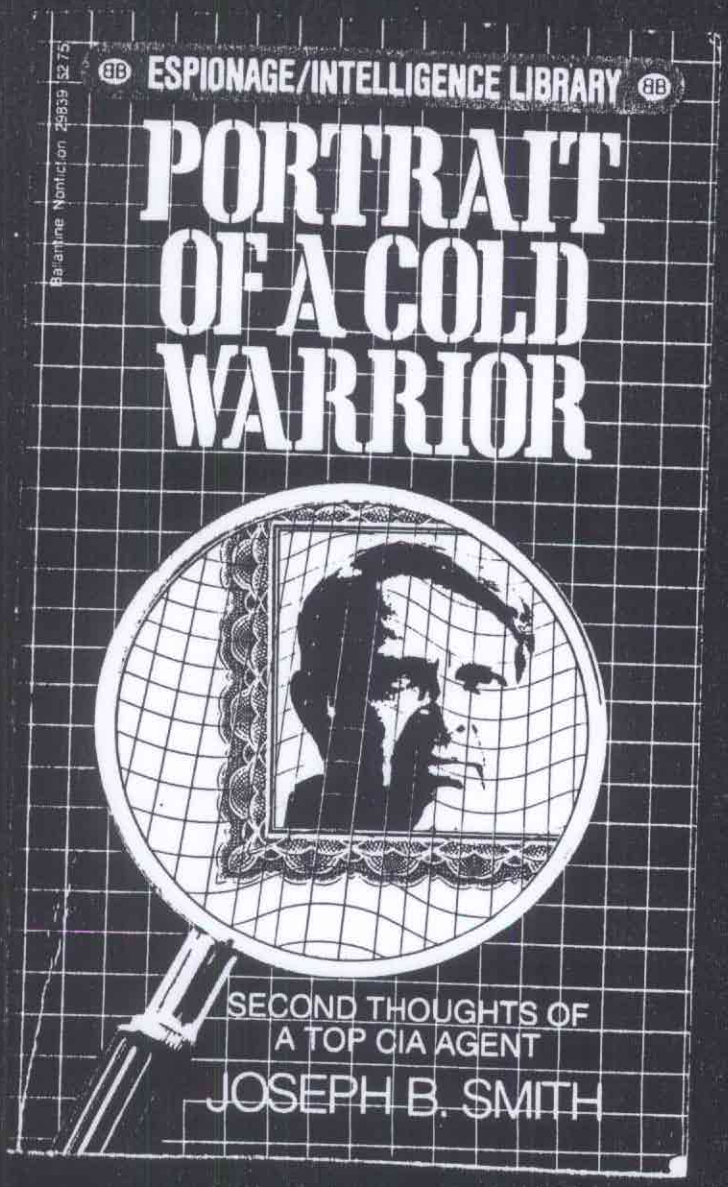
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PORTRAIT OF A COLD WARRIOR
SECOND THOUGHTS OF A TOP CIA AGENT
JOSEPH B. SMITH

ways told we did not do. I and, I'm sure, the majority of my colleagues believed this. We believed it for a number of reasons.

First of all, the initial orientation lectures for all employees pointed out that the CIA's charter expressly forbids the Agency to have "police, subpoena, law enforcement powers or internal security functions inside the United States." Second, it was important for Clandestine Services officers to believe this when they served in U.S. embassies abroad. They faced almost universal suspicion on this point from State Department personnel, USIS officers, aid mission employees, and people from all the other components of the U.S. mission. These people simply couldn't believe the illogical story that an Agency devoted to national security had no security interests in the American people it was supposed to protect. You couldn't believe this unless you had the language of our restrictive charter drummed into you. We had, and we tried to convince them. We often quoted the charter's language. Many were still skeptical because, unlike us, they did not appreciate fully how much power J. Edgar Hoover had in the U.S. government and how thoroughly he resented CIA. It was to placate Hoover that the CIA's charter was written the way it was. CIA's responsibiliy for national security ended at the water's edge and Hoover's men took over.

Another reason a lot of CIA employees believed that we did not spy on fellow Americans was that relatively few really knew what James Angleton's CI staff was doing. Most Clandestine Services employees were aware of the mail-intercept program and had some idea that our extensive capabilities to bug installations and tap telephones might be used sometimes to follow particular cases in which we were tracking down Soviet or other agents operating from outside the United States into our country, but not many realized the extent of the violation of people's mail which the investigations of the Agency uncovered in 1975. They didn't because only a few knew exactly how we worked in this field. Angleton's staff handled liaison with the FBI, and officers with a "need to know" got information they had to have, but never learned precisely how it had been produced. For one thing, the bad blood between the FBI and CIA was reason enough for the CI staff officers to be closed-mouthed.

The source of most of the illegal information the Agency acquired was the National Security Agency, however, and this material was guarded by an extremely strict security system. The National Security Agency's worldwide code-breaking and information-interception results flowed into our Agency via the CI staff's special unit known as "Staff D." No one got a Staff D clearance unless Angleton's men were satisfied that the officer absolutely had to have access to the NSA information in order to carry out his responsibilities. The counterintelligence paranoid personality was nowhere more prominent than in the Staff D clearance procedure.

I didn't get a Staff D clearance until I became involved in our Indonesian operations in 1957. It was decided then that I couldn't hold Sukarno's feet to the fire without access to Staff D. I was notified one day to go to a certain corridor in "L" building. I wasn't able to enter the corridor when I got there because I was stopped by a man who peered suspiciously at me from a window in the bolted door that blocked the corridor from the central passageway. After verifying I was who I claimed to be, I was admitted to an anteroom shut off from the rest of the offices in the corridor and given a security briefing which included reading a brief history of code-breaking activities in World War II and which stressed I was to guard the secrecy of the very existence of the National Security Agency work with my life.

The briefing material told how the British film star Leslie Howard had done exactly that. The quiet courage with which he faced Humphrey Bogart in *The Petrified Forest* he displayed in real life as he met his death. A British intelligence officer in World War II, Leslie Howard had access to information from the German coded-message system—the breaking of which was a tremendous triumph for British cryptologists. He learned the mission he was about to fly into France had been blown and German planes would be in the air to shoot him down. If Howard did not fly the mission, however, the Germans would realize the British had cracked the code. Howard died to keep the secret.

None of the Indonesian messages, mostly police calls, I soon was reading were worth anyone's life. Neither in