

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# Hazardous Duty

*1986-1989*



IN DECEMBER 1986, National Security Adviser Bud McFarlane suddenly resigned. It was rumored that he'd had an emotional breakdown. I wondered what the hell was going on to cause him that degree of stress.

My contacts with Ollie North were now constrained. Because media scrutiny made it impossible for me to come to his OEOB office, we would occasionally meet at local hotels when I was in Washington. But I got the definite feeling that either he was preoccupied with other matters or Secord had convinced him to cut his dealings with me and others working without profit to help the Contras.

One issue I did raise with both Ollie and the CIA was support for the non-Communist Iranian resistance. I had been contacted by Lieutenant Colonel Shapoor Ardalan, an exiled Iranian army officer with an excellent channel into military forces willing to help topple the Ayatollah Khomeini and provide information on the U.S. hostages in Lebanon. When I suggested Ollie meet with Shapoor, he was uncharacteristically vague on the matter, and suggested I contact the CIA. So I went to see Bill Casey. I explained that if nothing else, Shapoor could provide additional intelligence on the true situation inside Iran, which was now involved in a prolonged and bloody war with Iraq. Shapoor had gone back inside Iran on several occasions. As usual, Casey was enthusiastic about this potential contact.

Casey put me in touch with an Agency officer whose cover name was Bob Court, and I introduced him to Shapoor. Over the next several months I received disturbing reports about the Agency from Shapoor. Court was handling him like a walk-in street agent, instead of exploiting Shapoor for



his top-level channel to discontented senior Iranian military officers. At one point, Bob Court demanded that Shapoor somehow extract the most important of these officers from Iran to a third country where they could be polygraphed by Agency handlers. This was an impossible demand which disappointed and frustrated Shapoor.

Then he became convinced there was a leak within the CIA funneling back information on his organization to the Ayatollah's men. The final straw for Shapoor was the apparent CIA naïveté about Iranian government leaders like parliament speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani, whom they told Shapoor were "moderates" the West could deal with. Shapoor knew these men to be rabidly anti-Western. That winter he broke off his contacts with the CIA.

He told me that the Agency was getting some very bad advice on Iran. I had to agree with him.

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IN EARLY 1986, Barbara Studley invited me to have dinner with Eden Pastora in Washington. While initially reluctant to waste time on someone considered by the State Department—and according to Ollie North, the CIA, and the Defense Department—to be more of a liability than an asset to the Democratic Resistance in Nicaragua, I agreed to the social meeting. During the next few weeks, I had several long discussions with Pastora, reviewing his failures and his past successes. Eden invited me, Barbara Studley, and some staff members to visit him inside Nicaragua.

I had first met the legendary Comandante Zero the year before in Miami. Pastora was a complex, charismatic guerrilla leader, and certainly the best-known person in Nicaragua. In August 1978, Pastora led a small guerrilla unit that captured Somoza's National Assembly building in Managua, where he took hundreds of Somoza government officials hostage. These he bargained for the safe conduct out of Nicaragua for his team and the release of fifty-nine Sandinista prisoners, including the notorious Tomas Borge. His daring, handsome demeanor and obvious sangfroid captured the imagination of all Latin America. Pastora ended the anti-Somoza war fighting on the southern front from base camps in Costa Rica.

After the Sandinista takeover, he was named vice-minister of the interior and vice-minister of defense, serving under two powerful but shadowy Marxist comandantes, Tomas Borge and Humberto Ortega, brother of Daniel Ortega, the leader of the Sandinista Directorate. When the Communist nature of the Sandinista government became obvious, Pastora resigned his positions and eventually took over his old Costa Rican base camps to wage another guerrilla war, this time against the Sandinistas.<sup>1</sup>

He called his particular Contra formation the Sandino Revolutionary Front (FRS), which he incorporated within the forces of the Democratic



Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE). This alliance was led by Alfonso Robelo, who had led middle-class resistance to Somoza, and had been one of the five members of the Sandinistas' initial junta. A few months after *La Prensa* publisher Violeta Chamorro resigned from the junta, Robelo concluded that he had absolutely no power or influence within the Marxist Directorate, so he also resigned, then left Nicaragua for Costa Rica. Like the FDN Contras operating in the north, Pastora's and Robelo's forces were supported by the CIA. And, unfortunately, like the Contras in the north, the ARDE fighters were badly mishandled by their Agency case officers.

Pastora was one of those extraordinary characters who believed fervently in his own public image. He was a *guerrillo* par excellence, a romantic Latin warrior who evoked intense loyalty among his troops. The Agency treated him like a native mercenary. Worse, Pastora's CIA handlers included bureaucratic bean counters who required all supply requisition forms completed in English, in triplicate. The cultural barriers between Pastora and the CIA were insurmountable.

In short, the Agency ruined the only chance they had of exploiting the most famous military leader in Central America. Enrique Bermudez was a well-educated professional soldier, but Comandante Zero was a national hero troops could rally around.

That didn't mean he was easy to get along with. On the contrary, he was constantly sniping at his colleagues and jealously protecting his own turf and supply lines. He was especially jealous of the better-equipped Northern Front Contras, whom he often accused of being dominated by Somocista former National Guardsmen. Pastora resisted efforts to combine the Northern and Southern Contra Fronts and conducted his own offensive into the sparsely populated hills around Nueva Guinea, where he had a small following among the local *campesinos*.

On May 29, 1984, Pastora assembled a press conference at his river camp of La Penca, just inside southern Nicaragua. The purpose of the gathering was to demonstrate he could operate independent of CIA-supplied base camps in Costa Rica. Pastora never had the chance to address the small group of assembled Latin American and international journalists. A powerful bomb exploded in his headquarters shed, killing several ARDE fighters and two journalists, maiming several others, and badly wounding Pastora.

ARDE leaders accused the Sandinistas of planting the bomb, noting that the year before a Basque ETA terrorist had been caught drawing plans to Pastora's safe house in Costa Rica in order to booby-trap it, and that two Sandinista agents had died when a briefcase bomb meant to kill ARDE leaders in Costa Rica had exploded. Other ARDE leaders blamed the CIA.<sup>2</sup> Pastora himself, undergoing medical treatment in Venezuela, refused to blame the CIA.<sup>3</sup>

When I met him the next year in Washington, Pastora certainly wasn't



blaming the CIA because he was actively lobbying Congress and conservative groups for a share of CIA funding, when and if the Boland Amendment restrictions were lifted. He often expressed his bitterness about Agency mismanagement of his funding and supplies, but he never told me he suspected the Agency had tried to kill him. We were quite frank with each other, and an initial grudging mutual respect developed into a genuine friendship. I passed on complaints I had heard from Agency officers that Pastora was hopelessly disorganized, completely inept at managing more than a small ragtag band of guerrilla fighters. Eden rejected the criticism, showing me actual "supply requisitions" that he said the Agency had rejected. These epitomized the cultural gap in the operation. Eden's idea of a supply request was to pin a handwritten note, replete with his rubber headquarters stamp, onto an uncompleted computerized resupply form: "I need everything for 2,000 men for two months."

"You're just not a good commander," I had chided him. "An effective officer does whatever he has to, in order to see that his men are fed and supplied with ammunition."

Eden Pastora's big dark face always clouded when I brought up such practicalities. "The CIA stole my supplies" was his usual rejoinder.

By the spring of 1986, Pastora was back in Costa Rica, operating on a virtual shoestring, but still retaining the loyalty of his ill-equipped ARDE troops. Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, the minority leader of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was a firm advocate of Pastora. Through one of his staff aides, he asked us to make one last effort at bringing Pastora's group into the new United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) then being formed. Earlier I had checked with Bill Casey, who still refused to discuss operational matters dealing with Nicaragua. Casey had simply told me that Pastora was a very "difficult" man to work with, but had agreed that he was the most famous man in Nicaragua.

Before going to see Pastora in March 1986, I discussed the matter with Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. He agreed with my basic premise that Pastora was a resource we ought to have working for us rather than against us. I explained that Pastora was bitter about the way he'd been handled by the CIA. But I explained my hope to get him to agree to join the other Contras under the umbrella of UNO. The situation, I said, was similar to the problem of aiding the French resistance. The OSS and SOE had not been overjoyed supplying the Communist FTP, but we had done so because they were willing to fight Nazis. And now I was certain Eden Pastora would fight Sandinistas.

Abrams wished me luck, but expressed doubt that I would have any success.<sup>4</sup>

In March 1986, I had a trip planned to El Salvador to introduce Barbara



Studley to Salvadoran air force chief General Juan Bustillo. Her company was hoping to arrange the sale of several surplus prop-driven T-28 ground-attack planes much better suited to anti-guerrilla warfare than the A-37 jets America had provided. We decided to stop first in Costa Rica so that I could meet with Pastora.

The GMT team consisted of Barbara, myself, her son Michael Marks, and Mike Timpani, a former Army helicopter pilot who had flown for Pastora under a CIA contract after leaving the Army. Our original plan called for Timpani to fly Pastora and me to make a brief helicopter inspection of his forces south of the Rama Road near Nueva Guinea in Nicaragua. This was probably a risky endeavor, but I knew actually going into Nicaragua with Pastora would bolster his confidence in me, thus giving weight to my argument that he should join the United Resistance. It would also be a signal to his troops that they had not been completely abandoned.

Unfortunately, our flight to San Jose was diverted by weather to Panama City, and it was many hours later when we finally landed in Costa Rica. Eden Pastora had waited at the airport, then returned to his safe house in the outskirts of San Jose.

