

TAYLOR BRANCH

EDITOR'S NOTE: In last month's *Esquire*, Taylor Branch discussed the intricacies of the Sam Jaffe case. Jaffe lost his job as a correspondent for ABC after he was accused of working for the KGB, the Soviet secret police. Jaffe's problems were just beginning: he soon had to deal with the charge that he worked for the C.I.A., too. The Sam Jaffe story is concluded here.

Walter Cronkite went on the radio January 23, 1976, to denounce "phony journalists" for cooperating with the U.S. government and thereby soiling the profession. Walter was not his usual affable self. He was hotter than Isaiah as he held the sinner up to public scorn: "That former reporter's name is Sam Jaffe. . . . During the first part of his informing career, he worked for CBS News. . . . Few responsible news organizations would employ such a double agent knowingly. . . ."

It seems Jaffe, a former CBS and ABC correspondent, had compromised journalism by giving information to the C.I.A. and F.B.I. Because of "the Sam Jaffes in our profession," said Cronkite, rumors linger of reporters secretly in league with the C.I.A. Therefore, people may tend to disbelieve the news they get. Worse, Cronkite went on, news sources may get suspicious and clam up on reporters. And worst of all, innocent reporters may get shot as spies in faraway lands. Cronkite, ever practical, also feared that reporters' life-insurance premiums would rise because of the C.I.A. taint.

Sam Jaffe is the most complete pariah in the history of American journalism. To him, being an ordinary pariah looks like a Pulitzer Prize. In 1969, Jaffe's career as a network correspondent ended amid rumors that he had become a Russian spy back when he'd been ABC's first Moscow bureau chief. Stunned, Jaffe began suing the C.I.A. and F.B.I. for whatever evidence they held against him. He got only tidbits suggesting

that he had been on the periphery of everything from the Kennedy assassination to secret spy murders. Every lamppost in his past came alive.

Jaffe has collected nearly a thousand pages of government documents about himself. He was denied hundreds more on grounds of national security. It is as if all his old acquaintances had kept secret diaries on him for twenty years, then given him the collected work with all the juicy pages ripped out. Jaffe invited reporters, lawyers and other agents of justice to study the documents in the hope of proving him guilty or innocent of being a Russian spy. He said he was innocent.

To his everlasting misfortune, Jaffe was conducting these tours of his past at the height of the C.I.A. scandals, when investigators were hot after evidence of C.I.A. mischief in domestic institutions—like the networks. So when he marched in to tell his life story to a Senate committee, word promptly leaked out that he had admitted being a source of information for the C.I.A. and F.B.I. some years back. Instead of persuading the committee to take up his "Russian spy" case and end his long unemployment, Jaffe succeeded only in self-incrimination. The *New York Times* branded him an "informant."

Desperate, Jaffe tried to explain that he had told the F.B.I. of his contacts with Russian sources in the 1950's only because he was afraid the F.B.I. would persecute him as a Communist if he didn't. It had been, after all, the cold war. As for all the C.I.A. and F.B.I. "contact" reports in his files, Jaffe said he was surprised by them, too. He could only conclude that after every meeting with an American intelligence source, the source must have filed a report on what he learned from Jaffe, just as Jaffe would broadcast what he learned from the source. It was a "you scratch my back" world.

By the beginning of 1976, Jaffe was not only broke but angry. He was determined not to be made a

The man who called Walter Cronkite a spy

scapegoat for all the collaboration between the press and the American intelligence agencies. He said he had actually refused offers to work for the C.I.A. on several occasions. In 1955, he charged, a mysterious C.I.A. man offered to help him obtain a post with CBS in Moscow if he would agree to carry out "certain assignments" there. He turned the man down, Jaffe said, but the offer itself suggested that the Agency had some sort of hiring arrangement with CBS.

This issue, C.I.A. infiltration of the media, was percolating at the time Jaffe embarked on his ill-fated offensive. Daniel Schorr was about to risk his neck by reporting that executives of his own network, CBS, had met with C.I.A. executives to discuss sharing employees. Bill Gill, a correspondent recently dismissed by ABC, had gone public with a promise to prove collaboration between the



C.I.A. and ABC. And there were others. But the Senate and House committees on the C.I.A. were sputtering toward exhaustion without taking up this sensitive matter. So Jaffe decided to give them a push.

