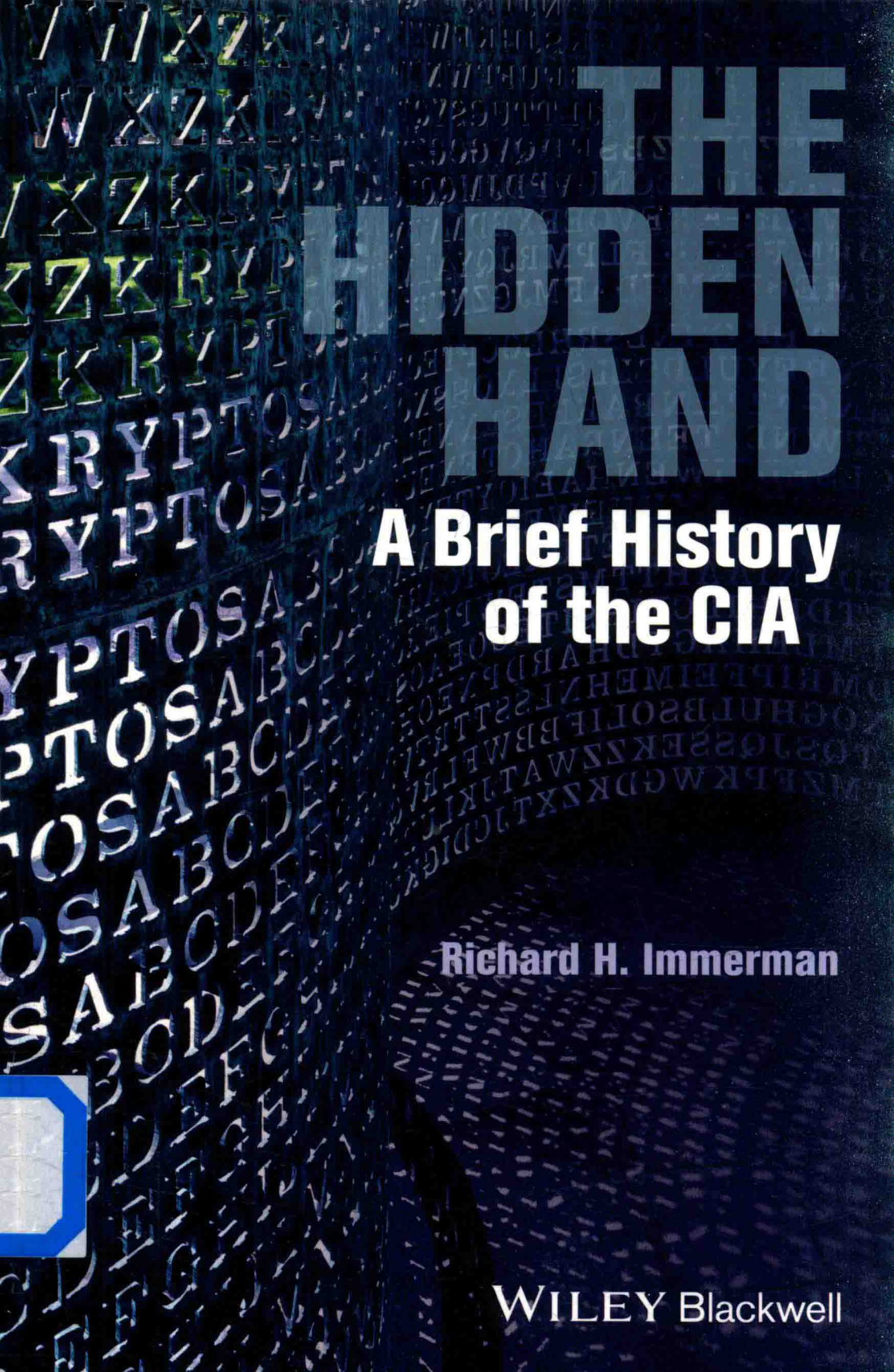
THE HIDDEN HAND
A Brief History of the CIA
Richard H. Immerman
WILEY Blackwell

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The Hidden Hand

To Anna, whom I hope will grow up in a world of greater transparency as well as security.

