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WATCHTOWER HANDBOOK

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by Charles Wayne

Part One

Chapter One

Part I – The Foundations of Espionage

HUMINT – Human Intelligence

Information gathered from people — recruitment, observation, debriefings. Oldest and least predictable form of intelligence.

SIGINT – Signals Intelligence

Interception and analysis of electronic communications — radio, phone, satellite, network data.

IMINT – Imagery Intelligence

Photography and satellite imagery for locating targets or verifying treaties. Resolution and context determine truth.

MASINT – Measurement & Signature Intelligence

Scientific data from thermal, acoustic, nuclear, or chemical signatures that betray activity.

OSINT – Open Source Intelligence

Publicly available information from media, academia, and social networks.

TECHINT – Technical Intelligence

Study of foreign technology — captured weapons, downed drones, or stolen schematics.

GEOINT – Geospatial Intelligence

Mapping and imagery analytics to visualize activity on Earth's surface.

Counterintelligence (CI)

Protection of secrets and detection of enemy spies through investigation and deception.

Five Eyes Alliance

U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand — partners in signals and analytic sharing.

CIA, DIA, NSA, NRO, NGA, DCSA — core U.S. intelligence agencies.

SVR, GRU, MSS, MI6 — foreign counterparts.

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Part Two

An Introduction to the Unseen World

The world operates on two levels: the one that is seen and the one that is not. History is written by the victors, but it is often shaped by the unseen hands of intelligence operatives. From ancient empires to modern nation-states, the covert acquisition of information has been a constant and critical element of power, security, and influence. This is the world of espionage— a discipline of shadows, secrets, and high stakes, where a single piece of information can alter the course of nations.

This handbook is designed as a foundational guide to the principles and practices of espionage. It is a serious examination of a field often clouded by romanticism and myth. The work of an intelligence officer is rarely as glamorous as popular culture suggests. It is a demanding profession that requires immense discipline, intellectual rigor, and an unwavering commitment to the mission. The objective is not adventure, but the strategic advantage that comes from knowing what others do not.

What is Espionage?

At its core, espionage is the practice of obtaining information of a secret or confidential nature without the permission of the holder of the information. It is distinct from other forms of information gathering, such as academic research or journalism, primarily due to the clandestine methods employed. The information sought is typically protected, and its acquisition involves circumventing security measures, whether human or technical.

Espionage can be conducted by a state, a corporation, or an individual. Its objectives are varied and can include:

- ♦ Political Intelligence: Understanding the intentions, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of foreign governments.
- ♦ Military Intelligence: Gathering data on an adversary's armed forces, weaponry, and strategic plans.

- ♦ Economic Intelligence: Acquiring proprietary information, trade secrets, or economic policies to gain a competitive advantage.
- ♦ Technological Intelligence: Obtaining details about new scientific discoveries or technological advancements.

The act of spying is fundamentally an act of penetration— breaching barriers to access guarded knowledge. This is accomplished through a range of techniques, from human intelligence (HUMINT), involving the recruitment and handling of agents, to signals intelligence (SIGINT), which involves the interception of communications.

A Brief History of Espionage

The practice of espionage is as old as human conflict and diplomacy. Sun Tzu, in his ancient treatise *The Art of War*, dedicated an entire chapter to the use of spies, emphasizing that "what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge." He outlined different types of agents and stressed the supreme importance of intelligence in warfare.

Throughout history, intelligence has been a key tool of statecraft. In ancient Rome, the *frumentarii* began as grain collectors but evolved into a secret service for the emperor, gathering information from across the empire. During the Elizabethan era in England, Sir Francis Walsingham established an extensive spy network that protected Queen Elizabeth I from numerous plots, most notably by intercepting and decoding messages that led to the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

The 20th century saw espionage evolve into a highly organized and technologically advanced profession, driven by two World Wars and the ensuing Cold War. This period became the "golden age" of modern spying, with intelligence agencies like the CIA, KGB, and MI6 engaging in a global contest for information and influence. Operations became more complex, combining traditional human spying with sophisticated code-breaking, satellite imagery, and covert action.

The Role of Espionage in Modern Times

In the 21st century, the landscape of espionage has shifted once again. While the fundamental need for intelligence remains unchanged, the methods and targets have adapted to a hyper-connected, digital world. The rise of the internet, globalized economies, and non-state actors has created new challenges and opportunities for intelligence agencies.

Today, espionage extends far beyond traditional state-on-state competition. Key areas of focus include:

- ♦ Counter-Terrorism: Identifying and disrupting terrorist networks requires deep-cover agents, electronic surveillance, and international cooperation.
- ♦ Cyber Espionage: Nations and corporations are increasingly targeted by hackers seeking to steal government secrets, intellectual property, and critical infrastructure data. The digital domain is now a primary battlefield for intelligence

services.

- ♦ Economic Security: Protecting a nation's economic interests involves uncovering unfair trade practices, corporate espionage, and threats to supply chains.
- ♦ Counter-Proliferation: Monitoring and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction is a top priority that relies heavily on technical intelligence and human sources.

The modern intelligence officer must be more adaptable than ever. They need to be as comfortable analyzing satellite imagery and data streams as they are cultivating a human asset in a foreign capital. The "great game" continues, but its players, rules, and playing field are in constant flux. This handbook will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the skills, tradecraft, and strategic thinking required to navigate this unseen

Part Three

Intelligence Gathering Techniques

The acquisition of information is the central function of espionage. An intelligence service without effective collection capabilities is merely an analytical body working with incomplete data. The methods used to gather this information are diverse, each with its own strengths, weaknesses, and operational requirements. A successful intelligence operation often relies not on a single method, but on a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach, a concept known as "all-source intelligence." This chapter provides a detailed examination of the primary disciplines of intelligence collection, known in the trade as the "INTs."

An Overview of Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering, or collection, is the systematic process of obtaining information about the capabilities, intentions, and activities of foreign powers, organizations, or individuals. The goal is to provide timely, accurate, and relevant data to policymakers, military commanders, and other decision-makers. This process is driven by specific requirements, often formulated as questions that need answers to support national security objectives.

Each collection discipline offers a different lens through which to view the target. Human sources provide insight into plans and motivations, while technical sensors can reveal capabilities and activities.

