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# Evolving Perspectives of Women in Intelligence: Can Women Have It All?

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Evolving Perspectives of Women in Intelligence:  
Can Women Have It All?

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
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## ABSTRACT

BONESTEEL, ALYSSA The Evolution of Women in Intelligence

ADVISOR: Thomas Lobe, Kristin Bidoshi

This thesis serves to analyze the evolution of women in the intelligence community, arguing that the role of women has transformed from one of a sexual nature into one of strong leadership. Early sources portray the female spy as a sexual object, using her body to covertly gather intelligence through the disguise of a stereotypical woman. Women hid behind their socially accepted roles as housewives or nurses. Using a mix of primary and secondary sources, including the declassified CIA Typist to Trailblazer document collection, as well as sources of spy fiction, this thesis identifies the factors that inhibited the advancement of women in the intelligence community. Following the creation of the CIA, women comprised eighty-six percent of the clerical work force, but very few women filled professional roles. As traditional gender norms gave way to discussions of women's equality, new opportunities for women were created. Gender stereotypes, lack of education, and lack of military training had inhibited women from progressing from clerical roles to professional roles within the Agency. The 1991 Glass Ceiling Study Summary identified that the number of women in the workforce had increased to forty percent; however, only nine percent of the Senior Intelligence Service were women. Systematic barriers prevented women from advancing to leadership positions. The exceptional women that first entered the intelligence community were pioneers for the subsequent generations of women. Today, women are commended for their work within the intelligence community. This research has shown that the CIA, once named the "Old Boys' Club", is no longer dominated by men. Modern spy fiction

has adapted to more accurately portray the female spy as a strong leader who can balance motherhood and a career. Women have forced change within the intelligence community, simultaneously constructing the most diverse and vigorous intelligence communities to date. The evolution of women in intelligence has transformed the fictional portrayal of the female spy. This thesis will analyze the relationship between fact and fiction in the portrayal of women in intelligence.

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## Introduction

Women have played an instrumental role in collecting intelligence for many centuries, but have historically been inhibited from advancing within the intelligence community. The initial role of women in intelligence was limited by patriarchal constraints. This thesis, which studies the evolution of women in the intelligence community, will highlight the transformation of women's role within the Central Intelligence Agency ("CIA"). Since the creation of the formal United States intelligence community in 1947, the CIA has persisted through present day while still adhering to the same mission. Despite the addition of other agencies and the growing intelligence community, the CIA has remained the main agency for intelligence. The CIA's long history within the U.S. intelligence community allows one to study the role of women overtime within the Agency. Chapter 1 of the present research will discuss the interconnected components and positions that create the intelligence community. Chapter 2 will then show how the roles of women have progressed from early female spies of The American Revolution to the evolving responsibilities of women in intelligence during the Cold War. This historical chapter will provide the baseline to understanding how women have evolved by highlighting that the initial role of women was centered on their gender and sexuality. The third chapter will discuss specific factors that inhibited women from advancing within the Central Intelligence Agency. The fourth chapter will assess the current conditions of the CIA and analyze what factors continue to inhibit women's advancement. After discussing the current status of women in the CIA, the final chapter will analyze the fictional accounts that portray women in intelligence by examining the intertwined relationship between fact and fiction. General findings indicate that though

fiction follows fact, fiction can also be utilized as a new medium to mainstream the ever evolving role of women in intelligence.



## Chapter 1

### United States Intelligence Community

All intelligence is information but not all information is intelligence. The term intelligence differs from information because of the manner in which it is discovered. Intelligence satisfies the needs of policy makers after it has been collected, sorted, and analyzed. Information is simply anything that can be known. Another distinguishing characteristic of intelligence is the notion of secrecy. Intelligence is about gathering the information other agencies, governments, and intelligence organizations want kept secret. The intelligence community is comprised of multiple agencies that simultaneously collect and gather intelligence. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was the precursor to the CIA. The OSS and other early intelligence gathering units are not considered the starting point for the intelligence community because they had interworking relationships with the military.<sup>1</sup> The military rules over the OSS by ordering operations and requesting information, essentially the OSS was subordinate to the military.

The first formal member of the United States intelligence community was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA.)<sup>2</sup> The Agency could handle matters secretly and did not have to report to another organization such as the military. The CIA can work above the law as it serves to protect the people of the United States from the threats they are not aware of. The Agency had full autonomy over the intelligence it procured. Today the intelligence community has expanded to include and collaborate with many other agencies. Figure 1 shows the structure of the intelligence community as of 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

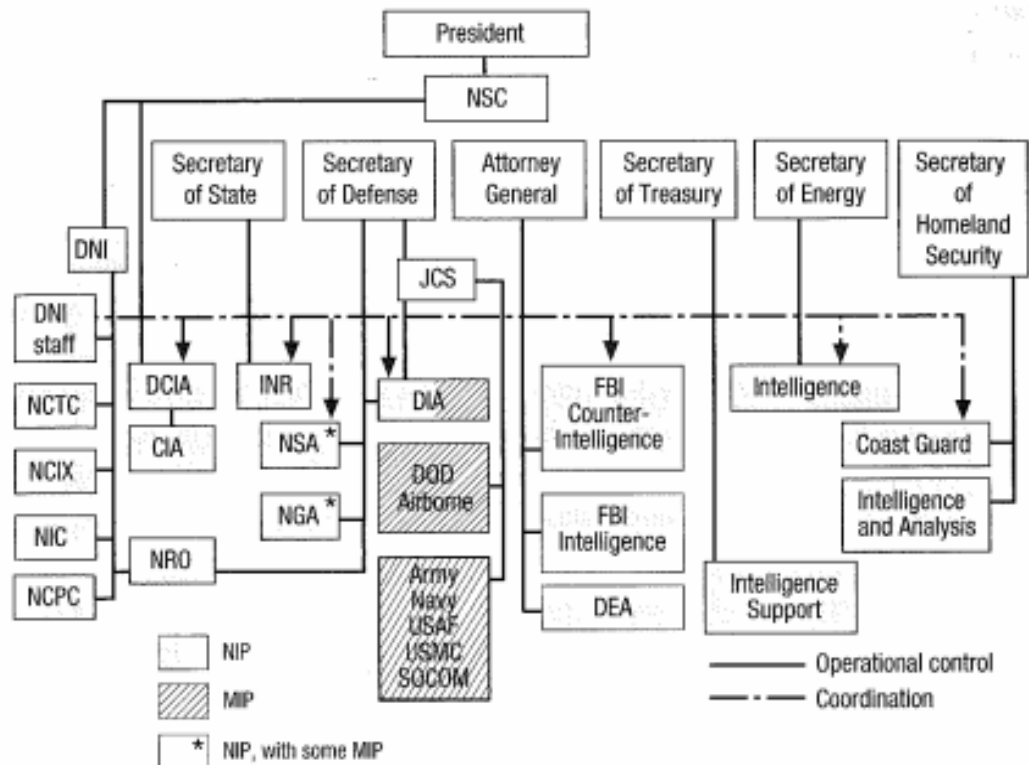


Figure 1: The Intelligence Community: An Organizational View  
Source: Intelligence, 35.

There are a plethora of agencies that specialize in certain areas of expertise to collectively gather information to keep policy makers aware of what is happening both within and outside the borders of the country.

Intelligence is the result of other governments attempting to keep information secret. Governments compete to gather intelligence on each other to stay informed. This develops a culture of secrecy. Many believe the intelligence community is filled with secret spies infiltrating the enemy and capturing or killing targets. It is so much more, covert operations is only one sector of the intelligence community. Two major sections of the CIA are the Directorate of Operations (DO) and Directorate of Intelligence (DI). The DO has now become the National Clandestine Service (NCS) which covers covert

operations and espionage. The DI is the analytical sector of the Agency. It is responsible for collecting, organizing, and analyzing the intelligence gathered during operational assignments. Together these two sectors along with a large administrative staff keep the CIA functioning effectively and efficiently.

The CIA can be broken up into five major categories; they are Directorate of Operations (DO), Directorate of Intelligence (DI), Directorate of Support (DS), Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T), and Directorate of Digital Innovation (DDI).<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, the DI, DO, and administrative staff, which is not its own directorate, will be discussed in further detail. There are many roles within each section but an understanding of these three overarching groups creates a comprehensive framework to for the intelligence community. To perform efficiently, each group requires a distinct skill set. They are often intertwined and may overlap, but by identifying these three key groups it becomes easier to understand the various levels of the intelligence community.

### Clerical and Administrative Positions

The administrative staff is extremely important to keeping the CIA functioning at maximum efficiency. As women began to enter the workforce they served in low level entry positions. Lisa Rein wrote in *The Washington Post*, “By the 1950s, secretaries were typing, filing, taking dictation, answering phones and opening mail in just about every American business and government office. The jobs were a woman’s ticket into the workforce.”<sup>4</sup> In the early years of the CIA, clerical roles were mainly filled by women, as

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<sup>3</sup> "Who We Are." Central Intelligence Agency. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Lisa Rein. "As Federal Government Evolves, Its Clerical Workers Edge Toward Extinction." *Washington Post*, 2014

it was really their only employment opportunity within the Agency. Secretarial and typist positions were viewed as acceptable roles for women considering the present gender norms of that time. In 1947, everything was recorded and filed by hand, thus creating many job opportunities within the CIA. Education was not a prerequisite to adequately perform in these low level administrative roles. As an entry level position these jobs equated to low ranks on the Government Salary (GS) pay scale, ranging between GS1 and GS6. Employees with tenure in the administrative roles were likely to reach the GS6 level. In the early years of the CIA it was uncommon for women to move into positions beyond clerical roles. There were institutional barriers that prevented women from entering into higher level positions within different directorates. The upper grades of the pay scale from GS7 to GS15 are comprised of the covert ops and analytical workers. The Senior Intelligence Service (SIS) officers and the Director of the CIA are ranked at the GS15 level. As societal norms shifted and women sought employment, the CIA provided many low level clerical positions.

Today administrative roles encompass a large part of the operations in the CIA. The extended network of administrative staff is the backbone of the Agency. Administrative positions range from customer support service to educator and financial analyst. Due to modern technology the clerical roles once held by women in the agency have transitioned to professional administrative roles with extensive responsibilities. When discussing the trends Rein stated that, “Across the federal government, the broad rows of desks where secretaries and clerks once typed at least 40 words a minute have vanished. While automation has been transforming the federal workforce for two generations, that change has now accelerated because of budget cuts, with the

government under pressure to keep only the clerical staff it needs.”<sup>5</sup> The need for a clerical staff has diminished over the years as technology progressed. Clerical positions used to account for three fourths of the federal government workforce. In 2013, only four percent of the workforce was classified as clerical positions. Clerical roles were crucial entry level positions for women in the early years of the CIA, but more recently the clerical sector of the CIA and in many other federal agencies for that matter, have been reduced and replaced.

### Directorate of Operations (Covert Operations)

Covert action is defined by the National Security Act as “[a]n activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publically.”<sup>6</sup> It is referred to as the middle option between doing nothing and intervening with military force.<sup>7</sup> Before beginning a covert operation, policy makers and leaders in the intelligence community must determine whether the benefits of the operation outweigh the risks. There are two major aspects of risk associated with covert operations. The first is exposure and the second is operation failure.<sup>8</sup> The unveiling of the operation could have some drastic effects down the road, so understanding the consequences can help weigh the risk of the operation. Failure of the operation puts human lives at risk in addition to creating a potential political crisis. These aspects compiled together help evaluate the potential risk of an operation. Covert action

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<sup>5</sup> Lisa Rein. "As Federal Government Evolves, Its Clerical Workers Edge Toward Extinction." *Washington Post*, 2014

<sup>6</sup> National Security Act, 1947.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 181.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182.

consists of many acts and strategies which have varying levels of violence and risk.

Figure 2 shows that as the level of violence increases the less likely one is able to plausibly deny involvement. The table below shows the relationship between level of violence and level of plausible deniability for each technique. As violence increases, the plausible deniability decreases. Some covert operations can have a very low risk such as propaganda while others have a very high risk like coups or parliamentary operations. The next chapter will discuss the use and implementation of some of these covert operations tactics.

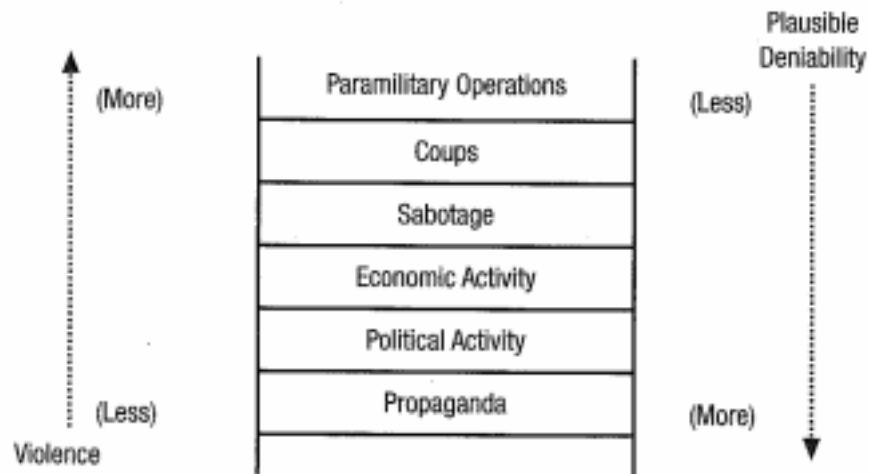


Figure 2. The Covert Action Ladder  
*Source:* Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 187.

### Directorate of Intelligence (Analysis)

Analysis is a crucial component to the success of an intelligence agency. It is the final producer, though the covert ops sector receives the most discussion in news stories and fiction novels, the analytical sector presents the intelligence to policy makers. Oftentimes, people associate the intelligence community with the operational forces who collect and gather intelligence, whether in a covert manner or not. The subsequent events that follow the collection process are equally important. It must be analyzed and then

turned into a report or memo, sent up a chain of command until it is necessary to act on that information. The analytical sector is extremely important to the overall function of intelligence agencies.

Analysis officials are tasked with sorting and prioritizing the massive amounts of intelligence that is gathered on the operational side. Not all intelligence will be used right after it is collected. It may be put aside and pulled to use in a new matter. If information is deemed important it will be passed along to military and civil organizations to inform policy decisions. With such a large volume of intelligence flowing in, in some circumstances it is necessary to make information stand out. One way to do this is to highlight the unique nature of the source. The more preferred option is to create an analysis that conveys the information in a clear and concise way, thus emphasizing the importance of the intelligence. An analyst who briefed a former president stated, “My value was telling the President something he didn’t already know about something he needed to know.”<sup>9</sup> This shows the difficulty in sorting through large quantities of information to decide what needs to be addressed in the moment.

