



THE SUPPORT APPARATUS

Slang for installing a support apparatus is “putting in the plumbing.” As with real plumbing, putting it in is expensive, and fixing it when something goes wrong is even more expensive. Here are some of the things that make up a counterintelligence support apparatus.

THE ROOF AND THE WALLS

Secrecy is efficiency. Secrecy is safety. Secrecy requires cover. CI people are a secretive bunch. They like to be taken for what they are not. They would much rather be taken for patent lawyers or market researchers or traffic cops than for counterspies; it makes counterspying easier. Because most of the people they are counterspying on feel the same way, CI people have a certain kinship with spies in general. If all this secrecy makes you uncomfortable, better find another line of work.

Part of cover is the apparent absence of it. Somewhere under your control should be a door with a sign, saying, in effect, “SECURITY, Enter Here and Tell All.” If it is somebody else’s office with which you can work closely, good. We call that kind of cover a “lightning rod,” because it keeps trouble away from the door to your real office that reads, “JANITORIAL SERVICES,

Please Wipe Feet Before Entering.” Journalists find this kind of evasiveness sinful, because it makes it harder for them to do their job. Our CI hearts would bleed for those hustling journalists if it were not for the fundamental difference between us: They make their living by blabbing secrets, we make ours by keeping them. General Creighton Abrams used to tell his staff that talking to journalists is like wrestling with pigs: The pigs have a lovely time, while you just get dirty.

Part of your plumbing is what the roof and walls look like that shelter you, your files, your photo lab, your offices, and the plumbing in your lavatories. I hope we have gotten away from such preposterous covers as “Center for Rehabilitation and Planning” or the U.S. Army’s Counter Intelligence Corps’s apocryphal “Messkit Repair Battalion.”

SURVEILLANCE TEAMS

Physical surveillance, discussed in detail in chapter 7, is one of your necessary tools, whether you do it with your own staffers (as you always will do some of the time), or with specialized nonstaffers recruited, trained, and paid for the job. You have to get your surveillance facilities in place before you start working, and you have to give them continuous maintenance. Surveillance machinery, the human kind, wears out faster than flashlight batteries, and surveillance teams are not rechargeable.

THE BUG AND TAP SHOP

Technical surveillance, discussed in detail in chapter 8, is a tool of your trade and a piece of the plumbing you have to put into your CI shop. Call it the “technical section” for purposes of reporting, but what it does is service “bugs” (hidden microphones) and “taps” (gadgets that eavesdrop on signals that move through wire).

Probably the bug and tap shop will occupy an awkward amount of real estate, not only because the machines are bulky but also because maintaining them takes a big bench with a lot of sophisticated tools. It also takes at least one trained technician. If your CI unit is small, you or one of your staffers will have to be qualified for this job. In larger units, the technical section is usually separate and specialized, with people who handle all the technical equipment, including photography and disguises (see below).

SAFE HOUSES

Why not have your defectors and double agents and surveillance team chiefs come into the office (the one with the sign “JANITORIAL SERVICES”)? Answer: Because you are under surveillance by the enemy—and under not so friendly observation by indigenous clerks, local policemen, transient agitators, and other people who leak almost as profusely as do the staff personnel of congressional committees in Washington. There is no sphincter control and no way to get any. Have you been to Washington lately? Noticed that pervasive smell of urine up and down the halls of the House and Senate office buildings? Now have a sniff in the corridors adjoining your office. Your French colleagues may call this experience *déjà senti*.

So you have to have safe houses and you have to have a system for establishing them and for replacing them and for maintaining them. It will be a big item in your budget and a drain on your manpower. But without them, where do you receive and handle your defectors, where do you meet your double agents, where do you coach your surveillance teams, and where do you handle the people who rent your other safe houses and hire the people who do the cleaning and laundry in them?

Some stopgaps can be used. Apartments that are temporarily vacant can be used for one-shot interrogations; colleagues

working in the overt sections can be persuaded to lend their quarters one night a week while they go to the movies. But remember that whenever you improvise, security will suffer. Change safe houses often.

