

# RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 (301) 656-4000

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Panorama

STATION WTTG-TV

DATE June 16, 1986 12:00 Noon CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT "The Rise and Decline of the CIA"

ROSS CRYSTAL: A lot of spy cases concerning the CIA lately, and it's been in the news more and more. But it seems many people do not understand the workings of the Central Intelligence Agency. So our next guest delved right into that organization.

Here is John Ranelagh, author of "The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA, from Wild Bill Donovan to William Casey." John also a producer a producer at Channel Four Television in England and author of two books on the history of Ireland.

This had to be a very difficult project for you. Where'd you begin?

JOHN RANELAGH: Well, I began in London and got into things and ended over here, as you see me. So I'm here today in Washington, having come to the end of a four-year trek, in fact, through the intricacies of the CIA.

CRYSTAL: We were just talking a moment ago about the problems of doing an unauthorized biography. But you try to do something on the CIA. What do they say to you?

RANELAGH: Well, I didn't actually ever approach the CIA directly. I spoke to people who had dealings with the agency and who had been in the -- I mean ex-officials of the CIA.

I had a very pleasant evening with Bill Casey, but that was as close as I came to having a direct contact, really.

CRYSTAL: Why did you do this?

OFFICES IN: WASHINGTON D.C. • NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES • CHICAGO • DETROIT • AND OTHER PRINCIPAL CITIES

Material supplied by Radio TV Reports, Inc. may be used for file and reference.

RANELAGH: Well, the most extraordinary thing was that nobody had put together a book on the agency as a whole. There are lots of memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, books on the Bay of Pigs or the U-2, a particular instance. But nobody had put the agency into its context in the history of America's rise to globalism and in the context of U.S. foreign policy-making, and in particular the analysis. Everybody concentrates on the James Bondery -- exploding toothpaste tubes, exploding cigars, what have you -- where in fact the most important thing about the CIA is its thinking, is its analytical capability.

CRYSTAL: It began back in the late '40s?

RANELAGH: Yes, 1947. It was the successor of the OSS, which was the wartime intelligence service of the United States. But the CIA was the first peacetime intelligence service. And there were enormous debates and fights and struggles about it starting because many Americans, and I think many Americans to the present day, did not think, and do not think, that the United States should have a spy service or an intelligence service.

CRYSTAL: How much of that intriguing side is true?

RANELAGH: A great deal of it is true. The point is that in context, it's about that much. It takes all the publicity.

CRYSTAL: As opposed...

RANELAGH: It takes, you know, 90 percent of the publicity, but in fact it's only that much of the activity.

CRYSTAL: So, then, how come we have grown so in awe of the C -- you drive down the G.W. Parkway and you -- the McLean Headquarters of the CIA. Any visitor to this town says, "The CIA!"

RANELAGH: Absolutely.

CRYSTAL: "Don't even go near that building."

It's not that way, is it?

RANELAGH: It isn't that way at all. No. I mean you can go near that building. They used to have guided tours of it, but Casey stopped that. You can fly over. I mean...

CRYSTAL: You see. You see. They stopped that.

RANELAGH: Well, I think he stopped it probably because they were building a new extension and there was a lot of activity going on, and they didn't want people running around.

CRYSTAL: There was an intelligence slump that we fell into. When did that occur, and what happened?

RANELAGH: Well, that really occurred during the 1970s, when there was a very decided move towards technological intelligence and away from human intelligence. It was thought that satellites and planes and the technology of intelligence should replace human agents. The argument being that it's much safer to have a satellite telling us what Gorbachev is saying in the Kremlin than to risk the life of the spy inside the walls.

The problem was, though, that the satellites could never tell you the tone of voice that Gorbachev was speaking in, or whomever it might be. So if Gorbachev was saying, "Well, we've got to rub out Ronald Reagan," and the satellites might pick that up; it comes down in cold black and white. You can't tell from that if he was making a joke or if he was serious.

That's the difference.

CRYSTAL: Where do we stand today with the CIA? How effective are they now?

RANELAGH: They're very effective. I mean it is one...

CRYSTAL: In what way?

RANELAGH: Well, in defending United States national security interests; and, indeed, in propelling American foreign policy interests.

One of the testaments to its success is the fact that, under Casey, the budget of the agency has increased well above inflation, about 10 percent, on average, above inflation, year-on-year. Which tells us that although we don't know everything it's doing, by any means, it is certainly doing something right because the President of the United States is quite happy, in an anti-inflation Administration, in a budget-cutting Administration, is very happy to increase the budget of this agency.