The challenge for an intelligence service lies in selecting the right tool for the right target at the right time and integrating the resulting information into a coherent picture. The value of any piece of intelligence is judged by its accuracy, timeliness, and relevance to the established requirements.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT)

Human Intelligence is the oldest and, for many objectives, the most valuable form of intelligence. It is derived from information collected and provided by human sources. Unlike technical methods that capture what is happening, HUMINT can reveal why it is happening by providing access to a person's thoughts, plans, and intentions.

The core of HUMINT is the management of human relationships for the purpose of acquiring secrets. This process is often referred to as the "agent acquisition cycle" or "recruitment cycle," which typically involves:

1. **Spotting:** Identifying individuals who have access to the desired information.
2. **Assessing:** Evaluating a potential source's access, motivation, and suitability for recruitment.
Motivations can range from ideology, money, and coercion to ego (MICE).
3. **Recruiting:** Making a direct or indirect pitch to the individual to persuade them to cooperate.
This is the most delicate and dangerous phase.
4. **Handling:** Managing the recruited asset, which includes tasking them, communicating securely, and ensuring their well-being.
5. **Terminating:** Ending the relationship when the asset's access is lost, their security is compromised, or the intelligence requirement is fulfilled.

HUMINT operations are conducted by case officers—highly trained intelligence professionals who operate under official or non-official cover. A case officer's primary function is not to be a "spy" in the popular sense, but to recruit and manage those who are.

Example: A case officer under diplomatic cover at an embassy might cultivate a relationship with a mid-level official in a foreign government's ministry of defense. Over months or even years, the

officer assesses the official's vulnerabilities and motivations. Eventually, the officer recruits the official, who then begins providing classified documents on military strategy in exchange for financial compensation. The case officer's tradecraft involves secure communication methods, dead drops for material exchange, and counter-surveillance techniques to protect both parties.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)

Signals Intelligence is intelligence derived from the interception of signals, whether communications between people (Communications Intelligence or COMINT) or electronic signals not directly used in communication (Electronic Intelligence or ELINT). In the digital age, SIGINT is a dominant and prolific source of intelligence.

COMINT involves the interception of foreign communications. This can include telephone conversations, emails, text messages, and radio transmissions. The primary challenges in COMINT are gaining access to the communications and breaking any encryption used to protect them. Specialized agencies operate massive listening stations, tap undersea cables, and use satellites to intercept vast amounts of data.

ELINT focuses on collecting and analyzing foreign electronic signals that are not communications. This typically involves radar systems, weapons guidance systems, and other non-communicative electronic emitters. By analyzing these signals, intelligence analysts can determine the location, capabilities, and characteristics of an adversary's military hardware.

Example: An ELINT-gathering aircraft flying in international airspace near a hostile country's border can detect the signals from an air defense radar system. Analysis of the radar's frequency, pulse repetition rate, and other characteristics can reveal the type of system it is, its effective range, and potential vulnerabilities. This information is critical for pilots who may need to evade or destroy that system during a conflict.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)

Open-Source Intelligence is derived from publicly and commercially available information. This

includes media (newspapers, television, radio), internet sources (websites, blogs, social media), public government data (reports, budgets, hearings), and professional and academic publications. While the information itself is not secret, its expert collection and analysis can produce valuable intelligence.

The rise of the internet has caused an explosion in the volume and value of OSINT. It is often used to provide foundational intelligence and context for information gathered through clandestine means. It can reveal social trends, political sentiment, and economic activity. OSINT is considered a low-risk, low-cost collection method, but its primary challenge is "information overload"—sifting through immense quantities of data to find what is relevant and reliable.

Example: An intelligence analyst tasked with assessing the stability of a foreign regime could use OSINT to monitor local news reports, social media posts from activists, and economic data released by international financial institutions. By tracking keywords, sentiment, and the frequency of protest-related discussions online, the analyst can identify growing public discontent and provide an early warning of potential political instability long before it escalates.

Imagery Intelligence (IMINT)

Imagery Intelligence is the collection and analysis of information derived from photographs and other imagery. Historically, this meant photographs from spy planes, but today it is dominated by satellite imagery. IMINT can be produced from visual photography, infrared sensors, radar, and other imaging technologies.

IMINT is exceptionally useful for monitoring activities, identifying facilities, and assessing capabilities. Analysts can use it to:

- ☐ Track the construction of military bases or nuclear facilities.
- ☐ Count the number of tanks, ships, or aircraft at a specific location.
- ☐ Assess damage after a military strike.
- ☐ Monitor troop movements and military exercises.

The analysis of imagery is a highly specialized skill. Analysts look for minute changes over time,

identify specific types of equipment based on their visual signatures, and interpret the context of the activities they observe.

Example: Satellite imagery taken over several months reveals the construction of a previously unknown facility in a remote desert. Analysts note the presence of high-security perimeters, reinforced bunkers, and specific equipment consistent with a ballistic missile development program. This IMINT provides concrete evidence of a clandestine weapons program, corroborating or even preceding reports from human sources.

Cyber Intelligence

A newer and rapidly evolving discipline, Cyber Intelligence is a hybrid field that involves collecting intelligence from cyberspace and providing intelligence for cyber operations. It overlaps significantly with SIGINT and OSINT but is distinct in its focus on the digital domain as both a source and a battleground.

Intelligence collection in cyberspace can involve penetrating an adversary's computer networks to exfiltrate data, a form of cyber espionage. This requires sophisticated technical skills to bypass firewalls, exploit software vulnerabilities, and avoid detection. The stolen information can range from government secrets to proprietary industrial designs.

Cyber intelligence also supports defensive and offensive cyber operations. Intelligence analysts map adversary networks, identify key nodes and vulnerabilities, and monitor the activities of hostile hacking groups. This enables proactive defense of friendly networks and provides the targeting information needed for offensive cyber effects operations.

Example: An intelligence agency's cyber division detects a persistent intrusion into the network of a major defense contractor. By monitoring the attacker's activity within the network, analysts determine they are a state-sponsored group. The cyber intelligence team tracks the data being exfiltrated, identifies the command-and-control servers used by the hackers, and analyzes their malware. This intelligence allows the government to attribute the attack, assess the damage, and develop

countermeasures to block the adversary's access and future attempts.