Similarly, to the covert ops sector, the analytical sector faces a few problems of its own. In the short term, intelligence may not be relevant, but may prove to be important in the future. Analyst officers have to make important decisions on a time sensitive basis as to what gets reported when and to whom.<sup>10</sup> This creates a divide between current intelligence and long-term intelligence. The advent of technology has helped create a collective intelligence database, making it easy to sort by searching for important phrases

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 119.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

and key words. Additionally, the shift to a digital forum for storing this large volume of data can be conveniently searched and used later within the Agency.

Briefings are the most common way to deliver intelligence to various policy making agencies and groups. Briefings are a short meeting to convey the relevant information to the policy makers. Analytical officers must be prepared to answer a myriad of questions and continue to deliver accurate information. It takes a certain set of negotiating and communication skills to handle this situation.<sup>11</sup> This may exclude some people from entering these positions within the intelligence community. Since the 2004 passing of intelligence legislation the President's Daily Briefing (PDB) became the responsibility of the Director of National Intelligence instead of the CIA. This allowed multiple agencies to collaborate and contribute intelligence. Prior to this change, the CIA had full control over the PDB, given this situation, collaboration in the intelligence community proved difficult. The analytical sector relies on a highly informed workforce of people who can write well and "think interesting thoughts" according to a senior official who oversaw the hiring of new analysts.<sup>12</sup> The intelligence community is comprised of many directorates, each of which works collaboratively and consistently to align under the Agency's mission. For the purpose of this thesis, the Directorate of Operations, Directorate of Intelligence, and administrative staff are the most important.

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 124.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.



## Chapter 2

### Evolution of Female Spies Constrained by the Patriarchy

#### Early Female Spies

The roles of the female spies have drastically changed over the last two centuries.

As nations involved themselves in conflict, they called upon women to expand their intelligence forces. Women began to enter the intelligence community and take on crucial roles. There is a clear evolution of women in intelligence from “typist to trailblazer” as the CIA coined it.<sup>13</sup> Women in the intelligence community have been severely inhibited by the societal norms of the patriarchal society. Traditional roles for women were to be in the home, supporting the husband, and caring for children. It was not common for women to participate in the work force, making it even more unlikely for women to be involved in intelligence. After it was discovered that women could provide something men could not, women were recruited for their resources. Women could go places seemingly unnoticed without causing suspicion, allowing women to infiltrate areas that perhaps excluded men. Women used their socially accepted roles as an entrance to the intelligence community. By serving as a nurse or dinner host women were able to gain access to military officials and front line areas unsuspectingly. This allowed women to break into the intelligence community.

The first women were pioneers for female spies. They did not have life long careers as spies, they simply acted on a single opportunity to pass information. Women may have been called upon to deliver information from one person to another within a hospital. For example, while serving as a nurse, it was not unusual for women to frequent

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<sup>13</sup> “From Typist to Trailblazer The Evolving View of Women in the CIA's Workforce” *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2013.

the halls of hospitals. Women could deliver notes from the battle field to those soldiers or important military commanders who were bed ridden in the hospital. Women's involvement in the intelligence community began with these small singular acts of transporting information by using the socially accepted roles they already served, such as nurse. As this proved to be helpful women took on larger roles, became more systematic and broke out of the traditional norms of the patriarchy.

History is littered with accounts of women bravely acting out against the traditional norms and serving their country or undermining it for a greater political will. Although female spies may have acted with as much valor, courage, and patriotism as their male counterparts, it is unlikely they received equal praise for their efforts. Female spies started with very minimal roles in the intelligence community but they continued to gain more responsibility over time as patriarchal norms began to shift.

### The American Revolution

During the American Revolution, women held traditional responsibilities and maintained the home while the men were defending the thirteen colonies trying to gain independence from Britain. The primary focus was on the war and the men that fought to secure their liberties. Due to the multinational understanding of gender roles, neither British nor American soldiers suspect women of being spies. This allowed women to participate in minor operations to gather information. The base camps and various army stations needed cooks and maids to aid in the general function of the unit. Generals saw this as an opportunity to begin to recruit women to serve in these positions to spy on the

soldiers and officers around them.<sup>14</sup> Women had the advantage of gaining unobstructed access to enemy camps, walking in with very little suspicion raised.

America's first formal organization tasked with gathering intelligence was the Committee of Secret Correspondence established in 1775.<sup>15</sup> From this stemmed the Culper Spy Ring in New York. Although this group was predominately run by men, they called upon women for assistance.<sup>16</sup> One particular member of this ring was Anna "Nancy" Smith Strong. She is known for signaling other spies by arranging her laundry on the clothesline in a particular way which would send messages.<sup>17</sup> These women used seemingly habitual activities to pass information to General George Washington from Philadelphia to Valley Forge.<sup>18</sup> Their efforts were crucial and resulted in many important discoveries. According to the National Women's History Museum the numerals "355" were used as code for the word woman in records. The notes state that one "355" agent was responsible for the arrest of a New England Intelligence Operations head officer Major John André. She also played an imperative role in discovering the acts of treason of Benedict Arnold.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately this agent's name is still a mystery today. Women risked their lives and their own personal security to serve their country in the only way they could, but still some remain anonymous as their efforts were reduced and cataloged under the generalization of female spies or agent "355." For centuries women have

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<sup>14</sup> Amy J. Martin "America's Evolution of Women and Their Roles in the Intelligence Community." *Journal of Strategic Security* 8 (5): 99-109.

<sup>15</sup> "Clandestine Women: Spies in American History," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> History.com Staff. "The Culper Spy Ring." History.com. 2010

<sup>17</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Amy J. Martin, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

participated in secret operations to gain intelligence, the American Revolution provides a starting point for examining the role of women in intelligence. Focusing on the role of women in intelligence throughout specific periods of time will show how women broke into the intelligence community and developed new roles.

### The American Civil War

During the American Civil War, women began to receive more assignments and expanded their operations. Organized networks of clandestine groups became common, as did women's participation in them.<sup>20</sup> Women began to receive a wider range of positions, such as scouts, encryption specialists, agents and some even operatives. However, these roles still heavily relied on the traditional roles for women within the patriarchal society. Women used their clothing and daily attire as a way to conceal messages and pass information. The fashion trends for women during this era consisted of many layers and hoop skirts.<sup>21</sup> Emeline Pigott used her hoop skirts and several layers of clothing to carry information and contraband.<sup>22</sup> Rose O'Neal Greenhow was an "operative" for the Confederates. Her primary responsibility was to play the gracious dinner host and open up her home to the elite political leaders and military personnel. She passed along military information through coded messages to General Beauregard, which helped the Confederates win the Battle of Bull Run.<sup>23</sup> O'Neal was referred to as an "operative" but her job relied on the fact that she was a woman and her conventional role was to maintain the home. She was successful in collecting information because men were still unsuspecting of women, especially when they were hosting elaborate dinners.

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<sup>20</sup> Amy J. Martin, 2015. 100.

<sup>21</sup> "Clandestine," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Amy J. Martin, 2015. 100.

The gender norms had not yet transformed, leaving most men with an idea that women had no role in intelligence operations and instead were just performing their daily routines within their homes. Essentially, women posed very little threat to men, which allowed them to succeed in gathering and passing information right around men.

Participating in clandestine activities became dangerous for women as both sides began to understand the advantages of including them. Elizabeth Van Lew was a slave owner and informant for the Union army. She brought food and medicine to imprisoned soldiers and helped many of them escape. She is most remembered for assisting her former servant Mary Elizabeth Bowser in getting a position in the home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Bowser took on the responsibility of an agent in place. She was able to spy on Jefferson Davis and collect intelligence on the Confederate plans. Davis left important papers lying around under the assumption that Bowser, an African American female servant, was illiterate and would not be able to read the plans.<sup>24</sup> Though most slaves were thought to be illiterate, Davis was able to use the stereotype to her advantage. Bowser did not appear as a threat, Davis left important documents scattered around in plain sight. Women were successful in their ventures because they embraced their daily role and completed tasks unsuspectingly. They used the fact that they were women to go unnoticed into places men could not easily go. Women collected information while performing their everyday tasks, turning their tasks into helpful intelligence operations.

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<sup>24</sup> “Clandestine Women,” *National Women’s History Museum*, 2007.

## World War I

World War I began a new era for female spies in the intelligence community.

President Woodrow Wilson spoke to the United States Senate advising them to pass the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, arguing that women had sacrificed a great deal for this nation and they should be able to have rights of their own. He stated,

...Are we alone to ask and take the utmost that our women can give, service and sacrifice of every kind, and still say we do not see what title that gives them to stand by our sides in the guidance of the affairs of their nations and ours? We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?<sup>25</sup>

The president of the United States acknowledged the service and sacrifice of women.

This represents the beginning of a new age for women where their efforts were recognized. The first world war presented many new opportunities for women.

The story of Mata Hari is often closely associated with the notion of women spies being very beautiful and having a certain aura about them. Mata Hari is remembered for her work as an exotic dancer who lured men in with her charisma. In her young life she answered an ad for an army captain in the Indies looking for a wife. The man was captivated by the photo of Mata Hari and agreed to marry her. The captain was obviously impressed with her looks but the marriage did not last long. After divorcing her husband, she moved to Paris and began dancing. She wore bedazzled jewelry and danced in very little clothing. She was good at attracting men and her shows became very popular. She later fell in love with Vladimir Maslof, a Russian pilot, who became ill and was placed in a French hospital. A French official, Georges Laudox, offered to let her in to the hospital if she agreed to be a spy. Her first assignment was to seduce a man of high importance in

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<sup>25</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

the German ranks. Immediately her value, worth, and success rate came down to her ability to seduce men.<sup>26</sup> She was able to build relationships with high ranking military officials and infiltrate places men could not go, such as the bedroom. She could effortlessly arrange meetings with influential politicians in many countries and seduce the men to gather intelligence.<sup>27</sup> For this examination of women in intelligence, Mata Hari will serve as the first example of women using their sexuality to seduce men and gather intelligence. This sexual relationship between two people, often referred to as a honey trap will be further discussed in a later section.

World War I was one of the first opportunities for women to travel overseas to serve but it was most common for them to assist in various roles stateside. The majority of women were not assigned as operators but as cryptologists, code breakers, and translators. Agnes Meyer Driscoll was petty officer for the Navy, who majored in mathematics, physics, foreign languages, and music. She was recruited to work for a code and signal unit.<sup>28</sup> Her previous education made her an ideal candidate to recruit. Education was an important factor in the mobilization of women into new roles in intelligence. Anna Keichline was an architect who served as a “special agent” in Washington DC. It is still unknown what her exact role was but she actively sought out harder and more dangerous work after being unsatisfied with the research and reporting role she was originally assigned. She asserted her abilities to Captain Taylor of the U.S. Army.

I am twenty-eight and physically somewhat stronger than the average.  
Might add that I can operate and take care of a car. The above [summary

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<sup>26</sup> Lisa A. Ennis. "Mata Hari". *Encyclopedia of Intelligence & Counterintelligence*, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> "Mata Hari-the Exotic Dancer, courtesan & Notorious WWI Spy," *The Vintage News*.

<sup>28</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

of education and professional experience] would suggest a drafting or office job, but if you should deem it advisable to give me something more difficult, or as I wish to say more dangerous, I should much prefer it.<sup>29</sup>

Captain Taylor was in charge of the Military Intelligence Division. In order to convince him she was willing and able to take on a more crucial role, Keichline had to list all of her personal and educational achievements to prove that she was qualified. Women had to be exceptional and above average to break into this field. The criteria for women to enter the intelligence community had expanded. The housewives and nurses that were helpful throughout the earlier periods no longer satisfied the current demands. The role of women in intelligence had transformed and now requires women who had received an education and were exceptional within their fields to enter the intelligence community.

During the war breakthroughs in technology opened up a whole new network of opportunities for women. Women were recruited by the Army Signal Corps to be ‘Hello Girls’ which were bilingual telephone switchboard operators that served overseas.<sup>30</sup> Again education was important to the promotion of the ‘Hello Girls.’ They needed to be bilingual so they were either raised with two languages or had the opportunity to learn a second language. The events and developments during World War I really shaped a new norm for women’s roles in intelligence, the field of codebreakers and linguistics relied heavily on women’s participation.

## World War II

By World War II women took on roles in even larger numbers. In 1942, with the creation of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a precursor to the Central Intelligence

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<sup>29</sup> “Clandestine Women,” *National Women’s History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Amy J Martin, 2015. 100.



Agency (CIA), the United States formalized its clandestine operations. After decades of showing their worth, women now represented a larger percentage of the intelligence community. In 1944, 4,500 of the 13,000 employees were women.<sup>31</sup> Out of these women, about one third served in positions overseas. Within the many nations involved in World War II, women took on more dangerous roles. Many remained cryptologists to gather intelligence but a select few worked as undercover field agents in covert ops.

As woman became more involved in clandestine operational roles, some women used their bodies to get information. The relationship in which a woman seduces a man to get information is called a honey trap. It originated centuries ago and has prevailed even into modern day popular culture. The FX television series *The Americans* uses the honey trap to emphasize the sexual aspect of female spies. The examples previous to World War II reflect that women's traditional roles in the home, their daily attire, and overall presence as a woman were used as an asset to infiltrate areas unsuspectingly. Another way to infiltrate an area dominated by men is to be a young woman with a charming charisma. As previously discussed, Mata Hari used her seductive personality to swoon men, but there are others stories similar to hers.