Preface and Acknowledgments

This is a short book with a long history. The number of debts I have accumulated along the way is therefore also long. The list begins with Walt LaFeber and Arnie Offner. Walt was almost solely responsible for shifting my interests from political science ("government" at Cornell) to history, specifically the history of US foreign relations. What is more, he provoked my curiosity about Latin America, particularly Central America. My decision to write my dissertation on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) intervention in Guatemala, accordingly, was a logical progression. The problem was that writing in the 1970s a history of a covert operation was highly illogical. There were no archives or, for that matter, documentation of any kind. As a graduate student, I received encouragement only from my faculty advisor, but he died. I then turned to Arnie Offner. Arnie, although at another university, believed in the project. More important, he believed in me. Under Arnie's guidance, I wrote my dissertation. It became a book, *The CIA in Guatemala*.

By the time of the book's publication, I had become a historian of intelligence, although I did not realize that I had. I continued to dabble in the subject over the subsequent years, but only dabble. Without fully appreciating the implications, during these same years I revived my interest in political science. Fred Greenstein and Bob Jervis are the reasons. Fred became the kind of mentor one never expects after completing the PhD. He introduced me to the literature on personality and politics, advising, and decision making. He also introduced me to Bob. Bob has no peer when it comes to applying theories of cognitive psychology to the study of international relations. He also has no peer as a scholar of intelligence. He inspired me in both spheres.

Athan Theoharis was the catalyst for my synthesizing these early influences and interests and finally admitting that I wanted to concentrate my

writing on the CIA and the Intelligence Community. I knew Athan only by reputation. He of course is renowned for his scholarship on domestic surveillance, civil liberties, and the FBI. When he contacted me shortly after the 9/11 tragedy, however, it was to invite me to contribute to a collection of essays on the CIA. Athan wanted me to write a lengthy overview of the agency's history. All of the contributors would be co-editors.

I accepted Athan's invitation, and my "Brief History of the CIA" came out in 2006 as the first chapter of *The Central Intelligence Agency: Security under Scrutiny*. I took great pleasure in writing it, and it serves as the foundation of this book. The essay provided me with the opportunity to evaluate the CIA through a much broader lens than "operations." I examined its origins and evolution over time, its relations with other elements in the Intelligence Community, the problems produced by the tensions inherent in its roles and missions, and more. Still, the project was as frustrating as it was exciting. I very much enjoy the challenge of trying to capture vast swaths of history in relatively few words. But an 80-page history of the CIA was a bridge too far.

Enter Peter Coveney into my story. Peter is a terrific editor with Wiley-Blackwell, a long-time favorite of many of us who boast of our membership in the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. I have no idea how many people read my "Brief History." I would bet very few. But Peter was one, and he thought it had the makings of a book. We struck a deal, and I can't thank Peter enough for making it happen. *The Hidden Hand* not only was his idea, but I also benefited from his advice, editing, and attention from beginning to end. And I also benefited from those at Wiley-Blackwell whom Peter recruited to help me. Specifically, I must thank my copy editor, Jamila Niroop, and Annette Musker, who compiled the index, and Georgina Coleby, who managed the manuscript through production.

Peter was very patient with me. He had to be. That's because in 2007 the book, my career, and my life turned in a very unexpected direction. Thanks in large part to the late Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, a dear friend, distinguished scholar, and committed citizen, I was asked to come to Washington to serve as assistant deputy director of intelligence for analytic integrity and standards and analytic ombudsman for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). I was stunned. I had just returned to Temple from leave, I was finishing one book and had promised Peter I'd start on this one, and I had never, ever considered government work. But accepting was one of the smartest decisions I ever made. Leaving aside any assessments of my performance, I cannot exaggerate the new insights on the entire intelligence enterprise I gained during my eighteen-month tenure in the ODNI and the

extent to which my appreciation for the dedication and capabilities of my coworkers grew. For this most rewarding and educational experience, I have my entire office to thank: Jim Marchio, Scott McCall, Karl Pieragostini, Kyle Rector, Steve Rieber, Glen Simpers, Jeff Stillman, Becky Strode, and Linda Whitehurst. I owe a special debt to my boss, Tom Fingar, the deputy director of national intelligence for analysis. As far as I am concerned, no one knows more than Tom about the finer points of intelligence. And no one is a better leader, or in my case, a better teacher.

