

The Langley Files: CIA's Podcast
FILE 016 – PART II
Meet the Legendary Black CIA Officer who Made Cold War History – CIA Operations

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Walter: At CIA, we work around the clock and across the globe to help keep Americans and others around the world safe. Secrecy is often vital to our work.

Dee: But we're committed to sharing what we can when we can. So let us be your guides around the halls of Langley as we open our files and speak with those who have dedicated themselves to this mission.

Walter: These are their stories.

Walter and Dee: This is The Langley Files.

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Dee: Welcome back to The Langley Files, and to the second installment of this very special two-part episode. We're sitting down with George Hocker, the trailblazing—and within CIA, legendary—officer who joined the Agency in the 1950s, became one of its first Black operations officers, and the first to undergo the CIA's paramilitary and survival training courses. He is also the first to open a CIA station overseas and to lead a CIA operations branch. When we last left off our discussion, George had just graduated from those trainings and was at the start of his CIA operations career.

Walter: Now, we're picking the story of his incredible career back up as he prepares for his first assignment. Stay tuned to hear—directly from George himself—about the surprises, perils, and triumphs of serving on the front lines of the Cold War, all while overcoming barriers within the halls of his own organization here at home.

Dee: It's a story that will see George carry off one of the most important CIA exfiltrations of a Soviet asset during the Cold War, and ultimately rise to the Agency's senior ranks. Here's the second part of our conversation with George.

Walter: So, sir, you graduate. You're now a certified operations officer for CIA. What was your first assignment out of training?

George: Well, I was I was picked to, uh, to go into Africa Division. Which was my first choice. And I had decided, when I was still working as an analyst, that if I was going to try to go into the spy business, that I wanted to go to Africa.

Dee: Now early on in your operations career here at CIA, you're sent on a short trip to a warzone, where you get an early taste of how harrowing even mundane tasks can be when operating in such environments—let alone running intelligence operations. But, to set the scene first, it's now the 1960s, and this is a country in Africa that, like much of the world during the

Cold War, was an area where the United States and the Soviet Union were vying with one another for influence.

George: Exactly.

Walter: And it was also a country in the midst of a long-running internal conflict, with the central government fighting insurgents based in the countryside. What was it like arriving in the middle of all that?

George: I arrived on, uh, on New Year's Eve. I was filling in for the deputy chief of station, and so I was gonna be there for three months. The war was winding down, but there was several defense restrictions in place so that you could not drive at night with headlights on. You couldn't have lights showing from your house. You had to have curtains or drapes to make sure that uh, this was all, uh, darkened, because the faction that had been threatening the government had aircraft that they had taken seats out of and added additional gasoline tanks, which would allow them to fly from their region to the capital, and possibly have a kamikaze-type suicide mission, and create a lot of havoc. And the, uh, government was working to try to bring about a secession of the hostilities. The government had not imported any new cars during that time, and so I was only able to rent a pretty old Volkswagen fastback that didn't have a horn, and I couldn't drive with lights. And it was a pretty populated capital of the country where I was located and operating and meeting agents with no cell phones, no maps, or anything else. So I would do my recons, uh during daylight hours to make sure I knew where I was supposed to be meeting agents. And so I had to figure out where those were each day before my meetings and make sure that, uh, I knew where they would be and get there in plenty of time to clean off and make sure that there was no surveillance on me, either if I was driving in the car, or if I was meeting them on foot to go somewhere. Shortly after I arrived there, the secession of hostilities, uh, was coming to an end, and so the chief of Africa Division decided he wanted to be there. Chief of Division was Archibald Roosevelt, a grandson of Teddy Roosevelt, and he brought his son with him, and so they prevailed upon me to take him to a nightclub. So I was driving still very unfamiliar with with the city and I ended up making a wrong turn and being on the street where the National Reserve was, and they had changed currency because they didn't want the, uh, hostile faction to be able to use the currency. And so it was heavily guarded, and I was stopped at a checkpoint. Soldier came over to me with his AK 47, pointed it at me. I couldn't understand his language, it was one of the tribal languages. I clearly knew that I was not in the place where I was supposed to be. As he got frustrated with me not being able to understand him, he went to pull the bolt back on his AK 47 and chamber a round, and his hand slipped. And having fired these myself, during my paramilitary training, I said, oh, God, he's probably gonna empty this clip and he's gonna kill my boss's son, and I will survive, but I'll lose my job. Well, fortunately, I was able, through doing everything except cry, to convince him to let me back up, turn around and take another route, and we eventually found the nightclub I was trying to find. And when I got ready to leave, the chief of station asked me if I would like to have a permanent assignment there. There was a young officer getting ready to leave in the next uh, less than a year. And I, uh, immediately accepted.