Amy Thorpe Pack was married to Arthur Pack who was stationed in Madrid, Spain. Amy took it upon herself to get involved by helping transport rebel Nationalist to safety during the Spanish Civil War and supplied forces with Red Cross materials. In 1937, she left Spain with her young daughter and nanny to go to Paris, where she wanted to become a part of the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Her first assignment was to befriend a group of men within the Polish foreign ministry. She stated later in a

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<sup>31</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

biography in regards to one particular man, “Our meetings were very fruitful, and I let him make love to me as often as he wanted, since this guaranteed the smooth flow of political information I needed.”<sup>32</sup> Her next mission was to impress the assistant to the Polish Minister Józef Beck. She seduced the men and traded secrets for sex. After successful missions in various countries she left her husband behind again to go to the United States. She was stationed in D.C. and assigned the task of gathering intelligence on the Italian naval cryptosystem. To do so she reached out to an old friend Alberto Lais, who worked at the Italian embassy. She says he gave the codes to her willingly, but others argue on his behalf that she used her sly techniques to seduce him and collect the information.<sup>33</sup>

In another operation for the British she was very influential in obtaining the Vichy French naval ciphers, which were instrumental in the war effort in Northern Africa.<sup>34</sup> She seduced a press attaché at the French Embassy named Charles Brousse. Over time she convinced this man to willingly help her collect information by claiming she was working for the Americans. When a mission they planned was in jeopardy, she quickly undressed and pretended to have sexual relations with Brousse to convince the security guard the two of them were there for personal relations. She swiftly used her body to her advantage to turn the security guard away and guarantee the success of the mission. Upon reflecting back on her experiences she states, “My superiors told me that the results of my work saved thousands of British and American lives....It involved me in situations from which ‘respectable’ women draw back—but mine was total commitment. Wars are not

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<sup>32</sup> "Amy Elizabeth Thorpe: WWII's Mata Hari." *HistoryNet*, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> “Clandestine Women,” *National Women’s History Museum*, 2007.

won by respectable methods.”<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Thorpe Pack was not the image of the ordinary female spy during the second world, on the contrary she was quite exceptional. She traveled to many countries and immersed herself under deep cover to complete the required missions. She was clearly determined from the start to be involved in this high risk thrilling environment. She is considered the Mata Hari of World War II due to her ability to swoon her male targets.

In contrast to the wildly popular accounts of women seducing men for information, men also seduce women for information. As women began to take on larger roles and get appointed to positions where they had access to important information, men set a honey trap for women. One prominent example of this reverse honey trap was the work of Marcus Wolf. In the 1950s in East Germany, he noted that there were more and more women moving into higher positions within the government and important industries. He decided to gather a team of handsome young men to work a new division of the Stasi, which he called the Romeo Spies. Their job was to get into West Germany, seduce single women, and gather information. He stated, "As long as there is espionage, there will be Romeos seducing unsuspecting [targets] with access to secrets."<sup>36</sup> Although the scheme was not all that successful in obtaining new intelligence, it does provide evidence that the honey trap relationship worked both ways, which is something that will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

The honey trap relationships have a heightened appeal to them, because they provide an interesting, and slightly scandalous insight to the intelligence community.

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<sup>35</sup> "Amy Elizabeth Thorpe: WWII's Mata Hari." HistoryNet. June 12, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Phillip Knightley, "The History of the Honey Trap." *Foreign Policy*, 2010.

These stories are not an accurate representation of the day to day work of the majority of men and women in this profession. Most women employed by the OSS (later CIA) and the British SIS, held desk jobs working to decipher messages in code and working on code breaking. Another large portion of women served as translators. Those with a background in education or foreign language skills were quickly put to use. Other women were responsible for writing and distributing propaganda to demoralize enemy troops or the people within a nation. These roles were crucial to both the war effort on the front lines and reducing the morale of the enemy's general population. The story of these women is not as alluring as those of the women who infiltrated enemy territory to seduce top officials for information, but they are just as crucial to the success of the Allied forces. This particular role for women allowed women to target the emotions of others. It is suggested that women are more aware of emotion and so playing to their strengths, women were sent to scramble the emotions of the enemy to bring their morale down. Throughout World War II, the majority of women still held secondary positions that aligned with their presupposed "abilities" in the eyes of the patriarchy.

Perhaps the most notable female spy from WWII is Virginia Hall. With her notorious wooden leg, she disguised herself as old peasant women and ran major clandestine operations in France in occupied zones. She trained and managed three Battalions of French Commandos for D-Day operations. Her team was able to capture 500 German soldiers and kill 150. For her service and sacrifice she was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, making her the first female civilian to receive this award.<sup>37</sup> Her ability to disguise herself as an unsuspecting old woman allowed her to infiltrate

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<sup>37</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

areas and go unnoticed only to later generate destruction to the enemy's communication.<sup>38</sup>

As the war progressed, the OSS and other important agencies involved in the war effort such as the State Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Army-Navy Intelligence Board, began to recruit women with expertise in linguistics, mathematics, and cryptology. A working knowledge of a foreign language was incredibly useful throughout the war. In order to obtain credible intelligence, people needed to be expertly trained in understanding the native language of their enemies. Juliana Mickwitz escaped the Nazi's after they invaded Poland. She settled in the United States and translated documents from Polish, German, and Russian for the War Department's Military Intelligence Directorate. Women with language skills would sit at desks all day long and listen to messages for valuable information. Genevieve Feinstein worked for the Signal Intelligence Service. In this position she applied her knowledge of Japanese to assist the cryptanalyst unit in producing an analog machine that could decipher Japanese diplomatic codes. Mary Louise Prather was able to discover a relationship between two Japanese messages which resulted in interpreting a new Japanese code.<sup>39</sup> The ideal candidates for these positions were educated women. Those with an education would excel and most likely be self-directed, relying on their previous knowledge to complete the work. Although there were opportunities for the uneducated in other facets of the war, those with an education were called upon and recruited to invest their skills into the war

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<sup>38</sup> Amy J. Martin, 2015. 101.

<sup>39</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

effort. This provided social, political, and economic mobilization for educated women but left the uneducated behind.

A special unit of the OSS was tasked with creating and distributing negative propaganda to bring down the morale of the enemy. This unit was called the Morale Operation (MO) and was considered a form of psychological warfare. Women were called upon to produce “black” propaganda that could not be traced to its source. Barbara Lauwers worked in a MO operations unit in Rome where she used captured German soldiers to distribute black propaganda regarding Hitler to the occupied areas throughout Italy. She helped create an organization titled the “League of Lonely War Women.” The goal of this group was to send letters to German forces to make them believe their wives and girlfriends had abandoned them and started relationships with new men, causing the troops to lose focus on the war effort. As a result, in 1945 six hundred Czechoslovakian soldiers fighting with the German forces withdrew their support after receiving this propaganda.<sup>40</sup> It may not have been a position on the front line but women were creating a large impact on the results of the war.

Elizabeth McIntosh worked in the OSS MO branches in India and China. In this role, she was able to distribute black propaganda by intercepting postcards from Japanese soldiers and rewriting the messages to make it apparent that the Japanese forces were not close to victory.<sup>41</sup> In order to perform this task, she needed an extensive knowledge of Japanese, her fluency was a crucial component to the success of her work. She created letters and pamphlets to expose the harsh conditions throughout Japan, and they were

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<sup>40</sup> “Clandestine Women,” *National Women’s History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

distributed in and among groups of troops to break down their motivation to forge on.<sup>42</sup>

Marlene Dietrich was a volunteer for the OSS who provided entertainment for the Allied troops to keep their morale up throughout the war. In addition to improving the morale of her own troops, she performed songs in German which the OSS would broadcast to the German troops to lower their resolve in the trenches.<sup>43</sup> This was an attempt to psychologically combat the German soldiers. It also shows the wide array of roles women filled to be involved in the war effort.

The war opened up many opportunities for women. Gender prejudices were pushed aside in the time of great need. Officers and leaders began to understand that women had many attributes that could be used as an asset to their missions. This is really the first time that large numbers of women were appointed to positions high in the ranks. Some women even led large groups of men during the D-Day invasions. However, after the war gender norms crept back to suppress women. Women received the civilian equivalent of military awards and honors, because despite their tremendous efforts, women were still technically ineligible from receiving the awards.<sup>44</sup> Most often reports of women's efforts were discussed in a manner that attributed their good looks and daring attitude to their success. Clare Mulley the author of *'The Spy Who Loved: The Secrets and Lives of Christine Granville'* reports that, "When I started researching the life of Christine Granville for my book, I faced barrage of well-meaning commentary about her bravery and beauty (she was a pre-war beauty queen), but very little recognition of her

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<sup>42</sup> Clare Mullen, "Sub-machine Guns, Prosthetic Legs and 'uncivil Service': The Hidden Lives of Britain's Female Spies." *The Telegraph*, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> "Clandestine Women," *National Women's History Museum*, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Clare Mulley, "Sub-machine Guns, ..." *The Telegraph*, 2015.

huge contribution to the Allied war effort that led to her being awarded the George Medal, OBE and French Croix de Guerre.”<sup>45</sup> Even after risking their lives and committing their careers to the war effort, women’s efforts were minimalized and sexualized. Women were instrumental in a great number of operations throughout the war but as the war ended so did the pressing need for women’s involvement. Women fell victim to the demands of the patriarchal system once again.

### The Cold War

The women of World War II were the trailblazers for other females in the intelligence community. The roles of women throughout the Cold War were quite similar to those during WWII. Due to the heightened suspense of the Cold War the most popular and often reported stories involve sleeper agents sent to live unsuspectingly for long periods of time in other nations. People were fearful of Russians infiltrating the United States at the local level. Wild stories such as the capture of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and the betrayal of Aldrich Ames captured the headlines, while women continued to serve at the administrative level, as typist, translators, technical support, and even as operatives.

The story of Elizabeth Bentley comes with a particularly strange twist. Bentley was an American citizen who was “turned” as they say in the intelligence community. That is to say, she changed her alliance from the United States to the Soviet Union as she became a member of the communist party. She attended Vassar College in upstate New York, where her classmates referred to her as the lonely girl.<sup>46</sup> She went on to graduate school at Columbia in 1932. At this point in time it was unusual for women to receive

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Kathryn S. Olmsted, “Red Spy Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth Bentley” 2002. 3.



such a high level of education. Of the doctoral students at this time, less than twenty percent were women.<sup>47</sup> To fill the void of her loneliness, Elizabeth joined the Communist Party in her community.<sup>48</sup> One member of the Communist Party spoke of Elizabeth's personality by saying, "As a communist underground agent in Italy, she shrieked, Elizabeth would have to drink heavily and sleep with many men. The movement did not need" a delicate hot-house flower."<sup>49</sup> This provides insight to the harsh realities of the honey trap relationship, there was a high risk involved. It took a strong character to successfully perform the honey trap.

Elizabeth Bentley spied for the KGB, the Soviet Union intelligence organization, for seven years. She worked as an agent in place passing pro-Fascist information while undercover as a librarian. Later while serving as a secretary for Richard Waldo, a conservative businessman, Bentley collected information on his daily movements, conversations, and contacts. Eventually, Bentley felt her position was about to be terminated by the KGB so she turned herself in to the FBI in 1945. In doing so she guaranteed her safety from the KGB, and provided the American government with information on spy networks and agents in place throughout the government. The information provided by Bentley instilled a fear in Americans that Communists had infiltrated their country at the governmental level.

Another female trailblazer began her career during the Second World War but her career reached its peak during the Cold War. Eloise Randolph Page began her career as the secretary for Major General Donovan during the second world war. She broke into

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 16.

the intelligence and espionage community as a trailblazer for women after the war.<sup>50</sup> In 1945, she moved to Brussels, Belgium and helped establish the first post-war station.<sup>51</sup> Donovan was the head of the OSS until the creation of the CIA in 1947, upon which Page transferred to the new Agency. She served as one of the highest ranking female officers for twelve years between 1975 and 1987. As the first female to be appointed chief of station, she was known as the “iron butterfly” in the office. The term iron butterfly speaks to her nice and well-kept outer appearance while having an iron inside that is unwavering even in difficult situations. Another colleague described Page as “a perfect southern lady with a core of steel.” As the first woman to head a major committee in the intelligence community, it is no surprise she was honored as a trailblazer for women in the CIA.<sup>52</sup> She eventually found herself as the number three officer in the Director of Operations (DO) a clandestine operations unit, known today as the National Clandestine Service (NCS.) The CIA reports that “Page was the first woman to serve as the Deputy Director of the Intelligence Community staff and Chairman of the Critical Collection Problems Committee, responsible for allocating collection assets on critical problems facing the United States.”<sup>53</sup> She had many tremendous accomplishments throughout her career and was certainly a role model for the women who would follow her. Page was never married or had children, she most likely sacrificed having a family to excel in her career.<sup>54</sup> At the time of her death in 2002, the active Director of the CIA George Tenet

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<sup>50</sup> Amy J. Martin, 2015. 101.

<sup>51</sup> "The People of the CIA ... A CIA Trailblazer: Eloise Page." *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Martin, Amy J. 2015. 101.

<sup>53</sup> "The People of the CIA ..." *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

spoke these words on her behalf, "From her earliest days of service with OSS, she was a source of inspiration to others. She will be forever."<sup>55</sup> Eloise Randolph Page reached some of the most elite positions within the intelligence community throughout her career. She serves as representation of how far women have come over the years. However, Page was an exceptional woman, with a noteworthy career. The majority of women in the intelligence community were still serving secondary roles and taking orders from the men in charge.

The sexual portrayal of female spies was still prominent even into the height of the Cold War. In the 1980s, U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Clayton J. Lonetree was blackmailed to open a U.S. embassy vault in Moscow.<sup>56</sup> Violetta Sanni was an beautiful young interpreter at the embassy. Lonetree began to escort her home after work and this was the beginning of their relationship. She introduced him to her Uncle Sasha who turned out to be a KGB agent who demanded information from Lonetree. By this time, Lonetree was left with very few options, he had to oblige or risk his life.<sup>57</sup> He was later transferred to Vienna where Uncle Sasha followed him and continued to request information. When he realized he was too far in, Lonetree turned himself into CIA. In 1987, he was sent back to the United States and spent time in prison for treason, however he never admitted he believed Violetta to be a spy. Intelligence observers have declared that Violetta personified the classic swallow act.<sup>58</sup> The story of Sergeant Lonetree

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<sup>55</sup> "The People of the CIA ..." *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2013.

<sup>56</sup> Frederick Hitz, "The Great Game" 2004. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 105.

provides a concrete example of the luring practice of the honey trap and how it was still successful decades after women entered the intelligence community.

### Female Spies as Victims of the Patriarchy

The honey trap and swallow relationship has prevailed through years of war, times of peace, and the evolution of the roles of women in intelligence. Women still remain a sexual object to be used as a weapon of war in order to gather information. In his novel *From Russia With Love*, author Ian Fleming writes, “Your body belongs to the State. Since your birth, the State has nourished it. Now your body must work for the State. Is that understood?”<sup>59</sup> This statement implies that a woman has no autonomy over her own body, that it belongs solely to the state to use as it desires. Assuming that the state represents the patriarchy, will women in the intelligence community ever escape the pressure of the patriarchal system? This chapter identifies how the role of the woman spy has evolved over time. As the state had greater demands and fought larger battles, women were asked to sacrifice themselves to the cause. Women spies embodied traditional womanly characteristics to allow them to go unnoticed and perform covert ops. As women were accepted into universities and became educated they took on roles that called upon their knowledge of math, foreign language, and technology. Women evolved only as far and as fast as the state would allow. The very exceptional women broke through the system and reached higher status, but the majority remained held back by the constraints of the patriarchy.