We found hotel rooms, and the next morning I went to see the American ambassador, Lew Tambs. He received me in his office together with Joe Fernandez, the CIA station chief who used the cover name of Tomas Castillo, and the American defense attaché. I told them I was meeting with Pastora and that I knew he was not very popular with the embassy staff. I had known Lew Tambs when he was a professor at Arizona State University and later when he was working on the NSC staff. I trusted him to be frank with me.

"I'd like to know specifically what Eden is doing that is causing you problems," I told him.

Tambs and Castillo exchanged a look of frustration. Obviously, Pastora had been a burden on the embassy. "To begin with," Tambs said, "Eden Pastora simply will not take advice from his advisers." The Ambassador began ticking off items on his fingers. "His troops are much too open here in Costa Rica. They don't carry out the operations they promise to. . . . The guy is simply hopeless, a loser."

"Well, Lew," I said, reiterating what I had told Elliott Abrams, "I believe Pastora could be an asset that we ought to have on our side. If we continue to treat him the way we have, he'll definitely become a liability."<sup>5</sup>

The Ambassador and his men looked skeptical, but said nothing to discourage me.

We met Pastora and began the long drive north from San Jose to his border camp with Eden, wearing one of his disguises, at the wheel. The Costa Rican capital is a handsome colonial city in the green volcanic high-



lands. The road north soon left the plateau and descended to a muddy plain of scrub jungle cut at odd intervals by the steep ravines of small rivers. It began to rain. Now the track became almost impassable. We had to winch the Toyota Land Cruiser up each ravine face, a process that took at least half an hour per ravine. Then after a few hundred meters, we would slide out of control down the next gully, splash across the muddy torrent, and start the winching process all over again. It was 3 A.M. when we finally arrived at a primitive farmhouse belonging to one of Pastora's supporters a short distance from the Rio San Juan. Barbara and Michael Marks had never experienced anything like this. In fact, Mike Timpani and I had difficulty recalling when we had walked, pulled, and pushed so long in such deep mud and so much rain.

Eden was greeted with big smiles and *embrasos* on the steps of an open-sided farm shed that was to be our shelter for the next day or so. We were battered and jolted, soaked to the skin, and covered with a layer of slimy red mud. The only food the farm family could offer was some small ears of dried corn, which a peasant woman had soaked in hot water, but which was now only tepid. As we attempted to chew the corn, Eden told us that we should not worry about the occasional gunfire we could hear coming from the direction of the river. At least there were no vampire bats.

Pastora's plan was for all of us to cross the river into Nicaragua in the morning, visit several of his base camps there, for me to inspect his troops, and move back to the river to rendezvous with a helicopter from Panama that would carry us up to his Nueva Guinea base camp sixty miles north in Nicaragua.

In the morning, the GMT team, Eden, and two Costa Rican friends boarded three big dugout canoes and headed across the island-studded San Juan River into Nicaragua. After a few hours' walk, we came to one of Eden's camps where he had assembled some troops for us to inspect.

They were a brave, cheerful, and pathetic lot. One young boy no more than twelve had walked for eighty miles to join Eden after his parents had been killed by the Sandinistas two years earlier. He was obviously malnourished, but carried his AK-47 with pride. His feet were a mass of infected blisters from his oversize rubber farm boots. Other soldiers looked close to starvation. But their weapons were clean. On checking their web gear, however, I found that no one had more than twenty rounds of ammunition for his AK-47. Looking around the camp, I saw a junkyard of broken and discarded equipment, including more outboard motors, a field generator, and gasoline lamps. One hut contained a stack of radios, useless without batteries, and a stack of captured weapons, useless without soldiers.

Looking around the poorly tended banana grove and the riverbank of featureless scrub jungle, I suddenly realized what an isolated spot this was.



We were miles inside Nicaragua. Had Eden Pastora actually been a secret Sandinista agent as some people claimed, this would have been the ideal spot for him to have arranged an ambush. Certainly the Sandinistas would have taken pleasure in killing a notorious Contra supporter like me. But I knew Eden was nothing more than he claimed to be, an authentic warrior caught up in his own romantic myth.

Eden and I sat down over tin cups of strong black coffee and talked frankly about his needs. What would it take, I asked, for him to move these troops north to their Nueva Guinea base area and start operations against the Rama Road?

By now, Eden knew I would not accept a vague answer about "everything" his men might need. For once he was specific. He wanted 6,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 300 pairs of boots, batteries for his radios, malaria suppressants, vitamins and antibiotics to keep the men healthy, and some antiseptic solutions and field dressings for his wounded. He explained that food was available from his supporters up in Nueva Guinea, and that he could supply the rest of his troops from captured Sandinista truck convoys.

"*Nada mas?*" I asked. Nothing more?

Pastora shook his head. "*Nada mas.*"

I told him I was confident Adolfo Calero could provide the ammunition, boots, and radio batteries, and that I could have the medical supplies shipped from the States within days. I also promised him a few American volunteer trainers and technicians to repair his broken commo gear and outboard motors.

Once he received a promise of these supplies, Eden agreed he would go back into Nicaragua and set up a drop zone to receive them from his own plane and pilots. He could then begin operations. He wanted badly to reopen the Southern Front, he said, and was willing to do so under the UNO banner.

Back at the river crossing site on the Costa Rican side, we were amazed to see a Hughes 500 helicopter sitting on the bank. His Panamanian pilot had somehow beat the weather to get there. But the weather to the north was right on the ground. So we scrubbed our planned trip to Nueva Guinea and set out again for San Jose, with Eden driving again.

While the others collapsed at the hotel, I called Ambassador Tambs and told him that I had just returned from my visit with Eden. He suggested that I come down to the embassy and brief him on the trip. I reported to essentially the same group of officials what I had learned. The bottom line, I said, was that Eden Pastora, in exchange for a few supplies and a small amount of ammunition, was willing to finally move all of his troops out of Costa Rica and resume the fight in Nicaragua.

"Would he put that in writing?" Tambs asked.

"I'm confident that he will," I replied.



I roused Barbara, Marks, and Timpani and we joined Eden and a young woman translator at his San Jose safe house. There was a dusty old manual typewriter and some flimsy stationery available. Eden and I talked out the details of an agreement, specifying what he would do in exchange for the supplies he needed. Barbara took notes during the discussion. Once we had an agreement, Barbara dictated while Michael typed up the final document. Unfortunately, we were all so groggy from the trip that no one noticed the words "The United States agrees to provide . . ." until Michael had laboriously typed out the whole document. This was ambiguous language and might imply U.S. government involvement, which was certainly not the case. It would have been better if this wording was "Private American interests . . ." I explained this to Eden and he understood. But we were reluctant to retype the document, so we both signed the agreement, understanding its true intent.

We returned to the hotel very late in the afternoon. I called the Ambassador at his office to report that I had a signed agreement with Eden Pastora along the lines we had discussed. He suggested that Barbara and I come to his home that evening and have a quiet, informal dinner with him and his family.

When we delivered the document to Lew Tambs that evening at the embassy residence, he was effusive with his praise. "Jack," he said, shaking my hand, "you've no idea what a great service you have done for your country." Costa Rican authorities had been planning to arrest Pastora because of his flagrant violation of their country's neutrality. Now that he promised to take his troops back into Nicaragua, the Costa Ricans would be mollified. Lew Tambs promised to send the text of the document to Elliott Abrams by back channel message.

Eden Pastora's value transcended his limited military potential. He was a legend in Europe, especially among moderate to left-wing Socialists. If he could be shepherded through one successful, newsworthy military operation, he could then be pulled out to hit the triumphant speaker's circuit in Europe and his troops given to a more competent field commander. I knew we had to wage the war against the Sandinistas on the psychological front, not just in the field.

Before leaving San Jose, I arranged with Eden to dispatch one of his few operable airplanes to Ilopango air base in El Salvador, where I planned to have the munitions from the FDN and the medical supplies from the States delivered.

The GMT team of Studley, Singlaub, Marks, and Timpani flew on to El Salvador, where we had our scheduled meeting with General Bustillo, the commander of the Salvadoran Air Force. We were surprised to find that General Bustillo had invited his friend and close personal adviser Felix Rodriguez, who was introduced by his nom de guerre, Max Gomez. U.S.



Army Colonel Jim Steele, the commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Group in El Salvador, also attended. While some GMT business was discussed, General Bustillo was most anxious to learn about our visit with Eden Pastora, who was a longtime friend of the General. He made it clear that he would help Pastora's pilot in any way he could.

An interesting sidelight to the trip from Costa Rica to El Salvador was an unscheduled stop in Managua, Nicaragua. The four GMT members stared in shocked disbelief when the announcement came over the P.A. system. After I determined that we did not have to disembark and that no Sandinista security people would come aboard, we positioned ourselves in vacant window seats to photograph the recently arrived Mi-24 helicopters which were dispersed around the main Managua airport.

In Tegucigalpa, Barbara and I had dinner with Adolfo Calero, who was pleased but skeptical that Eden planned to rejoin the battle. Adolfo made careful note of the ammunition and other equipment Pastora required. "This will be no problem," he said, and promised to prepare the goods for shipment within a few days.

I flew up to the Las Vegas base camp area by helicopter to inspect the troops after their latest encounter with the Sandinistas. The day before Easter, several thousand well-armed Sandinistas, led by Cuban advisers and covered by helicopter gunships, had attacked across the Honduran border in a well-planned assault designed to inflict maximum casualties. But it was the Sandinistas who had suffered most.

Although a number of the base camps were shattered by rocket fire, the Contras had formed into small, disciplined ambush teams and fanned out through the hills to pound the advancing Sandinista columns. The weapons requirements and tactics Enrique had worked out the year before had certainly paid off. Using coordinated machine-gun and RPG fire, Contra units had completely demoralized the advancing Sandinistas, who, I learned from several prisoners, had been briefed to expect a rabble of poorly armed Contras hiding in their camps.