I also must thank Tom and Bob Jervis, and Mel Leffler as well, for the advice and support they offered me in my ordeal with the requisite prepublication review of this book. I briefly describe this very difficult experience in a note immediately following these acknowledgments. Their assistance proved not only invaluable but also instrumental to reaching a resolution. I also express my gratitude to Jennifer Hudson. Her intervention months into the process was vital to reaching that resolution.

Whether I was struggling with my writing, readjusting to my comings and goings from Temple, or otherwise trying to find some semblance of balance in what became a very complicated life, I could not have asked for more support from my colleagues at Temple. The list is endless, but deserving special thanks are Petra Goode, Drew Isenberg, Jay Lockenour, Bryant Simon, Ralph Young, Vlad Zubok, and before they defected, Will Hitchcock and Liz Varon. For making me laugh as well as providing priceless assistance in so many ways, I also thank Vangie Campbell, Lafrance Howard, and, for always being there for me, Patricia Williams. My Temple students have always been a source of ideas as well as pleasure. Among the many that warrant thanks, Tim Sayle not only provided me with exceptional research help, but he also allowed himself to serve as my sounding board. I took full advantage. Matt Fay arrived at Temple as I was approaching the finish line, but not too late to provide essential assistance. Beth Bailey and David Farber warrant a category of their own, and not only for critiquing my text. For more than 25 years, whether or not at the same institution, they have been the closest of friends and the most gracious of colleagues and the closest of colleagues and the most gracious of friends. It's a distinction without a difference.

I have many friends and colleagues beyond Temple, and I have imposed on most of them over the years that it took to conceptualize and write this book. I can't name them all, but I must single out some. I asked Matthew Jones to read the entire manuscript. Matthew had been one of the principals in a British project on the CIA, "Landscapes of Secrecy." I could not have asked for a better critic. I did not ask Jeffrey Engel. He volunteered. I must

apologize as well as thank Jeff. He was so thorough, and made so many good suggestions, that had I followed up on them all I would have doubled the manuscript's length. So I compromised. Because of Jeff, the book is only several thousand words better.

Others I must thank include Sid Milkis and Jeff Jenkins of the University of Virginia. Their invitation for me to present a paper at the Miller Center on the politics of intelligence reform raised a whole new set of questions for me to address. My many conversations with Frank Costigliola about not just intelligence but also the craft of history has made me a much improved scholar. But in this case, Frank went a step farther by arranging for me to present some of my formative ideas to the University of Connecticut's Foreign Policy Seminar. Klaus Larres was similarly helpful by providing me with the opportunity to contribute to his U.S. in World Affairs lecture series at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. And I owe a debt to Ara Keys that I can never hope to repay. Ara encouraged me to apply for the Miegunyah Distinguished Visiting Fellowship at Australia's University of Melbourne. Once I applied, she shepherded through the paperwork, rewriting much of it. I am sure I would not have received the Miegunyah without her help. Winning this fellowship forced me to accelerate the pace of my completing the manuscript even as I refined my argument for the public lecture. I could also undertake the revisions in the most wondrous and hospitable of settings.

In all of my previous books, I've ended my acknowledgments by thanking my family—for their presence in my life and, frankly, for when necessary staying out of my way. This time, however, my debt to them is greater, and deeper. My wife Marion is my best friend and greatest booster. She has over the past thirty-something years regularly made sacrifices for me, but never more so than when she all but commanded me to accept the position with ODNI. I was prepared to turn down the offer. Marion insisted that I would always regret doing so. She was right. My daughters, Morgan and Tyler, sacrificed almost as much. Morgan had to be satisfied with seeing her father only on weekends and hitching rides with her friends to high school throughout her senior year. Tyler not only returned from college to a fatherless home, but she also took over my responsibility for caring for our dog in its dotage. I owe them for making my experience at ODNI richer, and that experience made this book much more rich. Finally, Marion, Tyler, and Morgan, added to whom now are my son-in-law Fred and darling granddaughter Anna Isabella, have made my life richer. How can anyone adequately express thanks for that?

Note on Redactions

Throughout this book you will encounter blacked-out text. These blackened passages were redacted by the CIA's prepublication reviewers. Let me explain.