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<sup>59</sup> Ian Fleming, “From Russia With Love,” 1957. 88.

## Chapter 3

### Factors Inhibiting Women's Role In Intelligence

Certain factors have contributed to women's initial absence in the intelligence community and in turn resulted in an inequality in the number of women compared to men specifically within the CIA. Throughout the 1950s and the early years of the CIA, women were inhibited by education and lack of military training. The following sections will discuss the effects of the prolonged exclusion of women from the intelligence community in the CIA from its formation up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Gendered stereotypes of women, education, and lack of military training, have all contributed to the ever present gap between women and men. The intelligence community can be broken up into three main sectors of work-clerical, analytical, and covert ops. Within each sector there are certain factors that directly correspond to preventing women from advancing their careers within the Agency.

#### Formation of the Central Intelligence Agency

The Central Intelligence Agency was created after World War II and took the place of the Office of Strategic Services. There was a need for a primary collector of intelligence. In 1947, President Truman signed the National Security Act which tasked the CIA with coordinating intelligence activities on behalf of the nation and evaluating intelligence regarding the national security of the country.<sup>60</sup> The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (DCI) serves to oversee the Agency and works to implement four basic principles. The first is to use human sources, technology, and other means to gather intelligence without police supervision. The next principle is to collect and circulate

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<sup>60</sup> "History of the CIA." *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2014.

intelligence regarding national security. The third principle is to utilize other government agencies to best gather intelligence outside the borders of the United States. Finally, the last principle is an umbrella clause that states the Director has the authority to act in the best interest of national security. The work of the CIA is to promote the initiatives of the director.<sup>61</sup>

The National Security Act of 1947 provided a legal basis for the intelligence community. Originally, the CIA was simply meant to collect all intelligence from other agencies and serve as the supervisory agency. Nowhere in the act did it legislate all the powers the CIA is known for today.<sup>62</sup> Recruitment for the CIA during the early years relied heavily on its predecessor the OSS. After the CIA was established, many women were hired for administrative roles, such as secretaries, typists, and stenographers. Those who were employed as officers in the OSS transferred over but faced unequal pay and less benefits than their male counterparts received.<sup>63</sup> Although a larger number of women were recruited to fill administrative roles, there were a select few who were recruited for the skills they had. Regarding one applicant, it was noted, “She could fly an airplane, speak the mandarin dialect of Chinese, and [was] a college graduate, but was only asked ‘Can you type?’ She could elicit no responses from the interviewer on where she might work in the Agency, what she might do, and what kind of work was open to her.”<sup>64</sup> This suggests that women had the necessary skills but were seen as an asset for administrative roles, even though they were qualified for professional positions.

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<sup>61</sup> "About CIA." *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> “From Typist To Trailblazer...,” *Central Intelligence Agency*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

By the 1950s, more opportunities were available and greater numbers of women were admitted into educational institutions. However, the gender stereotypes of those hiring within the ranks of the CIA had not yet changed. Although women were qualified, the newly created CIA did not utilize women in the most efficient and resourceful way which inhibited the advancement of women within the Agency. In the previous chapter, it was noted that Virginia Hall was commemorated for her excellent work and time spent behind enemy lines. Hall was recognized with the Distinguished Service Cross after she joined the British Intelligence and later the OSS during WWII. She was revered for her extended time spent behind enemy lines all while working on a wooden leg. When she returned to the United States, she joined the Central Intelligence Agency. By 1963, she was only at the GS14 level, which did not equally reflect her accomplishments and dedication.<sup>65</sup> Those women who joined the CIA after working for the OSS were not ranked in the same position as their males counterparts in the new Agency.

In conclusion, the formation of the CIA resulted in many women embracing strictly administrative roles within the Agency. A small number of those women with an education had the necessary skills to move into professional analytical roles and those with military training were recruited for special operations or higher ranking roles. However, often time those with these sought after skills still held low level clerical positions due to gendered stereotypes. Those women who transferred from the OSS did not enter the new Agency at the same rank as their male equivalents. The early years of the CIA set the Agency precedent for the years to come.

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<sup>65</sup> “From Typist To Trailblazer...,” *Central Intelligence Agency*. 11.

## 1953 Panel on Career Service for Women: Petticoat Panel

The first internal report investigating gender discrimination within the CIA was the Petticoat Panel. This was ordered by then DCI Allen Dulles. After observing the inequalities in pay and rank between men and women within the Agency. Dulles called for a survey that would review the position of women. It should be noted that although the discrimination against women in the CIA was present for many years after this study was conducted, it was quite radical for this study to be ordered. Gender discrimination towards women was certainly the norm during this time period. By conducting this study, the CIA showed that it was years ahead of other agencies. In *Typists and Trailblazers: Defining the Roles of Women in the Early Years of the CIA*, Jackie Benn Porter points out that other government agencies and large companies had not yet addressed or ordered studies to identify issues in discrimination against women.<sup>66</sup> This study is the first of many which highlights the inequalities for women within the CIA.

As the fifth DCI, Allen Dulles committed to compiling a panel of women to participate in a study to understand gender discrimination. He stated, "I think women have a very high place in this work, and if there is discrimination, we're going to see that it's stopped."<sup>67</sup> The panel consisted of thirteen women and nine alternates. The main aim of the panel was to identify "the problems of professional and clerical advancement" to decide whether there was really an issue of discrimination against women.<sup>68</sup> The goal was to answer a single question: "What are the career opportunities for women in the Central

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<sup>66</sup> "From Typist To Trailblazer...", *Central Intelligence Agency*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> "The Petticoat Panel: A 1953 Study of the Role' of Women in the CIA Career Service" *Central Intelligence Agency*, 1.

<sup>68</sup> "The Petticoat Panel:...", *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2.



Intelligence Agency?”<sup>69</sup> The preface within the final paper states that it was not long before this panel was created that women began to abandon traditional roles and enter the workforce. In comparison to other government agencies, the CIA provides a similar amount of opportunities for women. Then, the Agency admits they have not “taken full advantage of the womanpower resources available to it.”<sup>70</sup>

The internal study titled, *Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency* provided many statistics on the number of women working at the CIA and their roles. Using this information, one may understand how far women in the intelligence community have come since the early years of the CIA. As of June 30<sup>th</sup> 1953, the median government salary grade for men was GS7 while the median for women was GS5.<sup>71</sup> According to the GS pay scale for 1954, the average salary for GS7 was \$2,704 while the average for GS5 was \$2,000. Typically, men held positions in the professional sector around the GS7 level, while on average women held clerical and administrative positions in the GS5 level. This shows that on average women were a few pay grades below men and women’s positions tended to fall within the clerical sector while it was more common for men to hold higher level positions. The next section will discuss how gendered norms pushed women into clerical positions and prevented them from advancing into the analytical and operational sectors.

### Gender Norms and Clerical Roles

Changing gender norms opened up a clerical role for women in the intelligence community. According to “Women and Men in Organizations: Sex and Gender at Work,”

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<sup>69</sup> “Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency,” 1953, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., preface.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 2.

social attitudes during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution projected the idea that a woman's role was to "bear and nurture children."<sup>72</sup> The authors stated that there were three major factors that led to women's entrance into the workforce. They are, the onset of war, demographic changes and the increase of labor force participation by married women. It is important to understand how women broke into the general workforce in order to best contextualize what factors inhibited their participation in the intelligence community. The wars allowed for women to take on roles outside of their homes to fill the gaps left by the men sent to fight the war. There was a demand for women to fill the positions that men had abandoned. Population growth rates and trends show that there was an increase in the number of women in prime working ages, which ranged from twenty to sixty-four years old. There was also an increase in the percentage of married women participating in the workforce, rising from 15% in 1870 to 35.5% in 1940.<sup>73</sup> This increase is accounted for by societal changes such as mandatory schooling for children which in turn allowed mothers to leave the home during the day. Another reason for married women entering the workforce is that the cost of living was rising which resulted in families needing two incomes.<sup>74</sup> It is clear that various social factors and demands pushed women into the general workforce over the years. Table 1 uses the United States Bureau of the Census data to show the increase in the percentage of women in the workforce between the years 1890 and 1992. The number of men remained relatively

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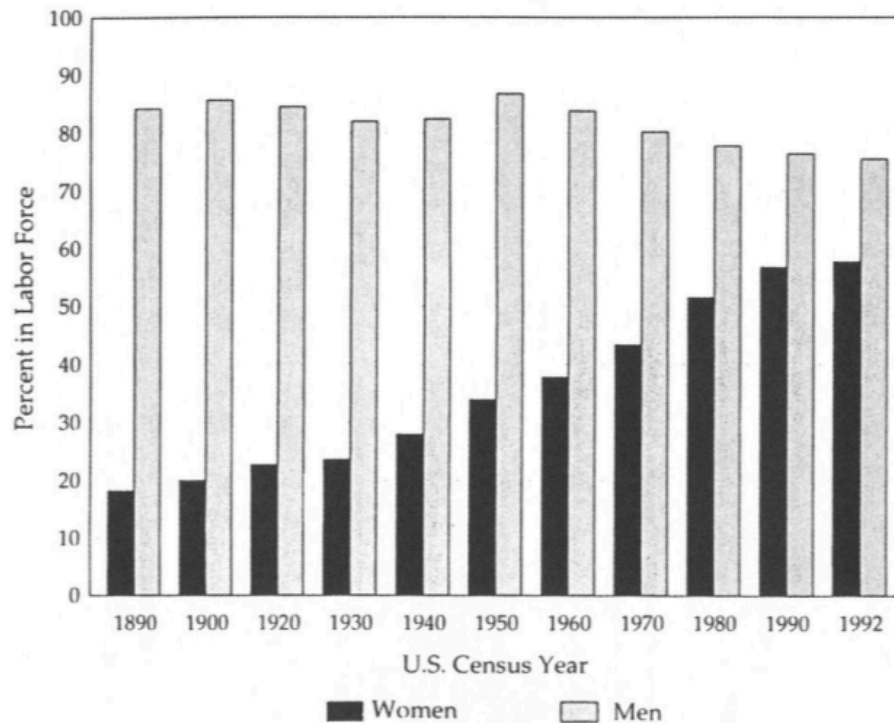
<sup>72</sup> Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy, *Women and Men in Organizations: Sex and Gender Issues at Work*, p 8.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>74</sup> Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy, *Women and Men in Organizations: Sex and Gender Issues at Work*, p 8.

steady throughout the years but the percentage of women increased from 18% in 1890 to about 56% in 1992.

Table 1: *Trends in U.S. Labor Force Participating Rates by Sex 1890 to 1992.*



*Source:* Women and Men in Organizations: Sex and Gender Issues at Work 11.

Table 1 shows that throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women began joining the workforce in increasing numbers.

As more women entered into the workforce, an increasing number of women began working at the CIA in clerical roles. Without a higher education degree or military training, the only positions for women within the Agency was in the clerical sector. Women served as administrators, secretaries, and typists. In clerical employee group in 1953, eighty-six percent were women.<sup>75</sup> The men held higher positions within the

<sup>75</sup> Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1953, 4.

Agency. In the professional group men comprised seventy-nine percent of the professional workforce while women represented only twenty-one percent.<sup>76</sup> Only in the occupational categories of Editing and Publishing and Administrative Support did men and women have equally low grades. In all other categories the lowest grade for women is two grades below the lowest for men.<sup>77</sup> In all but two categories men were in a higher grade for doing the same work as their female counterparts. Of the women working in the CIA the majority of them worked in a clerical role as an administrator, typist, or secretary because as new members of the workforce they had not been trained for other roles. At the time, gender norms persisted through the Agency and women were thought to be unable to carry out such important and difficult work.

The Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency includes responses and comments from people within the Agency regarding the report which directly shows that women were discriminated against in the CIA. In order to best contextualize the gender inequalities, it is important to remember the general discrimination against women during the relevant time period was not exclusive to those women in the CIA but to all women. The attitudes reflected in discussions were mainstream for that time, although they would be considered politically incorrect in today's more gender equal society. One comment stated men disliked working below women and that probably leads to a reluctance of men to accept women as professional equals. To which a panel member replied, "It is probably offensive to many men to find a woman occupying positions superior or even equivalent to theirs. It is also probable that

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 5.

many women prefer to work for men. In part, this preference comes from a traditional attitude toward women which will be affected only through a slow evolution of sociological change.”<sup>78</sup> The women that served on this panel appeared to be hopeful for the future and optimistic that their work and research would ensue change down the road. These women had the right to be hopeful, now in 2017 the numbers are much better. Today women have the necessary skills to advance within the ranks of the CIA.

Some top ranking members of the Agency suggested that woman would not be able to handle such a difficult and demanding job. One Agency official stated, “Women can’t work under the pressure of urgency, and special considerations inherent in much of the Agency’s work.”<sup>79</sup> To which the panel replied, “Women employed in many Agency offices are actually working under considerable pressure and appear no more affected by them than men are. It was certainly evidence during the war and post war years that women were willing and able to work under pressure.”<sup>80</sup> There were extreme gender stereotypes that existed during this time period. These comments show that men truly felt the CIA was no place for women to be in charge. Many women considered trailblazers of the CIA served overseas, crossed enemy lines, and gathered intelligence for the United States. These women who served on the panel were trailblazers of their own. They identified the harsh gender discrimination within the agency and produced a document highlighting the inequalities. These women laid the groundwork for the change within the “Old Boys’ Club.” It is clear that in the early years of the CIA the societal gender conundrum greatly affected the attitudes of those within the Agency. Women were

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<sup>78</sup> Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1953, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1953, 6.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

qualified but held back in low level positions. Unfortunately, this was the norm within the CIA for the next forty years. This ever apparent gap between men and women, led to many research investigations to figure out exactly what was inhibiting women in the CIA.

### The Glass Ceiling Study of 1992

As the Agency continued to grow over the years and expand its role in the intelligence community, women still faced difficulties while attempting to advance their career. In 1992, the CIA commissioned a Glass Ceiling Study to reevaluate the progress of women within the Agency. The Glass Ceiling Commission stated, “The “glass ceiling” is a concept that betrays America’s most cherished principles. It is the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.”<sup>81</sup> This definition exemplifies the trouble for women within the CIA in the first fifty years after its founding. The CIA conducted this report after receiving complaints about the unfair conditions of women and minorities in the Agency. The report produced many findings that show how women in intelligence are held back. The Glass Ceiling Study found that women made up 40% of the workforce in the CIA but only 9 % of the Senior Intelligence Service (above the rank of GS -15.) Statistically women were better represented than they were in the 1953 Panel on Career Service for Women, however the Glass Ceiling Study still highlights some inconsistencies where the working conditions for women could be improved.