THE FORGERY SHOP

When I make out a check for the liquor I buy, the clerk sometimes knows me, and I don't have to show my driver's license. But most of the time the clerk has only been on the job for two weeks, doesn't know me, and is terrified of having a check bounce that she has initialed. So I have to show her "documentation" of my identity. In the spy business you have to be ready to show documentation, *false* documentation, always, wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

If you have five case officers working, each using three identities, you have eighteen identities (counting the true ones) for which you must maintain a complete set of identity documents, including the miscellaneous junk that people carry around with them. Further, you must have backup and reserve documents in additional identities for the contingencies that may arise at any moment.

For an example of how one service documented an important agent (who happened to be a corpse), see Ewen Montagu's *The Man Who Never Was* (1954, U.S. edition, 93 ff). When the agent, whose false identity was that of a William Martin, a major in the Royal Marines, was deployed from a British submarine onto the shore of neutral Spain on April 30, 1943, he carried forty-one items of documentation ranging from his two identity discs through letters from his parents and fiancée to a pencil stub. For an example of how fiction is truer than fact, read Duff Cooper's *Operation Heartbreak*, an account of the same caper.

VEHICLES

In some places where I have worked, the main vehicle for surveillance was the bicycle. But even in those places, our staffers had to have motorcars, because in those places it looked peculiar for a European or American or Japanese to move around town on a bicycle. (In the old days in Saigon, this had an advantage—the Viet Cong teams who were trained to chuck a Molotov cocktail into an obviously American sedan never could adjust to an American showing up on their turf on a bicycle. It seemed to paralyze them. How could they take seriously a capitalist bourgeois imperialist plutocrat who rode a bicycle? The man was obviously an impostor or a sympathizer.)

When you tackle the task of documenting an operational vehicle, you will be amazed at the amount of red tape, everywhere in the world, that a car is entangled with—licenses, bills of sale, insurance forms, tax receipts, repair records. You have to have a system for quick and invisible change of plates and some means of avoiding being caught with more than one set of supporting documents. How nice it is that you are ingenious and resourceful about these *absolutely essential* details. How nice that you have this bit of plumbing installed, if you do, and how dangerous if you don't.

Of course it is a little easier if you are working on your own turf—law enforcement agencies can usually manage to get blank documents for as many vehicles as they need and fill them out with whatever cover names they need; and in case of an accident, the law enforcement agency can usually arrange for the investigation to be discreet. But even these arrangements require ingenuity and attention to cover. You don't want your Traffic Violations Bureau to know your secret business before, or after, the fact.

And how nice it is overseas if you have a good working relationship with the local authorities. But be careful. You don't want them to know your secrets, either.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A photo lab is a nuisance and a bore because it has to be hidden away, yet it must have a power and water supply and must be able to function around the clock, regardless of your cover building's ostensible office hours. Another nuisance: Photo labs have a characteristic smell that tends to seep out into the corridors and into your innocent-looking receptionist's office. Exhaust fans help, if you can find a place, out of smell of the foe, to which to discharge the acetate fumes.

(Incidentally, those fumes are a problem for some agents you may be on the trail of; if they happen to do their photo work in hotel bathrooms, the smell of acetic acid can give them away, as some of us can attest who have worked on the other side of the fence.)

Can your photo lab do these chores?

- *Quick copy in volume.* A happy day in the life of a CI officer is that when a double agent or a penetration provides a sheaf of documents that have to be copied and returned in quick time. If the phototechnician who has to do the copying doesn't have the equipment and established routine to handle the job, the day is no longer a happy one.
- *Mass processing.* Surveillance teams and sometimes double agents produce a volume of negatives that must be processed instantly to be useful. Fixed photo points, which, for example, photograph everybody going in and out of a building (maybe using infrared film at night), eat up a lot of film and a lot of developing time.
- *Quick copy of small photos, for example, ID cards.* This continuing chore requires special lenses, camera stands and lights. Most shops keep a permanent set-up for this work.

