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PROGRAM Jack Anderson Confidential STATION WJLA TV
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SUBJECT American Mercenaries in Angola

JACK ANDERSON: The Central Intelligence Agency has been conducting secret subterranean wars around the world. The CIA has sponsored rebellions in such faraway places as Cuba and Cambodia, Laos and Iraq. One of the most secret operations was run in the remote African nation of Angola.

Gary Acker, an ex-Marine, signed on to fight communists in Angola six years ago. He was then 21 years old. He was captured by the communist forces before he saw any action. He was sentenced to 16 years in an Angolan prison.

Last month Acker was released as part of a prisoner exchange with the Soviets. He described his experience in an exclusive interview with my associate Indy Badwar.

GARY ACKER: The prison clothing, what they gave us -- one time they gave us what we called a monkey suit. It was a brown overall type thing, and this I refused to wear.

When I was released, I refused to wear the clothing that they provided, because during my time in prison, they didn't give me sufficient clothing. Two and a half years, I was barefoot. I had no shoes. I had a pair of shorts that rotted, literally rotted off me. The guards would laugh and say "a white mercenary." And when I asked for clothes, they refused to give me clothes.

So when my time came, I refused to wear their clothes.

INDY BADWAR: What about medical treatment? They had refused it to you once.