### Education and Analytical Sector

Since the 1953 panel, social norms for women transformed which led to a larger

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<sup>81</sup> Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. "A Solid Investment: Making Use of the Nation's Human Capital." 1995. 4.

number of women attending educational institutions which opened up further opportunities for women. Women did not always receive the same opportunities as men in education. Similar to other fields, women's admittance to educational institutions was gradual, which further contributed to the prevalent gender gap within the intelligence community, specifically in the analytical sector. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were very few colleges that admitted women. This changed greatly following World War II. In 1950, women accounted for thirty-two percent of college students. Although women were admitted in larger numbers, their roles and academic focus was heavily geared towards care giving professions such as nursing, home economics, and teaching.<sup>82</sup> These educational tracks did not prepare women for entering the intelligence community. Former Deputy Director of the CIA Duane R. Clarridge provides some insight to the skills that are vital in order to work within the intelligence community. By examining his observations regarding men and women during his training and career, one may begin to understand the climate of gender norms within the agency at that time. He pointed out that during the 1950s Russian Specialists at Harvard were only men.<sup>83</sup> As the Cold War began and intensified relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, mainly men were being trained to speak Russian language and understand Russian history, politics, and culture. This in turn led to men being in greater demand to handle relations with the Soviet Union. Since women had not advanced in large numbers into these specialized areas of study they were excluded from recruitment efforts in the analytical sector. So in addition to many women lacking an education, those that were able to attend

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<sup>82</sup> "Public Higher Education in America." Women in Higher Education, 35.

<sup>83</sup> Duane R. Clarridge, "A Spy For All Seasons," 2002. 37.

college during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century received an education that further enabled the gender stereotype surrounding a woman's role in society.

Women who excelled in rigorous study were offered position in the higher levels of the CIA. Their background and specialization allowed them to better market themselves for advanced positions in the Agency, which were found in the analytical and operational sectors. Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Allen Dulles greatly praised the work of Elizabeth Swanek. After studying Russian and Political Science in graduate school, Swanek was recruited by the CIA in 1951. She was stationed in Germany at the Office of Special Operations where she would recruit Soviet defectors to infiltrate the Soviet Union. Swanek was active in the training of these assets, performing the same tasks as her male colleagues including parachuting and initiating drop zone techniques.<sup>84</sup> Swanek was recruited because she had a particular skill set that made her useful for the Agency. Her education made her valuable and without it she may not have been asked to take on a role in the covert sector.

Although some women were able to advance into the analytical and operational roles, the majority of women remained working in the lower grades. In 1953, of the total number of employees, sixty-nine percent of males had reached a grade of GS7 while only nineteen percent of women reached the GS7 or higher. This shows that men were more likely to be in the higher ranks and higher pay grades than women. A whole ten percent of the men employed have reached the GS15 grade or higher, while no women have reached a grade higher than GS14. Finally, with regard to the higher grades, of GS11 and

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<sup>84</sup> "From Typist To Trailblazer...", *Central Intelligence Agency*, 10.



higher, forty-three percent of male employees fall in this range while only nineteen percent of women reach this upper level.<sup>85</sup> This statistical employment comparison of men and women clearly shows that women were found in higher numbers in the lower grades. As the grade levels increased, the number of women decreased. In comparison to men, women were less represented at each level.<sup>86</sup> In the category of analytical work, women represented eighty-one percent of the assistant group, while in the professional group women represent only 23%.<sup>87</sup> Women are employed in greater numbers in the assistant group than the professional group.

### Military Training and Covert Operations

A background in military service was also beneficial to those wishing to enter the intelligence community, specifically the covert ops sector. The military draft and mandated service requirements pushed men into military posts, providing them with training and combat experience. This gave men an advantage over their female counterparts. The men who had military experience held a particular set of skills that made them valuable recruits for covert operations. In 1950, men were required to serve two years in the military.<sup>88</sup> This put men at an advantage over women looking to join the sector of covert operations. Social norms greatly contributed to women's absence in the intelligence community for many years building up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1960s and 1970s women of the CIA faced gender discrimination as they pushed to move up the ranks of the Agency. A small number of women worked in the

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<sup>85</sup> Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1953, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Note: The numbers regarding covert operations have been redacted, but it is implied that there are fewer number of women in that specific field as well.

<sup>87</sup> Career Employment of Women in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1953, 2.

<sup>88</sup> Duane R Clarridge, "A Spy For All Seasons," 2002. 43.

operations field. In 1978, a study showed that out of the entire Directorate of Operations only eight percent of the force were women.<sup>89</sup> Women represented a small number of the force due to the presumed gender stereotypes. Many thought that women would not be successful in certain areas of the world because of that culture's traditional view on women.<sup>90</sup> It was a common assumption that women would not make good operatives in the Near East, Latin America, Asia, and Africa because of the status of women in those areas. Female operatives from that time disagree. One conveyed that because she was a woman, she was more aware of who was around her, making her a useful asset with regards to surveillance techniques. Another woman shared that she got the credit for recruiting an asset when all she really did was listen to this man share information about his business. She said the man presumed her to be stupid and not understanding. She would play along and act as though she didn't understand and smile. All the while, she was gathering information about the movements and targets of this asset.<sup>91</sup> Within the Agency there was a presumption that women would not be able to perform in the covert ops arena and recruit assets, however many women felt they were able to make great agents because of how they were perceived. They could infiltrate areas relatively unnoticed. Finally, the highest office a women held was the branch chief and out of all the branch chiefs at the time, only seven percent were women.<sup>92</sup> It becomes very clear that women were at a disadvantage within the Agency. Women were paid less to do the

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<sup>89</sup> "From Typist To Trailblazer...", *Central Intelligence Agency*, 10.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

same job. They held a large number of entry level positions while occupying a very small percentage of the workforce in the upper grades.

The Directorate of Operations (DO) is male dominated in an even larger numbers. In 1991, the DO workforce was seventeen percent female, and the Senior Intelligence Service (SIS) comprised of those in GS15 or above, was one percent female. After leaving the Agency, Valerie Plame wrote a book titled *Fair Game* in which she discusses her career at the CIA. She writes, “it seemed there was little we could do to improve the situation, other than keep trying to rise through the ranks and change the system from within. The dinosaurs were still running the show in the DO and most just thought women were not up to the job.”<sup>93</sup> They didn’t think women could recruit other women. Women often got jobs destined for failure to continue the male dominated hierarchy within the DO.<sup>94</sup> Plame exemplifies that women in the DO faced many obstacles which they had to overcome.

In the years following the Panel on Career Service for Women the number of women within the CIA increased. Although the percentage of women in the workforce increased to forty percent, the majority of these women held positions in the clerical sector typically comprised of the lower grade scales. More women were joining the CIA but women were not advancing to highest grade levels. Table 2 shows the distribution of men and women by percentage within each grade from 1980 to 1991. In 1991, the largest distribution of women had been shifted to the middle grades comprised of GS10 through GS13. There had been very little change to the highest grades and SIS rank. Since the

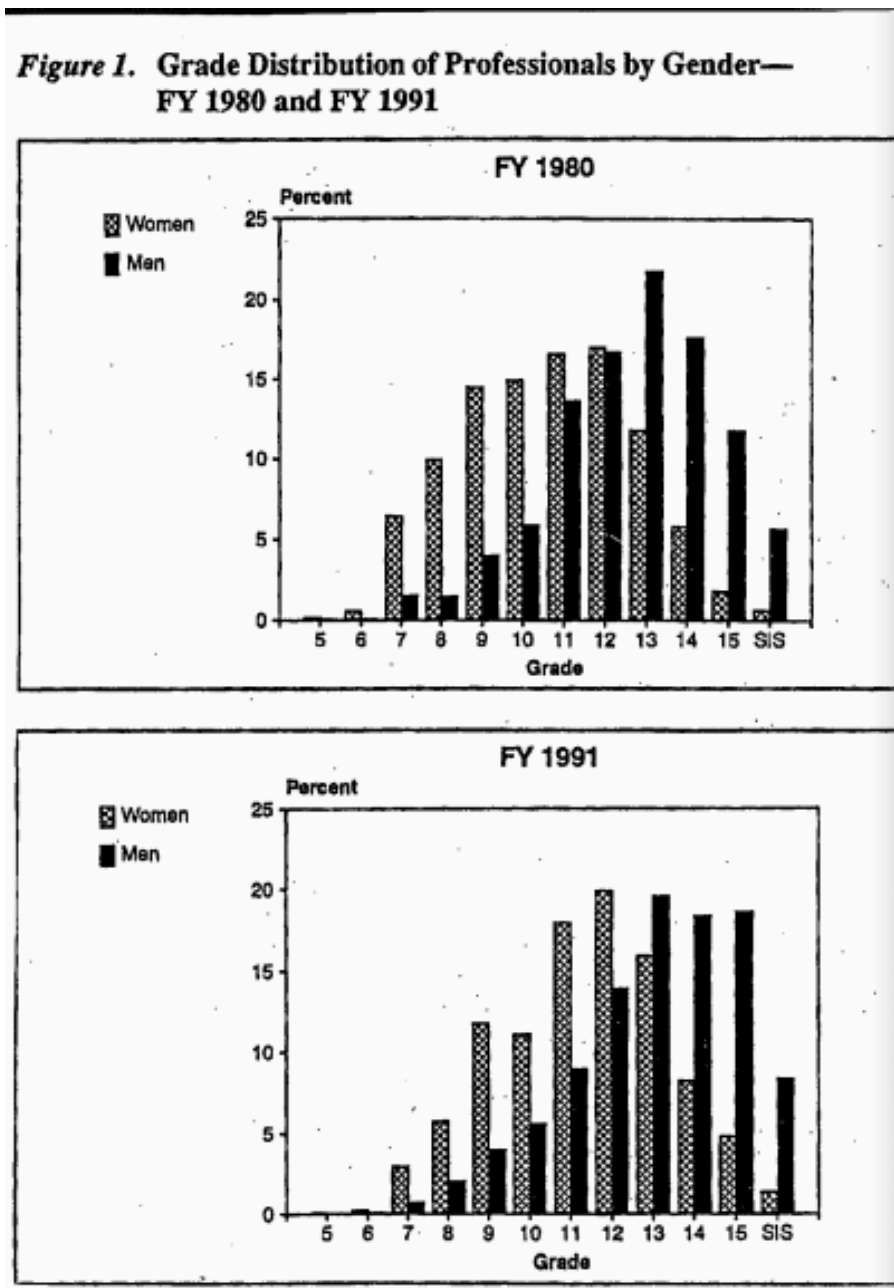
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<sup>93</sup> Valerie Plame, “Fair Game” 56.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

1953 study, the number of women in the CIA has increased but women are still inhibited from advancing to the highest ranks within the Agency. The next section will discuss the factors that continue to prevent women's advancement within the CIA.

Table 2: Grade Distribution by Gender from 1980 to 1991.



Source: Glass Ceiling Study Summary 5.

Although the number of women has improved since the last report in 1953, the Glass Ceiling Study identifies areas in which women in the CIA workforce were at a disadvantage. The first problem identified is that there were very few female role models and mentors for the younger employees. Due to the fact that women in senior positions were rare, those women in the lower ranks felt they had no one to look up to or consult for guidance. Valerie Plame was a CIA operative during the relevant period of the Glass Ceiling Study.<sup>95</sup> Plame writes, “I wasn’t looking for a formal mentoring relationship, just a model who could show me how to retain my femininity, perhaps have a family, and still be an outstanding operations officer in a male-dominated business. To my dismay, I found very few women managed to “have it all” and still reach the top of the operational cadre. I wondered how or even if it could be done.”<sup>96</sup> Women were left feeling that there were no female top officers to have as mentors. The top men would take in young agents that reminded them of themselves. Plame did not have a mentoring relationship during her career, she was on her own.<sup>97</sup> Valerie Plame provides great insight to the struggles female agents face during their careers at the Agency. Her story will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

### Systematic Barriers For the Advancement of Women

The *Glass Ceiling Study Summary* identified five major systematic barriers which inhibited the careers of women with the CIA. The first barrier was assignments. Many women within the Agency felt that they did not receive good assignments that would help advance their careers. It was the common school of thought within the Agency that

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<sup>95</sup> Note: the exact dates of her employment have not been released by the CIA.

<sup>96</sup> Plame, 56.

<sup>97</sup> Plame, 48.

assignments played a crucial role in career development. Certain assignments such as line management positions led to sure success down the road. The study states, “The top 11 Agency executives noted that assignments to line management was the critical turning point in a typical career. Repeated assignments to staff jobs were described as death on wheels for women and minorities.”<sup>98</sup> The top 11 Agency executives also stated that women and minorities did not receive these crucial assignments early in their careers. This hindered the careers of women and minority employees. Typically, the career building assignments went to white males, only further enforcing the stigma of the Agency being the “Old Boys’ Club.”

The second systematic barrier identified by the *Glass Ceiling Study Summary* is lack of feedback and communication. Effective feedback is a crucial component that allows one to enhance careers by changing behavior and improving performance. The 11 top Agency officials stated, “feedback is essential to make an employee competitive”<sup>99</sup> In a focus group study, it was found that white males in the SIS felt they were given sufficient feedback while women felt they were not.<sup>100</sup> White males reported they felt uncomfortable providing feedback to female and minority employees because they were worried they may file a complaint in return.<sup>101</sup> This lack of feedback results in a nonproductive work environment specifically for the women and minorities who felt most neglected.

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<sup>98</sup> Glass Ceiling Study Summary, 10.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 12.

The third systematic barrier for women within the CIA was stereotyping. This is no surprise. Gender norms and stereotypes have inhibited women from the intelligence community for centuries as shown in the previous chapter. However, this 1990 study identifies specific stereotypes that have most recently hindered women's career. Stereotypes lead to two effects that inhibit advancement. The first is that individual are hindered from advancing in the workplace due presumed stereotypes. The second is that due to stereotypes, employees may build barriers for themselves by assuming others project the stereotype on them.<sup>102</sup>

The interviews with top 11 Agency officers also revealed that there were three major stereotypes regarding women.<sup>103</sup> They stated "the long hours required for success are difficult for women; women have difficulty working constructively with others on a team; women and minorities are often reluctant to take the risks necessary to advance."<sup>104</sup> These statements make it clear that at the time this study was conducted, many of the Agency executives still held the stereotype that women were inferior to men and could not handle the same responsibilities. The SIS interviews resulted in more grounded arguments by stating that "women have family responsibilities."<sup>105</sup> This issue of motherhood and balancing family life and work will be addressed in the next chapter. Questioning family responsibility is reasonable seeing that if women choose to have children it would require maternity leave, but that should not be the basis for denying women advancement within their field.