I was in high spirits when I returned to Washington. But Elliott Abrams quickly shattered my good mood. He chided me for drawing up the document without his approval, and said coldly that I as a private citizen had no right to commit the "United States" to any agreement. I explained the circumstances and assured him that Eden Pastora understood the aid would come from the FDN and private American donors. Abrams seemed mollified and indicated he would do nothing to block the transaction.

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My optimistic mood was tempered somewhat by news out of Lebanon. The Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal had just announced that I was at the top of



his assassination list. His spokesman, known as Atef Abu Bakr, gave CBS TV an interview, taped in the Bekaa valley. In retaliation for the recent American air strike on Libya, he said, Abu Nidal had decided to "execute" three prominent Americans: NSC officer Oliver North; Dr. Edward Luttwak, who served as a consultant to the Defense Department; and retired Major General John K. Singlaub. Just in case Abu Nidal's men didn't know what I looked like, CBS featured my picture prominently. I was alarmed, but not surprised. There were close relations between the Sandinistas and Marxist Arab terrorist groups like Abu Nidal's. The FBI assured me that the threat was not a bluff. Abu Nidal's group was responsible for slaughtering innocent travelers in the Rome and Vienna airport massacres. They would certainly have no qualms about killing me if their Sandinista friends asked for a little fraternal help.<sup>6</sup>

This threat was certainly going to make international travel more interesting.

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BEFORE leaving for the Far East on a GMT trip a few weeks later, I made sure all the players were in place to resupply Eden Pastora. In State, Elliott Abrams and his deputy Bill Walker assured me that they would not interfere. Adolfo confirmed that everything was ready in Honduras. Mario Calero in New Orleans indicated that he would be able to replace the non-lethal supplies being transshipped to Ilopango for Pastora.

I also discussed with Abrams the issue of trying to raise more money for the Contras in the Far East during a trip to Taipei and Seoul to celebrate Captive Nations Week, an annual WACL event. I told him that, as far as I was aware, my earlier effort had not been successful and that this time I'd take the case right to the top of both governments. But I explained I'd definitely need a signal from the U.S. government that I wasn't just some "crazy con man" out to defraud the Chinese and Koreans. Don't worry, General, Elliott said, I'll send the signal myself.

So in Taipei, again armed with my trusty three-by-five cards listing a Contra bank account, I contacted Generals Tan Ying and Chiang Wego, requesting an appointment to see Wego's brother, Republic of China President Chiang Ching-kuo. Wego had been one of my classmates at Command and General Staff College years earlier, and we had maintained contact ever since. He jumped the protocol fence to secure a meeting with President Chiang at short notice.

But late that night I received a frantic call from one of Pastora's officers in San Jose, Costa Rica. He verified that Eden had indeed dispatched his light cargo plane to Ilopango, then moved with his troops north into Nic-



aragua to await the air drop of the promised supplies. Two weeks had gone by and no cargo had arrived at Ilopango. Now, the man said, Pastora was completely disheartened. He planned to trek back into Costa Rica and surrender to the local authorities. I pleaded with the officer to radio Pastora to wait. I was sure there had been some misunderstanding, that a logistics logjam, not a change of heart, had delayed the supplies. Adolfo had given me his word, and I had never known him to go back on it.

Unable to contact either Calero or Pastora, I called Elliott Abrams. He claimed to be completely ignorant of the situation.

"I have no idea what could have gone wrong," he said. Then he abruptly changed the subject. "As long as I have you on the phone," Abrams said, "don't hold that meeting, General." From his strained tone, there was obviously something wrong.

"Why?" I asked. "What's happened?"

He paused, and finally answered. "The approach, ah . . . will be made at the highest possible level."

"What about Seoul?"

"Don't do anything there either," he said.

I hung up, troubled and confused. Ollie North seemed oblivious to the Contra needs. Now Abrams had just cut me out of the effort, yet I knew from Adolfo that the situation in the field had become desperate. I couldn't imagine who would have a better connection to President Chiang at that moment than I had.

Only later did I discover that President Reagan himself had been convinced to personally intervene and appeal to the Republic of China government.<sup>7</sup>

Barbara Studley agreed to interrupt her trip to fly to San Jose to try to break up the supply bottleneck. But she arrived in Costa Rica too late. Eden Pastora had come out and surrendered to the Costa Rican authorities. He declared that his fight against the Sandinistas had finally ended. He asked for asylum in Costa Rica, and was formally placed under arrest for violating the country's laws against armed political groups. Comandante Zero's war was, indeed, over.

Months later, back in the States, I learned what had happened. While I had been acting in good faith to arrange the logistics of Pastora's resupply operation, Pastora had been ordered back to Washington to consult with Ollie North and Elliott Abrams. But once there, he found it impossible to make an appointment with either official. Meanwhile in Costa Rica, CIA officers had "invited" his four best commanders to a safe house, where they were given the typical Agency carrot-and-stick treatment to convince them to abandon Pastora. This was part of a secret official "denigration" campaign that North and Abrams were obviously party to, but which they had never



revealed to me. While Pastora was waiting in limbo, he received a frantic call from an aide in Costa Rica who told him his commanders had been "kidnapped." Eden immediately returned to Central America and went back into Nicaragua, hoping to find the commanders. He discovered that they had succumbed to CIA pressures and had taken their troops to join El Negro Chamorro, the Southern Front Contra leader supported by the Agency. He then waited near the assigned drop zone for the promised supply flight. When it, too, failed to materialize, he concluded that the betrayal was total. He came back to Costa Rica, turned himself in, and was arrested.

When Barbara, accompanied by Peter Collins of ABC, found Pastora at the prison in San Jose, the warden gave them his own office for their meeting. Pastora said he now understood that North, Abrams, and the CIA had set him up. Barbara's whole purpose of going to Costa Rica was to tell Eden the truth, so he would know we had not been part of this conspiracy. Because of his legendary name, she still hoped he would rejoin the Contras. One sign of Pastora's popularity in Central America was the stream of important visitors to the prison. While Barbara and Collins were there, former Costa Rican president Rodrigo Carazo Odio arrived to visit Pastora and warmly embraced the imprisoned hero.<sup>8</sup>

Peter Collins, who had covered Eden Pastora for years, was amazed at Eden's story. Pastora even gave Collins a copy of the signed agreement, and Collins arranged an on-camera interview with Ambassador Lewis Tambs. During the interview, the Ambassador denied that he had seen me in over two years. When Peter showed Tambs a copy of the agreement, he became flustered and tried to trivialize our meetings as a single social event. He denied that he'd known in advance that I was going into Nicaragua, or that he had in any way encouraged me in my efforts to bring Pastora back into the resistance fold.

Ambassador Tambs's behavior seemed so bizarre to Peter Collins that he brought his videotape to the Los Angeles International Airport and showed it to me upon my return from Korea. I had to confirm to Peter that most of what Tambs had said on camera was absolutely false. Fortunately for Lew Tambs, ABC decided not to air that interview.

The episode reminded me of the old adage that an ambassador is an honorable man sent abroad to lie for his country.

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ON MAY 29, 1986, a civil damage lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida, and placed on the docket of respected federal judge James Lawrence King. The plaintiffs were two American free-lance journalists, Tony Avirgan and his wife, Martha Honey,



who had a long history of espousing left-wing causes and were reputed to be pro-Sandinista. They were represented by attorney Daniel P. Sheehan, the general counsel of a strange Washington-based "interfaith center for law and public policy" called the Christic Institute. On the day he filed suit in Miami, the Christics staged a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, apparently to make sure the case received the media attention Sheehan felt that it deserved. As I was to learn, Sheehan was not shy about publicity.

The plaintiffs' complaint, he explained to the assembled reporters, was filed under the civil provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). Avirgan and Honey's lawsuit claimed damages of \$23.8 million for physical and psychological injuries, pain and suffering, and punitive sanctions resulting from the assassination-attempt bombing against Eden Pastora at his La Penca camp in southern Nicaragua on May 30, 1984. Avirgan had been an ABC stringer cameraman at the ill-fated news conference. Although eight men and women had died in the blast and many more were seriously wounded, Avirgan escaped with a few bruises and lacerations to the middle finger of his left hand.<sup>9</sup> His wife was nowhere near the camp, but nevertheless joined the suit, claiming, among other things, loss of consortium and loss of income during the period of her husband's recovery.

The size of the damage claim was only one of many bizarre features of the suit. The list of defendants was even more unusual. My name was among the thirty defendants, who also included Contra leader Adolfo Calero, Americans Andy Messing, Richard Secord, Albert Hakim, Rob Owen, former CIA officer Theodore Shackley, arms dealer Ron Martin, and his sidekick Mario Del'Amico, a couple of fugitive Central American cocaine traffickers, an American ranch property developer in Nicaragua named John Hull, and, finally, Medellín Cartel cocaine barons Pablo Escobar and Jorge Ochoa.

To round out the Alice in Wonderland weirdness of this legal action, the plaintiffs alleged that the La Penca bombing was engineered by the defendants acting as part of an ongoing conspiracy involving a criminal RICO enterprise that relied on drug smuggling to finance arms supplies to the Contras. Just to make things interesting, Sheehan accused us of conspiring to assassinate Ambassador Lewis Tambs in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Sheehan breathlessly explained he would call unnamed witnesses who had attended a 1984 Miami meeting at which Adolfo Calero plotted Pastora's murder. The actual attempt, Sheehan said, was made by a renegade Libyan of no known address.<sup>10</sup>

These charges were so outrageous that I was initially amused by Sheehan's



paranoid grumblings. I told the press the charges were "transparently scurrilous, cynical, and duplicitous."