- *Production of ID photos.* This continuing chore doesn't require the special equipment used in the place where you get your driver's license, but such equipment helps. Your phototechnician will pester you for it if he doesn't have it now.
- *Microdot processing.* A microdot is a tiny photonegative that can be hidden under a period on a printed or typewritten page. It normally holds an entire page of text, which has been photographed and then reduced to a size that can only be read through a microscope. Processing microdots requires specialized equipment both in your photolab and in the agent's kit. For incoming messages, the agent's own equipment can be used up to a point, but whereas the double only has to read the dot, you have to print its contents. For this you need bulky equipment. If you happen to be sending microdot instructions to a double agent or penetration, you also need relatively bulky equipment to copy your typewritten message onto a microdot negative. This is big-time stuff, and you won't lack for help from your headquarters.
- *Movie and TV.* Photosurveillance frequently uses movie techniques. When these produce movie film, your lab has to be able to develop it, project it, and make selective stills from it. When television cameras are used, projection is simpler, but making still prints requires special equipment. Still prints are essential and unavoidable. Suppose your problem is to identify your double agent's enemy handler. You have to be able to show him a selection of printed pictures ("mug book"), not hours of TV.

DROPS: LIVE, DEAD, PHONE

There are three main types of drops: live, dead, phone. Let's look at each.

Live Drops

Live drops are sometimes called "AAs," accommodation addresses, or "LBs," letter boxes. They are live because they are people, recruited agents, who receive letters or telegrams or parcels or hand-delivered material and hand it on to somebody else, whose identity is shielded behind that of the live drop. Whoever recruits and handles (pays and instructs) a live drop should himself use a false identity and if possible a false flag. Normally a live drop is recruited under a pretext—"I've got this girlfriend, see, and I can't get mail at home because of my jealous (and rich) wife. So I'll pay you a flat sum for every letter you receive for me. You'll recognize them by the funny mark at the corner of the envelope."

Remember to keep the drop alive by arranging for frequent dummy letters to be sent. This also buries the real messages among the dummies and cuts down the risk of exposure through curiosity on the part of your live drop agent, or of hope by that agent of blackmailing you, or of detection by whoever might be watching your live drop's mail for some other reason.

When you are putting in your plumbing, set up a number of live drops who will receive only dummy material until you activate them by instructing your double or penetration to use the channel. Keep a few in reserve at all times.

Finally, remember that the enemy's live drops are one of your best targets. If you can get control of an enemy live drop, you are astraddle of his communications, have your thumb on his windpipe. An enemy live drop is one of the best kinds of double agent you can have.

Dead Drops

Dead drops, sometimes called “caches,” are chinks in a wall or lockers in a train station or rocks in the desert or any hiding place. The commonest items cached are rolls of microfilm and rolls of folding money, but a dead drop may contain anything from a postcard holding one microdot to a car battery in which are hidden assassination pistols, as in the Khokhlov case. (Nikolai Khokhlov was an officer in the KGB’s Department of “Wet Affairs,” then numbered 13, which makes a science of assassination and sabotage. The specially designed pistols that he was to use to murder an émigré leader in Germany were concealed in a car battery that was then dead-dropped for him in a locker of a Munich railway station. Fortunately for his victim, Khokhlov had an attack of conscience and defected to the victim.)

Normally when an agent has “filled” a dead drop, he gives you a signal—a chalk mark on a curbstone, a bottlecap left on a fencepost, a name underlined in a public telephone book. The whole purpose of dead drops is to avoid personal contact, which might be noticed or surveilled, between a spy and his handler. When your support agent picks up the package at the “dead-drop site,” he has “serviced” the drop.

So when you are putting in the plumbing for your double agent and penetration programs, set up some dead drops, photograph them, and practice servicing them. And use your investigative resources to find your enemy’s dead drops. It will not be easy—you’ll need some help from your doubles.