On September 4, 2007, I Entered on Duty (EOD is the government acronym) as assistant deputy director of national intelligence for analytic integrity and standards and analytic ombudsman for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). This joint position was one of the few that was established with any specificity by the text of 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. Deputy director of national intelligence Thomas Fingar offered it to me without my applying. My mission, he explained to me, was to use the skills I had learned as a scholar to assist in the training of analysts throughout the Intelligence Community in order to improve the quality of their analysis. I was flattered. I also saw this offer as an opportunity to provide what I hoped would be valuable public service. I was honored to accept.

On that day, as required, I signed a nondisclosure or what is commonly called a secrecy agreement. Several years later, after I had left ODNI to return to my faculty position at Temple University, I accepted an invitation to serve on the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation to the Department of State (HAC). A year or two after that, by which time I had been elected HAC chair, the CIA required all committee members to sign its secrecy agreement (we had access to classified CIA documents). Both agreements stipulated that I must submit manuscripts for prepublication review in order to ensure that I do not divulge the classified information to which I had access. The briefing I received in each instance emphasized that I could continue to publish scholarship which relied on sources produced by the research methods in which I was trained. Further, if the Prepublication Review Board (PRB) had an issue with any of

my publications, it was mandated to provide me in writing with the reason. I had no reservations about signing, and I assured my colleagues on the HAC that they need not have any either.

I submitted the manuscript for *Hidden Hand* to the ODNI prepublication review staff on January 25, 2013. In the multiple previous cases when I had submitted a manuscript for prepublication review, I received a response promptly (the law requires a response within a month); invariably, the reviewers approved my manuscripts with few if any concerns. In this instance, however, ODNI sent the manuscript to the CIA because the agency had such a substantive stake (equity) in the history I had written. Despite my queries and eventual protestations, I did not receive a report until July 12, 2013, close to six months after my initial submission. What is more, the report I finally received insisted on scores of redactions without a single word of explanation.

I had not referred to, even indirectly, any classified document or conversation that I had seen or heard as a consequence of my service to either the Intelligence Community or the Department of State. As a trained historian, I systematically cited my sources, all of which came from the public record. Yet the Board insisted that I delete words, sentences, and entire passages. On occasion it required that I delete my citations of newspaper articles that I had come across in the course of my research. On other occasions, and more seriously, it redacted words that communicated the judgments and arguments that are fundamental to my conclusion. At the core of the discipline of history are the formulation, articulation, and support of judgments and arguments.

I appealed. Several weeks later, I received approval to publish a significant proportion of the "offending articles," to use the term used by a member of ODNI's pre-publication staff. Unable to discuss the redactions further over the phone or correspond by email because, officials explained to me, these modes of communication are insufficiently secure, some six month later I arranged to meet in person with two members of CIA's Prepublication Review Board. The meeting was cordial and frank. It resulted in authorization to publish more of the previously redacted material.

But as will be evident from the number of redactions remaining in this book, I did not receive authorization to remove all of them, or in my opinion, even enough of them. The CIA insists that any conduct which the U.S. government has not officially acknowledged is by definition classified, regardless of how widespread the press has reported on it or by other means it has "entered" the public sphere. Because of my privileged access to *some*

classified material, I am prohibited from publishing *any* material deemed classified, including that to which I had no privileged access. My reminders that I served in ODNI only from September 2007 to January 2009, and that as a member of the HAC I have seen documentation with dates of issue no later than the early 1980s, were irrelevant.

Had I delayed publication another six months or more, I am confident I could have "won" the "release" of a bit more material here or there. But I am satisfied that as a result of my appeal and subsequent efforts, the integrity of the book remains intact. Nevertheless, I am highly dissatisfied with my experience. I valued my work at the ODNI very much, performed my duties to the best of my ability, and never expected a reward, Still, in return for my taking leave from my university position to perform public service, my rights were abridged and my scholarly career undermined. The appeal, which resulted in the PRB's backtracking on the majority of its initial demands, is evidence of the profound flaws that plague the prepublication process. It manifestly lacks an effective mechanism to police itself. Moreover, the remaining redactions, all of which hide material readily available in the public domain, reflect an obsession with secrecy in our government and a propensity for overclassification, which not only violates America's ideals and values but also undermines the national security.

