

# Keeping the Crime Rate Under

By Art Buchwald

For  
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For some years now Washington, D.C. has had one of the highest robbery rates of any city in the country.

We always assumed the crimes were committed by the underprivileged, unemployed and disaffected members of the population. So you can imagine our surprise when all of us picked up the New York Times the other day and read that there was some evidence that the CIA had been involved in breaking and entering and other second-story jobs in the capital.

No one knows how many break-ins the CIA were involved in, but it certainly does pose a problem as far as our crime rate is concerned.

My friend, George Washington Custer, called me as soon as he read the story. "Hey, man," he said chortling. "You read where the CIA's been committing all the break-ins in our fair city?"

"The story didn't say that," I warned Custer. "It indicated that there was a possibility that the CIA may have been involved in some break-ins in the name of national security."

"What are they breaking into homes in Washington for? I thought they were supposed to spy on all those Communists in Russia."

"That's the point, Custer. In order to spy on Communists in the Soviet Union, it is sometimes necessary to break into people's homes in the United States. But I'm certain the CIA would not sneak into anybody's house unless they were certain they were friends of our enemies abroad."

"How would they know that?" Custer demanded.

"Because apparently the CIA kept a list of Americans that were suspect. They probably weren't per-

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mitted to rob your house unless you were on the list."

"How come the CIA were allowed to do this?"

"They weren't," I said patiently. "But when you work for the CIA you can do a lot of things you are not allowed to do. That's why you operate in secret."

"Well, let me ask you this. Suppose half the break-ins in Washington were made by the CIA and only half were made by the common robber? How come they never caught the CIA fellows?"

"The CIA crook has much better training for breaking and entering than the average man in the street. For one thing, he's a college graduate."

"Well, let me ask you another question. If the CIA is involved in a breaking-and-entering job, does that make it a street crime or a white-collar crime?"

"That's a good question, Custer. Why do you ask?"

"If it's a white-collar crime and it's been listed as a

street crime, then maybe Washington's been taking a bum rap. How do we know the biggest crimes in this city have not been committed by the government?"

"The biggest crimes in any city are always committed by the government, Custer. You should know that."

"It still bothers me. Going into someone's home through a window sounds like something the White House would do—not the CIA."

"Maybe," I said, "but let me ask you this. What would you do if you had all those people working for you out in Virginia and you could only afford to send a certain number of them abroad? Wouldn't you tell them to go out and break into a home in Washington?"

"But why?" he asked.

"Practice, Custer, practice."

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