

AN EX-CBS WRITER IS LINKED TO C.I.A.

FEB 11 1976

Former Network Aide Says
He Ousted Man in '54 on
Learning of Connection
NYTimes

By JOHN M. CREWDSON
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10—A staff officer of the Central Intelligence Agency worked in the mid-1950's as a staff writer for CBS News in New York while he was serving as a deep-cover intelligence operative, according to intelligence sources and past and present executives of CBS News.

The officer was identified as Austin Goodrich by Sig Mickelson, who at the time was a CBS vice president in charge of the network's broadcast news division. Mr. Mickelson said that he dismissed Mr. Goodrich in 1954 after learning of his C.I.A. connection.

Other sources said that Mr. Goodrich joined CBS as a part-time correspondent, or "stringer," in 1951, while he was stationed by the C.I.A. in Stockholm, where he also reported for Swedish television as part of his intelligence "cover."

CBS sent him to New York in 1953 to write for its broadcast news program, according to network personnel records. He remained there until he was discharged by Mr. Mickelson the following year, when his role as a career C.I.A. operative became known to network officials.

In Job 16 Months

Mr. Mickelson said that his recollection was that Mr. Goodrich moved to Stockholm after his 16-month stint as a writer in New York, because he believed the man was overseas when he was dismissed by CBS in May 1954.

"We got rid of Goodrich fast," said Mr. Mickelson, now an executive of Radio Free Europe here.

Richard Salant, who now heads CBS News in New York, confirmed today that Mr. Goodrich was employed by CBS during the period indicated by Mr. Mickelson, but said that he had no independent corroboration of Mr. Goodrich's agency background.

Reached at his home in suburban Virginia, Mr. Goodrich declined to comment on the assertion by Mr. Mickelson, saying only that he was "now retired from government service."

Other sources said, however, that Mr. Goodrich during his career as a clandestine C.I.A. operative in Scandinavia and elsewhere, had reinforced his cover as a journalist and author by publishing a book about Finland, "Study in Sisu," in 1960.

No one in the New York offices of the book's publisher, Ballantine, could be reached for comment on whether editors there had known of Mr. Goodrich's C.I.A. connection when they accepted the manuscript for publication.

Mr. Salant in a telephone interview, said however, that he and other CBS executives were aware of assertions by Mr. Mickelson and by John Day, a former manager of CBS News, that Frank Kearns, a former correspondent for the network in Africa and Europe, had had an operational connection with the C.I.A. while serving as the CBS stringer in Cairo in the mid-1950's.

Possible News Article

The CBS news chief said that the matter was being looked into by the network with a view toward a possible news article about Mr. Kearns.

He said that his office had received accounts of Mr. Kearns's agency relationship from Mr. Mickelson and Mr. Day, a former manager of CBS News who now publishes a small paper in England.

However, Mr. Kearns said today that he had never worked for American intelligence.

Mr. Day could not be reached for comment, but Mr. Mickelson recalled in the telephone interview that he and Mr. Day had heard a "rumor" about

Mr. Kearns's agency affiliation while Mr. Kearns was serving as the part-time CBS reporter in Egypt.

CBS, Mr. Mickelson recalled, thought highly of Mr. Kearns's work and was eager to hire him as a full-time staff reporter, but was concerned about his C.I.A. affiliation.

He and Mr. Day, Mr. Mickelson said, approached Allen W. Dulles, then the Director of Central Intelligence, at a Washington dinner party in 1957 or 1958 and told him, in effect, that CBS wished to employ the man, but would not if he remained with the agency.

Letter of Resignation

Mr. Mickelson said he then "put it up to Frank" whether to stay with CBS or the C.I.A., and that some time later an agency official approached him with a copy of Mr. Kearns's letter of resignation from the C.I.A.

It was only "after I was absolutely convinced that his resignation was total and complete" that Mr. Kearns was hired as the CBS correspondent in Cairo, Mr. Mickelson said.

According to Mr. Salant, Mr. Kearns joined the CBS staff in September 1958 and resigned in March 1971.

Mr. Kearns, now a professor of journalism at West Virginia University, said in a telephone interview today that the recollections of Mr. Mickelson and Mr. Day were unfounded.

He said at first that "during all the years I was a CBS news staff reporter, I had no connection whatsoever with the C.I.A. or any other intelligence agency."

He then added that he had never worked for American intelligence at any time during his career, including the period he served as the CBS stringer in Cairo before joining the network's staff.

He said that there had never been any acrimony between himself and Mr. Mickelson or Mr. Day, and that he could not account for the certainty with which they stated their recollections.