

## Capitol Punishment

# CIA: Why It's As Easy As ABC; American As KGB

11/12/77  
By Art Buchwald

Although the CIA is supposed to be secret, everybody in Washington knows at least one person who works for it. My CIA connection is Rumplemeyer, who has been in and out of the cold for 25 years.

"Nobody understands us," Rumplemeyer told me the other day as we changed taxis for the third time to make sure no one was following us.

"Why do you say that?" I asked. "Well, take all the hoopla about the CIA that is going on now. They are accusing us of every crime under the sun."

"Are the charges true or not?" "I can't say," he replied.

"Let me get this straight, Rumplemeyer. Accusations have been made against 'the company' which could or could not be true and, although you say no one understands you, you can't respond to them."

"That's correct. If we answered the allegations we might compromise the illegal actions we had to take in order to do the job we're supposed to do."

"Well, how can we understand you if we don't know what you're doing?"

"Why can't you take us on faith?" he wanted to know.

"I'd like to, Rumplemeyer. Everyone would like to. But if

we're not careful, you people could turn out to be another KGB. You certainly wouldn't want a KGB in this country, would you?"

"I'm not allowed to answer that," Rumplemeyer said.

"The problem as I see it," I said, "is that the American people want a strong intelligence agency, but not one that could turn against us."

"You think that way because you don't know us," Rumplemeyer said. "If you knew what we were doing you wouldn't say that."

"Well, what are you doing?" I asked.

"I can't tell you," Rumplemeyer said. "Let's get another taxi."

We settled in our fourth cab. "Nobody appreciates anything we do," he said sadly. "We're the only ones in this town who can't talk about our work. Do you think it's fun to go to a party and hear everyone bragging about his profession? The guy next door to me is a lawyer. When he wins a case, he tells everyone on the block. Down the street is a man who works for the Defense Department. Every time he gives a billion dollars away he is congratulated. But if I overthrow a government, I have to keep my mouth shut. I can't even go to a cocktail party and say, 'I had lunch with a Polish defector today.' It gets to you after a while."

"Of course it does," I said sympathetically. "But don't forget, you chose to work for the company. Surely you knew what you were getting into when you joined up."

"Everybody needs appreciation," he said as tears came into his eyes. "We all like to hear people say, 'Well done.'"

"But how can I tell you 'well done' when I have no idea what you did? Now if you said you were involved in the Chile operation, I could at least pat you on the back."

"I didn't say I was involved in the Chile operation," he said quickly.

"Then how can I give you any credit for it?"

"I don't want credit for Chile." "Well, what do you want credit for?"

"I can't tell you. Can't you just say 'well done' without knowing what I did? Is that asking too much?"

"All right, Rumplemeyer. Well done."

"What for?" he asked nervously. "I have no idea."

"How did you know I was involved with that?" he said with alarm.

"I didn't. I just guessed it."