

Ex-CIA Man Tells Of Strange Request

Washington

A former Central Intelligence Agency official who has recently been one of the CIA's chief critics said yesterday he was approached by the agency last year and asked to obtain an advance copy of a book manuscript being written by another disgruntled former agent.

Victor Marchetti, who quit as executive assistant to the CIA's deputy director in 1969 and began writing about the agency's inner workings, said a CIA agent came to his home and asked his assistance in getting a manuscript being written by Philip Agee.

At the time the approach was made, Marchetti was involved in a court fight with the CIA over the agency's attempt to censor his book, "The CIA and the Cult

of Intelligence."

"It was kind of sneaky," Marchetti said. "I asked him, Why should I do this for you guys?"

Marchetti said the agent, a friend from his days with the agency, told him that while he and the agency had disagreements, "I was still considered a patriotic American and would I please acquire Agee's manuscript."

The approach was made the same day Marchetti obtained a passport to go to England to promote his book. Agee was living in England then, and Marchetti had never met him. Agee's manuscript, "Inside the Company: CIA Diary," has since been published.

"It kind of shook me up," Marchetti said, "I told the guy I was not inclined to do it," although the CIA had

claimed to him that Agee had become an agent for the Cuban government or the KGB.

Marchetti said he subsequently met Agee in England and decided Agee was an "intense, sincere man, trying to be purer than the driven snow, who does things without considering the consequences."

After he returned to Washington, Marchetti said, the CIA man came to see him again. "I told him that I didn't get the manuscript and that I wouldn't get it."

"I believe now," Marchetti said, "that the agency already had the manuscript and they were trying to test me to see if they could draw me back in, or they were setting me up to discredit me."

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