

# Where Are the Clark Kents of Yesteryear? They Are Infiltrating the Movement, and Here Is How to Get Rid of Them

**S**HORTLY AFTER THE 1907 Bolshevik-led mutinies in Russia, a massive program of police infiltration and arrests rang down on all secret political organizers. Police agents and provocateurs riddled the party ranks. As Bolshevik membership dwindled, police spies shot to the top of the underground hierarchy. "There was not a single local organization into which some provocateur had not crept," Zinoviev writes in his *Chronicles* of the party. "Every man regarded his comrade with suspicion, was on his guard with those nearest him, did not trust his neighbor."

In spite of its renown, the secret police of Imperial Russia is rapidly being outstripped by the secret police of Imperialist America, where the city of Chicago alone maintains a force of nearly 1000 political agents across the country. The U.S. Army admits to another 1000 domestic infiltrators as necessary preparation for martial law.

The other military services, the CIA, other city and county and state agencies and the FBI have yet to oblige us with information on the levels of their infiltration, though the President has already asked for an extra 1000 G-men to contain the campuses this winter.

Of the 40 substantive witnesses for the prosecution of the Chicago Seven, 34 were undercover agents. Kent State University is hosting 200 federal agents and informers this fall, and despite the growing use of electronic surveillance, several police authorities estimate that 90 per cent of all intelligence gathered on movement activity is the work of infiltrators or informers. George Demmerle, a federal spy who wormed his way through the New York movement for six years, told reporters that every left or progressive organization in the country has at least one agent in its midst. Demmerle himself meandered through the Progressive Labor Party, the Revolutionary Contingent, the U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and the Yippies. He headed the New York Young Patriots and founded the Crazies. Demmerle ended his career with the indictments of the Panther 31 and three members of the Revolutionary Contingent for the New York "Bomber Conspiracy." Paranoia swept the movement when Demmerle officially surfaced last May at the huge hard-hat rally in New York, where he was introduced as a "super-spy." He had built such a personable and sincere image among movement organizations that many people felt helpless at the prospect of agents amongst their comrades. But others closer to Demmerle considered him everything from a sexist to "just an asshole." Above all, no one knew him well. "There were always many contradictions in his stories," write the women

of the staff of the New York Rat. "He was never really questioned about his past, his personal life or even his political analysis." Still, the lives and political work of at least 24 good people were left in serious jeopardy.

**U**NTIL THE NATION'S POLICE archives are opened, and agents and informers can be dealt with collectively, we are forced to deal with them on an organizational level. Even "super-spies" can be uncovered if two conditions are met: knowing the people with whom we live and work, and mastering the basics of background investigation. Knowing your co-workers may sound like a pasty, unsatisfying solution. But background checks alone, even universal checks, are inadequate. Checking everyone's past takes too much time, and informers who have lied about neither their names nor their past can slip by easily. Besides, such a mechanistic approach soon leads to self-defeating paranoia. Everyone has mulled over uneasy feelings about someone. Yet gut intuition remains the only initial basis for distinguishing between paranoia and legitimate suspicion. Careful analysis of the reasons behind intuitions will reveal whether contradictions in a person's behavior should be held suspect.

Sometimes an agent's contradictions are obvious. One undercover agent was repeatedly seen driving a cop car during the Democratic National Convention, while another's girl friend continually told movement people that her boy friend worked for the Chicago police. Usually the contradictions are more subtle. Some agents can never account for their time or whereabouts and are sometimes caught lying. Most lead normal suburban lives in their off-duty hours, but even those who don't must report somewhere at some time. Unexplained income, many long distance phone calls and a hesitancy to discuss personal past offer further reasons for suspicion. For example, a San Diego police spy told some people he was a gardener and others he was a construction worker. Yet in either event, his impeccably clean hands and fingernails gave his story the lie. Frequently, agents are faithful but silent meeting-goers who, when directly confronted for an opinion, demonstrate an abysmal ignorance and indifference to politics. Their lines display the kind of provocateurish flair described in the San Diego Police Department's manual on civil turmoil, in which part of an undercover agent's job is "aggravating potentially explosive situations" so police can move in with guns, clubs or indictments.