On checking into the Christics, I discovered, predictably enough, that they were a remnant of the 1960s radical left, founded in Washington in 1981 by a Jesuit priest named William J. Davis. According to Dr. Susan Huck, who has studied the Christics closely, Davis was an acolyte of Marxist "liberation" theology, as were several Sandinista Jesuit government officials. The new "interfaith" legal and public policy center was granted tax-exempt status. Davis's literature explained that the name of his center derived from early twentieth century Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who theorized a "Christic" force that would mystically spread to unite long-suffering mankind—no doubt led by radical priests like Davis—to do "battle against evil."<sup>11</sup>

In Daniel Sheehan, Davis found a natural ally. Sheehan was a curly-headed Irishman from upstate New York, who was radicalized as a student in the sixties, supposedly when his ruthless ROTC instructors at Northeastern University forced him to learn how to garrote innocent Vietnamese women. He left the ROTC program and went on to get a Harvard law degree, enjoying a student draft deferment. Years later, Sheehan reportedly liked to tell the story that he forced the draft board to continue his deferment by threatening to expose the evil ways of his sinister "Green Beret" trainers.<sup>12</sup>

Sheehan bounced from a minor position at a Wall Street law firm back to Harvard, where he studied ethics at the Divinity School, then dropped out to work on the legal defense of the American Indians involved in the murder of federal officers at Wounded Knee. He reportedly used "unorthodox methods" working on the notorious Karen Silkwood case for the National Organization for Women. Sheehan alleged Silkwood had been murdered by evil corporate conspirators because she had been about to blow the whistle on the theft of nuclear fuel at the Kerr-McGee Corporation nuclear plant where she worked. Although only a helper on the case, Sheehan later claimed credit for the out-of-court settlement for Silkwood's family. With this taste for conspiracy, Sheehan found a home in the Christics. Writing in the liberal magazine *Mother Jones*, journalist James Traub aptly described Sheehan as "a brilliant publicist with more than a shadow of the huckster, a charismatic personality who magnetizes others by the force of his certainty, a spiritual figure who sometimes stops to adjust his halo in the mirror."<sup>13</sup>

During my two years of fund-raising for the Contras, I had often encountered such hecklers from the ranks of true believers of radical groups camouflaged by religious cover. So I was ready to dismiss the Christics as "just another wacky, moribund left-wing hive," as they were later so aptly described by journalist David Brock.<sup>14</sup>



And when Judge King threw the suit back to Daniel Sheehan as unacceptable, it was easy enough to forget a posturing self-promoter like Daniel Sheehan.

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I FELT morally obligated to try one final time to convince Eden Pastora to return to the Contra ranks. Barring his decision to do so, I at least wanted to help him with his local debts in Costa Rica, which had to be paid off before he was released from custody. So I flew to San Jose and met with him briefly. There was no convincing him to take up the Contra cause again after what he correctly saw as the latest of many CIA betrayals. I used several thousand dollars of USCWF funds to help settle his local debts. He told me he would probably try for a bank loan to begin a fishing cooperative on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica.

But the other ARDE forces on the southern front and the FDN in the north were still in the battle. However, they were almost out of funds. When I met with Adolfo Calero in Miami, he was desperate. Although he was certain several million dollars from foreign donor governments had been channeled through Ollie North, earmarked for Contras' weapons purchases, the FDN had not received any substantial arms for months. And he was unable to contact Dick Secord to discuss the matter. Adolfo begged me to help free a few million dollars from the Contra bank accounts controlled by North and call on Sam to arrange a quick shipment of AK-47s and ammunition at the same prices we had offered him the year before.

In Washington, Ollie North made it clear that my arms procurement efforts for the Contras were no longer welcome. Through intermediaries he assured me there were arms in the "pipeline" that would soon reach the Contras. I was not so sanguine. Neither was Rob Owen. He told me of his concerns about Secord and Hakim reaping large profits, while the Contras were stalled in their base camps for want of munitions. Ollie had grown unusually secretive and distant. And more than once I caught him in lies. This troubled me. In clandestine operations, which by their very nature rely on public deception, the last thing you wanted to hear from a colleague was a lie. But I had to remind myself that Ollie North was actually not a veteran clandestine operator, no matter how much he liked to play at the cloak-and-dagger swashbuckler.

I was especially frustrated with Secord. From what I saw in Central America and heard from Adolfo, Secord's air resupply of the Contra groups inside Nicaragua depended on obsolete, poorly maintained aircraft that spent more time down for repairs than in the air. I told Ollie I could purchase a turboprop C-130 on the international market for \$1 million with only a \$250,000 down payment. The plane could meet all of the Contras' airdrop requirements,



and also ferry donated humanitarian supplies from the States. Ollie was not interested. Dick Secord, he said, was handling the air operation quite well.

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My attention was unexpectedly diverted from Central America to Southeast Asia. An American treasure-salvage group called *Nippon Star*, whose chief investors included a reputable couple named Harrigan from Memphis, contacted me concerning their work to uncover hidden Japanese war booty in the Philippines. Normally, I would not have been interested in buried-treasure schemes, but the *Nippon Star* group were not naive beachcombers. And I knew from past experience that stories of buried Japanese gold in the Philippines were legitimate. Before offering me a consultancy as a security adviser, the Harrigans outlined the situation.

General Tomoyuki Yamashita had been the Japanese commander in chief in the Philippines. He was later executed by the Filipinos for war crimes. In 1942, the Japanese hoped to formally annex the Philippines, then sue the United States for peace, offering to withdraw from other Japanese-occupied areas of Asia. Their field commanders looted the national treasuries, private banks, and temple complexes in Hong Kong, Burma, Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies, and shipped hundreds of tons of gold bullion and golden temple artifacts for safekeeping in their proposed future colony, the Philippines. The Harrigans produced credible documents that estimated upwards of 300 tons of bullion and other gold had reached the Philippines by 1943.

But the Japanese plan to annex the islands failed. The advancing American forces cut off the Philippines before the Japanese could ship their gold back to Japan. Faced with these Allied victories, General Yamashita dispersed the assembled treasure around the islands, where it was buried in 172 carefully chosen sites. The Japanese trained an elite team of geologists and engineers to perform the actual burials. All the sites were disguised and all were protected by several layers of booby traps, both manmade and natural. One underwater site in Calatagan Bay south of Manila was a shaft blasted seventy feet deep into a coral reef. Japanese records indicated five tons of gold bullion and several barrels of precious stones had been deposited there.

The entire treasure-burial operation was carefully documented by General Yamashita's staff, who used coded maps and ledgers, which were flown back to Japan before the capitulation.

By the 1970s, some Filipinos had allied themselves with both bogus and authentic Japanese treasure hunters, and the secret digging began. But neither side figured on the shrewdness of Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. His spies kept the treasure hunters under close surveillance. When they literally struck pay dirt, the Marcos forces moved in to arrest the treasure



hunters and confiscate their gold. Marcos's \$12 billion fortune actually came from confiscated treasure, not skimmed-off U.S. aid.

But Marcos had only managed to rake off a dozen or so of the biggest sites. That left well over a hundred untouched. With the Marcos overthrow and the advent of the Cory Aquino government, there was renewed interest in the so-called "Yamashita Treasure."

The only problem in the summer of 1986, however, was that several of the most promising sites Nippon Star had staked out were in remote provinces where the Communist New People's Army or bandit groups were in control. The group needed a qualified security adviser and offered me the job. What made the offer attractive was their promise to provide several percent of the eventual profit directly to the U.S. Council for World Freedom. I agreed to help them.

The situation I found in Manila was intriguing, but confused. The Harrigans' partner, Allan Forringer, was the chief of operations. Ill-advisedly, he had concentrated all their efforts on the reef site in Calatagan Bay. Not only was the Japanese concrete shaft cover too hard for their drilling equipment, the site itself was exposed to treacherous tides and currents that repeatedly swept away the Nippon Star work platform.

After close scrutiny of their Japanese maps and coded ledgers, I was convinced they had some exciting leads. But squandering their resources on the Calatagan Bay site was a tactical error. There was one promising site beneath a modern house in Cavite Province sixty miles south of Manila. From partial deciphering of the ledgers, it was clear that this site, and several others nearby at Los Banos, offered the best hope of immediate return.

On my second visit to the Philippines, I agreed to take charge of the Nippon Star operation and to staff it with competent retired American military officers familiar with the area and known to the Aquino government. Although treasure hunting has a romantic aura, the work we did that summer in the Philippines was basically a no-nonsense logistics and construction effort. Unfortunately, Nippon Star ran into funding problems before we could exploit our best sites.

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ALTHOUGH the Christic lawsuit remained a minor irritant that summer, I had not even bothered to hire a lawyer. I was confident that Judge King would reject the revised RICO suit the Christics were preparing for Avirgan and Honey, just as he had the first. When I mentioned this to Bill Casey at a dinner for former OSS officers, however, he advised caution.

"These people could be dangerous, Jack," he said. "They're more than just a nuisance."



"What do you think I ought to do, Bill?" Casey was a veteran attorney with a first-rate legal mind.

"I'll find you a lawyer," he said.

Casey put me in touch with John Sears, a Washington attorney with whom he had worked on the first Reagan campaign. Sears agreed to handle my case on an expenses-only basis. Neither of us realized the head of steam the Christics suit was gathering. And neither of us could predict the ruthless and unethical methods Sheehan and the Christics would employ.