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Part Four

Essential Skills for the Intelligence Officer

The effectiveness of an intelligence officer is not determined by technology or gadgets, but by a set of core, deeply ingrained skills. These abilities, often referred to as "tradecraft," are the foundational tools that allow an officer to operate securely, build trust, and acquire guarded information under adverse conditions. While technical collection systems provide vast amounts of data, it is the skilled operative on the ground who can interpret human intent, navigate complex social landscapes, and manage the high-stakes relationships at the heart of espionage. This chapter details the essential cognitive and practical skills required for success in the field.

Observation and Situational Awareness

The most fundamental skill for any intelligence officer is the ability to observe and interpret the surrounding environment with exceptional clarity. This goes far beyond simply looking; it is an active, continuous process of perceiving details, understanding their context, and anticipating potential developments. Superior situational awareness allows an officer to detect threats, identify opportunities, and maintain control in unpredictable settings.

Developing this skill involves training the mind to:

- ☐ **Establish a Baseline:** In any environment, there is a normal pattern of activity—the typical flow of people, traffic, and noise. An officer must first learn to quickly establish this baseline.

- **Identify Anomalies:** The key to detection is noticing deviations from the baseline. This could be a person who appears out of place, a vehicle that passes too frequently, or an unusual silence in a normally busy area. These anomalies are indicators that require further assessment.
- **Practice Active Observation:** This involves consciously taking in sensory information. For example, when entering a room, an officer should mentally note the number of people present, the locations of exits, potential security cameras, and the general mood. This is not a paranoid exercise but a disciplined habit of information gathering.

Example: While waiting to meet an asset in a public park, an officer observes the normal activity: children playing, people jogging, and couples strolling. They notice a man sitting on a bench who, unlike others, is not engaged with his phone or a book but is instead methodically scanning the area. His head movements are too systematic for a casual observer. This deviation from the baseline flags him as potential surveillance, prompting the officer to abort the meeting and initiate counter-surveillance procedures.

Communication and Code-Breaking

Communication in espionage is a dual-sided discipline. It involves both the art of interpersonal connection to persuade and influence, and the science of clandestine communication to transmit information securely.

Interpersonal Communication: An officer, particularly a case officer, must be a master of rapport. This requires active listening, empathy, and the ability to understand and leverage human psychology. The goal is to build a trusted relationship with an asset, making them feel understood and valued while guiding them toward fulfilling intelligence requirements.

Clandestine Communication: When communicating with assets or headquarters, security is paramount. Methods include:

- **Covert Writing:** Using invisible ink or microdots to conceal messages within seemingly innocuous letters or documents.

- **Codes and Ciphers:** Employing pre-arranged codes (where words or phrases represent other meanings) or ciphers (which encrypt messages letter by letter) to protect the content of a message. Modern espionage relies on advanced, computationally secure digital encryption.
- **Signaling:** Using subtle, pre-arranged signals to confirm actions without direct contact. This could be a chalk mark on a lamppost to indicate a dead drop is full or an open book placed in a specific window to signal that it is safe to meet.

Code-breaking (Cryptanalysis): While specialized agencies handle most high-level cryptanalysis, an officer in the field must have a foundational understanding of cryptographic principles to recognize vulnerabilities and protect their own communications. This includes understanding the difference between strong and weak encryption and recognizing patterns that might betray a code.

Disguise and Deception Techniques

Deception is central to espionage. It is the art of manipulating perceptions to mislead an adversary, protect one's identity, or create an opportunity for an operation. Disguise is a tool of deception, but the skill extends far beyond physical appearance.

Physical Disguise: The goal of a physical disguise is not to become unrecognizable, but to become unmemorable. It is about blending in, not standing out. A successful disguise is subtle: a change in hairstyle, the addition of glasses, a different style of walking, or clothing that makes one appear to be a local resident or a tourist. The aim is to deflect detailed observation and prevent a witness from providing a precise description.

Cover for Action vs. Cover for Status:

- **Cover for Action:** A short-term deception used for a specific operational act, such as adopting the guise of a utility worker to gain access to a building.
- **Cover for Status:** A long-term, fully developed false identity, complete with a backstory, documentation, and a plausible profession. This is the foundation for a deep-cover officer operating in a foreign country.

Deception techniques also include misdirection, where an adversary's attention is deliberately drawn toward a false target, and disinformation, which involves feeding an adversary false information that appears credible to influence their decisions.

Surveillance and Counter-Surveillance

Surveillance is the covert observation of people, places, and activities. Counter-surveillance consists of the measures taken to detect, evade, or neutralize surveillance. Mastery of both is critical for operational security.

Surveillance: An officer must be able to conduct surveillance without being detected. This is often done by a team to minimize the exposure of any single individual. Techniques include foot and vehicle follows, static observation posts, and the use of technical surveillance devices. The objective is to gather information on a target's patterns of life, contacts, and vulnerabilities.

Counter-Surveillance (Surveillance Detection): Before conducting any sensitive act, such as servicing a dead drop or meeting an asset, an officer must perform a Surveillance Detection Route (SDR). An SDR is a planned route through an area designed to flush out any potential surveillance. It involves:

- ☐ Varying speeds and modes of transportation.
- ☐ Making sudden, but logical, turns.
- ☐ Using "choke points" like public transit stations or busy markets where a follower is forced to get closer.
- ☐ Using reflective surfaces (shop windows, mirrors) to observe who is behind them.

If surveillance is detected, the operation is immediately aborted. An officer's primary duty is to protect themselves, their assets, and the integrity of the operation.

Emotional Intelligence and Adaptability

Beyond practical tradecraft, the most critical personal attribute of an intelligence officer is a high degree of emotional intelligence and adaptability. The work is inherently stressful, ambiguous, and

isolating.

Emotional Intelligence: This is the ability to manage one's own emotions and perceive the emotions of others. An officer must remain calm under extreme pressure, resist manipulation, and accurately assess the motivations and emotional states of their assets and targets. They cannot allow fear, anger, or ego to dictate their actions.

