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## A 'CIA Confession' in Kabul

With his blond hair, his trendy aviator glasses and his sweater, the young man looked as though he had just walked off an American college campus. But when Robert Lee appeared on Soviet and Afghan television last week, he made a startling—if wholly unconvincing—confession: he said he was a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency sent to aid Afghan guerrillas in their fight against the Soviet-installed government.

Since the Soviet invasion last December, Moscow's puppet regime in Afghanistan has been anxious to establish foreign complicity in the rebel cause—especially if the foreign devil was an American. Lee provided a convenient propaganda tool. A former chemistry student at the University of California, Lee happened to be in Afghanistan during the guerrilla uprising in February. He was arrested and imprisoned in a Kabul jail. There, according to former prisoners, Lee was subjected to physical and psychological mistreatment designed to extract his "confession."

"Lee is very confused," said David Wilkie, a 21-year-old Australian student who had been in an adjoining cell. "He has

bronchial pneumonia brought on by the intense damp cold and he also has jaundice. Without medical treatment, he could die." Wilkie said Lee was questioned incessantly by Afghan and Soviet officers and offered asylum and a new life in East Germany in exchange for his televised performance. As Wilkie recalled: "I remember hearing him say repeatedly, 'I want to make a new beginning for myself, I want to go to East Germany.' He was in such a bad state, he began saying anything to please his guards."

**'Crying Like Babies':** According to the released prisoners, Afghan jailers systematically tortured inmates to extract information about the resistance movement. Several mentioned electric-shock treatment; others recounted how an 8-year-old boy and a 90-year-old man were severely burned with lighted cigarettes. "At night we could all hear other prisoners, Afghans and Pakistanis mostly, screaming while they were being beaten and questioned," said Wilkie. "There was banging and thumping and some were crying like babies." Given the prospect of undergoing such torture, Wilkie said, "I wasn't surprised that Lee agreed to do what they wanted." But Lee's captors have not done what he wanted. Despite his "confession," the young American is still imprisoned in his damp Kabul cell.