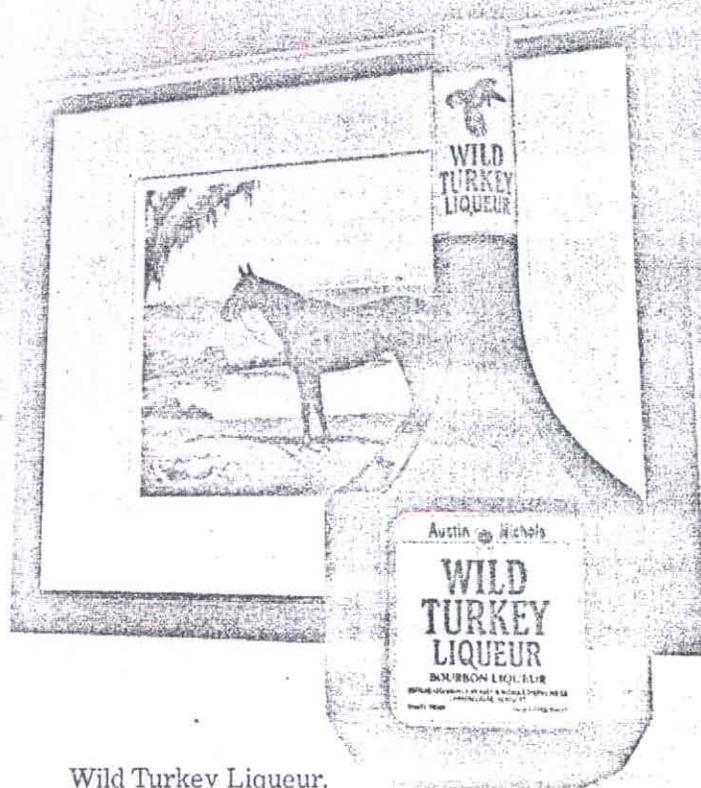
On January 23, 1976, Jaffe appeared on a Washington talk show and wasted no time in charging that there were many more important informants than himself. "I understand," he said, "that there is a list—and people are trying to cover it up—of some very, very big names in our profession who at one time, and maybe it was all right then, were involved with the C.I.A. . . . I am told that Mr. John Chancellor is on the list, Mr. Walter Cronkite, Mr. William Sheehan of ABC. Mr. Lou Cioffi of ABC is on the list, and there are a number of other names. I am told between forty and two hundred names. . . ." Jaffe went on to say that he had heard of the list from his former colleague Bill Gill and had confirmed it with others.

All hell broke loose. Bill Gill says that when he called his answering service shortly after Jaffe's appearance, there were already more than three hundred messages from reporters all over the world. (He also denied giving the list to Jaffe and that he'd even heard of it.) Cronkite himself was on national radio before the sun went down, vilifying Jaffe as an informant without mentioning Jaffe's charge against him, which he later denied. CBS News president Richard Salant announced that "my confidence in Mr. Cronkite is as complete as my contempt for Mr. Jaffe is total." And, in general, the press fell upon the House and Senate C.I.A. committees in a white heat.

The committees, faced with the prospect of infuriating the media establishment just when their crusades were coming to grief, announced that they had no proof of any list. They decided not to seek any, either, and declined to call witnesses like Gill. In fact, they all but dropped the C.I.A. media inquiry.

However, there was a list. I have been told so by people much closer to it than Jaffe or Gill, by people from the Nixon White House who had obtained it but who refused to say so publicly for fear of sharing Jaffe's sad fate. According to them, Nixon's honchos wanted some ammunition to use against their press critics, and being blunt and hard-nosed about it, they figured a little C.I.A. blackmail would do. So they had a Nixon man high in the C.I.A. compile a list of all reporters who appeared in Agency files as the source of any information whatsoever. The resulting list was a hodgepodge ranging from real C.I.A.

The Thoroughbred of Liqueurs



Wild Turkey Liqueur.

From Kentucky, home of fine thoroughbreds. For those who appreciate the value of good breeding and fine liqueur. The perfect finish to any meal.

NOTICE: SUPPLY WILL BE STRICTLY LIMITED. IF NOT IN YOUR STORE, PLEASE CONTACT AUSTIN, NICHOLS & CO., LAWRENCEBURG, KENTUCKY ©1976. AUSTIN, NICHOLS DISTILLING CO. 80 PROOF.

people posing as journalists to reporters paid by the C.I.A. for odd assignments, all the way down to reporters who provided the C.I.A. with information in the course of "cultivating" intelligence sources. Most of the media heavies were included.

By any reasonable interpretation, one's appearance on this list would mean nothing in itself; all would depend on what kind of information or services were given. But the press is anything but reasonable. It holds that it is a mortal sin to give any information to the C.I.A., which is somewhat like condemning anyone caught browsing at a newsstand as a fiend for pornography. This press sanctimony is precisely what the men in the Nixon White House counted on to bolster the blackmail value of the list.