Adaptability: No operation ever goes exactly as planned. The operational environment is fluid, and unexpected challenges are the norm. An officer must be able to think on their feet, improvise solutions, and adapt their plans to changing circumstances without compromising the mission or their security. This requires mental flexibility, creativity, and a deep understanding of the principles of tradecraft, allowing them to apply those principles to novel situations.

Example: A case officer's primary asset unexpectedly signals a state of emergency, requiring an immediate, unscheduled meeting. The standard protocol is to refuse such meetings due to the high risk. However, using emotional intelligence, the officer recalls the asset's psychological profile and recognizes the signal is likely one of genuine panic, not a trap. Using their adaptability, the officer quickly devises a new, short-term plan for a brief, low-signature encounter in a crowded public space to assess the situation, calm the asset, and exfiltrate them if necessary. This blend of empathy and improvisation is the hallmark of an elite operative.

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Part Five

Tools of the Trade

While the human element remains the most critical component of espionage, the tools an intelligence officer employs are vital extensions of their tradecraft. From classic clandestine devices to the sophisticated technology of the digital age, these instruments are designed for a single purpose: to enhance the operator's ability to access, record, and transmit information securely. The selection and use of these tools are governed by the specific requirements of the mission and the nature of the operational environment. This chapter examines the arsenal of equipment available to the modern intelligence officer, from timeless implements to cutting-edge cyber weapons.

Traditional Espionage Tools

Certain tools have been staples of espionage for decades, if not centuries, because they address fundamental operational needs that persist regardless of technological advancement. Their effectiveness lies in their simplicity and reliability under a wide range of conditions.

- **Lockpicks and Bypass Tools:** Gaining surreptitious entry into a location to search for documents, plant a listening device, or conduct other intelligence activities is a common requirement. A skilled officer carries a set of lockpicks, tension wrenches, and bypass tools (such as shims or decoders) tailored to the types of locks prevalent in their area of operation. Mastery of lock-picking is a perishable skill that requires constant practice to defeat both simple

and high-security mechanical locks quickly and without leaving a trace.

- **Disguise Kits:** As discussed, the purpose of a disguise is to become unmemorable. A field kit contains items for subtle but effective alteration of one's appearance. This includes non-prescription glasses with different frame styles, reversible clothing, subtle hair pieces or wigs, and makeup for creating or concealing blemishes and altering skin tone. More advanced kits might contain dental veneers or prosthetics to change the shape of the face for high-stakes, short-duration operations.
- **Concealment Devices:** The need to hide and transport sensitive items—such as microfilm, digital storage media, or money—is paramount. Concealment devices, or "hides," are ordinary objects modified with a secret compartment. Examples range from hollowed-out coins and bolts to pens with hidden chambers and shoes with false heels. The quality of a concealment device is judged by its ability to withstand casual and even detailed inspection.
- **Covert Cameras:** Before the digital age, miniature film cameras like the Minox B were legendary spy tools. They were small enough to be concealed in a hand and capable of photographing documents with high resolution. While largely replaced by digital technology, the principle remains the same: a small, easily hidden device for capturing images covertly.

Modern Technology and Surveillance Devices

The technological revolution has provided intelligence services with an array of powerful tools for surveillance and secure communication. These devices have dramatically expanded the reach and capability of field operatives.

- **Listening Devices ("Bugs"):** Modern audio surveillance devices are incredibly small, powerful, and versatile. They can be disguised as everyday objects like power adapters, pens, or smoke detectors. Some are self-powered with long-life batteries, while others draw power from the object they are hidden in, allowing for indefinite operation. They can transmit audio in real-time via radio frequency or cellular networks, or they can store recordings for later

retrieval.

- **Tracking Devices:** GPS trackers, often magnetic and easily attached to the underside of a vehicle, allow an operational team to monitor a target's movements in real time without the risks of a physical surveillance follow. These devices provide precise location data, speed, and direction, which can be monitored remotely from a command center.
- **Encrypted Communication Tools:** Secure communication is the lifeblood of any intelligence operation. Modern officers use dedicated devices and specialized software applications that provide end-to-end encryption for voice calls, text messages, and data transfers. These systems are designed to be resistant to interception and decryption by even sophisticated adversaries. Communications may be routed through multiple servers around the world to obfuscate their origin and destination.
- **Specialized Sensors:** Beyond audio and video, officers may deploy a range of other sensors. Infrared cameras can detect heat signatures through walls or in complete darkness. Laser microphones can pick up conversations from a distance by measuring the vibrations on a windowpane caused by sound waves inside a room.

Cyber Tools

The digital domain is now a primary theater for espionage, and intelligence agencies have developed a potent arsenal of cyber tools for both collection and disruption.

- **Hacking Software and Exploits:** This category includes malware, spyware, and trojans designed to infiltrate a target's computer or smartphone. Once installed—often via a phishing email or a compromised website—this software can exfiltrate files, log keystrokes, capture screen images, and even remotely activate a device's camera and microphone. "Zero-day" exploits, which are vulnerabilities in software unknown to the vendor, are highly prized tools for penetrating well-defended networks.
- **Digital Forensics Tools:** When an intelligence agency acquires a target's computer or hard

drive, forensic tools are used to extract information, even if it has been deleted. These tools can recover files, browser histories, and communication logs, creating a detailed picture of the user's activities. On the defensive side, counter-intelligence officers use these same tools to analyze their own systems after a suspected breach to determine the extent of the damage and the attacker's methods.

- **Network Analysis and Mapping Tools:** Before launching a cyber-attack, intelligence agencies use sophisticated tools to map an adversary's network architecture. These tools identify servers, routers, firewalls, and potential vulnerabilities. This "digital reconnaissance" is a critical preparatory step for any major cyber-espionage operation, allowing the attackers to plan their route of entry and exfiltration.
- **Specialized Hardware Implants:** Agencies such as the NSA have developed hardware-based tools to facilitate covert access and surveillance. For example, **RAGEMASTER** is a device embedded in a monitor cable, enabling the interception and remote viewing of the screen's contents without alerting the user. This device operates by emitting signals that can be captured and reconstructed into an image of what is being displayed, providing direct access to sensitive data in real time.
- **Peripheral Device Manipulation:** Advanced hardware implants, such as **COTTONMOUTH-I**, are designed to look and function like ordinary USB devices but contain clandestine modules for espionage. COTTONMOUTH-I not only intercepts and monitors communications passing through the USB port, but it can also inject malicious software (Trojans) into the connected system, establishing a persistent backdoor and allowing unfettered remote access for further exploitation.
- **Mobile Device Exploitation:** Software implants like **DROPOUTJEEP** demonstrate the capacity to compromise smartphones with advanced persistence. Originally developed to target iPhones, DROPOUTJEEP enables an operator to remotely access files, extract contact lists and

text messages, activate the device's camera and microphone, and track the phone's location in real time. The sophistication of such tools underscores the vulnerabilities inherent in widely used consumer technologies and highlights the degree to which target device security can be undermined.

