the B-26's to Portugal. But Mrs. Eugenie Ander-
 son (a U.S. Permanent Representative to the
 United Nations), although admitting that the
 planes had been delivered to Portugal, said they
 got there "without the U.S. authorities having the
 slightest knowledge of the operation." Then Mrs.
 Anderson proceeded to all but convict Hawke &
 Co. before their trial. She said, according to the
 Provisional Summary Record of the United
 Nations Fourth Committee, that "those con-
 cerned had been indicted on October 6 (1965) . . .
 for exporting aircraft without a license. The re-
 ason why the individuals in question had to resort
 to fraudulent methods in order to get the aircraft
 out of the U.S., and had been prosecuted for so
 doing, was precisely that the U.S. Government . . .
 had forbidden the provision of arms or military

equipment to Portugal without assurances
 they would not be used in Portuguese territ
 The U.S. authorities had made known to the I
 tish government its deep concern over the
 travection of known U.S. arms policy. . . ."

Pity poor U.S. Attorney Curtin. If the
 comes to trial as expected, and Hawke and
 colleagues are set free, the Soviet bloc and Afr
 delegates in the United Nations will, accordin
 highly qualified U.N. observers, charge that S
 row thus had been proven a CIA operation
 that Mrs. Anderson lied. So Curtin has more t
 a newsworthy conviction riding on the outc
 of the Sparrow case. He feels under pressur
 convict to avoid an international fuss. On
 other hand, if the alleged conspirators are c
 victed, there is sure to be a protest from those c
 cerned with civil liberties—and anyone else
 is worried about how much secrecy the CIA
 get away with, in the courtroom and outside

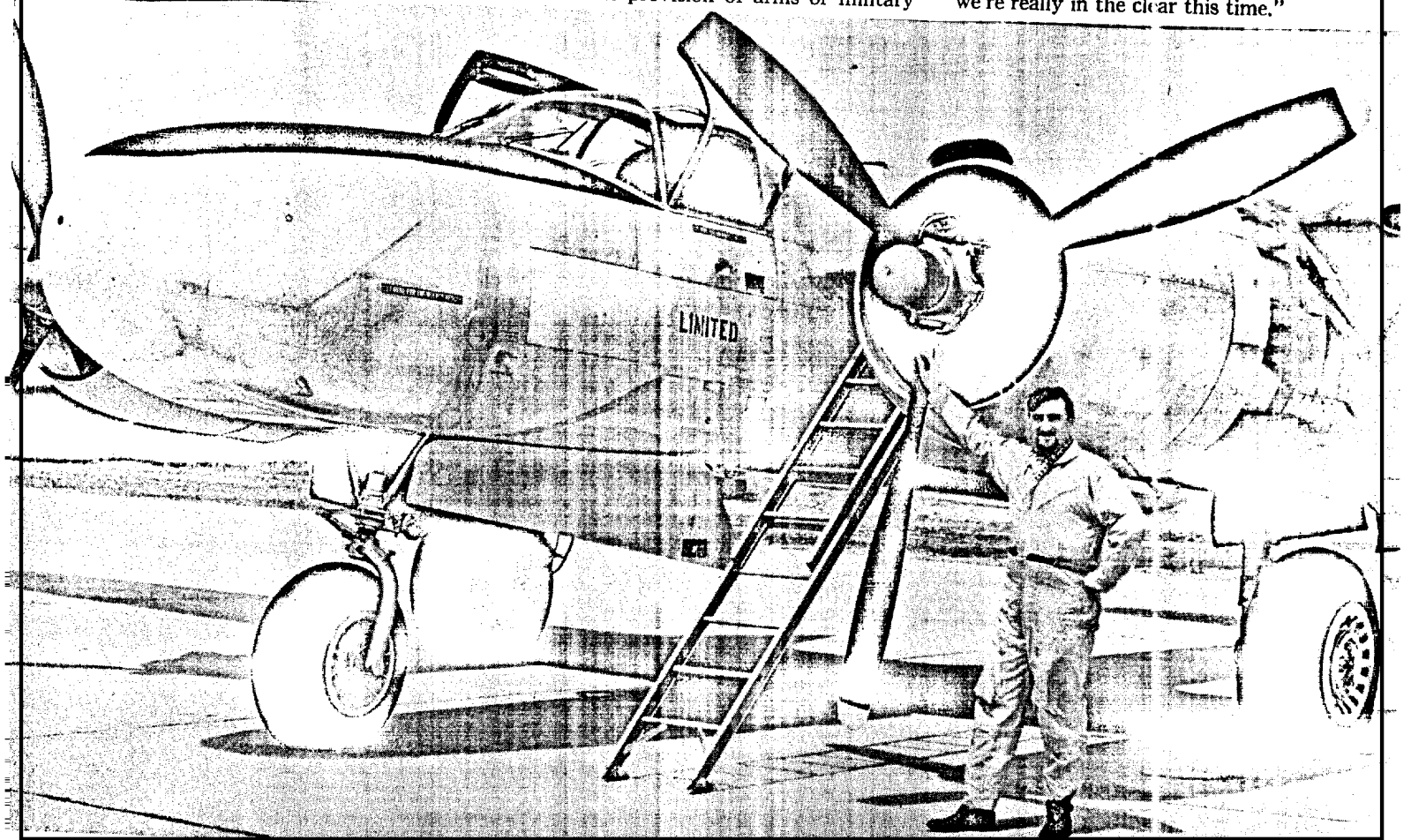
Again, in all fairness to the CIA, I must po
 out that there is the chance that Hawke got h
 self ensnared in a masterfully complex hoax
 CIA lawyer I spoke with not long ago insis
 that was the real answer, although he, too,
 mitted that he would never tell the truth in
 tional security matters. With its U.N. impli
 tions, Sparrow is a matter of national security

"Then how can I believe you even if I rea
 it is possible that Hawke was actually duped
 Board and de Montmarin?" I asked.

"You just have to," he said.

"Then how can you explain Board's easy esca
 the seven successful missions, the fact that nob
 has tried to get Board sent back here for trial
 all the other questions?"

"I can't tell you," he said. "But I'll tell y
 one thing. We're working up a hell of a ca
 against those guys. I think we'll win beca
 we're really in the clear this time."



to trouble with Canadian Customs in June, 1965, when flier John Richard Hawke put down at Torbay, Newfoundland, prior to his first flight over the Atlantic to Po