Walter: Wow. So you were undeterred by that, and you set off, back to that country that you've now been very much introduced to the possible dangers of operating in.

Dee: But before you can even really get started, you learn that your predecessor at the CIA station has already undercut you...

George: The case officer that I was replacing was a white guy, I think deep down inside, he did not believe that he could be replaced by a Black. Although this would have no bearing on him. He was leaving. He did not help me at all. I had contact instructions to pick up assets from him. And normally, when you go into a new assignment, the person you're replacing takes you to his farewell, uh, events, cocktail parties, dinners, and maybe lunches, to introduce you to people of interest, as well as clandestinely turning over assets to you. I was not introduced to anybody so I had to begin to establish my own contacts, do my own development, and everything starting from scratch.

Walter: And so you're forced, which is not how it usually goes or how it's supposed to go, if at all possible, to start your operations out there from square one. To come in, completely cold. And yet, you're tasked with solving a mystery that's been beguiling the CIA officers at that station for years, and you end up doing just that. What happened there?

George: Yea. An audio operation had taken place a couple of years before I got there, and the device went dead, and the station had no idea what had happened, had no way of finding out, because the, uh the asset that had helped to put the, uh device into this area, and they no longer had the asset or contact with him. And so we had equipment out there somewhere, and we didn't know. We knew where it was, and a new chief of station came in, and then he, uh, was consumed with this, he wanted to, uh, see, if we couldn't get that device, maybe get it reactivated. And so that was given to me as an assignment. I was able to get an apartment within clear vision of that building. And so I, uh, conducted one man surveillance myself, you know, to see who was coming in and out and what the schedule was. And so one Sunday, when I knew it was pretty secure to go into the building to kind of look around and see if I could find where it might possibly be, I went to the floor where I knew it was on, our target, and there was a door open and I went in, and it was actually the the room for the the janitorial staff. And I opened a, uh, a cabinet door, and I saw what looked like our equipment. I decided OK, I'm not gonna try to take this now, and walk out, I'm gonna go back and tell the chief of station, I think I found it. Well, he was out with his family. I made a phone call to, uh, one of our communicators and asked him to go with me. And I said, "You know, if there's any problem, I'm gonna make up a cover story," and sure enough, as soon as we got in the room, this African guy comes in, wanna know what we were doing here? And I said, I had my camera with me, I said, "Oh, I'm just trying to get a good angle," you know, I said, uh, "why don't you come over here and tell me what you think?" And I'm signaling to my colleague open that door and get the thing and let's be ready to go.

Dee: So you've managed to track down this CIA-implanted listening device that's gone dark and really been missing for literally years. What happened next? Did the two of you get it and return to the CIA station you were working out of?

George: So the next morning, I walked in and I said, I got the equipment and, you know, and told him what happened and everything...

Walter: So this would be the Chief of Station...

George: Yea. He said, “I don't know whether to reprimand you or give you a medal,” but anyway, he said, “Well, you know, congratulations because we've been looking for this for two or three years.” We sent it back to headquarters.

Dee: Cool under pressure right there.

George: And so we knew we knew that it hadn't been discovered by the opposition.

Walter: Wow. So you complete that assignment. And you receive a follow-on posting, again as an operations officer to another country on the continent, where you have another successful tour—you recruit several key new assets, which is to say, individuals with access to information of importance to the security of the United States, who agree to work with CIA in secret to ensure our decisionmakers are aware of that information. And and now we come to your third assignment overseas where the challenge is quite a bit different.