Discovering informers depends on intuition even more than does exposing police agents. While agents must lie daily, an informer need hide only that small period of his past and present when he deals with the police. Constantly on the prowl for informers, police sometimes offer movement people \$15,000-a-year salaries to turn over organizational information—\$2000 a head for Weathermen and a paltry \$25 for common GI deserters. The FBI has a slow, insistent method of developing informers, with a standardized pay scale based on the informer's reliability. "Potential Criminal Informants" are then recontacted within 45 days of their first approach.

The first job for a cop on the lookout is to know his potential sources and watch for their weaknesses. When he spots someone in a susceptible position or bordering on disaffection, he moves in with a deal. Fear, materialism and internal hostilities are the levers he uses. For the faltering brother who is wrapped up in a vendetta or rivalry, the cop offers to remove the source of chagrin, and for the person who is uncommonly materialistic, money is no problem. Lenin's friend Malinovsky, though a sometimes-dedicated unionist, was also a big spender and began informing to augment his laborer's salary.

The strongest coercion police have is fear—threatening drug prosecution, revoking a parole, taking a child away. A year ago two law students came to the office of the San Diego Street Journal, offering legal help. Before they left, they had asked many leading questions about staff members harboring runaways. A week later another law student told the newspaper how the FBI and the county sheriff had requested him to infiltrate and inform on the paper and another group. When he refused, they threatened to sabotage his bar examination.

No clear-cut or certain conclusions can generally be drawn about whether someone is informing or not. At best one can know one's friends' susceptibilities and be sensitive to any peculiar behavior. Given the almost inevitable strain of constant suspicion likely to result, it is much more rewarding, and simpler, to concentrate on uncovering full-time police agents. No agent using a phony name and past can escape a simple background investigation. Here's an example.

**S**EVERAL MONTHS AGO the San Diego chapter of the Movement for a Democratic Military had a new member named Randy Curtis who entered through a local study group. When he first approached MDM, Randy was a liberal; once he sensed that no one was paying any attention to him, he began to talk about "killing pigs." This weighty transition took all of one hour.

Randy was around much of the time, badgering people about moving into the commune, but he could never account for the time he wasn't around. Once, he was caught lying about his whereabouts. No one could reach him directly; his roommate took messages and Randy returned the calls. He displayed virtually no interest in radical politics and his attempts to appear interested were strained.

One Sunday afternoon at a GI picnic, Randy Curtis got drunk and staggered from one person to the next, slapping



*Curtis Randall Munro, alias Randy Curtis*



*John Paul Murray, Jr., alias Jay King (before and after)*

each one on the back. "I'm not a pig," he explained pleadingly to each. "You should believe me! I'm not a pig!" No one had said he was, but several people were beginning to wonder. One MDM stalwart decided to pull Randy quietly aside. He presented him with a series of background questions and explained that everyone in MDM underwent such an interview. Randy answered the questions and assured the investigator that he understood their necessity. Though the questions were few and simple, discrepancies immediately appeared in Randy's story. The night before the interview, he had told an MDM woman that he had been divorced in Scarsdale, Nevada, and during the interview he said he had been divorced in Scottsdale, Nebraska. No town named Scarsdale was listed among Nevada towns in a North American atlas. The investigator called the divorce court in Scottsdale, Nebraska, but there was no record of Randy's divorce. A second call did reveal such a record, but a call to the town in which Randy claimed a son had been born proved fruitless.

As more discrepancies cropped up, the investigator returned for more questions. By the third session Randy was visibly upset and complained that MDM was "just too paranoid." He had claimed that his truck was registered to the estate of his dead father, Vernon L. Curtis, but the Kansas Department of Motor Vehicles said that it was registered to a Vernon L. Munro. He also told the investigator that his mother's name was Jean L. Curtis and that she lived in Platt, Kansas. Telephone information for Platt listed no Jean L. Curtis, but it did list a Jean L. Munro.

