

I had access to the pages of Mexico's most respected newspapers, penetrations of the Communist Party of Mexico and the Trotskyite offshoot and two organizations that could accomplish medium-size public demonstrations on call. 73

From time to time our Mexican agents disrupted Communist meetings held indoors with CIA-manufactured stink bombs and itching powder. One such disturbance took place during the well-attended recantation speech of Communist artist Diego Rivera.

At my request Joe Bryan lent me an artist who spent a month at the station and turned out enough poster designs so that for several months a different anti-Communist poster appeared on the walls of Mexico City each week. These poster campaigns did much to awaken Mexican public consciousness to the menace of international Communism and appeared under the aegis of an organization headed by a Mexican of unimpeachable reputation.

A long letter from Bob and Maxine North in Bangkok informed me that Bob's cover work was to establish a Thai film industry, erect a modern studio and produce a lengthy film reenactment of an epic Thai legend. For her part, Maxine was learning Thai and improving her already first-rate golf game. En route Washington for consultation, Bob spent a few days with me in Mexico City, where we planned a complicated operation designed to discredit a prominent Mexican Communist. The operation required critical timing and a good deal of work by the printing services section of CIA's Technical Services Division.

The Mexican Communist leader was then visiting Peking. On the day of his departure Bob North airmailed me a copy of the English-language Shanghai Post announcing his departure, sending a duplicate copy to CIA headquarters. To replace the departure announcement I fabricated a story in which the Mexican Communist was quoted as deprecating fellow Mexicans and saying, among other things, that Mexican peasants could never hope to achieve the cultural level of the superior Chinese. I cabled the fabrication to headquarters, where a special type font had been made by reproducing samples from the Shanghai Post. My fabricated story was set in this duplicate type and the entire front page of the Post re-created by technical means. A dozen copies were pouched to me and were received before the target Communist returned to Mexico. local

The fabricated newspapers were made available to agent-journalists who published facsimiles of the offensive interview to-

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Bureau target. I agreed in principle, but reminded the ambassador that CIA had no arrest powers whatever, foreign or domestic. I was embarrassed, of course, that CIA had not known of Greenglass' presence, much less the instructions given him by Soviet Intelligence.

Twenty years later I was to learn that what the Bureau had done to Greenglass, they did routinely to fugitives they were able to locate abroad.

I had not taken part in a surreptitious-entry operation since Sparrow II burglarized the office of the Italian consul in Shanghai and photographed his lists of Nazi and Soviet agents in China. That entry had been hardly surreptitious, with uniformed men piling out of jeeps and bursting into the consulate, where we set up a Recordak camera and photographed records for many hours, hardly caring whether the consul appeared or not.

*8/10 CIA comment*

The Guatemalan Embassy in Mexico City was located two blocks from the American Embassy in an apartment building. From our CIA offices we had a direct line of sight to the front windows of the embassy, which were on the third floor of the apartment building. According to prescribed form, we cased the target office and mounted round-the-clock surveillance on the principal embassy officers. With the concurrence of the National Security Agency a date was fixed for surreptitious entry, and a week or so before that date a team of CIA safecrackers arrived in town. These highly skilled men were part of a small cadre of specialists that traveled, and perhaps still travel, for entry operations in different parts of the world.

*Comment*

We recruited the charwoman who cleaned the Guatemalan Embassy offices and placed a microphone in the ambassador's office from which could be heard conversations relayed to an apartment—the Listening Post—we had rented one floor above. The microphone installation supplemented telephone taps which had been active for some time. Several station cars were equipped with mobile transceivers that operated on frequencies not normally utilized in Mexico. We had a floor plan of the offices, a description of the safe, and a putty imprint of its keyhole. The charwoman provided us with a key to the embassy service door, and we duplicated it. Now we were ready to move.

*Comment*

A Friday night had been selected for the first entry attempt, for, according to their pattern, the Guatemalans left their offices early

Friday afternoon and With the aid of binoculars could be seen from many of any movements in the offices that Friday or apartments and eleven that night asleep and the remainder phone call was placed pickup mike we could hear. The word was Go.