Dee: It's now the 1970s, and this time, you're asked not just to go overseas as a CIA operations officer. You're asked whether you'll accept the challenge of opening up an entirely new CIA station in a location in which the Agency doesn't yet have that kind of operational presence. If so, you'll be CIA's first-ever chief of station there. What was it like getting that assignment?

George: I was told that, uh, my chief of division that he was gonna give me a station as chief of station and it was gonna be one of two countries in West Africa for me to think about it, and we would talk. And this country had Chinese, North Koreans, and Soviets. And I said to myself, you're not gonna be competitive with white officers if you don't have hard targets to work against, you know, it would be a wasted assignment. So I took that country, and it, uh, it was great assignment.

Dee: So you're getting a whole new CIA station up and running. How many people did you have working with you at the very onset of this?

George: It was just myself and and my administrative assistant, a woman who, uh, we both went through communications training together to be able to communicate with one-time tapes.

Dee: So, for folks at home, that's an early encryption technique for secret communications, in which each party has a pad and uses it to decode the message sent from the other.

Walter: Dee and I use those to plan our show notes. So wow, a skeleton crew of two. Did you have to undergo foreign language training for the assignment?

George: I took French for months. And I went to my first meeting with, the local service, the head of the intelligence service. French was like his third or fourth language after two or three other African languages, so and he kind of mumbled. So when I left that meeting, I sent up a prayer. I said, Father in heaven, please don't let me have missed something important that Washington needs to know today because I didn't get it. A week or so after that, I was invited to

a, uh, reception that the Soviets were giving and I think they wanted to take a look. They had, just they had my name. It had been sent by the embassy of a new officer in the embassy. And so, they want to take a look at me. And I went to that reception and it had another stark reality because everybody seemed to be talking in nuances and innuendos. It's like, you know, somebody asks you, you know, you catch any big ones today means you know, how did that business deal go or whatever. So, uh, I felt when I left there I had missed probably a lot of things. So I said, you know I've got to get better because I'm not trying to traverse a frontier or order in a restaurant or do some of these other things that they focus on in language training. So I started hanging out in the motor pool, talking to the Africans in the motor pool. Every group I could get in, I would go to just to be able to use the French and get more familiar with it. I go to the marketplace and spend extra time, you know, just so that the accents and everything, you know, were clear. So it turned out to be a great assignment.

Dee: You know, those are good tips for anyone trying to learn the nuances of a foreign language.

Walter: So true. And this is the assignment where ultimately, sir, you face the challenge we mentioned in the introduction to Part I - what can only be considered a signature feat of Cold War espionage—exfiltrating a KGB officer who has agreed to work with CIA out of harm's way, and to safety. And in this case, a particularly significant KGB officer. So, sir, can you talk us through, what led up to this moment? How did you find yourself tasked with that carrying out that operation?

George: The most important thing that happened on that during that three years was a, uh, an operation with a Soviet officer who walked into a neighboring country's embassy. They were flying a technical officer out in the event that we had to exfiltrate him at some point. So they had sent an officer up there who had one meeting with this with this guy to take his picture and to tell him how we would contact him later. And I received a message saying that headquarters wanted me to go up. And so I was sent up to to get the picture and bring it back. And so it was probably a six plus hour drive on all dirt roads. Once I left the, uh, city limits. And so I drove up there, met the, uh, our case officer who'd been sent up there from another station. And then I was asked to fly to a neighboring country and to have a meeting about next steps in this operation. And one of the things headquarters had decided was they wanted to introduce a dead drop to cut down on personal meetings.

Dee: So for those not in the intelligence field, that means leaving messages or items in a discreet, everyday object, or location, where someone else can retrieve them later without attracting attention. So George, what was your take on that course of action?