CRYSTAL: Is the CIA only as effective as its current Director?

RANELAGH: The CIA is only as effective as the President of the United States. It is a presidential arm, ultimately, rather than a congressional one. It's a presidential arm.

CRYSTAL: How does the Director affect its workings? Is he a figurehead?

**Page Denied**

RANELAGH: No. Bill Casey certainly isn't a figurehead. Bill Casey has done a remarkable amount of work in improving morale. But the importance of the Director lies in his relationship with the President. If the Director is close to the President, then the agency is, by inference, closer to the President than the State Department, shall we say.

CRYSTAL: Let me try something here for a second with just a few Directors. Just your instant reaction when I run some of these people down.

James Schlesinger.

RANELAGH: The first political director. He was brought in as Nixon's man to kick ass in the agency.

CRYSTAL: Okay. Bill Colby.

RANELAGH: A very misunderstood Director, and a very great one. He is the man who probably saved the agency.

CRYSTAL: George Bush.

RANELAGH: Potentially the next President of the United States, was...

CRYSTAL: And which means what to the Central Intelligence Agency?

RANELAGH: Which -- I think it means nothing. I mean in the same way that when Dwight Eisenhower became President, it didn't mean anything to the Army. And in fact, Dwight Eisenhower made that famous farewell speech warning against the Military-Industrial Complex.

But George Bush was a very good Director. He was the right man at the right time, and he did a marvelous job.

CRYSTAL: Admiral Stansfield Turner.

RANELAGH: An admiral who had a limited concept of intelligence and, like Jimmy Carter, confused American idealism with American interests.

CRYSTAL: Now, here is a man, Turner, that shows up on a lot of broadcasts explaining things. How nervous does the CIA get when you've got somebody who knows the inner workings of the organization and is now on the air all over the country, all over the world?

RANELAGH: Well, I think Stan Turner is without doubt a patriot. And there may be great disagreement with his views on

intelligence in the agency, but he's not somebody who's going to give away secrets. So they don't worry about that.

CRYSTAL: Yeah.

RANELAGH: You know, a lot of it's hype.

CRYSTAL: In this freedom-of-information society we live in, what kinds of problems does the CIA run into?

RANELAGH: Well, this is, of course, what Bill Casey is talking about a great deal now. In the wake of the Pelton case, he's worried about newspapers reporting information revealed in the trial. He's worried about leaks from committees in the Congress.

We do have a very great problem about secrecy in our democracy. But I think the fact of the matter is that Americans generally accept that there is a very important and needed place for secrecy and that the question is simply in trying to find how far it goes. And that's what we're looking at at the moment. That's what we're witnessing today.

CRYSTAL: Did you ever get a call, a letter, some type of communication: we don't want something in this book?

RANELAGH: No, I didn't. I did come across information which I decided I did not think it was appropriate to put in. I came across detailed specifications of satellite and tracking devices and spying devices and some documentation which I really shouldn't have been given. It was a leak. I received various leaks. And this one leak was not, I think, in the interests of the United States or, indeed, of the West as a whole. And so I simply didn't use it.

But I never had an instruction, or even a formal request, not to.

CRYSTAL: Hindsight, if you had, if there was something that you thought was pertinent -- gosh, this has been in the news lately, where, you know, a network says, "Hey, we think it's pertinent. We're going with it." Would you go with that? Where does your mind take you on that?

RANELAGH: Well, I think that, you know, the job of a journalist, or any investigator, is to pursue the story, however far it goes. The job of the legislators is to determine how far that person should be allowed to go. But it isn't -- I mean there is a formality about it.

But the real point is that the specifics in each case

pale against the big picture. And the big picture of the agency is that it really is intricately involved in the foreign policy of the United States.

CRYSTAL: The comparable organization of the CIA in England is?

RANELAGH: It is the British Secret Intelligence Service, which is two arms: M-I5, which is domestic and compares to the FBI; and M-I6, which compares to the CIA and operates overseas.

CRYSTAL: But this is the most effective, would you say?

RANELAGH: This is the most effective. It's the biggest, 18 thousand -- billion-dollar budget, approximately. I mean you don't tangle with the CIA.

CRYSTAL: The next time you drive down the G-W Parkway, remember that. Don't tangle with the CIA.

The book is called "The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA."