

# Ex-Spy's Expose of the

Washington

Frank Snepp doesn't call them nightmares; he says they're soundmares.

"I wake up in the middle of the night," he says, "and I hear radio transmissions from the last day we were there; people are screaming. I have to carry (a narcotic more potent than codeine) with me all the time. I sleep maybe three hours a night."

Frank Snepp was the Central Intelligence Agency's chief strategy analyst in Vietnam. Last week Random House published his 600-page account of America's most disastrous mistakes in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Since then, he says CIA folks have been tracking him down and calling him up and telling him he's a traitor. And the news media — newspapers, magazines, "60 Minutes" — have been trailing after Snepp and his story.

"I wrote this book to exorcise the ghosts," Snepp says.

"Decent Interval" is filled with outrageous tales of bureaucratic bunglings: how facts that didn't jibe with what Washington wanted to hear were revised to toe the line, how other facts were changed to give the impression that a few more billion dollars could win the war; how Henry Kissinger was duped by Soviet diplomats into thinking that Hanoi would never invade Saigon; how thousands of Vietnamese recruited for the American cause and thousands of CIA files were abandoned in the mad rush to clear out of the collapsing capital.

Virtually all of the American officials named in Snepp's accounts — Kissinger, Ambassador Graham Martin, former CIA Director William Colby and CIA station chief Tom Polgar — have already taken exception to Snepp's version of the events concerning themselves.

In revealing all this, the 34-year-old former spy violated a written pledge made by every CIA employee to clear anything said or written about the agency with the front office. Snepp claims that his resignation in January, 1976, came only after his supervisors had resisted efforts to get an internal CIA investigation under way. He then announced that he had thoughts about writing a book, but left the

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specifics vague.

Then the weirdness really started. Meetings with editors in Manhattan parks. An argument with his Arlington neighbor: The guy liked to play rock 'n' roll loud in the afternoons, even as Snepp was squawking his memoirs into a tape recorder, which would not do. Flying fists, and the guy moved out of the apartment.

At the Fun & Fitness Health Club, geriatric ladies looked at him strangely, he says, when he showed up to swim every afternoon for 18

months, like some unemployed bum. His colleagues at the CIA avoided him like swine flu, for the most part. And, of course, Snepp was convinced that his phone was bugged. He'd take his tapes to New York to be transcribed by an out-of-work actress he knew. His phone conversations began to sound like CIA standards. His editor, Robert Loomis, became Janice. "Has Janice put the apartment together yet and has she done anything about the curtains?" meant simply "What's up with the maps in the book?"

Meanwhile, at Random House,

books last week were shipped to stores that didn't even know the book existed — with a letter explaining what was going on.

"I am a disquieted Quiet American," Snepp says. "But I'm willing to take the consequences. Philip Agee (author of 'Inside the Company: CIA Diary'), that son-of-a-bitch. He runs away from the country for asylum and then blows the cover of a lot of working agents. At least Marchetti and Marks submitted their book to the agency, although they still blew some covers. I was very careful to protect people. If you have a moral gripe to pick you do it on moral terms. If you believe in something, you act like Martin Luther King and stick around for the consequences."

Then too, Snepp did not submit his book to anyone at the agency because, as he rationalizes it, the CIA had blown its end of the secrecy pledge by leaking half truths to the press. He likes to cite what's chiseled into the building wall in the CIA headquarters at Langley, Va.: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make ye free."

*Washington Post*

perhaps a dozen of the company's 800 employees knew that the book was being published. Largely in light of Knopf's 1972 battle with the CIA over "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence" by Victor Marchetti and John Marks that cost Knopf \$150,000 in legal fees, the company had decided virtually to make believe that the book didn't exist.

Various parts of the text were shipped out to different typesetters. No galley proofs were made. The individual letters for the cover copy ("An Insider's Account of

Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam") were ordered separately. And on the night before the cover deadline the copy was handed to the art director with instructions on how to assemble the letters.

Snepp's mother made sketches of the characters for the book's title pages, never knowing precisely what the book was about. Snepp did not pay his 1976 income tax on his less than \$50,000 advance, for fear that the CIA might discover who his publishing house was. Finally the