George: The suggestion they made was one that I totally disagreed with. And so I sent a message from that station saying that, uh, I disagreed with their choice. And I disagreed with where they wanted to to place the dead drop. Being familiar with the area I knew that the device they wanted to use had the potential of being picked up by anybody who walked by that area, and this could cause a real problem. They came back and basically said, you don't know what you're talking about. So, I, you know, had my marching orders. We finished our session next planning, but I sent another message back. Said I respectfully request to not be part of the next operational cycle

providing surveillance because if anything goes wrong, I'm the only one who can put into place the exfiltration plan that we had developed. And so they agreed. A couple of weeks later, midday. Get a flash message in: deaddrop disappeared. Soviet panicked. We gotta get the exfiltration plan going. We gotta get him out.

Walter: And this wasn't just a matter of driving someone across the border. The plan calls for a US aircraft to fly in after sundown and retrieve the Soviet officer and whisk him out of the country and to safety. So, how did you go about putting that in motion, sir? What did you have to do?

George: And so that triggered me getting aircraft in place, get a hotel room booked for the pilots to be kept overnight, get approval for the plane to land, get approval for it to be refueled. And make sure that all that was in place, making up stories about why the plane was coming in and all the rest of that, to get the clearances.

Dee: And as you're doing all of this, other CIA officers are at that very moment already headed to a rendezvous point with that Soviet officer. You are literally racing the clock here.

George: It was 4, 4:30 or so by the time I got everything in place and they had already been on the road for a couple of hours coming toward me.

Walter: And you yourself are a key part of the plan—you're set to meet up with the other team of CIA officers and the Soviet officer at a rendezvous point and ensure they make it safely onto that US plane when it arrives.

George: We had a rendezvous point where I would take them from the road. So finally I get the approval that, you know, everything's OK and I've got the approvals that I need. And I, uh, make myself a tuna fish sandwich because I haven't eaten anything. And I took off, changed my clothes, because I knew it was gonna be in the bush.

Dee: So much is on the line in this moment as the sun's going down and you're making this drive. What are you thinking about or feeling?

George: It was a long night. It was a long night. Because first of all, it gets dark in Africa year-round, pretty early. So, you know, there's the adrenaline running. There's the anxiety. First of all, I didn't know the plane landed, because the plane was coming in after I left. So I'm hoping that they made it. So I didn't know whether they'd got in, whether everything went well with the refueling, with them getting in their hotel room. Did they not oversleep? Would they be landing shortly after daybreak? Would we get that plane in the air without getting caught?

Dee: It's just a night full of all of those thoughts running thru your head.

George: And I will get our other officers out of this country without anybody knowing they've been here. And so I hit the road and probably seven o'clock at night or so. I see this car that looks like it's the Isuzu Trooper that I have coming toward me with flashlights. So they stop. I stop, we get out. They introduced me to the to the Russian. He gives me a big bear hug, kisses me on both

cheeks, he's standing there, he's got shoes on, but no socks. He bugged out without his socks. So, I said, OK. Follow me. So, we were about 10-12 miles past where we were supposed to rendezvous, and then I took them into the bush, which I had already reconnoitered, and there was a strip there, where they would be landing. And fortunately we had dragged that strip before, in the event, not even knowing that this was going to take place. But we knew that we could land an aircraft, they turn around and take off. So I had I had the Russian and the uh, Russian speaking American case officer in my vehicle. And the other officers were there a slight distance from where I was, and shortly after six in the morning, we heard the plane coming. It landed, turned around. As soon as it started to turn around, I drove out to it. The Russian interpreter, our guy, and the Russian got out. Took him to about 15 ft in front of the plane. He gives me another big bear hug, kissing me on both cheeks. And I said, We don't have time to talk, you know, God bless you and hope you get off. And they they took off. They were probably 500 ft off the ground, and, uh, Land Rover rolls up with the local police.

Walter: Oh my God....