These advanced cyber tools exemplify the unrivaled reach of modern espionage in the digital age, enabling agencies not only to gather communications and files but also to covertly monitor and control target systems at a distance. Their deployment requires high-level technical expertise and is generally reserved for priority intelligence targets where physical access is limited or impossible.

Everyday Objects Repurposed for Espionage

An officer's greatest asset is their ingenuity. The ability to improvise and repurpose common, everyday items for operational use is a hallmark of skilled tradecraft. This approach has the significant advantage of allowing an officer to carry tools that do not arouse suspicion.

- ❑ **Roll-on Camera:** Disguised as an ordinary deodorant stick, this device houses a miniature camera, allowing for covert photography or video capture during routine activities.
- ❑ **Pencil with Eraser Cavity:** Appearing as a standard pencil, it contains a hidden cavity beneath the eraser, suitable for concealing small notes, microdots, or other critical items.
- ❑ **Hypodermic Needle Hidden in Parker Ballpoint Pen:** This everyday writing instrument can be modified to conceal a slender hypodermic needle, providing a discreet way to administer substances or, in extreme circumstances, neutralize a threat.
- ❑ **"Spy Dust" (Radiographic Tracking Powder):** Developed for tracking persons of interest, this radiographic powder is invisible and harmless but can be detected by a Geiger counter, enabling operatives to monitor movements without a target's knowledge.
- ❑ **Spy Coins (Hollow Coins):** Indistinguishable from ordinary currency, these coins are expertly hollowed out and used for transporting secret messages, suicide poisons, or microfilms through security checks and hostile territories without detection.

- **Smartphones:** A standard smartphone is the ultimate multi-purpose espionage tool. It can be used for overt and covert photography, audio recording, GPS navigation during a surveillance detection route, and secure communication (using specialized apps). It can also store maps, notes, and digital copies of documents.
- **Clothing and Accessories:** A scarf or a newspaper can be used to conceal the hands while picking a lock. A brightly colored hat or bag can serve as a pre-arranged signal to another officer. The reflective surface of a pair of sunglasses can be used to observe someone behind you.
- **Improvised Weapons:** While intelligence officers are not assassins, they must be prepared for self-defense. A tightly rolled magazine, a pen, or a belt can be used as an effective improvised weapon in a dangerous situation. The key is not the object itself, but the officer's training and mindset to use whatever is available to ensure their survival and escape.

Ultimately, a tool is only as effective as the person wielding it.

An officer must have a deep, practical understanding of each item in their kit, knowing its capabilities, its limitations, and the specific circumstances in which it should—and should not—be deployed.

Part Six

Counterintelligence and Operational Security

For every action in espionage, there is an equal and opposite reaction. While an intelligence service strives to collect information, its adversaries work tirelessly to prevent that collection, deceive the collector, and penetrate the collecting organization itself. This adversarial dynamic is the domain of counterintelligence (CI). It is the art and science of protecting one's own intelligence operations from the enemy. Hand in hand with CI is Operational Security (OPSEC), the set of practices and procedures that officers use to protect their missions. Without a robust understanding and application of CI and OPSEC, even the most brilliant intelligence collection plan is doomed to fail.

The Importance of Counterintelligence in Espionage

Counterintelligence serves as the shield for the intelligence community's sword. Its primary mission is twofold: to protect a nation's secrets and assets from foreign intelligence services and to neutralize the efforts of those services. It is a defensive and offensive discipline that aims to:

- ❑ **Protect Assets:** This includes safeguarding personnel (officers and assets), information (classified data), and facilities (embassies, stations).
- ❑ **Identify Threats:** CI actively seeks to identify hostile intelligence officers, uncover their methods, and understand their objectives.
- ❑ **Deceive and Manipulate:** Beyond simple defense, a primary goal of CI is to manipulate

hostile intelligence services. This can involve feeding them controlled, false information (disinformation) or turning their own officers into double agents.

- **Ensure Operational Integrity:** CI ensures that the intelligence being collected is genuine and not disinformation planted by an adversary. It validates sources and vets information to prevent the organization from making critical decisions based on faulty intelligence.

An intelligence agency that excels at collection but fails at counterintelligence is like a house with no locks on its doors. It is vulnerable, exposed, and ultimately ineffective. Every officer is a CI officer; they are the first line of defense responsible for the security of their own operations.

Techniques for Identifying and Neutralizing Threats

Identifying and neutralizing threats from hostile intelligence services (HIS) requires a proactive and analytical approach. It is a constant battle of wits fought in the shadows.

- **Surveillance and Observation:** Just as an officer conducts surveillance on a target, CI teams conduct surveillance on suspected hostile intelligence officers. They track their movements, document their meetings, and analyze their patterns of life to identify their network of assets and understand their mission.
- **Asset Validation and Vetting:** Not every volunteer who walks into an embassy offering secrets is genuine. Many are "dangles"—provocations sent by a hostile service to waste resources, identify intelligence officers, or plant disinformation. CI uses rigorous vetting processes, including polygraphs, background checks, and psychological profiling, to assess the bona fides of potential assets.
- **Double Agent Operations:** One of the most effective CI techniques is to recruit an officer from a hostile service. A successful double agent can provide invaluable information on their service's personnel, methods, and active operations. They can also be used as a channel to pass disinformation back to the adversary, turning the enemy's own collection efforts against them.
- **Defensive Counterintelligence:** This involves analyzing one's own organization to identify and

patch vulnerabilities. CI officers conduct security audits, investigate unauthorized disclosures (leaks), and provide security awareness training to all personnel. They study the methods of hostile services to anticipate future attack vectors.