When a double fills a dead drop for the enemy, you have two sticky problems: How can you stake it out to identify and tail whoever services it? Dare you meddle with the content of the drop? The well-trained agent preparing material to be dead-dropped booby traps it with indicators of whether it has been tampered with—a hair at a prearranged place under the scotch tape, a dusting of powder under the rim of the film cartridge. You may be dying to know what is in it—really damaging in-

telligence?—but you'd better not tamper. Your flaps-and-seals shop probably is not good enough to beat a KGB booby trap, as our American FBI has found out a time or two. If your surveillance team cannot cover the drop site without “blowing” (compromising) itself, let it alone.

Phone Drops

Most double agents and all penetrations lead busy lives. Their schedules cannot be made to conform with your office hours. Meeting times have to be set by the agent, not the case officer, and the efficient way to set a meeting time is by telephone. But obviously the agent cannot simply call you at your home or office; for one thing, he doesn't know either where you live or where you work, certainly not what your telephone numbers may be. And phone calls can be traced. So there must be the telephone equivalent of live and dead drops.

The simplest phone drop is a live one, an agent who takes messages and relays them to you. Sometimes the messages need be only a signal—a specified number of rings. Your phone drop agent doesn't need to answer and doesn't need to know what the signal means; he or she simply calls you a few minutes later and says that his phone sounded three rings and that this happened again three minutes later. You then know, from prearrangement with your double agent, that, for example, a meeting set for later in the evening has been canceled.

Sometimes, if you can get at the phone system at its center, you can use specialized equipment to make a kind of dead phone drop. The number given the agent may be one listed in the phone book, but your equipment cross-switches to ring somewhere else. Redialing to a long-distance number is not recommended, unless through a very good scrambler system, because most long-distance calls these days go via microwave and can be intercepted. In fact you can bet that all calls coming into your headquarters are intercepted and analyzed most skillfully by hostile services.

FLAPS AND SEALS, MICRODOT, SECRET INK

A CI service has to be able to read other people's mail without their knowledge. This means that after you have devised a way to get your hands on the mail of a suspect, you have to get it open, inspect it, maybe copy it, and get it back before he or she misses it. For this you must have expert technicians in your shop.

Spies using mail for communication often use secret writing (SW). If they are merely evading casual detection, their ink may be lemon juice or a wax paper carbon, providing just enough invisibility to fool the mail carrier or an inquisitive child. Sometimes there is no SW, as in the case of couriers signaling their itinerary by the postmark on an innocent postcard—the message is provided by the postal service.

On the other hand, the agent may use an ink devised by a nation's best chemists, one that, like a good cipher, requires a sophisticated chemical procedure to detect. If you know or suspect that sophisticated inks or microdot are in use on the mail you acquire, you probably have an important case. I shall have to leave discussion of the technology that you will use to the technicians with whom you will be working.

Flaps-and-seals work is hard on the nerves. The technician must be cautious and methodical, yet work under time pressure. This job is not unlike that of a bomb-disposal expert, and indeed (remember letter bombs?) sometimes just as dangerous.

WEAPONS

Law enforcement agencies working at home have standard procedures for the acquisition, storage, maintenance, and issue of weapons, as well as for training in their use. The CI unit working under the cover on foreign soil has problems the cop at home never dreams of.

The first rule about weapons is never carry one unless you expect—*really* expect, on the basis of solid knowledge—that you may have to use it. This applies especially to concealed handguns. A black-jack, a pair of brass knuckles, or even a fighting knife may be in a slightly different category, given the amount of street crime that goes on these days in nominally civilized places, and the amount of time your people probably have to spend on those civilized streets. You will have to make judgments day by day and hour by hour, because your people will often be carrying sensitive material that your government enjoins you to protect. Your government also expects you to protect the people themselves and to help them protect themselves.