It is worth noting that the spy business and the news business are similar in ways other than their parallel historical development during the cold war, when the new C.I.A. and the new television networks set up overseas bureaus at about the same time, using employees of common experience. The two businesses are similar by their very nature, although one professes to expose secrets and the other to keep them.

Both spies and reporters rely on sources. Sources are the name of the game. The C.I.A. will do almost anything to protect its sources, even if they are Mafia hit men or journalists—especially if they are such. Likewise, journalists are sworn to march to the dungeons rather than identify a source. In both professions, it is essential to have sources but forbidden to be one. Being a source is treason for a spy and a betrayal of public trust for a reporter.

But the C.I.A. is more honest about sources than the press. It readily admits that it must bribe, seduce, blackmail or otherwise entice a

source into service, whereas the press argues that its sources receive nothing but civic gratification. In reality, reporters usually trade information with sources, who have their own interests to promote, but the slightest exposure of such traffic is enough to cost a reporter his job. This gap between scripture and practice makes reporters vulnerable to those who know how to exploit weakness. Spies, for instance.

In the wake of the public explosion over Jaffe's charge of a C.I.A. list, the media and the C.I.A. engaged in a little minuet that showed how confused their respective functions can become. The top brass of The New York Times (led by Punch Sulzberger) and the top brass of CBS (led by William Paley and Walter Cronkite) arranged private sessions with the top brass of the C.I.A. (led by Director George Bush) to talk over residual suspicions of collusion. No one knows exactly what went on at the meetings because the journalists present did not report on them. But the C.I.A. did leak stories that the media executives had visited and expressed private solidarity with the Agency's position that it would do no good to publicize the names of "tainted" journalists and ruin distinguished careers. These stories caused an uproar and were promptly denied by the media brass, who told reporters, including their own, that they could not divulge what went on at the meetings because they were "off the record."

The networks proclaimed themselves clean and they neglected to pursue contrary evidence within their own ranks. Instead, they staked out lofty but contradictory positions. On CBS, Eric Sevareid announced that journalists were in danger of becoming the victims of a new McCarthy era, and he cautioned against exposing reporters "whose crime

seems to be that they were not too pro-Russia but too pro-America." Before a single working reporter had been exposed for collusion, Sevareid called for letting bygones be bygones. Meanwhile, Cronkite condemned the lowly and departed Jaffe, using the kind of tactics feared by Sevareid.

Meanwhile, Jaffe was unable to prove anything in his defense. Then he received the smallest confirmation of his beliefs. The government, in forwarding files to him, accidentally failed to censor one of the documents providing information about Jaffe rather than from him. It was a 1965 cable from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to the American embassies in South Vietnam, Laos and the Soviet Union: "John Scali has informed us that . . . D.R.V. [North Vietnam] has authorized visa for Sam Jaffe to visit Hanoi in near future . . . ABC also informed that head of N.L.F. has provided replies to questions submitted by Jaffe before his expulsion from Moscow. We understand Winston will provide embassy with copy of replies. . . . Rusk." In context: Rusk was trying to prevent American journalists from visiting Hanoi for fear of hurting the war effort, and ABC correspondent John Scali was keeping Rusk abreast of Jaffe's efforts to go. Former *Business Week* correspondent Don Winston was helping out. Jaffe's trip was later spiked.

By Walter Cronkite's standards, Scali, ABC and Winston would all stand convicted as government informants and should be consigned to oblivion along with Jaffe. This did not happen, and without knowing more about the nature and circumstances of their "informing," I'm not sure it should have. Still, this cable is a highly suspicious peek at the way the press and government scratch each other's backs.

Jaffe and Scali both worked for ABC. From sketches of their careers there, you can get an idea of how seriously the press takes its sacred doctrine about not consorting with the government. Scali was already a veteran foreign correspondent when he won fame in 1962 by serving as a highly secret middleman in the Kennedy-Khrushchev negotiations over the Cuban missile crisis. Two years later, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists established the John Scali Award for news reporting. Just then, Scali began to hit some snags. He went on the air with an exclusive report that Secretary of State Dean Rusk would resign in a few months. (ABC was so proud of its scoop that it interrupted *Queen for a Day* in order to broad-