Neutralizing a threat does not always mean arresting the hostile officer. Often, a more subtle approach is more effective. This can include declaring the officer persona non grata (for those under official cover), disrupting their operations, or "burning" their assets by exposing them.

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Operational Security (OPSEC) Measures

OPSEC comprises the specific actions and procedures that an individual officer uses to protect their operation. It is the practical application of a counterintelligence mindset.

- **Surveillance Detection Routes (SDRs):** As previously discussed, an officer never goes directly to a sensitive meeting or dead drop. They conduct an SDR to detect if they are under surveillance. This is a fundamental and non-negotiable OPSEC discipline.
- **Clandestine Communication Protocols:** All communication with assets and headquarters must follow strict protocols. This includes using pre-arranged signals, employing secure dead drops, and using encrypted digital channels. The goal is to communicate without creating a detectable link between the officer and their contacts.
- **Mindfulness and Situational Awareness:** OPSEC is a 24/7 mindset. An officer must remain constantly aware of their surroundings, looking for anomalies that could indicate surveillance or a threat. They must practice "digital hygiene," ensuring their personal and cover online activities are kept separate and do not expose their true identity.
- **Need-to-Know Principle:** Information is shared only with those who absolutely need it to perform their duties. Officers do not discuss operational details with anyone not directly involved, as every person who knows a secret is a potential point of failure.

- **Contingency Planning:** Every operation must have contingency plans. What happens if the asset is arrested? What is the escape plan if the officer is compromised? What is the duress signal to indicate a meeting is taking place under hostile control? Planning for failure is a key component of ensuring survival.

Case Studies of Successful Counterintelligence Operations

- **The Cambridge Five:** This infamous case is also a story of a long-term CI failure for the West and a stunning success for the Soviet Union. However, the eventual unraveling of the network was a major CI achievement for British and American intelligence. Through painstaking analysis of archival communications and the slow accumulation of evidence over years, investigators were able to identify Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess as Soviet agents, prompting their defection in 1951. This led to the eventual identification of Kim Philby, the ring's most damaging member. The investigation, though slow, demonstrated the power of methodical, long-term analysis in uncovering deep-penetration agents.
- **Operation Mincemeat:** During World War II, British intelligence sought to deceive the Germans about the Allied invasion of Sicily. In a brilliant CI and deception operation, they obtained a human corpse, dressed it as a Royal Marine officer, and planted fake documents on it detailing a plan to invade Greece and Sardinia. The body was then released from a submarine off the coast of Spain, where it was expected the neutral but pro-Axis Spanish authorities would pass the documents to the Germans. The Germans fell for the deception completely, diverting troops away from Sicily. This classic operation shows CI not just as a defensive shield, but as a proactive weapon to manipulate enemy actions.

Lessons Learned from Counterintelligence Failures

- **Aldrich Ames:** Ames was a CIA officer who began spying for the Soviet Union in 1985. For years, he passed information that led to the execution of at least ten top-level CIA assets in the USSR. The CIA's initial failure to identify the mole was a catastrophic CI breakdown. **Lesson:**

The agency was too slow to accept the possibility of an internal traitor, initially blaming the losses on compromised communication systems. An assumption of internal loyalty, or "institutional trust," can create a critical blind spot. Rigorous and impartial internal investigation is crucial when assets are being lost systematically.

- **Robert Hanssen:** Hanssen was an FBI agent who spied for the Soviet Union and later Russia for over two decades, from 1979 to 2001. He compromised a vast range of American intelligence sources, methods, and operations. His case highlighted severe flaws in the FBI's internal security. **Lesson:** Hanssen was never given a polygraph examination during his career, despite his access to extremely sensitive information. Furthermore, warning signs in his behavior were overlooked. The failure demonstrated that technical security measures are insufficient without robust personnel security procedures and a culture where anomalous behavior is reported and investigated, regardless of an individual's rank or position. The most dangerous threats can often come from trusted insiders.
- **Ana Montes:** Montes was a senior analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) who spied for Cuba over the course of nearly 17 years. She provided the Cuban government with vast amounts of classified information, including details on U.S. military operations, intelligence activities, and the identities of American operatives. Montes skillfully avoided detection by exhibiting an outwardly exemplary professional record while taking care to avoid drawing attention to her activities. She memorized classified material rather than removing documents, communicated with Cuban intelligence through encrypted shortwave radio, and met her handlers using clandestine techniques. **Lesson:** Montes' case demonstrates that a motivated insider can evade traditional security checks through personal discipline and a deep understanding of internal procedures. Her successful deception for nearly two decades exposes the vital need for continuous monitoring, insider threat awareness, and the importance of robust counterintelligence practices focused not just on technical safeguards but also on behavioral

indicators and lifestyle anomalies. Regular reinvestigations, cross-agency communication, and fostering a culture where employees are encouraged to report suspicions can all play a critical role in detecting and stopping such threats.

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Part Seven

Tradecraft

Tradecraft is the lifeblood of espionage. It is the comprehensive set of skills, methods, and techniques used by intelligence officers and their assets to conduct clandestine operations securely and effectively. While technology provides powerful tools and cover identities offer protection, it is the disciplined application of tradecraft that governs every action in the field. It is the practical art of managing secrets, people, and risk in a hostile environment. From the subtle nod that confirms a signal to the intricate planning of a clandestine meeting, tradecraft is a language of its own, understood by practitioners and hunted by their adversaries. This chapter explores the core tenets of this essential discipline, introducing both classic and modern techniques that span the evolution of spycraft.

The Definition and Importance of Tradecraft

At its core, tradecraft is the methodology for avoiding detection while gathering intelligence. It is a set of learned behaviors and established procedures designed to counter the efforts of opposing counterintelligence services. Its importance cannot be overstated. A single, minor lapse in tradecraft—a hurried meeting, a poorly chosen dead drop location, a careless conversation—can lead to the compromise of an officer, the arrest of an asset, the failure of a mission, and even loss of life.

Tradecraft also encompasses specialized roles and operational support. For example, within the Secret Intelligence Service, "FIREMEN" are headquarters personnel available for urgent, short-term

overseas assignments, ready to address critical operational needs on short notice. Within the CIA's paramilitary operations, officers are classified as either "blue badgers" (career CIA employees) or "green badgers" (contractors with unique skillsets), each playing distinctive roles in clandestine missions.