Using the duplicate target premises and the microphone we did not really need could hear their conversations.

The operating procedures I participated in, black muslin, to ensure they were not seen outside the embassy.

Meanwhile, in the meantime, he was drinking tequila and had begun his cultivation.

Above, the entrance was covered with a keyhole and, where a sturdy duplicate keyhole was placed, the listening device was placed. For example, the tickler was placed.

As soon as the operation was taken of the contents of the photograph in the original position, a team set up a camera for photography. For the optical system, and the safe were photographed.

Inside an inner room, the American currency was completed, the operation in reverse order.

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*Comment*

Friday afternoon and did not return until Monday at midmorning. With the aid of binoculars, the interior of the ambassador's office could be seen from my office, the planted microphone would inform us of any movement within the target, and as each staff member left the offices that Friday afternoon, they were followed to their homes or apartments and continuing surveillance established. By about eleven that night surveillance reported most of the staff members asleep and the remaining few accounted for. A precautionary telephone call was placed to the Guatemalan Embassy; through the pickup mike we could hear it ring repeatedly, but no one answered. The word was Go.

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Using the duplicate key, the entry team gained access to the target premises and reported the location dark and quiet. Through the microphone we could hear them moving quietly around. They did not really need to transmit to us on their walkie-talkies, for we could hear their conversations perfectly well.

The operating procedure followed in this and all other entry operations I participated in was to cover all windows with opaque black muslin, to eliminate the possibility of team flashlights being seen outside the embassy, then the team went to work on the safe.

Meanwhile, in the basement below, the night watchman was drinking tequila and playing cards with one of our agents who had begun his cultivation a month earlier.

Above, the entry team forced a soft metal compound into the safe keyhole and, when the compound hardened, used it to make a sturdy duplicate key. Before opening the safe, an amplifying listening device was applied to the keyhole to detect such sounds as, for example, the ticking of a time lock or a booby-trap bomb.

As soon as the safe door was open, a Polaroid photograph was taken of the contents and developed on the spot. Later, by referring to the photograph, everything in the safe could be replaced in its original position. In a small room off the ambassador's office the team set up a camera specially designed by CIA for document photography. Floodlights were plugged into the embassy's electrical system, and for the next three hours the entire contents of the safe were photographed.

Inside an inner drawer the team found more than \$30,000 in American currency but were ordered to leave it there. Photography completed, the team packed up and withdrew from the target area in reverse order, removing the blackout drapes just before they left.

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*Communist*

82 Before dawn the entry team had flown from Mexico to Dallas, where they changed identities and flew to Washington. Pouched separately was the photographic record of their night-long work. The code-book film was sent at once to NSA, and the rest of the filmed documents were examined at leisure by interested sections of CIA. Soon the Mexico City station received lists of Mexicans whom the Guatemalan Embassy had subverted, as well as the names of prominent Mexicans still on their target lists. Of equal importance were ambassadorial notes covering his efforts to purchase arms and munitions in Mexico, a physical description of the ambassador's Soviet Embassy contact and a number of profiles in which the ambassador appraised senior officials of the American Embassy.

If we were able to burglarize at will, we were also vulnerable to Mexican burglars.

An FBI agent and his wife, asleep in their bed, were chloroformed and their dog killed while burglars removed everything from their home with a moving van. My own home had been entered twice and looted. We lost my wife's jewelry, my typewriter, assorted sterling silver, a radio and other valuables. All these effects were insured, but Dorothy and I preferred to wait, hoping the Mexican police would produce, at least, her jewelry.

A distinctive sapphire earring of my wife's had been dropped by the second set of burglars, and with it to go on, its mate was located in the Thieves Market downtown. Spurred on by the urgings of the legal attaché and myself, Mexican detectives called daily at my home, assuring me they were following all leads intensively. Moreover, the insurance company had offered a large reward for the return of our stolen valuables.

Presently I was summoned to Mexican police headquarters and a strongbox opened for my inspection. In it was most of my wife's missing jewelry. I identified it as such, but to my surprise saw the strongbox closed, locked and removed. The jewels were needed for evidence, the detective told me; otherwise the thieves would go unprosecuted.

