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Copley Papers Linked To FBI; Allegations Denied

By JAMES GARY
Copley News Service

WASHINGTON — Penthouse magazine said yesterday that the Copley newspapers and Copley News Service (CNS) have served as intelligence arms of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In an article written for the August issue by Joe Trento and Dave Roman, the magazine said it had learned of 23 persons, most of them part-time stringers in Latin America, had worked for the CIA while employed by the Copley organization. Richard G. Capen Jr., senior vice president for operations of the Copley Press, responded that "we have been assured by the highest levels within the CIA that no employees of Copley newspapers or CNS have been employees of the agency."

Charles Ohl, editor and general manager of CNS, denied any CIA connection with CNS. "I have been with Copley News Service for 13 years as foreign editor, executive editor and editor-in-chief," he said, "during that time there has been to my knowledge absolutely no connection between Copley News Service and the Central Intelligence Agency."

Trento unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for Congress from the San Diego area in 1976 and now is a reporter for the Wilmington (Del.) News-Journal. Roman, a freelance reporter, was a teaching assistant in English at San Diego State University during the spring of 1974.

NEWSROOM SPIES

Their article, entitled "The Spies Who Came In From The Newsroom," said that CNS had provided information to the CIA about Latin American activities and had published articles to enlist public support for CIA activities. The article said that the late James S. Copley, publisher and sole owner of the Copley Press until his death in October, 1973, had acted on behalf of the CIA in a number of efforts to influence foreign governments.

The article identified Clement David Hellyer as a CIA member who became the first Latin American editor of CNS when it was formed in 1953.

It said he left CNS to take up "other CIA assignments which ranged from being a student in Brazil in 1960 to becoming the final editor of the CIA-funded Santiago South Pacific Mail between 1964 and 1966."

William Giandoni, the current CNS Latin American editor, was quoted as saying he tried to join the CIA in 1950 when he was a reporter for United Press in Mexico City. The article said Giandoni "fed information to CIA operative William Kelley in 1961 concerning the forthcoming Bay of Pigs invasion" of Cuba.

The authors said Giandoni reported to Kelley on his trips to Central America and Guatemala prior to the Cuban invasion and learned of that upcoming invasion but did not publish it, according to a CIA request for secrecy.

GIANDONI RESPONSE

Responding, Giandoni said:

"In 1950, while working for United Press in Mexico City, I applied for employment with the Central Intelligence Agency. Eventually, the agency sent me a form letter telling me that there was no opening for me. . . . Prior to the Cuban exile invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, the local Central Intelligence Agency man in San Diego and I used to talk about preparations that were going on there for the invasion."

The article said the CIA reciprocated for the withholding of news of the pending Cuban invasion by providing Copley reporter Charles Keely information that the Soviet Union had troops and nuclear armed rockets in Cuba.

Keely's story won the Raymond Clapper Memorial Award. One of the sources of Kelly's story, Penthouse said, was a Cuban professor of advanced age who had long been on the CIA payroll. It said Keely was directed to persons in the Cuban refugee community, some of them CIA agents, who had seen and worked on the rocket and warhead installations.

Keely was quoted in the article as saying he could not say whether the story was CIA-inspired.

TAPES CAN TELL

Reached at his home in Los Angeles, Keely said: "I am disappointed that Mr. Trento did not pay much attention to what I said during his interview with me. But it is all on his tape recorder and maybe we should ask the court to make his tapes public."

"If the facts of the article build up have a Kennedy barassn him with the State Department not only repeatedly denied my stories that week but continued to do so almost daily for months. In fact, it was not until U.

Trento it was not until April 4, 1963, that President Kennedy at a news conference for the first time confirmed and documented these stories."

1953 MEETING

Penthouse asserted that the decision to form CNS was inspired by a meeting in 1953 between Copley and President Dwight D. Eisenhower "for the purpose of supplementing CIA activity." The authors said they have seen still-secret documents that verified this.

They said the documents confirmed that Copley volunteered to make CNS "the eyes and ears" against "the Communist threat in Latin and Central America" for our intelligence services.

The article asserted further:

"CNS reporters often acted as if they were doing CIA public relations. When the CIA decided to overthrow a Latin American government, CNS would begin writing unfavorable articles about it. Editorials would appear on the pages of the Evening Tribune and The Union in San Diego, warning of the dire consequences of Communists in Latin America. The articles on 'Freedom Fighters' and 'Anti-Communist Opposition' would appear on the CNS wires. When the coup came Copley editorials rejoiced."