The primary purpose of tradecraft is to create a secure operational environment. It enforces a strict separation between the clandestine and the overt, ensuring that an officer's secret activities leave no trace that can be connected to their cover identity. It is a discipline of patience, observation, and precision, demanding a level of mental fortitude and self-control that goes far beyond the ordinary. For the field officer, good tradecraft is not just a professional requirement; it is a survival mechanism.

Key Tradecraft Techniques

While the range of techniques is vast, a few core skills form the foundation of field operations. These are practiced relentlessly until they become second nature.

- **Surveillance and Counter-surveillance:** Surveillance is the act of covertly observing a person, place, or object to gather information. Counter-surveillance is the set of actions taken to detect if one is the target of such observation. Before any sensitive act, an officer will conduct a Surveillance Detection Route (SDR), a planned journey with specific waypoints and maneuvers (e.g., stopping abruptly to browse a shop window, taking an unexpected turn, using public transport for a single stop) designed to reveal the presence of a surveillance team. SDRs are foundational, but elaborate techniques may also be used by law enforcement. For example, the FBI has used "floating box" vehicle surveillance—a fleet of vehicles that rotate positions and change patterns to discreetly follow a subject, minimizing the chance of detection.
- **FBI Special Surveillance Group ("Gs" or "Super Gs"):** These agents are specialized in visual surveillance, shadowing targets with extraordinary persistence and discipline. Their presence is often felt during SDRs, challenging even the most experienced officers.
- **Dead Drops, Mail Drops, and Brush Passes:** Tradecraft provides safer alternatives to direct meetings. A **dead drop** is a pre-arranged, concealed location for leaving items. A **mail**

drop, also known as a live letterbox, refers to a third-party location or address used to route physical messages or packages, often without direct contact between sender and recipient. The FBI commonly uses mail drops to monitor communications in counterintelligence cases. A **brush pass** is a brief, seemingly accidental encounter in a public place where an item is covertly exchanged—requiring precise timing and choreography.

- **Covert Communication (CovCom):** Communication is a dynamic area for tradecraft innovation.
 - **Signals:** Simple, deniable actions used to convey messages. A chalk mark on a lamppost might mean "Dead drop is loaded." A specific colored book placed in a window could signal safe or dangerous conditions. In classic spy lore, the **signal site** is any prearranged physical or digital location that conveys such messages—a flowerpot on a balcony, a towel draped a certain way, or even patterns in public advertisements.
 - **Numbers Stations:** These clandestine shortwave radio broadcasts transmit coded messages using sequences of numbers or random words. Believed to serve as communication channels to intelligence agents operating in hostile territory, they remain an enigmatic staple of tradecraft, with new messages often read aloud by computer-generated or mechanical voices.
 - **One-Time Pads:** A gold standard of cryptography, one-time pads use a single-use, random key that, when correctly applied, renders the message absolutely secure—provided both sender and receiver have identical copies of the pad. The challenge lies in safely distributing and destroying the pad after use.
 - **Steganography:** Beyond traditional codes, steganography hides a message within a mundane file—an innocuous photograph might contain a hidden text if the binary data is manipulated in a specific way. This technique is invaluable for digital age espionage, where outright encrypted messages might draw suspicion.

- **Seals and Flaps:** Handling mail or packages without detection is essential. Seals and flaps refer to the incredibly delicate operations conducted by professionals trained to open and reseal envelopes, packages, or containers without leaving any observable evidence—allowing the interception, copying, or alteration of contents before safe resealing.

Tradecraft in Evasion, Recognition, and Deception

- **False Flag Operations:** Tradecraft often involves deception at its highest levels. A "false flag" is a mission or contact made under the guise of a third party, misleading the target about the true affiliation of the officer. For instance, a Russian officer might pose as an official from a completely unrelated country to recruit an asset without hostile suspicion.
- **Parole:** When unknown individuals—typically a case officer and a new agent—meet for the first time, prearranged recognition words or signals (a "parole" or "protocol") ensure that both parties verify each other's identity before proceeding. This method is vital to avoid dangerous mistakes or sting operations.
- **Cir Outs:** On rare occasions, an agent may feel compelled to withdraw from operations due to fear, suspicion, or personal circumstances. A "cir out" is a discreet process, employing carefully signaled messages and protocols to allow an agent or asset to safely exit their clandestine role.
- **JARK:** In modern counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, tracking weapons is sometimes necessary. For example, British security forces secretly inserted "jarks"—homing devices—into paramilitary weapons in Northern Ireland to track their movement, revealing arms caches or routes used by insurgent groups.
- **RIP (Reinvestigation Polygraph):** Ongoing loyalty is regularly tested with security checks such as polygraph examinations. RIP, or "reinvestigation polygraph," is an internal security measure designed to uncover divided loyalties, suspicious behavior, or clandestine activities within an organization.

Advanced Detection, Surveillance, and Cryptography

- **RAFTER:** Tradecraft is not just about human skill—it spans the technical. The British RAFTER technique discovered that even radio receivers, though they do not transmit, emit weak local oscillator signals. Specialized equipment could detect these signals from outside a building, thereby identifying the presence and tuned frequency of a clandestine radio operator.
- **Numbers Stations and One-Time Pads:** These remain essential for untraceable communication. The unpredictability and anonymity offered by numbers stations, paired with the unbreakable encryption of one-time pads, have allowed spies, dissidents, and covert operatives to share secrets for generations.
- **MAIL DROP (Live Letterbox):** Known as a “mail drop” to the FBI, and as a “live letterbox” in classic tradecraft, these are designated intermediary addresses or individuals trusted to pass along packages, funds, or correspondence without direct association between sender and recipient—providing compartmentation and an extra layer of deniability.

Specialized Roles and Groups

- **Gs (Super Gs):** The FBI’s Special Surveillance Group, known colloquially as “the Super Gs,” are dedicated to 24/7 surveillance, sometimes using ingenious disguises or techniques that challenge even experienced counter-surveillance officers.
- **Blue Badgers and Green Badgers:** Within the CIA, paramilitary operations officers are split into two categories. “Blue badgers” are direct CIA employees who have completed the agency’s standard hiring and training pipeline, while “green badgers” are typically contracted or attached personnel with specialized skills from outside the agency.