I was much less interested in a thief's prosecution than in the recovery of my wife's valuables, many of which were family heirlooms. I consulted with the insurers, who indicated that the jewels would be released to me as soon as the reward was paid. After this was done, I was again summoned to police headquarters and again permitted to see my wife's possessions. This time I expected to take

them with me, but no number of men and suggested an additional sum already paid him it was quite enough. what figure he had in of scotch would do ni shooting him, but ba word, the detective c the strongbox to me knew, he would be a the black market.

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them with me, but no, not just yet. The detective dilated upon the number of men and man-hours the investigation had consumed and suggested an additional reward should be forthcoming. I named the sum already paid him by the insurance company and suggested that it was quite enough. He closed the lid of the strongbox. I asked him what figure he had in mind. He raised the strongbox lid. Five cases of scotch would do nicely, he told me with a vulpine grin. I felt like shooting him, but bargained him down to three. True at last to his word, the detective came to my home the following day, turned over the strongbox to me and carted off three cases of scotch, which, I knew, he would be able to sell for three or four hundred dollars on the black market. 83

I had been slow to learn the traditional way of dealing with Latin American policemen, but it was an object lesson I never forgot.

There now arrived from Washington a long dispatch from Beetle Smith addressed jointly to the OSO station chief and to myself. The two stations were to be merged and the overall station chief would succeed the OSO incumbent. I was named deputy. I accepted the change with what good grace I could muster, but asked that I be reassigned. Not long thereafter the new station chief arrived and within three months my replacement reported to the embassy.

Before departing, Dorothy and I were remarried in her Catholic faith and our daughters baptized as Catholics. For as long as I could I kept this intelligence from my parents, for I knew that it would inevitably produce ill feeling. Then, after a month of farewell parties and making last-minute purchases and packing, we saw our lift van trucked away and were driven by friends to the airport.

From there we flew to Florida, where we vacationed in a cottage given us by Dorothy's mother. Toward the end of my leave I went to Washington to find a house and receive word of my next assignment. I was to spend a year or so at headquarters, I was told, as chief of covert operations for an area of the world with which I had had no prior experience whatever: the Balkans.

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During his first few months, however, Woodward frequently expressed astonishment at the breadth and depth of my contacts across the country, and as a straight Foreign Service type he re- 115  
sented my progress, feeling that CIA officers should, somehow, be relegated to the back room, with only legitimate FSOs allowed any personal contact in the host country. Although I could not have disagreed more, I did my best to maintain working relations with him, though I was not always successful.

Just before national elections the embassy predicted another Colorado win and officially discounted the challenge of Nardone and his Ruralista-Blanco supporters. But for the first time in nearly a century the Colorados were defeated, and at that night's victory party tendered Nardone by his enthusiasts, I was the lone American invited from the embassy. And it galled Woodward that though he was obliged to meet the incoming President before inauguration, he was forced to arrange the introduction through me, for no other embassy officer was on speaking, much less social, terms with the President-elect. After inauguration Nardone replaced the chief of police, but I persuaded him to maintain the chief of military intelligence as the best available man for the job.

The new police chief was an Army colonel who knew nothing about police work and less about intelligence. But he was loyal to Nardone, and because I was obviously a favorite of the new President's, he gave me full cooperation. When I took him on an inspection of our clandestine listening posts the new police chief was astounded to find that we were monitoring forty-two telephone lines. Later he told me his predecessor had either carried off or destroyed the card files of all known subversives in Uruguay. (Actually, when I heard the files were to be destroyed, I asked permission to photocopy them before the cards were destroyed by the outgoing police chief. These photocopies had since been integrated into the files of my station.) Without violating his predecessor's confidence, I told the new police chief that from my own files I would be happy at any time to supply him with information on any individual of interest to his department.

While at a country club dance I learned from the embassy watch officer that my father had died, and I departed early next morning to join my mother in Albany and make funeral arrangements in Ham- burg. He was buried in the Hunt cemetery plot beside my infant brother, and I was granted a week's leave to help my mother settle

*what we could do  
in our coverage of  
local targets.*

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