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Capitol Punishment By Art Buchwald

The CIA in the White House

MORE AND MORE facts keep popping up about the CIA since it was revealed that it had financed the National Student Association. The big story that will break soon is how the CIA wormed its way into the White House and with its enormous funds took over the Executive Branch of the Government.



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It happened several years ago, when a high representative of the CIA paid a call on the President of the United States.

He said, "Mr. President, we understand you've got a serious deficit and we'd like to help you out."

"That's very kind of you," the President said. "But we have to keep the Executive Branch clear of any outside influence. If the American public found out the Administration was receiving funds from the CIA, it would compromise our position, and also our credibility would be questioned."

"No one would have to know the CIA had anything to do with the White House," the man said. "We could slip you the money through Congress. As far as the American people are concerned, they would think the funds were coming from the House Appropriations Committee. There would be no possible way of their tracing your budget to us."

"But what would the Administration have to do in exchange for being supported by the CIA?" the President asked.

"WELL, YOU AND your people get around a lot. You personally get to speak to heads of state, Dean Rusk is in touch with foreign diplomats, Bob McNamara has a chance to meet with military experts from other countries. All we ask you to do is keep your eyes and ears open."

"That doesn't sound too hard," the President said.

"It isn't. Let's say you

have a state dinner and a Foreign Minister tells you something. To you it might sound unimportant and trivial, but to us it might make a lot of sense. What we'd also like you to do everytime you or Rusk or McNamara meets with somebody is to write us a report on it."

"But how would we get the reports to you?"

"We'll arrange a drop for you. There's a hollow cherry tree right next to the Washington Monument. Anytime you think you have anything important, just drop it in the hollow and turn the branch on the tree so that it is pointing up. Our people will pick it up in a few hours."

"And just for doing that you're going to give me all the money I want for the Great Society?" the President asked in amazement.

"Well, we'd like to get some of our people into your Administration without anybody knowing about it. Let's say you've got an opening in the Cabinet. You could fill it with one of our men."

"I haven't appointed an Attorney General yet," the President said.

"FINE. We'll let you know in a few days who we want you to put in the job. Now, we'd also like to get someone on the Supreme Court. You never can tell what they're up to. As soon as you have a resignation, send it to us in code on this little transmitter which looks like a fountain pen, and we'll tell you what to do next."

"I don't want to do anything wrong," the President said.

"How could you do anything wrong if you're helping your country?" the CIA man said. "All we're asking you to do is let us use the Executive Branch of Government to fight communism."

"Well, as long as you put it that way," the President said. "But I'd like to ask you one question. How come you can get all the money you want to, and I can't?"

"It's simple, Mr. President. We don't have to account for ours."

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