In a series of revised RICO complaints, Honey, Avirgan, and the Christic Institute alleged that the plaintiffs were the victims of a massive conspiracy that spanned three decades and involved the devious activities of a cabal of former American government officials, ex-CIA and ex-military officers, Colombian drug lords, Cuban exile mercenaries, and arms dealers. This group Sheehan dubbed the "Secret Team," which, he proclaimed, had actually taken over American foreign policy from the democratically elected government. I was supposedly involved in this illegal conspiracy by dint of my nefarious activities in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War and later during my activities in support of the Contras.<sup>15</sup>

Sheehan was also juggling the defendant list to suit his political goals. But I recognized a pattern in his tactics. Certainly drug barons like Pablo Escobar and Jorge Ochoa would not be expected to defend themselves. And the Christics had not named a single active-duty military or intelligence agency officer or serving government official as members of the alleged conspiracy.

Ted Shackley, Rob Owen, Richard Secord, and I were all private citizens. Had any of us been serving government officials, we would have had access to Department of Justice resources in our defense. And no doubt the Christics understood that a massive counterattack by Justice would have quickly blown them out of the water. Once the Christics refiled their RICO complaint, and Judge King accepted Sheehan's written assurance he had evidence to back his wild claims, the Christics had subpoena powers during the discovery process. This meant they could require the defendants to give depositions under oath, and they would have access to our personal files. I certainly had nothing illegal to conceal. But I did have a lot of sensitive information about anti-Communist resistance groups. I would naturally have to resist wholesale snooping. John Sears could not continue representing me *pro bono* during a protracted discovery process. This meant I would have to retain counsel and would accumulate substantial legal bills.

So Tom Spencer, a brilliant Miami attorney with years of federal litigation experience, took over my case. Like all top-drawer lawyers, he did not come cheap. The clock of my eventually crippling attorney fees was now running, and there was no end in sight.<sup>16</sup>

And it was clear that the Christics would indeed drag out the pretrial



process of discovery. They were using the lawsuit as an extremely effective fund-raising tool. According to one of their solicitation pamphlets:

A shadow government run by a "Secret Team" has been operating for the last 25 years carrying out covert actions without Congressional approval and at times even without Presidential approval.

They have financed their operations by stealing from the U.S. Government and by trafficking in DRUGS.

During the Viet Nam War Richard Secord, John Singlaub and others in the C.I.A. imported heroin from S.E. Asia into the United States. Today these same people are importing cocaine from South America.<sup>17</sup>

Over the coming months, the Christics raised millions of dollars in widespread fund-raising activities. They held countless fund-raisers on college campuses, where credulous academics and gullible students lined up to hear Sheehan expound his bizarre conspiracy theory, which explained all American foreign policy for the past thirty years, and even included a convenient explanation for the Kennedy assassination. Clever marketers, the Christics pedaled video and audio cassettes, books, pamphlets, and bumper stickers at these sessions. They even sold bound copies of Sheehan's exciting but legally dubious complaints and affidavits, which were ballyhooed as shocking "evidence."<sup>18</sup>

Their small Washington staff swelled to over sixty, including ten lawyers and eight full-time investigators. And they managed to recruit forty-six volunteer members of the Trial Lawyers for Public Justice to work on the case. I came to realize my legal fees in defending myself against this frivolous lawsuit might well ruin me financially.

At one point during the suit, Sheehan told an audience of his supporters that I and the other defendants were "going to get fined \$20 million and lose everything they have."<sup>19</sup> Ted Shackley aptly described the Christic's tactics as "legal terrorism," which has as its objective setting "a political agenda via the courts."<sup>20</sup>

Sheehan made his intentions very clear that fall when he submitted a sensational revised affidavit alleging details on the thirty-year global conspiracy of the "Secret Team." He claimed to have legally acceptable evidence that the defendants were responsible for the bomb that caused the plaintiffs' injuries. This affidavit was written in the first person and read more like a cheap spy thriller than a legal document.<sup>21</sup> It alleged the members of the Secret Team had been conspiring to control American foreign policy for decades and had resorted to assassination, drug trafficking, and sundry other corrupt practices to achieve their evil goals. He claimed to have legally admissible depositions and statements of his seventy-nine witnesses to prove these charges.



People began comparing the Christics to the Lyndon LaRouche political cult; indeed, Jonathan Kwitny, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, was later harassed by "glassy-eyed" Christic followers during a book promotion tour. They demanded to know why he disagreed with Sheehan's bizarre claims of a global conspiracy led by the Secret Team.<sup>22</sup>

But others wondered why Judge King was obliged to listen to Sheehan's crazy charges. When an attorney in good standing like Sheehan makes such claims, ostensibly backed by evidence, a judge is required to take him seriously. Mutual trust is the foundation of our legal system.

Unfortunately, Sheehan refused to divulge the identity of his witnesses, whom he listed only by number. When Judge King ordered him to do so, Sheehan and the Christics appealed, stating that revealing the witnesses' names would expose them to possible assassination by the evil crew of conspirators being sued. This reminded many people of Senator Joe McCarthy's famous list of Communists in the State Department. Judge King was not amused by the Christics' maneuvers.<sup>23</sup>

And I certainly was not amused by my mounting legal bills.

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Back in the Philippines, I tried to bring some semblance of organized discipline to the Nippon Star field operations. John Harrigan in Memphis and John Voss in Denver had secured better funding through an investment consortium. I was able to obtain the services of some well-qualified retired Army personnel to assist in running the several scattered work sites. I set out to build better bridges to the Philippine government by giving periodic and detailed reports of our activities to Teodoro "Teddy" Locsin, Jr., a key adviser to President Cory Aquino.

We concentrated on the Cavite site, but unfortunately ran into more water problems. Several meters down the shaft we struck one of the subterranean streams the Japanese had successfully dammed during the initial excavation. The men digging were almost drowned in liquid mud. We had to start again, reinforcing the shaft with expensive shoring. At this point, funds became a problem. And Forringer was obliged to hustle for more investors overseas.

Natural and financial obstacles were not the only problems we encountered. The local *cavitano* Mafia, who controlled everything from the colorfully painted jitney buses to the cockfights of the sugarcane workers, wanted a part of our action as well. They threatened us with all manner of mayhem, but I managed to thwart their attempts at extortion.

I wasn't so fortunate with the Communist New People's Army. The NPA must have gotten word of the Abu Nidal death threat against me. That autumn, they made it clear I was on their hit list. I began to move about



cautiously, using real tradecraft, not the James Bond movie nonsense the earlier Nippon Star crew had employed.

I was immersed in these problems that September when I got a call from friends in the States. Both houses of Congress had just signed a continuing-resolution budget bill that included \$100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan Contras. The President was specifically authorized to use these funds for both lethal and non-lethal aid. Congress had finally come to its senses. The two-year hiatus of the Boland Amendment was over.

But my euphoria over this news was short-lived. On October 6, 1986, I heard a BBC radio report that a C-123K cargo plane had been shot down over southern Nicaragua while on an airdrop supply mission to the Contras. Three crewmen had been killed, but a fourth, an American named Eugene Hasenfus, had parachuted to safety and was taken prisoner by the Sandinistas. As more details were revealed over the next few days, I became incensed. Apparently the aircraft had been flying in broad daylight and at a low altitude and had been shot down by a Sandinista SAM-7 missile. A C-123 is an aircraft very vulnerable to ground fire. Only a fool would dispatch such a plane on a clandestine airdrop during daylight. To make matters worse, Hasenfus and the three dead crewmen had been carrying their wallets with identity cards linking them to Southern Air Transport, a known CIA proprietary company. The final straw in this foul-up was the fact that the plane's logbooks were on board, which also linked the operation back to the CIA.

I recalled how Ollie North had smugly insisted that his "air adviser," Dick Secord, knew more about running clandestine aerial resupply operations than I did. For almost two and a half years as commander of MACV/SOG, I had run very similar resupply flights into North Vietnam, the most hostile anti-aircraft environment in history. And I had never lost a plane. But if one of my aircraft *had* been shot down, the crew sure as hell would not have been carrying their wallets and ID cards. Once more, Ollie North's grandiose self-image as a master covert operator had come back to harm the Contra cause.

This incident could not have come at a worse time. There was bound to be bad reaction in Congress, especially among the disgruntled liberals who had just had their precious Boland Amendment voted down. This was another election year and, once more, politics would interfere with sound foreign policy.

Two days later I left for the States to attend an IRS hearing on the tax-exempt status of USCWF. Before boarding my flight in Manila, I called the Nippon Star office in town to check on last-minute messages. They told me Elliott Abrams of the State Department had just phoned, urgently trying to reach me, but they had explained I was on a trip. I thought no more



about this until I reached the States and called Barbara Studley in Washington.

"General," she said, "have you heard the news?"

I was groggy from yet another trans-Pacific flight. "What news?"

"Someone in the government told the press that the Hasenfus plane was part of your operation. They're blaming you."

This was outrageous. Not only had North and Secord fouled up the Contra resupply operation, they apparently now had the gall to foist the blame onto me.<sup>24</sup>

When I reached National Airport late that afternoon, there was a news media ambush even bigger than the one that had hit me at Kennedy Airport in 1977. But Michael Marks had outfoxed them. Posing as an airport security guard, he had ordered the camera crews away from the passenger gate. As I trudged down the corridor, he stepped forward unobtrusively and guided me into a private airline club, from which we escaped by a side exit to a waiting limousine with smoked-glass windows. Unfortunately, the media had posted a motorcycle scout in the taxi rank at the National terminal who trailed us all the way in to the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. But the hotel staff kept the hungry reporters at bay that night.

The staff of the Sheraton Carlton were really magnificent. When it was necessary for me to leave the hotel, they would arrange to sneak me out to a waiting car through the labyrinth of hotel laundry and other subterranean tunnels.