On a hunch, the investigator went down the short list of Munros in the *Polk City Directory* for San Diego. Near the top was listed a Curtis R. Munro; it showed his occupation as a city cop. The clincher came when the investigator called the Bureau of Vital Statistics for Fort Smith, Arkansas, where Randy claimed he was born on August 18, 1943. The lady on the other end could find no certificate for Randall R. Curtis. She paused for a moment, then said, "Are you sure you don't mean Curtis Randall Munro? That's the closest thing I've got."

By now the investigator was sure he did mean Curtis Randall Munro, and MDM confronted Munro with his real identity before a general meeting of movement groups from San Diego. "Bullshit!" said Munro. "I'm no goddamn police officer!" He stomped out and was never seen again, but for the next two nights the MDM commune was circled with police cars.

No one can create a phony past, no matter how many records he plants; even the most transient people leave too wide a trail to cover, and—as MDM learned—there exists a technique of background investigation. For anyone involved in anything more progressive than the American Legion, the FBI has used it. The trick is to turn their technique against them.

**T**HE SIMPLEST WAY TO SINK an undercover agent is to swamp him with questions about his past—the more specific the better. Don't scare the suspect away. Say that everyone in the organization undergoes similar questioning. If the suspect has been around

long enough to know better, say that other people suspect him but that you personally think they are being paranoid. Here are some sample questions:

1. Suspect's full name, address, phone number and aliases.
2. Parents' and stepparents' names (including maiden names), addresses, phone numbers and occupations.
3. Names, locations and dates of attendance for the past four schools the suspect attended.
4. His last four employers with addresses, dates of employment, kind of work and reason for leaving.
5. A description of his last two cars, including physical description, names of legal and registered owners, and license plate numbers.
6. Past marriages, divorces or separations with dates and locations of such actions. The same information on the births of children, civil or criminal court actions and any traffic tickets in the past year.
7. His past four residences, with exact addresses, dates of residency, and the phone numbers while he lived there.
8. All driver's license and draft card information. Look at the cards yourself.
9. Names of two of his long-time friends or acquaintances, how long he's known them and how to reach them.
10. A complete military history, including units, dates, jobs and superiors.

Don't let the suspect fill out a form. Ask the questions aloud and copy down the answers, along with his reactions. No one will be able to answer all the questions completely and accurately, but few agents can remain cool and resolute throughout the entire interrogation.

There are hundreds of sources of background investigation for checking his responses. The following are some of the most common to all parts of the country. Begin with names, addresses and phone numbers. All information must be verified and contradictions checked on. Check the telephone book—and call information, as changes may have been made since the book was published.

The R. L. Polk Company publishes a directory of households for most metropolitan areas. The cost of Polk's *City Directory* is prohibitive, but local libraries usually carry a current edition for their areas. The first section of the *City Directory* is an alphabetized list of heads of households, usually the husband, showing his spouse's name, his job, his employer and his address. The second section is indexed by street address. The resident's name and telephone number follow. The third section is indexed by telephone number. While the *City Directory* is fairly comprehensive, some libraries have current local directories, indexed by street address, providing residents' names and phone numbers. It is published by local phone companies and is usually not otherwise available to the general public. Many libraries keep the old editions of the *City Directory* (which is usually updated every two years), allowing you to verify past addresses and phone numbers.

The Haines Company publishes the *Addressakey*, a volume similar to the last two sections of the *City Directory* but usually more geographically comprehensive.

County assessors' offices have complete listings of all real estate owners in the county. They always list property description first, then the owner's name and address. Sometimes they have a separate index, listing property owners'

names first, followed by the property description. Be polite and the clerks in the assessor's office will be of immeasurable help. If the suspect lives in a rented house or apartment, locate the owner, who may provide information about his tenant.

In California, and probably in most states, voter registration files are open to public inspection and contain a wealth of information that is usually indexed by last name and by street address. For a small fee most State Departments of Motor Vehicles will release individual driving records and information on a vehicle's ownership. Try the county recorder's office, which lists all real property transfers and lien actions and often records births, deaths and marriages. In some parts of the country, bureaus of vital statistics perform the latter functions. The clerks' offices of the Superior, Municipal, Small Claims and Traffic Courts have last name indexes and files for all criminal, civil, divorce and traffic cases. The files are open to the public. Finally, Selective Service Regulation 1606.32(a)(1) states: "Information contained in records in a registrant's file may be examined by any person having written authority dated and signed by the registrant." Insist that the suspect fill out a permission slip, then look through his file.