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<sup>102</sup> Glass Ceiling Study Summary, 13.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

An adverse work environment was identified as the fourth systematic barrier for women in CIA by the *Glass Ceiling Study Summary*. The report found that many women said they felt the environment was alienating. The culture at the Agency leaves very little room for complaints. Therefore, women experienced sexual harassment and said nothing. They feared that reporting the harassment would hinder their careers, so they did not report it. Although there are a small number of official harassment cases reported, the interviews led to the discovery that many cases had occurred but had not been reported. In the sample of SIS agents that were interviewed, seventy-eight percent said that “sexual and racial harassment affected careers at the Agency.”<sup>106</sup> In addition, after conducting surveys of every racial group, it is shown that between one half and one third of the groups have experienced sexual harassment.<sup>107</sup> Women were affected by sexual harassment at a higher rate than men. About fifty percent of white women said they experienced sexual harassment while only nine percent of white males reported experiencing harassment.<sup>108</sup> This environment in which women felt they could not complain or report harassment was a very negative and pressure filled work space.

The final systematic barrier for women within the Agency is the lack of work and family policies. There is an inherent assumption by the top 11 Agency officials that women are inhibited because they are expected to raise a family and so they cannot dedicate themselves to the long hours needed for the job. However, the reality is that women felt they completed their jobs while sacrificing their family time. It is more common for men in the Agency to have children than it is for women. This suggests that

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<sup>106</sup> Glass Ceiling Study Summary, 15.

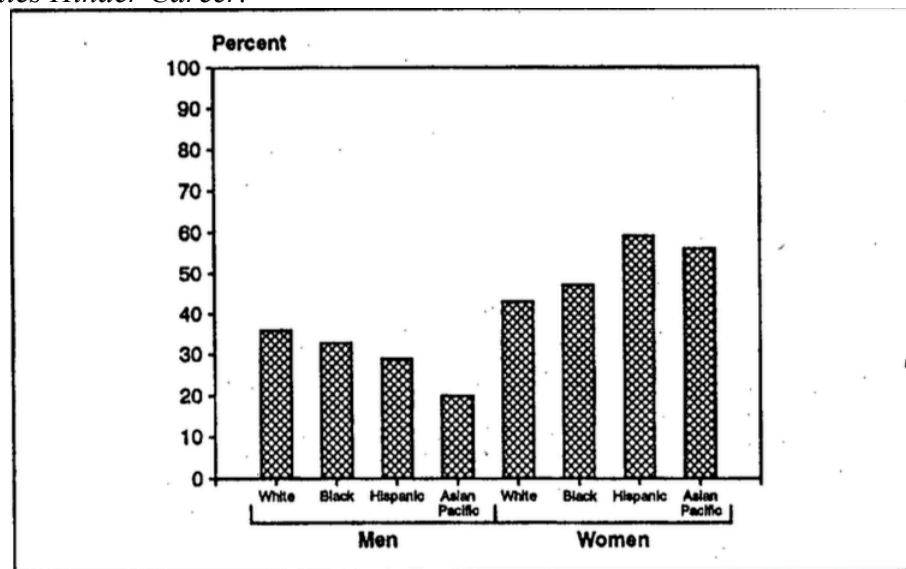
<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 16.



women find it difficult to have children while continuing to work. For men in the Agency, their wives can care for the children at home while they work. For women, having children would require them to take on the role of a mother and a CIA employee which do not easily coincide.<sup>109</sup> Table 3 shows that throughout all racial groups a larger percentage of women find family responsibilities to be a burden on careers than men do. In addition, a larger percentage of minority women declare that having children would be a burden to their career. The percent of Hispanic women is nearly double the number of Hispanic men who believe family responsibilities would hinder their career.<sup>110</sup>

Table 3: *Percentage of GS-07 Through GS-15 Survey Respondents Who Believe Family Responsibilities Hinder Career.*



Source: Glass Ceiling Study Summary, 17

Since the early years of the CIA, women have been excluded from employment opportunities and unfairly inhibited from advancing their careers due to gender norms and stereotypes. The 1953 *Panel on Career Employment for Women* provided statistics

<sup>109</sup> Glass Ceiling Study Summary, p16.

<sup>110</sup> Glass Ceiling Study Summary, p17.

showing that women were only hired for low level positions and had much lower representation than males in many levels of employment. Over time, the number of women in the CIA increased a great deal but the increase did not carry over into the higher levels of GS11 and above. Those levels were still populated mainly by men into the 1990s. Moreover, the number of women in the lower levels increased tremendously. The 1992 *Glass Ceiling Study Summary* identified many aspects in which women were still inhibited from advancing their careers within the CIA. As gender norms changed and women entered the workforce they took on clerical roles within the Agency. As women sought out higher education they were recruited to join the analytical sector of the CIA. Those that had military training were more likely to take on roles in the covert ops sector. Education and lack of military training served as limiting factors for women that hindered their advancement. In addition, certain systematic barriers led to the discrimination against women which hindered their advancement within the Agency. This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the rise of women in the CIA for the first fifty years of the Agency. The next chapter will discuss the current conditions at CIA including factors that continue to inhibit women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Chapter 4

### Women of the Modern CIA

The previous chapters discussed the exceptional female spies of the past centuries up to the creation of the CIA. This included the factors inhibiting women in the Agency since its founding in 1947 up to the turn of the century. The major factors that inhibited women were social norms, lack of education, and lack of military training. Now that women have equal opportunity access to join the CIA many of the previous issues that held women back from positions in the Agency have been overcome. In this new modern age of the CIA there is a new set of issues that prevents women from advancing to the high ranking positions within the Agency. The issue of balancing motherhood and career has been a major deterrent to women's progress at the Agency. The topic of motherhood creates four major issue areas with regard to women's advancement, which are: fostering feedback and development, adequate resources, workplace flexibility, unpredictable hours and allowing for diverse career paths. This chapter will discuss each of the sections in detail to show how they affect women's advancement.

While some jobs outside the CIA allow for flexible work, this is not always an option at the Agency. Those in the analytical sector or other directorates based in the United States have the possibility for more flexible working conditions than those in the operational sector who are often in contact with assets and placed overseas. By analyzing recent reports on the progress of women in the CIA and specific case studies this chapter will evaluate the position of women in the modern CIA and identify the remaining obstacles.

Although women have made tremendous advancements since the creation of the CIA, there remain some institutional factors that prevent women from advancing to

senior positions even in the equal opportunity environment present at the modern CIA. In 2013, the CIA conducted the *Women in Leadership Report* to examine the position of women within the Agency. There has still never been a female Director of the CIA, but the study showed that the number of women in high leadership positions has greatly increased. In 1980, thirty-eight percent of the CIA workforce were women; in 2013 that number rose to forty-six percent.<sup>111</sup> While the overall number of women employed by the CIA increased, this is not an accurate way to measure improvement within the Agency. In the early years of the CIA, women did not occupy positions in the GS13-GS15 in high numbers. Women were inhibited from advancing up the ranks due to social norms, lack of education, and lack of military training. As the CIA adhered to the equal opportunity regulations there have been tremendous improvements. The number of women in GS13-GS15 positions has increased from nine percent in 1980 to forty-four percent in 2013.<sup>112</sup> With regard to Senior Intelligence Specialist (SIS) positions, the number of women has increased to thirty-one percent as of October 2012. Since the initial 1953 *Career Employment for Women of the Central Intelligence Agency* and the *Glass Ceiling Study* of 1992 there has been tremendous improvement regarding the opportunity for women at the CIA. Statistically, women have advanced into high ranking roles that were once only held by men. Despite the increased opportunity for women there are still factors that make work in the Agency difficult for women.

The CIA's 2013 *Women in Leadership Report* identified multiple reasons women were, and continue to be, held back from leadership positions. The authors of the report

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<sup>111</sup> "2013 Women in Leadership Report" Central Intelligence Agency

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

stated, “At CIA, not maximizing women’s talents and expertise directly and negatively impacts the mission. Increased flexibility and diversity cannot and should not be seen as inhibitors to the mission, but rather as the keys to attracting and retaining a dedicated and diverse workforce capable of meeting our increasingly complex and changing mission.”<sup>113</sup> The report identifies college educated women as an excellent talent pool of which the CIA must take advantage. With women comprising fifty-eight percent of college grads, the CIA feels that this is an important demographic to recruit.<sup>114</sup> The previous chapter discussed how education provided women more opportunity within the CIA. Although college graduation rates of women are comparable to men, there is still a lack of women in the SIS leadership positions above GS13. Access to higher education has been removed as a barrier for women, however something is still preventing them from obtaining high ranking positions within the SIS.<sup>115</sup> Only nineteen percent of SIS officers were women after the 2012 SIS promotion period.<sup>116</sup> Women are still inadvertently excluded from the SIS and Director positions within the Agency. Women have progressed to working in these higher ranks of the GS scale but the very top positions are still male dominated.

The 2013 report identified three critical areas that continue to hinder women’s advancement to SIS positions. By focusing on the three areas: Foster Intentional Development, Value Diverse Paths, and Increase Workplace Flexibility, the CIA can advance the entire workforce and further promote their mission.<sup>117</sup> The United Kingdom

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<sup>113</sup> “2013 Women in Leadership Report” Central Intelligence Agency, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>117</sup> “2013 Women in Leadership Report” Central Intelligence Agency, 5.

Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament produced a report titled, *Women in the UK Intelligence Community*. This report showed that the UK intelligence community was grappling with similar issues. This chapter will use both the UK report and the *2013 Women in Leadership Report* by the CIA to analyze the factors that continue to inhibit women from advancing to high ranking positions in the modern CIA.

### Ensure Development Through Feedback

In order to foster intentional development both the employee and the Agency have to place focus on providing feedback to help create an environment of employee development. The CIA Director's Advisory Group found that women regard formal guidance and mentorship more important than men do, but women use sponsors and supervisors less. The report recognizes that having a sponsor is crucial to an employee's career development in order to reach senior ranks.<sup>118</sup> The lack of a relationship between sponsors and women has already been discussed in the 1992 *Glass Ceiling Study Summary*, but has remained a problem nearly twenty years later. In order for women to have equal opportunity for high ranking positions there must be an emphasis on building mentoring relationships within the agency.

### Adequate Resources for Mothers

There are still many prevalent issues concerning women, specifically mothers in the intelligence community. New mothers report feeling extremely isolated from their past work and the intelligence community while on leave. Appropriate security measures made it difficult for new mothers to stay involved on assignments while working from home. One way to combat this is to set up a mentoring program where those on maternity leave are connected with a member of their employer's human resource department to

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 6.

stay up to date on the Agency's affairs.<sup>119</sup> The CIA has established a personal and family support section as a supplement to the employee benefits. This is to help combat some of the stresses of work-life balance. It offers support to employees and families through an outsourced company.<sup>120</sup> In practice this would be an effective resource, but some employees do not seek assistance when needed. Another issue that arises with regard to motherhood is childcare. Once returning to work, the challenge for new mothers is hardly over, they must find daycare for their children.<sup>121</sup> The CIA sponsors a daycare accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The CIA also provides families with financial aid for children and helps them receive referrals to other daycare centers.<sup>122</sup> However, just because these services exist within the CIA doesn't mean they are used and it doesn't truly alleviate the issues surrounding motherhood. These reports show that even though the resources are available, many women do not use them because they fear there is a negative stigma attached to them.

### Diverse Career Paths

The CIA can greatly benefit by using a diversified employee group which includes women. Not all employees should be held back from senior leadership positions for taking leave without pay, taking part time work, or having multiple assignments of the same grade or level. Some positions allow for more flexibility while others do not. The Directorate of Intelligence is able to be more flexible with leave and working hours, due to the nature of the work. The Directorate of Operations cannot always afford to be as flexible. Since work in the operational sector is spent overseas, it makes it difficult to

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<sup>119</sup> "Women in the UK Intelligence Community" 2015. 25.

<sup>120</sup> "Benefits." Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>121</sup> "Women in the UK Intelligence Community" 201526-27.

<sup>122</sup> "Benefits." Central Intelligence Agency.

take leave. Agents directly attempt to create networks where they work, therefore leaving for long periods compromises these relationships. Operations require diligent work around the clock. The unpredictable hours come with the job. Extended time off can cause one to lose contact with important people and become disconnected from the mission.

The CIA Director's Advisory Group found women were more concerned than men with unpredictable hours, which were often associated with crucial stepping stone positions. Women were likely to minimize how qualified they were for assignments in an effort to reduce the likelihood they would receive the "extreme jobs."<sup>123</sup> Extreme jobs refer to positions that require more than sixty hours a week with unpredictable work schedule. The number of extreme jobs within the Agency have grown, however, recent data has shown that women are less likely to take them because the long unpredictable hours may interfere with plans to have a family and optimize work life balance.<sup>124</sup> Within the Agency there are extreme jobs in all the directorates, in a crisis situation all teams stationed abroad and domestically would work long hours to react to the threat. Placement in an extreme job is very likely throughout an agent's career. In terms of valuing diverse career paths, the CIA recognizes that employees who have experience in various directorates or other intelligence agencies will promote the mission of the CIA in the long run. In order to include women in the diverse group of employees, the Agency must recognize that not all career paths will be the same. When possible, women should

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<sup>123</sup> "2013 Women in Leadership Report" Central Intelligence Agency, 7.

<sup>124</sup> "2013 Women in Leadership Report" Central Intelligence Agency, 7.



be able to take on flexible working hours without fearing it will hinder their career advancement.

The UK report stated there was a stigma that recent mothers returning to work would enter into business support roles rather than going back to their operational roles. This was also apparent in the CIA, assumptions regarding women led to certain career paths for women. It was assumed women would take on supporting roles even when they were capable of performing in more prominent positions. It is unfair to assume what a recent mother can handle in terms of work load. One woman interviewed stated,

However, once in the office, there were implied restrictions on what jobs you could do as a working mother – often from men who were assuming they were being helpful, along the lines of: ‘Oh you wouldn’t want to do that job, there’s too much travel for a mum’. How one resolves one’s childcare arrangements is a very personal decision, based on both finances and on parenting choices, so I found these assumptions (largely made by husbands with stay-at-home wives) galling. You are much less likely to get a male manager saying that now. For practical childcare reasons, and through personal choice, we still don’t have loads of mothers of small children hopping on planes to meet agents, or running stations, but we have enough women who have simply scoffed at the idea that they might not be able to do something, and just done it anyway, to have disproved some largely unspoken prejudices about the operational roles of women, and of mothers in particular.<sup>125</sup>

This stigma regarding a new mother’s abilities must be altered, in order to move forward and maximize the number of women who advance into upper level positions.