I immediately called Elliott. He denied that either he or Ollie North had made the scandalous leak to the press. But to me his assurances were transparent lies. Why else would he have called me urgently in Manila? I had come to realize that Elliott Abrams was one of those ambitious political creatures for whom lying simply came more naturally than honesty.

The next day, rested up from my trip, I held a press conference. "I wish I *had* been in charge of that flight," I told the reporters. "I would have done it right."<sup>25</sup>

Despite my public denials during the news conference, at which *New York Times* reporter Richard Halloran was present, the *Times* again charged that I was responsible for the Hasenfus flight when it was shot down. Halloran claimed that "Administration officials privately" confirmed the earlier information. A personal telephone complaint to the *New York Times* editor produced a promise of a public retraction, which never came.<sup>26</sup>

A few days later, Abrams assured Congress that there had been no U.S. government involvement with the ill-fated Hasenfus flight.



THAT November I was back in Manila, trying to keep the Filipino laborers paid and safe from the *cavitanos*, the American supervisors talking to each other, and the Philippine government happy—when the Iran-Contra story broke.

The news initially arrived in dribbles. A pro-Iranian magazine in Beirut called *Al-Shiraa* ran a story that former national security adviser Bud McFarlane had traveled secretly to Tehran to negotiate with the Ayatollah Khomeini. Rumors of ill-advised bartering for American hostages held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian Shiites abounded in the international press. The President denied them.

Then came the deluge. On November 19, President Reagan announced a "secret initiative" to Iran that had supposedly been designed to better relations between the two countries. He confirmed that America had sold arms to the government of Ayatollah Khomeini in full defiance of our announced policy and in complete breach of agreements with allied governments to prevent arms from reaching Iran. Over the next few days, an official government investigation revealed that thousands of TOW anti-tank missiles and a score of HAWK anti-aircraft missiles had been delivered to Tehran, some in an elaborate three-way transaction involving Israel.

By November 21, it was clear that Ollie North had been the administration point man in this endeavor. Attorney General Ed Meese led an investigative team into the role of the NSC. It was soon revealed that a "diversion" of funds accruing from the profit of these arms sales had occurred. The Attorney General announced that some of these proceeds had been used to support the Nicaraguan Contras while the Boland Amendment was in effect. Meese then announced the resignation of Admiral John Poindexter and the firing of Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North.

Former senator John Tower led a commission of inquiry convened by the President. Ostensibly the operation was begun to secure the release of William Buckley, the former CIA Beirut station chief kidnapped by the Iranians in 1984. But the true nature of the failed policy soon became evident. Although three American hostages were eventually released during the course of the arms-for-hostages barter, *five* more were eventually kidnapped to take their places. I was absolutely outraged by these revelations.

Not only were American citizens abroad placed at much greater risk by the administration's actions, our government had lost whatever moral authority it had in trying to dissuade other countries from negotiations with terrorists. The White House had gone blindly into the cruel and devious bazaar of the Middle East hoping to save the lives of a few citizens, and instead we had allowed our nation's foreign policy to become a hostage. In the future, I knew, any tin-horn dictator or terrorist would target Americans for kidnapping knowing the leverage he could extract.



President Reagan was the commander in chief of the American armed forces. In that capacity he should have had the moral courage to sacrifice the lives of others, if need be, in order to protect our national integrity. I knew from personal experience that the hardest decision a commander could make was to risk a few men to protect the majority of his command. Reading about Ronald Reagan's failed policy, I couldn't help but remember all those long nights on the Main Line of Resistance when a handful of gallant men in my command defended Outpost Harry. Being a commander forced cruel choices on a man.

But the revelations of convoluted profit "diversions," ostensibly to the Contras, were even more disturbing than the hostage bartering. It was eventually revealed that Richard Secord and Albert Hakim, through a holding company called Lake Resources, were the repositories of those profits. Yet I knew from discussions with Adolfo Calero and Enrique Bermudez that the Contra troops had been going hungry, without needed ammunition and medicines for months, when the millions in profits had been supposedly *diverted* to them.

In February, I was contacted by the FBI, who were conducting preliminary investigations for both Judge Lawrence Walsh, the special prosecutor—now called the independent counsel—and the Joint Select Congressional Committees investigating the Iran-Contra fiasco. They told me I was not the subject of a criminal investigation, but that they would definitely appreciate interviewing me. I flew home from the Philippines.

The week I arrived in Washington, Bud McFarlane took an overdose of Valium and nearly died the night before he was scheduled to testify before the Tower Inquiry Board. The next week, President Reagan conceded, "What began as a strategic opening to Iran deteriorated into trading arms for hostages."<sup>27</sup>

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THAT winter and spring, I spent hours testifying and giving depositions on my role in aiding the Contras. At no time was I ever accused of criminal wrongdoing or unethical behavior. Since I had absolutely nothing to hide, I testified with complete openness.

I did not see Oliver North, Richard Secord, Bud McFarlane, or any other of the Iran-Contra notables during this period. Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to discuss the issue with Bill Casey. He had undergone emergency surgery for a brain tumor in December, and was in critical condition and rapidly deteriorating.

On April 29, 1987, I spent most of the day on Capitol Hill giving a sworn deposition to Kenneth Ballen, staff counsel of the House committee, and



Charles Kerr, his counterpart of the Senate committee. Since I was not facing criminal charges, I appeared voluntarily, requested no immunity whatsoever, and answered almost six straight hours of questions with complete candor. I detailed the role I had played in securing private funds for the Contras. I carefully documented my part in helping Adolfo Calero buy high-quality weapons at bargain prices. I delivered to the attorneys my complete file on the arms transaction. I discussed my relationship with Oliver North, Richard Secord, and Elliott Abrams.

Obviously, the two committees, each controlled by partisan Democrats, were trying to trace a smoking gun of causality back to the desk of Ronald Reagan. Congressional Democrats clearly wanted to discover an impeachable high crime or misdemeanor that would cripple the Republican presidency and sow the ground for a Democratic victory in the next year's election. I had no knowledge of any action or event that would help them. When I finished my deposition, Ken Ballen told me I had probably been the most honest and forthcoming of any witness he had interviewed. It was only later that I discovered Richard Secord, who gave deposition under subpoena on February 6, 1987, had repeatedly pleaded the Fifth Amendment when asked even relatively innocuous questions.<sup>28</sup>

The Joint Congressional Iran-Contra Select Committees hearings began on May 5, 1987. Richard Secord was the first witness. His testimony was less than forthright. He testified for three days, detailing a skein of private individuals, bank accounts, and front companies he called the "Enterprise" that sold missiles to Iran and supposedly diverted the millions of dollars of proceeds from the profits back to the Contras, all with the aid of his trusty Middle Eastern companion, Albert Hakim. But Secord was elusive about the amount of money actually returned to the Contras. The Congressional committees investigating the Iran-Contra affair found from the Swiss bank accounts that Secord had purchased a Porsche sports car and a personal airplane from the proceeds.<sup>29</sup> He contended that his relationship with Oliver North had been made at the suggestion of CIA director William Casey, who, apparently, had been looking for just such an upright citizen to help Oliver North manage aid to the Contras during the term of the Boland Amendments.

This was a very convenient contention. Bill Casey died the day Richard Secord began his testimony.

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I BEGAN my own testimony on the afternoon of May 20, following that of Adolfo Calero. I was proud of Adolfo. Far from being the toady of the CIA that the left had portrayed him, Adolfo correctly labeled the Agency as



"more snoopers than helpers," who had managed the Contra operation inefficiently. He spoke well of Ollie North, but complained of his secretiveness once Secord had been put in charge of the Contra resupply in 1986. Calero was especially bitter about profiteering by arms dealers, like Secord, whom he had been shocked to learn had made profits of 20 to 30 percent on weapons delivered to the Contras. He conceded that he had handed over Contra funds in the form of traveler's checks to Ollie North, who used the money for expenses not related directly to the FDN.<sup>30</sup>

When I was sworn in on the witness stand, I couldn't help noting the intentionally theatrical atmosphere in the Senate Caucus Room, the same room that had been used fourteen years earlier in the Watergate hearings. Congressional aides, of course, had been obliged to enlarge the raised dais to accommodate the Joint Committee, but they managed to keep the same appearance as the Senate Watergate panel. This time, Senator Daniel Inouye was in the middle of the dais.

In my opening remarks, I emphasized that all the funds I raised for the Contras here in the United States had been used for non-lethal humanitarian aid. My decision to help the Contras obtain weapons overseas, I said, had been based on the conditions I personally witnessed in the Contra base camps in March 1985. Our methods of operation had been the subject of a written ruling by the Department of Justice, in which it was concluded that all of my actions were legal.<sup>31</sup> I ended these remarks with an appeal for continuing support for the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance. Quoting Winston Churchill's comments on his country's lone struggle against the Nazis in 1940, I said the Contras "fight by themselves alone, but they do not fight *for* themselves alone."

The questioning was surprisingly even-handed. Obviously the congressmen had been briefed on my deposition and saw there was nothing for me to hide.

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ONE of the most interesting witnesses to appear in the coming weeks was Stanley Sporkin, former general counsel of the CIA. He testified that he had denied Richard Secord a security clearance in 1983, because of a Justice Department investigation of Secord's alleged ties to renegade former CIA officer Edwin P. Wilson.<sup>32</sup> This investigation of Secord never resulted in formal prosecution. Sporkin's testimony was little noticed in the press, but carefully noted by former associates of Bill Casey who had witnessed his outrage at Ollie North's employment of Secord and members of the "Ed Wilson Gang."

Another interesting witness was Albert Hakim. He completely refuted



Richard Secord's testimony that Secord had worked on the operation almost as a "philanthropic" hobby. Hakim detailed the obscene profits the Enterprise had reaped on the arms transactions. Hakim also testified that he had tried to channel a secret payment of \$200,000 into a bank account set up for Ollie North's wife, Betsy.

