

Told His Captors Secrets, Downey Says

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 NEW BRITAIN, Conn., March 13 (AP)—CIA agent John T. Downey said today he was subjected to intensive questioning by his Communist captors and told them "about every bit of information I had."

Downey, 42, returned here Monday night after more than 20 years' imprisonment to be with his critically ill mother. He discussed some aspects of his captivity at a news conference but refused to reveal details of the mission that led to his capture.

When asked if he revealed any "secrets" during interrogation by the Chinese, Downey said: "I would say I revealed about every bit of information I had" during the first nine months in prison.

"I don't feel I would like to discuss" the type of information revealed to the Communists, he added.

Downey was asked by a newsman if he thought "what you were doing" was worthwhile. "I'd say no," he answered. "I'm not quite sure if I have gotten the ramifications of that, but as I say, I thought the 20 years for a large extent was wasted and I don't see it benefited anybody."

It was not clear, however, whether Downey was questioning the worth of the 1952 mission that led to his capture or the time he spent in jail. He did not elaborate.

10 Months in Leg Irons

Speaking in a quiet, reserved manner, Downey said during the first 10 months after his plane was shot down over Manchuria in November 1952, he was kept continually in leg irons.

The Chinese subjected him to "pretty intensive questioning" and threatened his well



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 South Vietnamese military policeman, right, and Vietcong soldier start 32 American POWs toward Bienhoa center for scheduled release from captivity on Friday.

being, but never beat him, he said.

The slightly balding Downey was released to be at the bedside of his mother, Mary V. Downey, 75, who suffered a severe stroke Wednesday. She remained in critical but improved condition, and visited twice with her son.

Asked during the 45-minute news conference whether he would remain with the CIA, he said: "At present, I would say not."

he never lost hope but felt some bitterness and discouragement during his imprisonment.

But he said the bitterness disappeared when he was told he would be released. He attributed his hopefulness in part to a belief that the Chinese will "sock it to you with a heavier sentence, then let you off with a lighter term."

Surprised by Nixon

Downey said the agreement for President Nixon to visit mainland China "caught me so much by surprise that I nearly fell off my chair." That visit, last year, and an earlier trip by U.S. ping pong players "broke the ice" that had prevented his release until then, he said.

He added that he didn't believe anything more could have been done by the United States to win him an earlier release.

Downey described his 20 years in prison as "a crashing bore."

His typical day, he said, began at 6 a.m. and included required listening to political broadcasts and participation in ideological "study periods."

He was permitted to leave his white washed cell for between 30 minutes and four hours of exercise in a 30- by 90-foot courtyard. Prisoners also were taken on supervised visits to farms, factories and the Great Wall, he added, and his captors gave him enough to eat.

[CIA officials in Washington said that Downey was carried on agency rolls as an employee throughout his imprisonment and will get back pay, presumably 20 years worth. But the officials refused to disclose how much Downey was making and how much he now has coming to him, claiming such information was Downey's personal business.]

Downey, who joined the CIA after he graduated from Yale University in June 1951, said