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# Why I Am Leaving The (

John R. Stockwell was 27, a graduate of the University of Texas and a Marine veteran working as a market analyst for a rubber company in Colorado when he was recruited into the CIA in 1964. A week ago, he resigned from the agency and explained his reasons in the following letter to Adm. Stanfield Turner, the new director of central intelligence. Stockwell plans to move to Texas and become a house builder.

31 March 1977

Sir:

WE HAVE NOT MET and will not have the opportunity of working together; as you are coming into the Central Intelligence Agency as I am leaving. Although I am disassociating myself from the Agency, I have read with considerable interest about your appointment and listened to some of your comments. You have clearly committed yourself to defending the Agency from its detractors and to improving its image, and this has stirred a wave of hope among many of its career officers. However, others are disappointed that you have given no indication of intention or even awareness of the need for the internal housecleaning that is so conspicuously overdue the Agency.

You invited Agency officers to write you their suggestions or grievances and you promised personally to read all such letters. While I no longer have a career interest, having already submitted my resignation, numerous friends in the DDO [Deputy Directorate for Operations] have encouraged me to write you, hoping that it might lead to measures which would upgrade the clandestine service from its present mediocre standards to the elite organization it was once reputed to be. While I sympathize with their complaints, I have agreed to write this letter more to document the circumstances and conditions which led to my own disillusionment with CIA.

First, let me introduce myself. I was until yesterday a successful GS-14 with 12 years in the Agency, having served seven full tours of duty including chief of base, Lubumbashi; chief of station, Bujumbura; officer in charge of Tay Ninh Province in Vietnam, and chief, Angola Task Force. My file documents what I was told occasionally, that I could realistically aspire to top managerial positions in the Agency. I grew up in Zaire, a few miles from the Kapanga Methodist Mission Station which was recently "liberated" by Katangese invaders, and I speak fluent English and Tshiluba, "High" French and smatterings of Swahili and other dialects.

My disillusionment was progressive throughout four periods of my career. First, during three successive assignments in Africa from 1966 through 1977, I increasingly questioned the value and justification of the reporting and operations we worked so hard to generate.

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I looked up through a chain of command which included, step-by-step: a) the branch chief, who had never served in Africa and was conspicuously ignorant of black Africa; b) the chief of operations, who was a senior officer although he had never served an operational overseas tour and was correspondingly naive about field operations; and c) the division chief, who was a political dilettante who had never served an operational tour in Africa. Their leadership continuously reflected their inexperience and ignorance.

Standards of operations were low in the field, with considerable energy devoted to the accumulation of perquisites and living a luxurious life at the taxpayer's expense. When I made "chief of station," a supergrade took me out for drinks and, after welcoming me to the exclusive inner club of "chiefs," proceeded to brief me on how to supplement my income by an additional \$3-4,000 per year, tax free, by manipulating my representational and operational funds. This was quite within the regulations. For example, the COS Kinshasa last year legally collected over \$9,000 from CIA for the operation of his household. Most case officers handled 90 per cent of their operations in their own living rooms, in full view of servants, guards and neighbors. And I expect few individuals would accept CIA recruitments if they knew how blithely their cases are discussed over the phone: "Hello, John . . . when you meet your friend after the cocktail party tonight . . . you know, the one with the old Mercedes . . . be sure to get that receipt for \$300 . . . and pick up the little Sony, so we can fix the signaling device."

In Burundi we won a round in the game of dirty tricks against the Soviets. Shortly after my arrival, we mounted an operation to exploit the Soviets' vulnerabilities of having a disproportionately large embassy staff and a fumbling, obnoxious old ambassador, and discredit them in the eyes of the Barundi. We were apparently successful, as the Barundi requested that the ambassador not return when he went on leave, and they ordered the Soviets to reduce their staff by 50 per cent. We were proud of the operation, but a few months later the Soviets assigned a competent career diplomat to the post and he arrived to receive a cordial welcome from the Barundi who were more than a little nervous at their brashness and eager to make amends. For the rest of my tour relations were remarkably better between the two countries than before our operation. The operation, nevertheless, won us some accolades. However, it left me with profound reservations about the real value of