

To the Editor:

May I let your readers in on a little secret?

To my certain knowledge, every American correspondent serving in the



Mary Wagner

Middle East or Africa from 1947 up to the witch-hunts of 1975 and 1976 qualified as a "C.I.A. agent," according to Carl Bernstein's definition.

You see, contrary to the current

trend, foreign correspondents in those good old days were on our side, anxious to help their country by passing on such information to its Government as came their way in the normal course of their investigations, and for various reasons the C.I.A. "station chief" is normally the safest and most effective conduit. He is less formidable than the "straight" diplomats as a personality, he has more information to give in return and, either under his "cover" job or in his true one, he is more accessible. In any case, a foreign correspondent worth his salt can sniff out the "C.I.A. man" within microseconds of hitting a new town.

About the C.I.A.'s "feeding the press misleading information," I will now reveal another heretofore deep dark secret: Everybody feeds newspapermen false information, including those who so recently sucked in Carl Bernstein and the others. It's up to the intelligent journalist to sift the true from the false. And I submit that there are fewer clinkers in a C.I.A. station chief's handouts, and that they are easier to spot, than in information from other sources.

MILES COPELAND

Washington, Sept. 22, 1977

The writer is a former C.I.A. official.