George: They had heard the engine and figured out where it came down. And they came over to me, asking me in French what was taking place. I told them in French that I had I had an American who had been bitten by a bat and we were concerned about him developing Rabies, and we needed to get medical treatment to him that we weren't sure we could get there, and that's what was taking place And you can check with Mr. So-and-So and Mr. So-and-So in the Capitol, and they'll tell you that, uh they authorized us having this plane here, and they said OK and they took off and I took off. And I had already located a place where we would stash the uh, Toyota Land Cruiser that they had brought from the other country, and I would arrange to have it picked up in a day or two, and then I took the other officers to the train station. I had already bought train tickets for them because I had to do that, too that day, so that they could get on the train and get out without having to go through customs. They had to go to headquarters, and I send a flash saying the operation is a success, Russian's on his way to where we're going to take him to get him to the United States.

Dee: And this was an intelligence history first.

George: It was the first time that there had been a successful black exfiltration from Africa of anybody. And it was the first time that we had a Soviet with his skills.

Walter: How did it feel to carry off that kind of operation?

George: I was very, uh, happy and excited to be part of that operation and played a role that I did and that I had refused to let headquarters, you know, I didn't get headquarters to not do what they wanted to do, but at least I got them to agree to not make me part of that cycle of meetings.

Walter: So you complete that assignment overseas, and you return home to Headquarters here in Langley with a massive accomplishment behind you. Now, at this point in an officer's career they might well be looking at management postings at here Headquarters, but you've said that whenever you'd ask about them, you'd encounter a strange lack of such openings.

George: I, I come back from from that African assignment, I get a message from headquarters saying, oh George Hocker is coming back. You know, you've done such a great job. Uh, what are we gonna do with you? Just you know, a couple of sentences like that. Said, 'Well we've thought about it, and we'd like for you to be a trainer at the farm.' I sent a cable back saying, thank you very much. I'd really like to have an opportunity to pass on some of my experiences to younger officers at some point in my career. But I really feel that I need management at this point. Get another cable back saying, 'Well, we looked at a couple of other things and we've got something really exciting for you. It's a, uh, small team and you'll be doing super-sensitive kind of operations and some other things that we think you'd be perfect for.' And I sent a message back saying, 'Really sounds exciting. You know, I haven't done one of those things yet, but I think that I need management at this stage in my career.' And then I get the fourth message saying we'd like you to be branch chief in the Soviet East European division, uh, responsible for all Soviet East European operations in Latin America. I said, great, just what I wanted to do.

Dee: And then you hear from a friend that a senior CIA official actually said it was the opposite—that it was you who didn't want to accept a management job. What did your friend tell you about that?

George: He said, John told me he had to really force you to take the branch chief's job because Blacks don't want to be in management. So, after he told me that I did what junior officers, I was still a junior officer, don't do. I called the office, because I knew John, and I asked his secretary if I could have a meeting with him, and she said, well, what's it about? I said, well, it's a personal matter. So anyway, she set up the appointment for me. And I went in and John said, 'George, what's up?' And I said 'John, it's just you told him that Blacks didn't want to be managers and you had to force me to take this assignment. I said, maybe you didn't see the three other offers that were made to me and that I turned down because they weren't management.' And he was like somebody who had egg all over his face. He's trying not to have eye contact with me, he's looking from side to side and said, well, he didn't remember saying anything like that. 'But I thought that if he's using your name like this, you should know about it.' And he said, 'Well, OK,' mumbling. And anyway, putting out his hand to shake my hand and say, 'Well, you know, I'm sorry if there was any misunderstanding.' I said, 'Listen, no problem, John, I'm really enjoying my job. I got to get back down. Thanks for seeing me.'

Walter: Wow. And so, after all of that, you take your place as the first Black CIA officer to lead a branch in the Directorate of Operations. And that leads to you becoming, after that assignment, special assistant to not one, but two Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency—Stansfield Turner and Bill Casey—during a period that includes some key events in CIA history, like the ARGO operation. We did a previous episode on this, but you actually met Tony Mendez.

George: Yea. I met Tony Mendez as we're planning the operation – the ARGO operation, to get uh, get our Embassy personnel out of the Canadian Embassy. So I was there when all of that was taking place.

Walter: Window into history. And that leads to you being made chief of one of CIA's largest and most important stations in Latin America.