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Birth of an Enigma: 1945–1949

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is America's most enigmatic institution. Its mission requires secrecy, and, as a consequence, it and its history are shrouded in mystery. The "Company," nevertheless, is among America's most well-known institutions, with its own YouTube site, Facebook page, and Twitter account. "CIA" is likewise among the world's most recognizable acronyms, and millions of people around the globe and within the United States consider the agency both a primary instrument of and an appropriate metaphor for US foreign policy.

The enigma of the CIA goes beyond its notoriety. Opinion poll after opinion poll in the United States reveal that it is among America's most unpopular, disrespected, and mistrusted institutions. "The agency's a funny place," reads a recent comment, by one of its own veterans no less. "It's like middle schoolers with clearances," he explained. Politicians and officials of both parties, from the president on down, are fine with this description and reputation. Attributing a policy disaster, security lapse, or even a war to an intelligence failure is easier for the American public to understand than would be a deep dive into the policymaking process, and of course the policymakers and legislators escape blame. Further, intelligence gaffes seem susceptible to quick fixes. The offending intelligence officers can readily be replaced, institutional reforms can be enacted, more spies can be sent into the field and better satellites built, and analysts can be more rigorously trained. For most Americans, writes another CIA veteran, the Company is a "combination of hope chest, voodoo doll, and the portrait of Dorian Gray."[1]

Still, despite, or in a perverse sense because of, the CIA's image and reputation, the Company is unequivocally a cultural icon. The year 2001 and the

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tragic attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center brought unprecedented and unwelcome attention to the agency for its failure to "connect the dots" and prevent al-Qaeda's long-gestating operation. It was also the year that three popular series focusing on the CIA debuted on network television: "Alias" on ABC; CBS's "The Agency," and Fox's "24". All featured an attractive cast of racially and ethnically diverse men and women who are committed, competent, and courageous. Coincidentally, yet in retrospect appropriately, each of the programs aired for the first time only weeks after the 9/11 tragedy. In fact, CBS changed the sequencing of "The Agency's" episodes because the framework for the pilot script, an al-Qaeda plot to attack the West (Harrods in London) that repeatedly refers to Osama bin Laden, would have struck a raw nerve. Shortly after the show proved a success, however, CBS ran the pilot.[2]

While coincidental (the writers and producers were of course unaware of al-Qaeda's plans), the plot lines and character of these programs are revealing and suggestive of how twenty-first century Americans have come to perceive and understand the CIA. The television shows prior to 2001 that revolved around the agency were very different. "Get Smart" (1965), for example, was a slapstick comedy. "I Spy" (1965), with Bill Cosby, the first African American to play a lead in a television drama, was a light-hearted vehicle for promoting civil rights. And "Mission Impossible" (1966), which featured a make-believe CIA and decades later was turned into a series of movies to show off Tom Cruise, was pure escapism. None made an attempt to portray the CIA seriously; none raised any one of the multiple ethical, let alone legal, questions inherent in its responsibilities and behavior. This is how the CIA wanted it. Indeed, the agency went so far to buy the movie rights to novels to ensure that they never became movies and to refuse to cooperate with those movies that actually illuminated the CIA.[3]

This changed with the films about the CIA made during and in the wake of the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the Congressional hearings held in the mid-1970s to investigate the agency's misconduct. These were big Hollywood productions that represented the agency as not only un- or anti-American, but also as institutionally evil. There was the deadly and paranoid CIA featured in the director Michael Winner's "Scorpio" (1973), the misanthropic CIA portrayed in Sydney Pollack's "Three Days of the Condor" (1975), and the reprobate and renegade CIA of Oliver Stone's imagination in his 1991 "JFK." The "Hunt for Red October" (1990), "Red Storm Rising" (1992), and "Patriot Games" (also 1992), all based on Tom Clancy novels, were the exceptions that proved the rule. Through

the exploits of Harrison Ford's Jack Ryan, they sought to evoke what the historian Walter Hixson calls the Reagan-era "Cult of National Security." Because these films received Washington's cooperation, they signaled a transition in the CIA's filmography.[4]