IN ZURICH

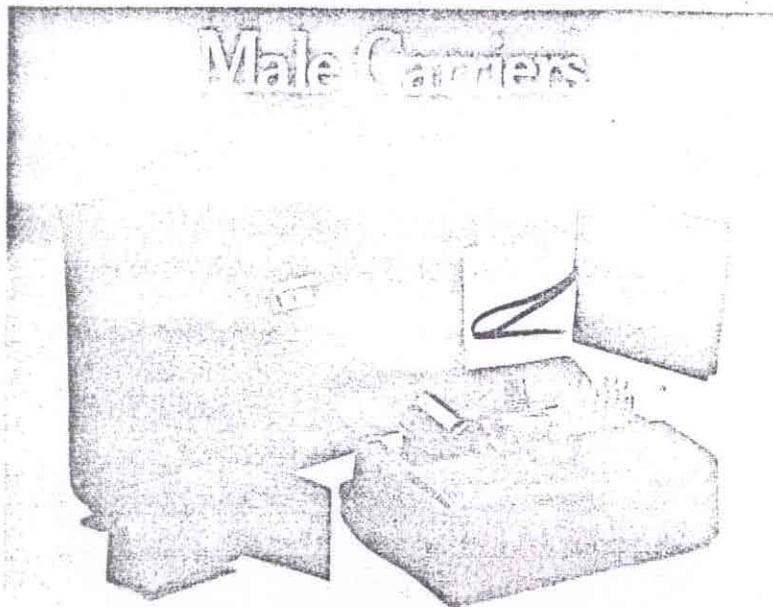
*Now they've moved Nora near him, let them go
earthwise, wherever. To whom can they matter, these mounds?
The great bear effigy we saw in Iowa, cleared for*

*everyone's climb and look, connected more.
But why should any of it arrest us so,
except as burial practice, getting set*

*to learn, near woods and water, schemes of repose?
What's helped before, this side—the taking measure
of worlds we don't know quite what to make of—may*

*still count for something when the final oddness
comes like a bear and calls, as the dark loses
lucidity, "Move nearer, Nora . . . whoever . . ."*

—G.T. WRIGHT



Introducing Rolfs' new Carriers for the fashionable male. They're ideal for those times when pockets aren't enough, yet bulkier bags are too much. There's a Carrier for your every need, all handsomely styled in beautiful Polished Brass cowhide. See the Male Carriers. They're a special delivery of style and convenience from Rolfs.

ROLFS... it shows you care.

West Bend, WI 53095. Available at fine stores throughout the USA and Canada.



The spirit of the British Empire.

Bombay Gin, imported from England. Superbly dry and gentle.
One taste and you'll be one of its loyal followers.

© 1976 Carillon Importers, Ltd., N.Y. 10022. 86 Proof. 100% Grain Neutral Spirits.



cast the message.) Rusk stayed on for four more years.

In 1965, Scali shook the news world again with an exclusive story that Brezhnev and Kosygin had been ousted from the Kremlin. The Soviets were so angry about the report that they closed the ABC bureau in Moscow and expelled its correspondent—Sam Jaffe, who had elevated his reputation a year earlier with an accurate scoop on the Kremlin ouster of Khrushchev. Jaffe, naturally, was irritated with Scali for obliterating his Moscow post.

Nevertheless, Scali continued to rise as Jaffe declined. By 1969, Jaffe had been eased out of ABC. That same year, Scali invited a number of diplomatic correspondents to lunch with C.I.A. director Richard Helms. Out of this conclave emerged a flock of earthshaking stories about how the Russians were considering pre-emptive nuclear attacks on China. The stories, later discredited, were apparently some sort of psychological-warfare ploy by Helms, and the role he and Scali played in planting the stories came to light only because one reporter was upset about not being invited to the lunch.

In 1971, Scali crossed the line into direct government service and became special consultant to President Nixon, where his job was to urge his press brethren not to harass the President so much. He went on to be Nixon's ambassador to the United Nations. Crossing back into journalism in 1975, he lost no time in getting ABC ahead of the news by reporting that Spanish dictator Franco had died. He broke the story well in advance of any other reporter but also well in advance of Franco's death. Since then, Scali has devoted much time to public service, giving speeches before august groups. Last year, he told the ABC Radio Network affiliates that "the pendulum has swung too far in the journalistic zeal to rout out evil," and he went on to scorn the "unbelievable numbers of bright-eyed, energetic, would-be crusaders" in the press. ABC pays him more than \$65,000 a year.

Jaffe is still canned, along with the only other TV reporters who have raised serious questions about network cooperation with the C.I.A.—Daniel Schorr and Bill Gill. Jaffe's problem with the government, according to one C.I.A. veteran, was that "nobody ever considered him [Jaffe] really on his side." In theory, this is the ideal stance for a reporter, but it does not seem to work as well as the methods of Scali, who rose to the pinnacle of journalism by becoming indistinguishable from the officials he was supposed to monitor. #