

# FRONT PAGE PEOPLE

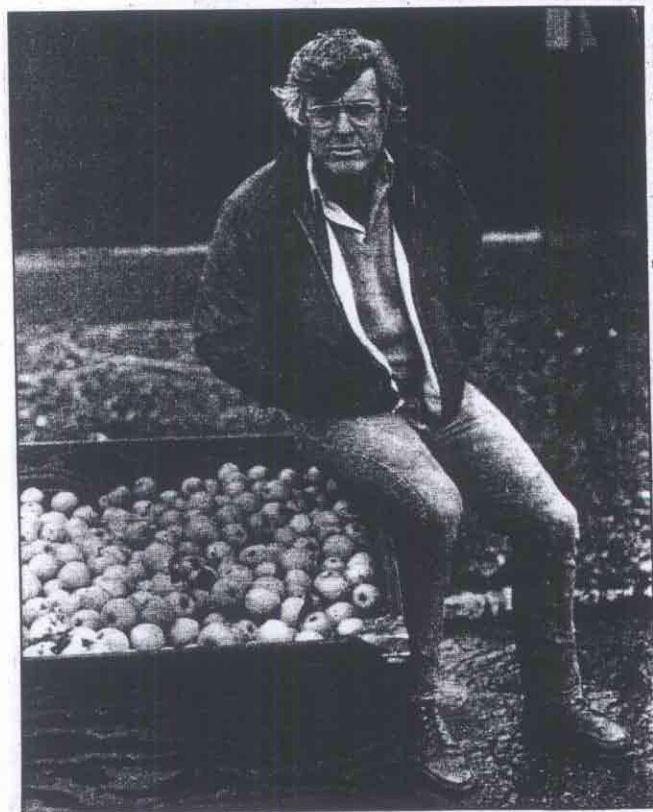
BY RUDY MAXA

## Our CIA Man in Idi Amin's Uganda

**T**he State Department still sends Jay Mullen the news clippings he requests about events in Africa. The mailman who delivers the envelope sometimes finds Mullen, 39, squeezing apples into cider at his orchard in rainy, chilly Medford, Ore., which is a long way from the hot, dry capital of Uganda. It was in Uganda, from 1971 to 1973, that Mullen worked as an undercover CIA agent watching Idi Amin, the Russians and the Chinese. He also became Amin's basketball coach.

"I wrote a book [unpublished] about Idi Amin," says Mullen, "that is in stark contrast to what people in the agency have been saying about him. I didn't think Idi Amin was crazy. He was violent and ruthless, but I don't think what he did in Uganda was either mercurial or inexplicable."

Mullen was in a position to know. He arrived in Uganda, posing as an academician, when Kampala was a pleasant capital under Amin's young administration. He was soon offered a job teaching European history at the local uni-



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versity, and he lived his double life as a professor and spy until 1973, when Amin's reign of terror turned Kampala into a city gone mad. During Mullen's years there, he:

- ✓ Politely declined the romantic offers of women he suspected were paid by unfriendly countries who wanted to know if he was a spy;

- ✓ Plotted the bugging of the Chinese embassy, a project the CIA canceled when Rich-

ard Nixon began negotiating with China;

- ✓ Secretly photographed government documents stolen for him by a local citizen on his payroll;

- ✓ Slugged Amin in the face accidentally during a swimming race and lived to tell about it;

- ✓ And, at Amin's request, coached a hapless basketball team of eager Ugandans who subsequently were defeated by a visiting Russian team.

A former demonstrator against America's involvement in Vietnam, Mullen was teaching at a conservative women's college in Kentucky in 1970 when the administration ordered him to shave his beard;

he decided to switch jobs. His credentials to secure a new position with were that he had done a doctoral dissertation on the influence of Asian Indians on British colonial policy in East Africa and that he had studied Wolof, the language of Senegal and Gambia, at the University of Indiana's African Language Institute. With a growing family to support and such esoteric skills, Mullen approached the CIA.

After batteries of tests and interviews in various Washington apartments over a period of several months, Mullen was hired. He and his family packed for Uganda.

"What have I done?" he thought to himself when he

first landed after midnight at the shabby Kampala airport. The capital turned out to be a small town, a Peyton Place of spies and suspected spies. He soon knew most of the foreign community as well as Amin, whose son played with Mullen's son at school and swam at the hotel pool that other foreign residents used. For two years Mullen reported on the deteriorating condition of Amin's little empire. He finally left when his staying would have caused too much

suspicion.

"What could I have said to people who asked why I stayed?" says Mullen. "Oh, this is a great place—you can't get soap or salt, you might get shot at night . . ." Actually, I left when the toilet across from my office at the university overflowed and the gentle African breeze wafted . . ."

After a couple more years spent in the Sudan for the CIA, Mullen came in from the cold in 1976 to return to his childhood home of Medford.

"I left the CIA because my kids couldn't have piano lessons, didn't know how to play baseball and needed orthodontists," says Mullen. In Oregon he bought a farm and began buying the apple crops of neighboring orchards. An interest in local Democratic politics unearthed his past. During a race for a state senate seat, a researcher for the opposition discovered that a Los Angeles company listed on Mullen's campaign income disclosure form did not exist. The CIA connection leaked out. At school his children were asked if their Daddy kept shellfish toxin on a shelf. He still gets calls from, among others, an anti-Communist at a veteran's hospital who wants Mullen to help him escape. Another recent caller was a man whose daughter was kidnapped in Germany.

"I don't know if he thought I was going to pull out a short-wave radio and call somebody in Hamburg, or what," says Mullen.

He narrowly lost his race for state government and happily went back to his orchard business, padding about in the Oregon mud watching the apples ripen and pressing cider, an unlikely spy living a more certain life.