Hakim testified that his Enterprise had grossed almost \$48 million in proceeds between December 1984 and December 1986. The Enterprise's profits from the sale to Iran of U.S. missiles, which included the Hawk surface-to-air missile, amounted to just over \$18 million, not including such minor items as private airplanes and Porsche sports cars. But only \$7.8 million could be accounted for, and was then frozen in Swiss bank accounts. Less than \$5 million had actually been "diverted" to the Contras.

The true *diversion* of funds had not been to the hard-pressed Contra troops, fighting for survival in the Nicaraguan mountains, but to Secord's and Hakim's secret Swiss bank accounts. Foreign governments, acting in good faith, had contributed millions of dollars to the Contras, but—contrary to the media's interpretation of the complex affair—much of this money, not just the profits from arms sales to Iran, had never reached the Nicaraguan resistance.<sup>33</sup>

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THE star witness in this long televised spectacle, of course, was Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North. He was a serving officer and entitled to wear his uniform, complete with his combat decorations. He did so. The televised image of his earnest young face juxtaposed with the multiple rows of decorations was powerful. He exuded patriotism and sincerity. Within a day of his first televised appearance on July 7, 1987, young men across the country were asking their barbers for close-cropped "Ollie North" haircuts.

North testified with apparent sincerity that in 1984, as the Boland Amendments loomed on the horizon, it had been William Casey who "had suggested General Secord to me as a person who had a background in covert operations." According to Ollie, Bill Casey had told him that Secord was a man who "got things done, and had been poorly treated."

Naturally, Bill Casey was not there to challenge that testimony. Later, former CIA official Clair George testified that it was very doubtful Casey had introduced Secord to North. Casey, George said, was aware of Secord's reputation and would not have willingly brought such a person into the Contra supply operation.<sup>34</sup> Throughout his subsequent testimony, Ollie North repeatedly relied on the ghost of William Casey as his moral, tactical, and political compass.

North also testified that it had been Bill Casey—whom I had known for



forty years as a strict legalist—who had proposed establishing a “full-service covert operation” that would conduct “off-the-shelf operations” while preserving “plausible deniability” in order to protect the CIA. Again, Bill Casey was not there to refute this charge.

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BUT other senior CIA officers have done so. Clair George’s public testimony has been augmented by a confidential interview I had with a former senior CIA executive, who wishes to remain anonymous. I asked this official a series of specific questions about the Casey-Secord-North relationship. He was emphatic that Bill Casey was “very leery” of Secord’s previous involvement with Ed Wilson. Casey, the officer told me, had endorsed General Counsel Sporkin’s refusal to grant Secord a security clearance that would have given him access to Agency premises. The officer also stated that it was extremely doubtful that Casey would have introduced Secord to North. “Casey would have never personally brought Secord into a secret operation,” the officer stated, “and Casey would not have acted on Ollie North’s word alone.” This was because North had a bad reputation among the senior Agency staff and was known for “going off half-cocked on most occasions.”

When asked if Casey would have encouraged North to turn the private Contra support organization into a profit-making commercial concern, the officer stated: “This is absurd.” He categorically denied that Casey wanted North to create a “stand-alone” covert action organization, as North had testified. “This is bullshit,” the officer answered angrily. “Casey was a lawyer. Before he did anything, he always consulted his legal staff.” Such an organization, he added, would have been illegal, and Casey was always conscious of legalities.

I could certainly attest to that because every time I tried to mention Nicaragua during the tenure of the Boland Amendments, Casey had threatened to throw me out of his office. And Bill Casey was not a man to make idle threats.

This former official concluded his interview by stating, “The North-Secord-Casey relationship was grossly exaggerated. . . . [Casey] would never have colluded with the likes of Secord. He listened on occasion to reports from North, in my view, only because North forced himself on the Director and because someone had to keep tabs on what North was up to.”<sup>35</sup>

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ON ANOTHER day of testimony, when North was pressed by congressional counsel to explain why he had stopped ordering high-quality, low-cost arms



through my channel with Sam and had shifted all the lucrative business to Secord's high-profit Enterprise, he gazed at the television cameras with his most sincere expression and proceeded to stab me in the back. He stated that there had been three possible sources. One was Ron Martin's arms supermarket, which, he said, was tainted by a questionable funding. The second source was my group. Director Casey, Ollie North said, had warned him against conducting another multimillion-dollar transaction with this broker, because the firm "had been involved in reverse technology transfer to the Eastern Bloc, and he [Casey] told me to do everything possible to discourage further purchases."<sup>36</sup>

Watching North's televised testimony that afternoon, I felt as if he had crept up behind me and delivered a sucker punch. "Reverse technology transfer" was a euphemism for espionage. North's slander had probably been a spontaneous lie to cover his own involvement with Secord, but it unjustly tarnished the reputations of several people, including Sam and me. Sam, after all, had worked his contacts in Eastern Europe in order to provide Soviet-bloc military technology to the United States, not the other way around. Ollie North's lie was therefore especially outrageous.

For two years I had been willing to take public scorn and harassment in order to shield individuals like Ollie North who were delivering vital aid to the Contras. Now, North had the audacity to evoke Bill Casey's name to justify his dealings with Secord and Hakim, which, I now suspected and it was later confirmed in North's trial, had involved illegal "gratuities" to North himself.

By this point in the hearings circus, however, Ollie North had so endeared himself with the American people as a sincere young war hero that this slander almost went unchallenged. But in the sensitive world of international commercial military technology, the accusation that a company and its officers had been involved in reverse technology transfer to the Soviet bloc was poisonous. It was analogous to accusing an auditor of embezzlement. Integrity was the most precious attribute a person possessed in this professional arena, and North had just blithely committed character assassination on me and my colleagues in order to protect himself. I was furious, but not actually surprised.

I later learned from a former staffer on the Congressional Select Committee that most of the investigators considered North a consummate liar. As for North's testimony that Bill Casey had warned him against us because of our involvement in reverse technology transfers to the Eastern Bloc, the staffer said Committee investigators had found "absolutely no evidence whatsoever that this was true. In fact, the opposite was true." North, the staff member added, was known to be "perfectly capable of lying on the



witness stand in order to bolster his own cause, and was willing to impugn the reputation of others to do so."<sup>37</sup>

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THE hearings finally ended. Congressional investigators had found no smoking gun linking President Reagan or Vice-President Bush with Ollie North and the Secord-Hakim Enterprise.

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IRONICALLY, it was during the bitterest internecine political warfare of the Iran-Contra scandal that President Reagan's support for the United Nicaraguan Opposition paid its biggest dividends. While scores of congressmen, supported by hundreds of publicly funded attorneys and staff members, scrutinized every detail of the aid given the Contras during the period of the Boland Amendments, the Contras themselves were quietly regrouping into an effective combat force.

With renewed American military aid and revitalized CIA training and logistical assistance, the Contras were able to maintain hard-hitting mobile task forces deep inside Nicaragua. The Sandinistas undoubtedly hoped the Iran-Contra scandal would spell the final end to American Contra aid. They were mistaken.

Faced by new military pressure, the Sandinista Directorate reluctantly accepted the Central American peace plan put forward by Costa Rican president Oscar Arias Sanchez. In Guatemala that August, all five Central American presidents signed the Arias Plan, which called for cease-fires in Nicaragua and El Salvador, negotiations between the combatants, the release of political prisoners, and amnesties on both sides in the two countries. The new pressure from the revitalized Contra deep-strike forces was Sandinista president Daniel Ortega's strongest impetus for signing the agreement. But the Sandinistas also hoped to sway the pending congressional vote against renewed fiscal year 1988 Contra funding.

In 1987, when it became obvious that Congress would not support the White House request for \$270 million in new Contra aid, the Sandinistas felt they had scored another victory in the predictable Marxist Talk-Fight, Fight-Talk war. Despite the Arias Peace Plan, Comandante Bayardo Arce stated: "There will never, at any time or in any place, be any direct or indirect political dialogue with the counterrevolutionary leadership." And in another rejection of the Guatemala agreement, Sandinista hardliners stubbornly refused to release the more than 5,000 political prisoners held in their jails.



The true intentions of the Sandinista comandantes were revealed in December when Major Roger Miranda, a key subordinate of Defense Minister Humberto Ortega, defected. Miranda carried documents that showed the Soviet Union and Cuba intended to build a Sandinista army of 80,000 regulars, supported by well-armed reserves of 520,000. This force of 600,000 would be in place by 1995 and would be equipped with heavy weapons and jet attack aircraft. Rather than deny Miranda's assertions, Daniel Ortega himself confirmed that the Sandinistas planned to build their forces to 600,000 men, under "agreements with the Soviet Union." This military buildup, he said, would continue, even if relations with the United States were "normalized."<sup>38</sup> In other words, the Sandinistas had given lip service to the agreement simply to again influence Congress and to prevent the Contras from consolidating their growing battlefield advantage.<sup>39</sup>

But the Contras showed they could wage Talk-Fight warfare as well as the Marxists. They used the cease-fire to reinforce their guerrilla enclaves inside Nicaragua. When Ortega staged a publicity blitz in Washington, directly lobbying House Speaker Jim Wright to undercut the new Contra aid plan, Enrique Bermudez and the UNO political leadership decided the Sandinistas needed additional pressure to force them into serious negotiations.