Remember that a weapon is not much self-protection unless the bearer knows how to use it. This means not only training but also practice. A man or woman can be checked out on, say, a Browning 9-millimeter, and may at some time in the past have been able to fire it quickly and accurately. But marksmanship, like billiards, requires periodic if not constant practice, else you lose the eye, the timing, the feel of the weapon.

At home you may have a firing range in the basement of your headquarters and a regular schedule for weapons practice. Overseas, these things have to be improvised under whatever cover you have, or by ensuring that your people get weapons training and practice on their periodic trips home.

The storage and maintenance of your weapons are tasks for your support shop. Somewhere near the photo lab, the flaps-and-seals cubicle, the forgery shop, and the corner where you handle the audio equipment, there needs to be an arsenal with cleaning equipment and safe storage for ammunition.

How you get the weapons into the arsenal in the first place depends on your cover situation. Use whatever channels are available; improvise when you have to. Hope to be friendly with the local police, and be very careful if they are unfriendly.

LOCKS, KEYS, AND BURGLARY

In the early 1970s, the United States lost a whole White House full of politicians and a whole foreign policy because of a bungled burglary in a place called Watergate. The ineptitude of the retired intelligence and security people who tried to be burglars was almost as shocking as the political motive of the burglary and the criminality of the politicians who directed it.

If you, as a CI officer, are part of a law enforcement organization in your own country, you have to stay within the law—court orders, a clear chain of approving authority, and continuous judgment by yourself of the validity and necessity of each of your operations.

If you are working on foreign soil, your operations are by definition illegal under the laws of your host country, no matter how many agreements have been signed between your service and the host government. In either case, you must have the resources available to commit what is euphemistically called “sur-reptitious entry.”

The ultimate objective of burglary in the CI business is to steal information, either directly by filching or copying documents, or by installing surveillance devices (see chapter 8) that will steal information for you. You will therefore use the people who can be integrated into a particular caper—surveillants, photo technicians, flappers and sealers, forgers and disguisers (to give your burglars some cover), and so on. But you must also have people trained in penetrating physical security barriers, whether simple locks that can be picked with a piece of coat hanger wire or the electronic sensing systems that normally surround a communications room. And these people must be backed up by a good workshop stocked with the tools of the locksmith’s trade. It does no harm for every one of your case officers, and you, to have some basic training in locks and picks—know how to use a “rake,” understand the principle of the pin-barrel lock and the master system keys that can be made from a single example bor-

rowed from an accessible door in a target building, know how safe combinations are set and how a safe lock works, and understand the rudiments of the electronic sensing that insulates some meeting rooms against audio surveillance.

DISGUISES

The rebirth of the fashion for face hair (after—was it the Korean War?) was a boon for people who have to evade surveillance, and a calamity for surveillants. Regiments of spies who had been wearing mustaches and even some with beards immediately shaved themselves clean so that they could change the shape of their faces with false hair as the moment required. Brown beards in the morning turned blond at noon and red in the evening. Mustaches altered hourly from toothbrush to handlebar to guardsman.

Childish? Melodramatic? Well, even outside a Victorian thriller, disguise has its place. The hidden movie camera that films you leaving your building can often be confused by a change of clothing, a beard of a different color, or a limp from a marble in your shoe. So can the foot team tailing you.

Smuggling a defector from an official building to a waiting automobile is easier if you change his appearance. Both he and you are less likely to have a fatal collision with a truck or catch a round from a sniper.

So, somewhere in your shop near the flaps-and-seals bench you may need a cosmetic stand equipped with wigs and hair dye and false beards. There must also be a wardrobe of varied clothing, and each of your case officers (and your surveillance team) should keep an assortment of the kind of clothes worn by the local population, not neglecting that giveaway, shoes. A *Steireranzug* (gray and green costume) common in Austria is not much good on the streets of Vienna if the shoes are made by Florsheim. Austrians always look at shoes, and they know what non-Austrian shoes look like.