Dee: But before you set out, you undertake a different kind of operation - dating and proposing to the woman who will ultimately become your wife. I know that we love this story—can you tell us how that went?

George: So I said, I have something to tell you, and then I have something to ask you. And she said OK, and she was sitting on her sofa at her apartment there in New York. I said, uh, ‘I work for the Central Intelligence Agency, and Bill Casey is my boss.’ And she said, ‘Oh OK,’ and she said, ‘what do you do?’ I said, ‘well, I’m a little like a doctor,’ I said, ‘I go out sometimes late at night. You know, I said, But I always come back.’ And she said, ‘oh, ok.’ She reminds people that her dad was NYPD, and he said to her and her sister, ‘Whatever you do, don’t marry New York Police, don’t marry police,’ she said ‘Now I’m getting ready to marry intelligence.’

Walter: And you proposed right after that, right?

George: I proposed right after that, and she said yes. And I said, I said ‘fasten your seatbelt.’

Walter: And she goes with you on that next assignment, in which again, you served as CIA Station Chief in that Latin American country. And this is a dangerous posting—there are insurgent groups, narcotics traffickers—and so she undergoes some of the pre-deployment CIA training alongside you.

George: She has no idea what’s getting ready to happen. And before you know it, she’s learning how to shoot a handgun from a moving vehicle at day and at night. And then she’s learning how to, uh, survive tear gas. And she’s, uh learning how to take a nine-millimeter apart and put it back together. So, fortunately, she didn’t have to use any of that. And I didn’t either.

Dee: So what did she think of all of this?

George: She said this is ‘so this is what CIA doctors do at night.’ I just kind of smiled.

Walter: Well, despite probably being under threat a great deal of the time, you both survive that assignment—which proves to be another successful tour for you, and you return to Headquarters here in Langley. And you’re now, Sir, we understand in the home stretch of your career. You’ll be selected to serve as CIA’s first senior representative to the DEA. You’ll be awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit before ultimately retiring. But we understand that you’ll have one last assignment overseas, and it’ll prove to be quite different from all of your prior postings. These were previous tours to austere and dangerous locations—this last assignment turns out to be quite the opposite: a small, quiet country at peace.

Dee: And we understand you were notified of the assignment personally by the Deputy Director of the CIA, as you were graduating from a prestigious seminar for senior US government officials.

George: Uh, we graduate from the senior seminar, and I’m there with my wife and our children and my mom and my dad. And about 20 minutes before the ceremony for graduation, a young woman comes up to me and she’s got a pink message slip for me to call Bob Gates.

Walter: This is then-Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Bob Gates, who later goes on to become Director of Central Intelligence, and ultimately Secretary of Defense.

George: And so I called Bob Gates' office, and the secretary said, 'Oh, Bob wants to see you, can you can you come up to the office?' So, I go up to see Bob. he said 'I would really like you to go, everything you write is going to get to me, the director, the president, and other members of the National Security Council, because all eyes are on this country.' He said this little small country is driving us crazy. But he said, I don't know if you and Marcia can handle a nice, quiet, pastoral place with a lot of sheep around where you don't have to boil the water and you don't have to carry a gun.

Dee: And I'm afraid that's all we can share about that particular assignment, but suffice it to say that after years of serving with CIA in hotspots around the world, you're able to close out your years with Agency out in a very different fashion.

Walter: Sir, you served at CIA for over three decades. You started off in the records office and you ended your time in the Agency's senior ranks. You achieved so many firsts. And along the way you overcame not just all of the operational challenges you faced from our adversaries overseas, but barriers here in these halls at home. And I'm sure we've only discussed a small sub-set of both of those today. Being back here at Langley now where some of the things you were thinking back in 1963 about the mission importance of building a diverse CIA to understand and operate in a complex and diverse world are now much more widely discussed. How do you think the Agency is fairing in those efforts? Do you feel that CIA has changed, possibly even from the Agency that you retired from?

