

The Spies Who

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THE APARTMENT building off K street is ordinary and, inside, all the doors look alike. Behind one lives a lawyer. Behind another, a secretary. Behind another, a secret school for spies.

A secret school for spies, operated — unbeknown to the neighbors — by agents of the CIA.

On a sunny spring day, three men in business suits enter the building, take the elevator to four and step into the apartment. They are carrying attache cases. Perhaps their homework is inside. They are spies in training.

Their routine is regular. They come during daylight, stay a few hours and leave. Always the same apartment. The apartment, it is learned, is rented in the name of a husband and wife — but nobody seems to ever have seen the wife and the husband doesn't seem to spend his nights there. An advertising circular has been in the message box downstairs for weeks.

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A VISITOR takes note of this, and one day, while walking along the fourth floor corridor, he hears a man's voice coming from inside the apartment.

"... microdot..."

"... KGB..."

The voice, it becomes apparent, belongs to the trainer. No electronic eavesdropping equipment or any other device is ever used by the visitor. It is not necessary. The trainer is blessed with a rich, clear voice. It can be heard while lounging casually in the hallway against the wall opposite the apartment door. It can be heard even better in the laundry room across the way, where the cement-block walls create an echo-chamber effect.

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ONE DAY the trainer is saying something that sounds like:

"... Make a code word greeting that is easy to remember... You've got real

problems when you try to contact someone in a foreign city... In Rome once, I walked up to a guy and said: 'I'm from Bangkok.' He said, 'I'm from Shanghai.'

Another day, the curtains are drawn on the apartment's windows. A film projector or recorded soundtrack seems to be playing inside. Once the trainer is heard describing various people. Also giving advice: "If you have to have communications, you contact a technician."

Usually background instrumental music plays in the apartment, perhaps as a precaution against being overheard. The trainer's voice carries above the music, but the voices of the students do not. They speak more softly; their comments come in a decided foreign accent.

One day the trainer is apparently lec-

Secret School

Live Next

turing on how a spy can avoid being followed. "Go to three or four locations in a city — like a wide-open square. Go to the first one and look around. See who's there. Then go to a second place far removed. Look around. If you see any of the same faces, you're being followed."

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THEN CLASS is over for the day. It is easy to follow the spies - in - training as they leave. They walk several blocks and enter another apartment building where they apparently feel very much at home. They emerge a short time later on a corner balcony several stories above the street and proceed to take in the afternoon sun.

It is also easy to follow the trainer.

Door

He takes the elevator down to the basement garage and drives out in a blue sedan. The car has Virginia license tags and an Arlington, Va., inspection sticker. A check of the sticker registration reveals the trainer's true identity.

On occasion, the school for spies has another visitor — a man well into his middle-aged years, who stands about 5-foot-9 and drives a Volkswagen. On a rainy day, he gives a couple of the other students a ride. His car has Maryland license tags. A registration check reveals his identity as well.

A Newsday reporter telephones the Rockville, Mo., home of the man with the Volkswagen. A relative answers, "He's not here," the relative says. "He's at work."

In response to questions, the relative adds: "I don't know his phone number at work . . . He works for the government . . . I don't know which agency or which branch of the government . . . He doesn't tell me anything . . . That's the way they are and I don't ask."

It seems a good time to call the CIA.

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A NEWSDAY reporter telephones an official at the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters at Langley, Va. The reporter identifies himself and says he wants to try to verify the employment of three men. He gives the names of the man in the blue sedan, the man with the Volkswagen, and the name under which the Washington apartment is rented. (Newsday is voluntarily not publishing names or addresses of the individuals involved.)

The official explains that such requests cannot usually be fulfilled. Maybe this time, the reporter says, adding that he is concerned because "if they are not ours, then they are probably theirs."

The CIA official checks and calls back with the answer.

"They are our guys," he says. "You've come across something that is quite useful and legitimate. It's a training exercise . . . There is training going on at various times and various places.

"This is all rather embarrassing."