In addition to checking public records it is almost always essential to develop new background sources—and that means finding political friends in local firms or public service agencies. A contact in the local utility company might provide gas, electric or water service billing files, which probably constitute the most comprehensive addresses-to-resident index available. A friend in the telephone company could supply unlisted phone numbers, while doctors have access to nearly all medical records in their area. A merchant who subscribes to a credit bureau can get information on anyone who's ever bought anything on credit. Members of the Movement for a Democratic Society in Chicago recently uncovered two of their co-workers as police by running a simple credit check.

Since these sources are scattered throughout the country, much of the information must be collected through long distance phone calls. Either learn to make them for free or plan on a huge phone bill. In any case, don't use your own phone, since it is probably tapped. Finally, an investigator needs a variety of ruses or ploys to extract information from civil servants and others who may be less than willing to cooperate with a movement detective. The investigator who uncovered Randy Curtis pretended to be everything from an insurance investigator to a social worker. It's a simple matter of matching the kind of information needed with the right kind of cover story.

The same kind of ingenuity, applied to even limited background information resources, can multiply their usefulness many times and make any investigator the toast of the sleuthing set.

**A** WEST COAST AGENT recently exposed was using the name John Milton and the cover address and phone number of a 68-year-old woman who he claimed was his maternal grandmother. Movement investigators soon discovered he was a fake but they wanted his real identity. The woman's name was Martha Rindon,

and the *City Directory*, as well as other sources, showed no other Rindons living in the area; but it did list her as the widow of John Rindon.

Checking old issues of the *City Directory*, investigators found a John Rindon listed in the 1958 edition; Martha was listed as his wife. The 1954 edition showed Rindon with no spouse, though he still lived in town; so the investigators looked through the 1954 and 1955 county marriage records and learned that aging John Rindon had married aging Martha Mitzak. Both had been married once before, and both of their mates had died. If what Milton claimed about his maternal grandmother was true, there is a good possibility that his mother's maiden name was Mitzak, as undercover agents generally stick very close to their real histories to prevent slip-ups.

Only one other Mitzak was found in the *City Directory*, an Allen Mitzak who was an engineer and lived in town. Milton had claimed that his mother's name was Eileen, so one investigator called Allen Mitzak and said that he was visiting from Ohio. "My mother had a friend long ago named Eileen Mitzak," explained the investigator, "and when she heard I was coming out West she asked me to see if I could locate her. Mom had heard that she had relatives here."

Allen wasn't home, but his wife was happy to explain that Eileen had married a man named Wilten and was living in New York. The investigator thanked the woman and went to the *City Directory*, where he found John Wilten, a state narcotics investigator, listed with his home address. A stake-out confirmed that Milton and Wilten were one and the same.

Wilten had claimed that his parents were living in New York. It probably would have been easier to go through the address he gave for them, but the investigators were being arrogant. They or any investigators could easily spend all their time chasing bogeymen by concentrating too heavily on standard background checks and forgetting that the safest protection for any collective is to know the people in it. What does "knowing someone" mean? It means talking to the people with whom we work and live about racism, chauvinism and political feelings. Many personal struggles are going on right now; people are trying to purge many old, competitive and supremacist attitudes from themselves and are trying to learn to work as equals in a cooperative manner to make the world worthwhile.

The very things that we are trying to overcome are the things that police use against us to turn us into informers—rivalry, jealousy, materialism and authoritarian attitudes. Yet how many undercover cops understand the complexity or the intensity of these struggles—let alone are capable of feigning the same struggles? If in no other way, we all can intuitively tell when and what our comrades are going through—if we are going through it with them. If we aren't going through it with them, we can never expect to know if a "friend" is finking on us or whether the person is really who he claims to be. A lack of trust is the basis of suspicion.

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