George: I do think it has changed. And I've, uh, I've read a diversity report that came out a few years ago. I've read comments from Director Brennan and and some of the others. Is there a lot more to be done? Absolutely. But that's the case everywhere. We're not unique. We should never think that we are through with what we're doing.

Dee: So, sir, what would you say to someone else who might not immediately see themselves in a career here at CIA?

George: First of all I think, uh, CIA is is the greatest organization we have for the security of our country, not just here, but in the world. And it is, uh, is a it is an honor to be able to serve here, even under difficult circumstances. But you have to be ready to stand up for yourself. Stand up when you think you're being treated unjustly, be able to deliver that message in a calm and collected way, so that the recipient can hear what you're trying to say. Always know that what you're having to say may or may not have the impact that you would want it to have, but that you still have a job to do. A job that not many can do or would want to do. And so, you are part of a special group of Americans who focus day and night, seven days a week, on the security of the United States of America, and the world as a whole. And that if you're playing a part in that, you're blessed. Whatever you're doing is important. There's no place better to be working to do the things that are still needed to keep this country safe. If you're fortunate enough to be accepted and get through the clearance process, know that you can have a, uh, a marvelous career. And if

you happen to be in the clandestine services, you will have adrenaline rushes that will keep you on your toes more than you ever thought you could be. And so, in summary, I would just say that, uh, if you if it's something that you think you can't do, you probably can if you put your mind to it, and if you want to do it badly enough, and you should want to do it badly enough because it's important enough.

Dee: So, like I said before, you are a legacy here. And I know that Walter and I thoroughly appreciate the work that you've done for this Agency, for this country. But we also appreciate you taking the time to come and talk to us today, imparting some of your wisdom, and sharing your story with us. It's it's really been a privilege. So thank you very much.

Walter: Yea, sir. It's been such an honor. Thank you.

George: Oh, thank you. I'm I'm, uh I'm delighted, you know that you've asked me. I was delighted when I got the message, you know, and my wife and I, you know, sat there looking at each other saying, 'oh, my goodness what is this? This is overwhelming.' But it it has been my joy to be here with the with the two of you and with Corey. And, uh, it's just, uh, it's just a real honor.

Dee and Walter: Honor's ours.

Walter: Jinx.

Walter: Truly a legend.

Dee: Really. And such a role model to really all of our Agency officers here. And I'm so glad he was able to sit down with us because I feel at this point his story needs to be heard. Hopefully he can now be seen, you know, as a global role model.

Walter: 100%. Absolutely. Well, let's see if we can work in some George Hocker related trivia.

Dee: Let's do it, but first we need to answer the question from File 015.

Walter: That's right.

(music)

Dee: And on that episode, we mentioned that there were several cameos, made by two very special guests, on our social media during CIA's presence at SXSW. And we asked you all if you knew who these unofficial CIA mascots were, and even more specifically, if you knew their names.

Walter: So the two mascots that accompanied our team on the ground in Austin, Texas, were none other than Mischief the Fox and the one and only Secret Squirrel. These two cuddly colleagues of ours were all too happy to jump on an airplane and deploy with the team at the Creative Industries Expo. And frankly, they will not stop talking about it.

Dee: And for the next trivia question. And you know, Walter I think it's time to do another World Factbook trivia. What do you think?

Walter: I agree.

Dee: All right. So, as we were highlighting in this episode with George Hocker, many of our officers can spend a great amount of time in their careers overseas. And in George's case, a lot of his time was spent in Africa. So, let's focus in on that continent. Which country is slightly larger than twice the size of California and is the only African nation to have both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines?

Walter: We should probably say we are not confirming that was a country that George Hocker served in.

Dee: Absolutely.

Walter: Head on over to cia.gov and check out CIA's World Factbook to get the answer. Or, just stay tuned for our next episode, when you'll be read in to that answer.

Dee: So that's it for this two-part episode. From all of us here at Langley...

Walter: We'll be seeing you.

(music begins)

Walter: Should we go check out George's exhibit?

Dee: I think we should go do that.

Walter: Let's do it.

(music ends)