



JACK NICHOLSON

Parade 10/27/74

Q: Recently I attended a conference on the CIA in Washington, D.C., where I heard a professor from Vanderbilt University—I believe his name was Ransom—cite an exchange of letters between Adm. Sidney Souers, first temporary director of the CIA, and President Truman, who founded the CIA. Both were disillusioned with the agency. Can you fill me in on the details?—David Marks, Washington, D.C.

A. On Dec. 27, 1963, Admiral Souers, then chairman of the board of the General American Life Insurance Co. in St. Louis, wrote Truman a letter in which he stated: "...Allen Dulles caused the CIA to wander far from the original goal established by you, and it is certainly a different animal than I tried to set up for you.

"It would seem that its principal effort was to cause revolutions in smaller countries around the globe.

"As bad as that was, it was worse to try to conduct a 'war' invading Cuba with a handful of men and without air cover. The campaign had been designed and carried out by Mr. [Richard M.] Bissell who was on my staff in the N.S.C. (National Security Council). He had been a professor at Harvard and wrote good staff papers, but he had little or no experience in practical warfare. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding that he has never worn a uniform.

"With so much emphasis on operations, it would not surprise me to find that the matter of collecting and processing intelligence has suffered some."

In reply, Truman on Jan. 17, 1964, wrote Souers: "Thanks for yours of December 27. I more than appreciated it, and I am as happy as I can be that my article on the Central Intelligence Agency rang a bell with you because you know exactly why the organization was set up—it was set up so the President would know what was going on..."