### Workplace Flexibility

The next critical area which the CIA identified in the 2013 report which will help promote the progression of women within the CIA is to increase workplace flexibility.

The demanding work practice of the CIA has inhibited those who seek a work-life balance from reaching the top ranks. Mothers are greatly affected by the intense demands

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<sup>125</sup> “Women in the UK Intelligence Community,” 26.

of working at the CIA. The Agency recognizes that some changes need to be made to alleviate the harsh demands of the work practice in order to allow employees to have a better work-life balance. The long term career path in the CIA is a daunting prospect and has resulted in talented officials and Agency employees turning down career opportunities in order to maintain a work-life balance. The Director's Advisory Group found that women are more likely to take on flexible work hours through part time or leave without pay between GS11 and GS14 which is a pivotal point in a career. Security and IT issues make it difficult for employees who take this break for flexibility to stay informed and involved, therefore contributing to delays in career advancement.<sup>126</sup> Depending on the directorate there may be certain opportunities for flexible work hours. As previously stated, the work in the Directorate of Operations is very difficult to halt or perform on a part time basis. Generally, agents work all hours of the day to accomplish the mission. One must be on the ground to meet with assets and recruit new ones. These assignments are not ones that can be done back at headquarters in Langley. Agents who work in the Directorate of Operations must uproot their lives and work at all hours of the day. The work is inflexible and non-negotiable. The Directorate of Intelligence can afford to be more flexible with work hours due to location and daily job requirements. There are different opportunities for time off and flexible hours within the different directorates. As the job varies so does the ability for women to take time off and work with flexible hours.

The UK report also showed that their intelligence community struggles to deal with workplace flexibility for new mothers. After having a child, the demands of work and life change. Some people require changes to their hours to accommodate the new

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<sup>126</sup> "2013 Women in Leadership Report" Central Intelligence Agency, 8.

demands. The CIA offers flexible work and part time options but it may be more applicable to some jobs within the agency rather than others.<sup>127</sup> Both the *Women in Leadership Report* by the CIA and the *Women in the UK Intelligence Community* discuss how employees hesitate to ask for flexible working hours because they fear it will inhibit their career down the line.<sup>128</sup> There is evidence in both reports that the assumptions surrounding flexible working hours render it an unsuccessful practice.

Statistically, the number of women in the high ranking positions of GS13 through GS15 has improved since the 1992 *Glass Ceiling Study Summary*, but there are still similar factors that inhibit women's progression to SIS positions. For example, both the 1992 and the 2013 reports state that lack of feedback and lack of work-family procedure have hindered women's career advancement. After more than twenty years, the issues of sponsorship for women and the balance of work and family life still persists, despite two reports that include recommendations for improvement. Both reports show that women tend to feel as though they do not have mentoring relationships to help them navigate up the ranks. In addition, women feel excess pressure regarding balance between work and family life affairs. Balancing work and family life is a problem for women who wish to have children during their career with the Agency. As previously discussed, many of the high ranking positions in the CIA require extremely long hours and complete devotion to the operation. This makes these positions very difficult for female employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or have small children to care for. Women are held back from reaching the senior positions within the Agency for similar reasons that they were

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<sup>127</sup> "Benefits." Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>128</sup> "Women in the UK Intelligence Community," 28.

over twenty years ago. Statistically, more women now hold positions in the upper ranks of the Agency but women have still not gained equal access to SIS positions due to factors related to work-life balance and motherhood. The next section will discuss how the women of the modern CIA deal with these setbacks and overcome them.

### New Generation of Women in the Modern Intelligence Community

After reviewing the current status of women in the intelligence community, this chapter will provide insight to the life of an agent through the eyes of female intelligence personnel. The story of Valerie Plame, a CIA operative, shows how difficult it can be to balance motherhood and a job as an operational officer. Valerie Plame Wilson was a top CIA agent who worked in the Directorate of Operations. After graduating from college, Plame applied to the CIA. She had been inspired by a 1976 book she read about the OSS during World War II titled, “A Man Called Intrepid” and was struck by the possibilities of joining the intelligence community. By this time the opportunities within the intelligence community had expanded for women. After reading this book Plame saw a future for herself in the CIA. After going through extensive interviews and very thorough background checks, she was offered a position and sent to be trained at The Farm. After graduating from The Farm, Plame worked in the Directorate of Operations and built her career within the Agency. Her husband, Joe Wilson, was a United States diplomat. Someone released the real name of Valerie Plame the CIA operative, as a harmful political tactic, effectively destroying Plame’s career. Releasing her name and occupation put the lives of her assets at risk in addition to causing problems to her ongoing operations. Plame tells her story from recruitment to retirement in her book *Fair Game* within which she provides an account of what it is like to work in the CIA, defy gender norms, and balance work and motherhood.

CIA censors the material published by ex-employees so that certain classified information is not made public, which includes the year Plame joined the CIA. Based on the fact that her name was released in 2004 it can be assumed she started in the CIA in the late 80s to early 90s. She wrote that less than half of her CIA introductory class were women and that many of the men appeared to be ex-military. Of a class of fifty, half were female and about four were destined to become operatives.<sup>129</sup> This shows that women were accepted into the CIA in greater numbers than the previous decades. There were more opportunities for women but the Directorate of Operations was still highly dominated by men. The term “The Farm” is used to refer to the place separated from society where CIA agents are trained. Plame referred to it as a “camp for adults.”<sup>130</sup> The Farm was another place to assess skills such as “strength of character, ability to work in a team, and dedication- all skills critical to success in the Agency, no matter what your career path.”<sup>131</sup> This is the first opportunity for agents in training to set themselves apart in the testing environment. Their performance at The Farm is major factor in determining where they will be placed in the Agency.

While discussing her own training, Plame admitted she had never used a gun before she arrived at The Farm. She became the best in her class and had a natural talent for the shooting.<sup>132</sup> Plame received a college education but had no military training and no prior instruction on rifles but her natural talent helped break the gender norm surrounding women, by showing that women could be talented marksmen. As women

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<sup>129</sup> Plame, 7.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 13.

were given more opportunities within the Agency they were able to showcase their talent and disprove the stereotypes regarding women. This was also common in other areas such a linguistics and physical training. As more women were given opportunities to showcase their talent, gender norms faded away as they disproved the presumed stereotypes.

The Farm created an atmosphere of extreme psychological pressure, intense physical training, and competition among those in training. Plame describes how her competitive nature made her more successful, she looked at every task as an opportunity to beat her fellow trainees.<sup>133</sup> It takes a certain strong willed and determined person to make it through The Farm. At The Farm, those in training are constantly evaluated on their ability to write, form plans, think on their feet, and endure various levels of stress. One unacceptable mistake could send a trainee back to the Agency to choose another career or they could be terminated from their contract. The Farm extracts the agents not fit for this intense line of work, those with the correct skills and knowledge to succeed graduate from The Farm and begin their career. Training at The Farm calls on previous education and a background in physical training in order to succeed. Since women were not previously educated nor expected to perform physical training there were not originally admitted into the Directorate of Operations. As the gender norms surrounding women disappeared and women entered educational institutions in higher numbers, the opportunities for women at the CIA increased. Valerie Plame provides an example of how opportunities for women opened up within the Directorate of Operations, which allowed for some women to take on leadership and officer positions within the Agency.

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<sup>133</sup> Plame, 17.

Plame also provides insight into the barriers women face during their career with the Agency. In her book, Plame shares with readers the benefits and disadvantages of being a female operations officer. She found it easier to connect with local women because she did not have to worry about a potential advance or relationship expectation like she did with men.<sup>134</sup> One negative aspect Plame discussed in her book, that is also present in the CIA *Glass Ceiling Study Summary*, is that there are very few, if any, female mentors for women to look up to. In discussing the early period of her operational career, Plame writes “I wasn’t looking for a formal mentoring relationship, just a model who could show me how to retain my femininity, perhaps have a family, and still be an outstanding operations officer in a male-dominated business. To my dismay, I found very few women managed to “have it all” and still reach the top of the operational cadre. I wondered how or even if it could be done.”<sup>135</sup> Feeling that there were no female top officers to have as mentors. The top men would take in young agents that reminded them of themselves. She did not have a mentor, she was on her own.<sup>136</sup> Lacking a positive mentor led to many setbacks for women in the CIA as outlined in the previous chapter.

Plame identified the unfair allocation of assignments during her time at the Agency. It was the norm for men to receive the jobs that would lead to promotion down the road. Plame stated, “Many times, I believe, female officers were simply not even under consideration. There was a natural tendency for male CIA managers to see themselves reflected in the young, ambitious male officers in the Station, and remember when they were starting out and hungry. Female officers were usually only considered as

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<sup>134</sup> Plame, 46.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 48.

an afterthought.”<sup>137</sup> Once again, Plame shows the effect of the statistical trends discovered in the 1992 *Glass Ceiling Study* on the female employees.

The last major issue for women in intelligence that Plame discusses in her book is motherhood. She shows a personal example of the struggles women in the CIA have faced when attempting to balance their career and family life. Plame provides very personal insight to the challenges she faced after just giving birth to twins. She became hyper conscious of their every movement. She was unable to sleep and became more and more anxious.<sup>138</sup> She stated, I was self-aware enough to see that I found no joy in my babies... I went through all the motions, but each day I detected a little more distance between myself and reality. I felt hollow inside and was scared to death that someone would discover I was a terrible mother.”<sup>139</sup> After having years of working experience in the CIA, traveling the world, and seeing the hardships of the covert operations sector, it is not all that surprising that Plame panicked about her children all the time. She saw first-hand how terrible the world can be. After seeing intense situations and constantly being on guard while on the job, it is no shock her motherly instinct to protect her children made her excessively anxious. Plame suffered from postpartum depression, but once diagnosed her condition improved.<sup>140</sup>

When she returned to work she faced a new set of challenges. She wondered if it was possible to be a part time CIA agent and mother. She questioned how she would adjust back to being an operations officer. To her surprise she was asked where she

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<sup>137</sup> Plame, 57-58.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 83.



would like to be assigned by the Chief. This shows transformation for the years before where men and especially women were assigned to positions with no regard for their opinion. Her positions in the operational sector required travel at a moment's notice, something that made balancing motherhood and work at the Agency even more difficult. When discussing the extended hours, she noted, "When I had to deal with pressing operational issues I had no choice but to bring the toddlers into my office on a Saturday. Making decisions on how much money to offer a potential asset while handing crayons to my daughter was strange, but not without humor."<sup>141</sup> Balancing motherhood and work at the Agency was a special task that required extreme dedication and quick planning. Plame allows readers to imagine the day to day craziness, to supplement the testimony from the reports conducted by the Agency which discuss how motherhood inhibit careers for women in the CIA. Plame was already at a high rank when she took leave, thus allowing her an easy entrance back into the position, but even she faced some difficulties once returning.

Valerie Plame expresses disapproval for the injustice against women in the CIA, but she provides hope for the future showing that the way to change the system is by not giving up. She states, "The female operations officers didn't like the obvious inequalities, but it seemed there was little we could do to improve the situation, other than keep trying to rise through the ranks and change the system from within. The dinosaurs were still running the show in the DO and most just thought women were not up to the job."<sup>142</sup> This may appear to be a grim outlook for someone trying to make it up the ladder in the CIA,

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<sup>141</sup> Plame, 100.

<sup>142</sup> Plame, 56.

but this shows the strength of the women before Plame and those who rose through the ranks alongside Plame. It was the continued determination, strength, and perseverance that pushed women beyond the norms of the intelligence community and broke apart the stereotypes that have persisted for years.

Women have increased in numbers in the CIA and have taken on crucial roles that made a lasting impact on the intelligence community. A few remarkable women have moved up the ranks and accepted leadership positions in the Agency. The appointment of women to these positions signals the start of breaking through the last barriers of the glass ceiling. The previous chapter discussed how women had not been placed into the highest positions within the CIA, even though their overall representation had increased tremendously. This section will show how a few exceptional women have broken into this sector and are setting the precedent for the next group of women to break down the CIA's glass ceiling. In 2014, Obama appointed Avril Haines to be the first female Deputy Director of the CIA. When discussing Haines' work Obama stated, "Avril has been a key member of my national security team since early in the administration ... a model public servant."<sup>143</sup> Women have entered the top executive roles within the Agency but have also entered operational roles that were instrumental in changing the intelligence community.

The women at Alec Station referred to as the 'Sisterhood' were crucial in the takedown of Osama bin Laden. Alec station was the first post tasked with finding bin Laden and locating other members of al-Qaeda. The station chief at the time was Michael Scheuer, who said the majority of the twenty-three people working for him were women. On the subject of the women's work ethic he stated, they "were extraordinarily adept at

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<sup>143</sup> Boyer, "Avril Haines Picked By Obama as Deputy Director for White House Post."

both mastering the kind of detailed information that's key to counterterrorism, but also very, very insightful in mapping out relationships,”<sup>144</sup> These women were tracking bin Laden years before the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>, but they were viewed as obsessed until their intelligence became highly important after the attack.

After the takedown of Osama bin Laden, many influential people spoke about the efforts of the women at Alec Station. Fran Moore was the Director for Intelligence from 2010 to 2014. She discussed the importance of the sisterhood in an interview with Ann Curry from NBC. During the interview Moore stated, “Some of the people that did the longest sort of, most intense work on the analysis aspect of it were women, pure and simple... I can say that if those individuals hadn't been working the issue at that time, I'm not confident we would have been successful.” The women at Alec Station are recognized as being crucial components to the successful mission to find Osama bin Laden. These women may serve as role models for women currently working their way up the ranks of the Agency.

For some women the demands of the job still make it too difficult to balance family life and work. Nada Bokos was a crucial player in the capturing and killing of an al-Qaeda leader named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. She ended up leaving behind her successful career after spending years moving up the ranks. She left the Agency because there was no work-life balance. She stated, “I didn't have a lot of options at the time to make it work for me and my family, ... I would love to see a shift from the way assignments are traditionally handled to accommodate the needs of both working

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<sup>144</sup> Brigid Schulte, “Many Women in CIA Still Encounter Glass Ceiling, Agency Report Says.”

spouses.”<sup>145</sup> Bokos serves to show that not only are women inhibited from moving up the ranks due to family matters but once they get to the top they are still affected by the work-life balance hardship. Carol Evans, who is president of Working Mother Media, noticed that women in intelligence who take higher positions don’t usually have children.<sup>146</sup>

Susan Hasler worked at the Agency for over twenty-one years. She witnessed first hand the transformation of the role of women. She came into the Agency at a time when the training videos still only showed women as secretaries. By the end of her career, she was editing the intelligence that would be placed in the President’s daily briefing. However, this change wasn’t enough, and she decided to leave the Agency because of the pressure to continuously work long hours.