With the end of the Cold War and as a result of the increased attention to domestic concerns paid by the White House, Congress, and the American public, the CIA leadership concluded that the agency was desperately in need of a public makeover. In the popular consciousness, James Bond was out, and Gordon Gecko was in. The CIA thus judged it vitally important to refurbish its image in order to bolster appropriations and to recruit America's best and brightest at a time when many Americans defined the Company as an unsavory relic of a bygone era. In 1996, therefore, the agency appointed Chase Brandon as its official liaison to Hollywood and permitted former employees to serve as consultants and even extras. For the purpose of projecting authenticity, "The Agency" was the first television program to receive official sanction to film inside the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Although the three shows that came out in 2001, as illustrated most forcefully by "24's" Jack Bauer, uniformly concede the moral ambiguity that so pervades the CIA's culture and mission (that mission is all but exclusively identified with operations; intelligence analysts typically make only cameo appearances if they are present at all), they present agency personnel in virtually every instance as discovering that a career spent battling against the forces of evil is as rewarding as it is exciting.[5]

Blockbuster movies that came out during this same brief window of time after the 9/11 tragedy and before America's invasion of Iraq turned into a nightmare, such as "Spy Game" (2001) and "The Recruit" (2003), project the same dynamics as the trio of 2001 television series. They portray the CIA as a bastion of patriotism and a dream job. In the former, megastars Robert Redford and Brad Pitt engage in virtually criminal behavior, but the viewer cannot help but applaud their professionalism, courage, noble self-sacrifice, and sense of brotherhood. As an MIT-trained computer whiz in "The Recruit," Colin Farrell forfeits the certainty of earning great wealth, endures the rigors of training at the "farm" (the CIA's facility at Camp Peary in Virginia), and becomes a dazzling and dashing mole-hunter simply because, as Al Pacino explains, he "believes." The demographics of the recruits at the farm also showcase that the Old Boys network that once defined the CIA had become a mix of race, ethnicity, and gender. Indeed, the CIA in 2004 hired Jennifer Garner, the seductive Sydney Bristow who in "Alias" is as well educated (she is fluent in countless languages) as she is expert in martial arts, to introduce

the recruitment video it showed at college job fairs as the agency sought to bolster its work force after years of erosion. "In the real world, the CIA serves as our country's first line of defense," Garner says. "Right now," she continues, "the CIA has important, exciting jobs for U.S. citizens."[6]

The silver and television screens have remained vehicles for communicating Garner's message. "Burn Notice," which debuted in 2007, and "Covert Affairs," first broadcast in 2010, have once again treated viewers to stylish and gorgeous agents who are highly principled and display almost superhuman skills and wisdom. They even reflect wholesome family values. Nevertheless, the contemporary environment's influence on popular representations of the CIA is palpable. Intense public criticism of the agency attended the congressional investigations of 9/11 and the production of the fatally flawed National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in 2002. That estimate erroneously claimed that Iraq's tyrannical dictator Saddam Hussein had a hidden cache of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which he was trying to supplement with a nuclear capability. The CIA was further pummeled as the death totals mounted in Iraq and it was branded as an agency that kidnapped, tortured, and assassinated. Adding insult to injury, Congress knocked it off its pedestal by enacting the 2004 reform legislation that established a director of national intelligence, effectively "demoting" the director of central intelligence (DCI) and, in principle, the agency itself.

Within this context, the darker images of the CIA resurfaced. In the 2004 summer miniseries "The Grid," which serendipitously premiered in a two-hour special the week that the report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission) became public, turf wars within the Intelligence Community marred the Global War on Terror that President George W. Bush declared soon after the 9/11 attacks. The chief culprit is the Tom Skerritt-played CIA director, who is only slightly less dastardly than the Middle Eastern terrorists. The next year, in "Syriana" George Clooney won an Oscar for portraying Bob Barnes, a CIA assassin whom the Company scapegoats, double-crosses, and ultimately kills when he unwittingly jeopardizes agency operations in the Middle East that almost unintelligibly blend geopolitics, oil, and arms sales. Matt Damon's Edward Wilson in "The Good Sheperd" (2006) is a composite of James Jesus Angleton and Richard Bissell: one a former chief of counterintelligence, the other a former deputy director of plans, both renowned, for different reasons and with various degrees of validity, as evil geniuses. Not only does a mole penetrate the highest corridors of the CIA and an agent fall victim to a seductress, but also the agents in this movie sanction an