Signal Sites, Paroles, and the Art of Trust

- **SIGNAL SITE:** Delivering a prearranged message via a physical location—a signal site—remains a basic element of classic tradecraft. These sites are meticulously chosen for both convenience and deniability, becoming drop points for items, visual signals, or chalk marks that mean everything to those in the know.

- **PAROLE:** Exchanging prearranged recognition words upon first meeting helps ensure operational safety, making it possible for field officers and new assets to verify each other while minimizing the risk of hostile intervention.
- **FIREMAN:** Within the Secret Intelligence Service, the term "fireman" refers to personnel stationed at headquarters who are ready to be dispatched at short notice for critical overseas assignments, providing rapid support when unexpected situations arise.

Examples of Tradecraft in Action

- **The Jackal's Car:** During the Cold War, CIA officer Tony Mendez, a master of disguise and tradecraft, devised a "jack-in-the-box" device. An officer could get into the back of a car, and while it was briefly out of sight of a surveillance team, a spring-loaded mannequin would pop up in the passenger seat. The officer, now hidden in a secret compartment, could be driven to a clandestine meeting while the surveillance team continued to follow a car that appeared to have two occupants.
- **The Hollow Coin:** When Soviet spy Rudolf Abel was arrested in New York in 1957, the FBI found a hollowed-out 5-cent coin in his pocket. It was a perfect dead drop concealment device, capable of holding microfilm. This simple yet effective piece of tradecraft allowed for the transfer of information in plain sight. An asset could simply "lose" the coin at a pre-arranged spot, like a newsstand, for Abel to "find" and retrieve later.
- **JARK in Northern Ireland:** British authorities' use of homing devices inserted into paramilitary weapons—"jarks"—enabled them to track arms movement covertly and monitor the supply chains of insurgent groups, effectively blending covert surveillance and technical innovation.

The Evolution of Tradecraft

Tradecraft is not static; it evolves in response to technology and the changing operational landscape. The principles remain the same—security, separation, secrecy—but the methods are

constantly updated.

The rise of the internet and ubiquitous surveillance has rendered some classic techniques obsolete while creating new opportunities and vulnerabilities. Biometric security systems make physical infiltration harder, while the digital "breadcrumbs" everyone leaves behind create a new surface for intelligence collection and tracking.

Modern tradecraft increasingly focuses on the digital domain. Instead of physical dead drops, an officer might use a shared, anonymous cloud storage account, uploading an encrypted file from one public Wi-Fi hotspot and having the asset download it from another. Instead of a chalk mark, a signal might be a "like" on a specific, obscure social media post.

Steganography is a prime example of digital adaptation, allowing operatives to embed clandestine messages into images, audio, video, or even metadata, making detection by adversaries extremely challenging.

However, technology is a double-edged sword. Every digital tool can be tracked, and every communication can potentially be intercepted. For this reason, the old-school, non-technical methods—the physical meeting in a crowded market after a long SDR, the simple visual signal, the cleverly concealed physical message, the subtle use of parole or signal sites—remain a vital part of the tradecraft playbook. The most effective modern officer is a hybrid, able to seamlessly blend timeless techniques with mastery of the latest technology, adapting their methods to each unique operational threat and environment.

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Part Eight

Chapter Two

Part II – Tradecraft

Dead Drop – Passing items without contact.

Brush Pass – Instant hand-off in public.

Legend – Fully fabricated identity.

Cover for Status / Cover for Action – One explains presence; the other, behavior.

Safe House – Temporary secure meeting site.

Cutout – Intermediary breaking direct contact.

Handler / Asset – Controller and source.

Double Agent – Serves one side while reporting to another.

Dangle – Decoy recruitment target.

False Flag – Operation under borrowed identity.

Burn Notice – Official compromise declaration.

SDR – Surveillance Detection Route – Pattern to expose followers.

Moscow Rules – “Assume nothing. Trust no one.”

Compartmentalization – Need-to-know barriers.

One-Time Pad – Truly random, unbreakable cipher.

Steganography – Hidden messages within media.

Elicitation – Casual conversation as collection tool.

Backstop – Documents supporting a cover.

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Part Nine

Chapter Three

Part III – Modern Espionage

Cyber Espionage – Data theft through digital intrusion.

Signals Exploitation (SIGEXP) – Interception plus manipulation.

Metadata Analysis – Finding patterns in time and location data.

Quantum Encryption – Security via quantum states.

AI-Assisted Surveillance – Machine detection of anomalies under human oversight.

Disinformation Operation – Fabricated narratives to shape beliefs.

Maskirovka – Russian doctrine of strategic deception.

Information Laundering – False data cycled through credible channels.

Narrative Warfare – Influence through stories and memes.

Active Measures – Political subversion tools from the Cold War forward.

Cyber False Flag – Attack posing as another actor.

Deepfake – Synthetic audio/video impersonation.

Insider Threat – Compromise from within.

Industrial Espionage – Theft of commercial technology.

Cyber Counterintelligence – Digital deception against hackers.

PSYOP – Psychological operations targeting emotions and logic.

Behavioral Analytics – Pattern-based anomaly detection.

Zero-Day Exploit – Unpatched vulnerability in use.

Attribution Trap – False clues to confuse investigators.

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Part Ten

Chapter Four

Part IV – Tools & Behavioral Tradecraft

Concealment Device – Object disguising another.

Microdot – Miniaturized hidden message.

Covert Camera – Surreptitious imaging device.

Burn Bag – Container for classified destruction.

Secure Comms Suite – Disciplined encrypted channels.

Disguise & Persona Work – Behavioral alteration to avoid recognition.

Honey-Net – Controlled trap for adversary hackers.

Recruitment Cycle – Spot → Assess → Develop → Pitch → Handle → End.

Rapport Building – Trust as operational currency.

Counter-Surveillance – Detecting observation.

Operational Security (OPSEC) – Culture of secrecy.

Safe Exfiltration – Low-visibility withdrawal.

Controlled Leak – Intentional release for effect.

Operational Deception – Strategic misdirection.

Ethical Tradecraft – Balancing duty and morality.

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