In late December, the UNO Contra forces staged their most effective operation of the seven-year war. For over a month they had been moving troops from southern and central enclaves and the Honduran base camps along the Rio Coco. Over 8,000 combat-hardened Contras massed in the jungle mountains of the Cordillera Isabelia, surrounding the fortified Sandinista gold-mining towns of Siuna, Bonanza, and La Rosita. What made this deployment remarkable was the fact that thousands of Contras from the southern and central region had trekked undetected for almost a month, in formation, carrying their arms and equipment, to join the attack in the northeast. Obviously, they could not have made this march without the full support of the rural population. In the words of Mao, they were, in fact, guerrilla "fish" in an ocean of *campesino* supporters. This fact was not lost on the urban-based Sandinista comandantes.

The Contras struck the week before Christmas. In two days of sharp fighting, they captured all three fortified towns. At Siuna, a thousand Contras routed 750 heavily armed Sandinista regulars, who abandoned artillery and automatic weapons in their flight. The Contras captured a large ordnance supply depot and liberated enough Soviet-made weapons and munitions to supply a thousand troops. They blew up the runway at the Siuna air base and destroyed the Soviet GCI radar site that had threatened their resupply flights. At La Rosita, two battalions of Contras overran a brigade headquarters under a devastating mortar and rocket barrage. They cut all the



bridges in the area and destroyed Sandinista bunker complexes guarding the roads.<sup>40</sup>

The weather was bad, with clouds and mist choking the mountain valleys. This effectively grounded the Sandinistas' Hind attack helicopters. Contras firing American Red Eye and Soviet-made SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles kept Sandinista resupply helicopters and attack planes at bay. But the bad weather also made flying very difficult for the Contras' medevac helicopter. The Lady Ellen, however, did manage to evacuate seriously wounded Contras to field hospitals north of the Rio Coco. When the Contras withdrew to their base camps in the south and in Honduras, their pack mules carried over fifty tons of weapons and food. This was Third Option unconventional warfare at its most devastating.

At the indirect peace talks in the Dominican Republic, the Sandinistas quickly agreed to a new cease-fire, but stubbornly refused the Contra demands for direct, face-to-face negotiations. Congress responded by granting an administration request for stopgap, non-lethal aid for the Contras. This aid, together with the munitions they had captured inside Nicaragua, would keep the Contras a viable fighting force for months.<sup>41</sup>

Under battlefield pressure, the Sandinista comandantes now agreed to meet important terms of the Arias Peace Plan. They announced the pending release of all political prisoners and promised to suspend the six-year state of emergency under which they exercised their harshest totalitarian control. But they still refused direct negotiations with the Contras. Then, when they saw congressional support shifting back to the Contras, the Sandinistas agreed to face-to-face peace talks. But this was more Talk-Fight. With the peace talks under way in Costa Rica, the Sandinistas launched a repeat of their Easter 1986 offensive across the Rio Coco. Several thousand Sandinista regulars attacked the Contra base camps inside Honduras, trying to capture the arms depots where the CIA had stockpiled over 300 tons of supplies, paid for with the last of the fiscal 1987 military aid funding. Again the Contras employed guerrilla tactics effectively to slip away from the Sandinista advance and harass their flanks.

The Reagan administration response was swift. Four battalions of the 82nd Airborne Division parachuted onto a Honduran air base in a "readiness exercise" that sent a clear message to the Sandinistas. The Honduran air force, flying U.S.-supplied F-5 jets, attacked Sandinista positions just inside Nicaragua. The politically clumsy Sandinista invasion aroused Congress, which quickly voted an emergency Contra aid package of \$48 million, including several million for new weapons.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the political bloodletting of the Iran-Contra affair, the Sandinistas and their Soviet sponsors had been unable to cripple American foreign policy. Over the coming months, the Sandinistas reluctantly conceded to



serious peace talks, which would eventually lead to the first free and open election in Nicaragua's history.

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JUDGE Walsh and his independent counsel staff took over after the congressional hearings. Carl "Spitz" Channell and his associate Richard Miller had already pleaded guilty to felony fraud charges involving tax evasion in the Lavender Bund scam. In March 1988, Bud McFarlane pleaded guilty to four misdemeanor charges that he had withheld information from Congress about Iran-Contra.

The attorneys for Richard Secord, Albert Hakim, and Ollie North sparred with and successfully evaded Judge Walsh's prosecutors during the new election year of 1988.

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IN JUNE 1988, the ludicrous Christic lawsuit finally sputtered to a conclusion. For fifteen months, the Christics had managed to delay revealing their witness list, eventually taking their appeal all the way to the Supreme Court, which rejected it. During this time, my Florida lawyer, Tom Spencer, was unable to depose any of the plaintiffs' witnesses.

But once the list was revealed, the true nature of the Christics' case was exposed. Opening up Sheehan's bag of *evidence* was like turning over a rotten log: The squirmy critters underneath quickly disappeared in the harsh light of day. According to Sheehan, the major accusations linking the defendants to the La Penca bombing came from a *source* known only as "David," who had revealed his story to associates of Avirgan and Honey, and who had then been conveniently murdered. Other sources on the list were now identified by Sheehan as "unknown." As Tom Spencer and his staff of hard-working attorneys went through Sheehan's witness list, one source after another failed to substantiate the wild claims of his explosive affidavit. One of Sheehan's key "Secret Team" witnesses, a former Army warrant officer named Gene Wheaton, who Sheehan falsely claimed had been an intelligence officer—and whom the Christics had paid \$20,000 in cash for expenses—failed to provide any substantiation for the major claims about me that Sheehan had attributed to him.<sup>43</sup>

In short, when held up to the rigorous scrutiny of a sworn deposition, those of Daniel Sheehan's witnesses who actually existed in the real world—and not simply in the mystic ectoplasm of his imagination—completely refuted his allegations.<sup>44</sup>

But there were people who obviously resented Spencer's success in putting



the federal legal system back on a constitutional track. His Miami law firm began receiving threatening phone calls and poison-pen mail. At one point a scorpion fell out of an envelope his receptionist was opening. Rosie Gonzalez, who handled press relations for his firm, received several death threats, which she managed to shrug off. Then one day a caller claimed to have just kidnapped her young son, who would be killed unless Spencer's firm stopped defending Singlaub. Even though the threat was bogus, she quit her job.

Tom Spencer received most of the death threats. But he was a tough trial lawyer who kept a careful log of these illegal harassments for future action. One afternoon when he was in Washington taking a deposition, his son was called by a "hospital emergency room," which told the young man that Spencer had been shot and critically wounded. This was merely another cruel fabrication.<sup>45</sup>

I was outraged by these tactics, but not surprised. Like followers of Lyndon LaRouche, the mindless disciples of the Christics were perfectly capable of such illegal action in the name of doing mystical battle against the evil Secret Team.<sup>46</sup>

On June 23, 1988, five days before the case would have gone to trial, Judge James Lawrence King issued a summary judgment dismissing the notorious Christic lawsuit against me and the twenty-eight other defendants. Avirgan, Honey, and their Christic attorneys, he said, had completely failed to prove any conspiracy or secret enterprise had ever existed.

Sheehan quickly appealed.

On February 2, 1989, Judge King granted me and several other defendants sanctions against the plaintiffs in the Christic lawsuit amounting to \$1,034,381 to cover some of the attorneys fees and expenses we had accrued over thirty-one months of legal terrorism. Since Tom Spencer had led the battle exposing Sheehan's secret list of bogus witnesses and sources, he was awarded almost \$300,000 in fees, the highest of any of the defendants' attorneys. In granting our motion for sanctions under Rule 11 of the Federal Code, which prohibits frivolous lawsuits, Judge King noted, "The Christic Institute must have known prior to suing that they had no competent evidence to substantiate the theories alleged in their complaint." He added that the Christics' wild claims of a wide-ranging conspiracy spanning thirty years (the infamous Secret Team nonsense) "were based upon unsubstantiated rumor and speculation from unidentified sources with no first-hand knowledge."<sup>47</sup>

When the Christics tried to appeal this ruling, Judge King quite rightly obliged them to post a bond for 125 percent of the Rule 11 sanctions awarded to us. The Christics went to one of their prime funding areas, the wealthy liberal enclaves of Santa Monica and Bel Air, where the Hollywood left had been active in raising financial support for the original Christic lawsuit. But



apparently the leftist glitterati's passion for leftist causes did not extend as far as writing checks for \$1.25 million. The Institute found a sugar-daddy in one Aris Anagnos, a Greek-American known to have supported a number of liberal causes. He provided credit for most of the funds required to post the bond while yet another Christic appeal crept ahead, and, of course, Sheehan and his colleagues continued their own fund-raising.<sup>48</sup>

Despite Judge King's firm action, the Christics' legal terrorism continues.

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ON MARCH 1, 1989, I testified for several hours at the federal felony trial of former Marine lieutenant colonel Oliver North. Once more, I repeated the details of our relationship during the frustrating months that the Boland Amendment had been in effect. The prosecutor, David Zornow, asked me about my relationship to William Casey. I looked away from Ollie North when I talked about the exciting, dangerous months in the summer of 1944 when Bill Casey had been my OSS case officer.

Among men who have been in combat together, there are times when you later encounter someone who, through normal human weakness or perhaps basic character flaw, has dishonored himself by showing moral or physical cowardice. At those times, be they social occasions or chance encounters, you always feel uncomfortable, embarrassed for the other man. Ollie, like other cowards, had faced a hard choice and had made his decision. And now he had to live with it.

I certainly had no reason to doubt Ollie North's bravery on the I Corps battlefield in Vietnam. But I felt the familiar embarrassment here at his trial. I had learned too much about his moral courage to ever respect him again.

On May 4, 1989, Ollie North was convicted of destroying federal documents, accepting illegal gratuities, and obstructing Congress. Judge Gesell sentenced him to a suspended prison term and a fine of \$150,000. Ollie North began his appeal.