It seemed like every year, there was more and more pressure to stay longer and longer on the job,” she said. “I was always the most productive analyst in my branch and could get my work done in eight hours. But I was looked down on because I didn’t stay until 10. People are happy to work long hours in a crisis. But four months later, when managers are acting like it’s still a crisis and it’s not, people aren’t so happy. At least half of the extra hours we worked could have been cut down by more intelligent management.”<sup>147</sup>

Even though she was a top analyst, it was hard to balance everyday life and work. This ultimately caused her to abandon her position. Something must change in order for the Agency to recruit and retain skilled women to diversify the CIA.

This chapter focuses on the modern CIA and assesses what factors contribute to inhibiting women’s advancement to the high ranking officer and SIS positions. Using the *2013 Women in Leadership Report* by the CIA and the *Women in the UK Intelligence*

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<sup>145</sup> Brigid Schulte, “Many Women in CIA Still Encounter Glass Ceiling...”

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

*Community* report, several factors were identified that cause women to be held back from the highest positions in the Agency. Lack of feedback and intentional development, ineffective use of resources for career planning and childcare, unpredictable hours, and lack of workplace flexibility all contribute to women's inability to maintain the highest ranking positions within the Agency. In addition, motherhood presents a challenge for women to find a work-life balance while working at the Agency. The SIS is still male dominated despite the increasing number of women in the Agency. The opportunity for women to enter the CIA in a role above administrative and secretarial positions has greatly increased. Women now account for forty-six percent of the workforce at the CIA. This tremendous improvement has not been seen in the high officer positions and SIS officers. Certain factors are still hindering women from advancing to the positions with equal opportunity as men. The previous chapters have shown how women's roles in the intelligence community have evolved over time. In addition, certain factors have been identified as aspects that inhibit women's advancement. This section also discussed the status of women in the modern CIA is today. The next chapter will compare the portrayal of women in fiction to the women in the present day intelligence community.

## Chapter 5

### Fictional Women in the Intelligence Community

This chapter will call upon fictional works to compare how different women are portrayed in fiction versus the modern day intelligence community. The previous chapters have identified factors that hindered the advancement of women in intelligence. This section will address each factor and analyze how multiple fictional characters deal with those specific issues. The main factors that inhibit women are: gender norms, lack of education, lack of military training, honey-trap relationships systematic barriers, and motherhood. The fictional women in the intelligence community also cope with these factors. The Showtime television series *Homeland* written by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon features Carrie Mathison, a bipolar CIA operative. The FX television series *The Americans* was written by Joseph Weisberg who was an ex CIA case officer. Within this series, Elizabeth and Philip balance parenting and keep watch on their FBI agent neighbor, all while remaining undercover as dormant Soviet spies in the United States. *The Night Manager* mini-series, produced by AMC and BBC, is based on the original novel *The Night Manager* by John LeCarre. Set amidst an illegal arms deal, this series shows how a woman nearly sacrifices her own family for her operation. *Eye in the Sky* was written by Gavin Hood and provides insight to the chain of command for the legal authorization for drone strikes. Using these sources this chapter will analyze how fictional accounts portray women in intelligence as they grapple these key issues.

#### Gender Norms, Education and Military Training

Gender norms, education, and military training were identified as barriers that prevented women from professional positions within the CIA. This section will analyze how fictional characters deal with these barriers and what the relationship is in the

fictional portrayal. Each character has been uniquely portrayed in terms of gender. In *Homeland*, Carrie suffers from bipolar disorder, which discredits her work at times throughout the series. She does her best work when she is off her medication but in turn becomes a danger to herself and those around her. Carrie appears to be a strong female character but her mental health issue delegitimized her actions. Her disorder puts Carrie's career at risk at multiple points throughout the series. Carrie can be very emotional at times and cannot control her outbursts. Before women entered the CIA in professional roles, there was a stigma that women were too emotional and could not be legitimate agents because of this. Carrie's mental health condition detracts from her strengths because viewers see her as an exceptional agent, but she is labeled as crazy because of her disorder.

Elizabeth from *The Americans* defies gender norms regarding women repeatedly throughout the show. Elizabeth tends to be mission oriented and places her love of the motherland over her own personal relationships. She is cast as a cold and ruthless KGB agent. In the eighth episode of the first season, Phillip asks if the two of them could start over. As Phillip was hoping for a fresh start, Elizabeth coldly replies, "No we can't. We can do our jobs, we can fulfill our mission, the reason we were together and sent to America, but we cannot do this. We will never do this."<sup>148</sup> Elizabeth makes it clear that her relationship with Phillip is strictly part of the job and that is all. Elizabeth represents the antithesis of the fear men in the CIA had when admitting women into the Agency. Unlike Carrie, Elizabeth does not show emotion unless it is to deceive and seduce an informant. Instead, Elizabeth utilizes a stoic approach to interpersonal relationships. She

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<sup>148</sup> *The Americans*. Season 1. Episode EP8. 21:04.

once states to Phillip, “we cannot do our jobs if we are emotional”<sup>149</sup> Elizabeth serves as a complete contrast to the stereotypes that once inhibited women. Her extreme lack of emotion disproves the stereotype that women are too emotional for roles in the intelligence community.

When creating fictional characters, decisions must be made to determine what that character will represent. Oftentimes in the fictional spy world women become hyper sexualized objects. The writers of *The Night Managers* also contemplated these important decisions. The director and cast discussed how Jed should be represented. Elizabeth Debicki stated, “we used to fight a lot about how sexy Jed had to be.”<sup>150</sup> During a conversation with Debicki, Tom Lamont reveals, “Debicki thought less, Bier thought more. A shower scene from episode two had to be tried a few times because, as Debicki remembers, “Susanne thought I was drying myself off like a football player in a locker room. She wanted Jed to be, not an object, but very feminine.” Bier helped her to understand the difference.”<sup>151</sup> The characters are purposely crafted to what is portrayed on screen. In this series Jed is portrayed as more beautiful and sexual than Burr, but even Jed has great moments of patriarchal protest. Angela Burr is interesting because her character does not emphasize a sexual appeal but rather embodies a resilient leader. Her character removes viewers from the age in which the female spy uses her body to seduce men. Unlike Carrie and Elizabeth, Burr does not use seduction as a method to gather intelligence. Angela Burr is strong and independent, she is a great agent solely because of her skills and knowledge.

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<sup>149</sup> *The Americans*. Season 1. Episode EP8. 4:45.

<sup>150</sup> Lamont, Tom. "Elizabeth Debicki: 'We Fought about How Sexy I Should Be'."

<sup>151</sup> Lamont, Tom. "Elizabeth Debicki: 'We Fought about How Sexy I Should Be'."



The portrayal of Angela Burr is different from the most common fictional women in intelligence. She is not glammed up, wearing tight suits, and heels as she chases the enemy. Fictional women in intelligence are often portrayed in sexual ways. Burr appears to be in her forties, and she doesn't wear excessive makeup. There are signs that her demanding job is catching up to her. She looks tired and worn out from the high stress environment. She looks like an everyday mom but is the strong woman behind the major operation to take down Roper.<sup>152</sup> Burr is very direct and stubborn. She opposes the authority of her superiors.<sup>153</sup> She doesn't let a secretary stop her from bursting into a government office. The secretary yells behind her, "I will call the police!" to which Angela replies, "I am the bloody police."<sup>154</sup> Angela gets feisty and argumentative when she knows she is close, but is getting denied access from her superiors. They tell her to back off but she does not listen. She is not a dainty delicate woman. She will stop at nothing to do the right thing and stop Roper's illegal schemes.<sup>155</sup> Angela Burr became the backbone of this series. Sophie Gilbert discusses the actions of Burr in her article in the Atlantic. She writes, "Soon, and rather improbably, Burr decides to plant Pine inside Roper's operation, staging a kidnapping in Spain that makes Pine a trusted new member of his inner circle."<sup>156</sup> Burr is tough and takes full control of finding Roper while simultaneously acting as the mother of the operation, in addition she acts as the mother of the operation by looking out for Pine.

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<sup>152</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 4.

<sup>153</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 1. 31:00 remain.

<sup>154</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 5. 15:03 remain.

<sup>155</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 5. 51:28 remain.

<sup>156</sup> Sophie Gilbert, "The Night Manager: From the BBC With Love."

## Reversing Gender Roles

In *The Americans*, Phillip and Elizabeth swap roles within their household.

Elizabeth is portrayed as being cut off from emotions, cold, and harsh. At first she doesn't appear to be motherly or endearing but instead it takes great effort for her to be nurturing. All these qualities contrast the typical gender roles associated with women. Early in the first season, viewers witness a flashback to a conversation in Russia between a young Elizabeth and her mother. Her mother said to her, "You have to rely on yourself in this world."<sup>157</sup> This provides viewers with an insight to why Elizabeth has developed into this closed off character. Elizabeth's adolescence was stripped from her as she was called to join the KGB. Her childhood was cut short and she was told by her mother, the one person she trusted, that she could rely on no one else but herself. This forced Elizabeth to be self-sufficient and independent from an early age. Elizabeth developed the mindset to take care of her own well-being above all and adhere to the mission while remaining faithful to the motherland. The matrilineal bond between Russia as the motherland, Elizabeth's mother, and Elizabeth is very strong. This series is structured and highly focused on the matrilineal bond, which continues even to the next generation as Elizabeth tries to connect with her daughter, Paige. This concept of motherhood will be discussed in a later section. This series uses Elizabeth to protest and disprove the gender norms that once inhibited women by focusing on the matrilineal relationship instead of the patrilineal lineage.

Instead of adhering to traditional gender roles, Phillip exhibits many of the traditionally motherly qualities in the family, while Elizabeth is so focused on work and

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<sup>157</sup> *The Americans*. Season 1. Episode 4. 37:12.

less on nurturing the kids. In her article *'The Americans': Is Keri Russell's Elizabeth a Bad Mother?* Melissa Maerz writes, "As Elizabeth's husband, Phillip, he's the one who's there to send Paige off to church camp, who brings coffee and vanilla cream donuts to Elizabeth in one early episode, who reacts to his partner in this arranged marriage totally emotionally."<sup>158</sup> This role reversal would not have been as common during the Cold War period in which the show is set. However, in present day, this role reversal between husband and wife is much more common. This article criticized Elizabeth for being a bad mother but it was based on the traditional gender norms for women that state that they should be nurturing and place family above their career. In the present day, women have both a career and children. For this reason, Elizabeth can be viewed as a new age fictional spy.

Angela Burr and her husband also exhibit a role reversal from traditional gender norms. It becomes apparent in the fifth episode that Burr is rarely home with her husband. Burr's husband stays home at night and prepares the nursery for their child. When she comes home from her long day of work she checks on her husband who is fast asleep.<sup>159</sup> She justifies the long hours and lack of family time by describing all the terrible things that are happening at the hands of Roper that she feels responsible to stop. She doesn't want to see more innocent children become victims of Roper's illegal arms deals. In the end she stated to Roper, "Since the sports day in Kurdistan, I always thought those kids could use my protection, me and Jonathan we're protecting them. Not the ones you already killed obviously, but the next ones."<sup>160</sup> She has been on a mission since that day

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<sup>158</sup> Melissa Maerz, "The Americans': Is Keri Russell's Elizabeth a bad mother?"

<sup>159</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 5. 32:30 remain.

<sup>160</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 6. 7:25 remain.

to stop Roper from harming other children. She focused on her job while her husband ran the household. Women were once inhibited by this stereotype that women should remain in the home and not work. This role reversal in *The Night Manager* shows how traditional gender norms have evolved to complex overlapping relationships.

Elizabeth and Burr are motivated by two different causes that force them to take on the traditionally male roles within their households. Elizabeth is motivated by her distaste towards America and her love of Russia. She acts to please the motherland and distances herself from her children in the process. She truly believes that Communism is the way to create a better world for her children and future generations. On the other hand, Burr may leave her family to stop Roper so that future generations may be safer. Although their work stems from two different causes, it seems as though they are both motivated to abandon their family and children to provide a better space for them in the future. They believe in the sacrifice they are making for the greater good. Both Elizabeth and Burr defy the traditional gender roles and leave their husbands home to take care of the family and home. This portrayal of the female spy in fiction demonstrates that the intelligence community has moved into a new era where it is no longer shameful for women to share home responsibilities with their husbands so they too can have a career. Many of the women in the intelligence communities note that in order to balance a career and family, their husbands have made sacrifices too. The fictional portrayal serves to show the changes in the society.

### Education and Military Training

With regard to education and military training, it is clear that Elizabeth had spent years training at the KGB. She is portrayed as a bold woman with exceptional tactical skills. There are various flashbacks throughout the first season of boxing and fighting

sessions that display Elizabeth brutally abused by her trainer. In these flashbacks, a younger Elizabeth appears disciplined and strong willed. The portrayal of Elizabeth that viewers are introduced to is the product of years of training and practice. In comparison to Valerie Plame, Elizabeth begins her training at a much younger age. Elizabeth was a teenager when she first became involved with the KGB. The cause is so specific and ingrained her mind during impressionable years: to hate America and its principles. Perhaps this is why Elizabeth is so rigid and cold. Unlike Elizabeth, Plame did not begin training until after graduating college. She also worked on many different issue areas, which meant the enemy was always changing. Elizabeth's early training could be accredited to the KGB's practice of recruiting young agents. Although Elizabeth provides readers with an in depth look at her training process, it is not equivalent to the real life training that Plame and other members of the U.S. intelligence community receive.

### Changing Gender in Fiction

*The Night Manager* miniseries was created based on the John Le Carré novel. The original novel was written in 1993 during a time when women were still climbing the ranks in the intelligence community. Le Carré writes, "In the novel, my chief British spook had been a man named Burr - a rough-cut, ponderous, no nonsense fellow, but a man for all that, and a throwback to my own distant days in the secret world, when female officers were, to say the very least, a rarity."<sup>161</sup> It was decided by the producer and approved by Le Carré to change Burr from a burly man to a strong willed women. Olivia Colman was chosen to play Angela Burr, who would be a tough MI6 agent. In the following interview, Olivia Colman provides some insight to the gender change of the

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<sup>161</sup> Amie Gordon, "The Spy Who Became a Woman: New BBC Adaptation of John Le Carré Novel Changes Sex of Secret Agent."

casting of Burr. Colman stated, “Well, the book was written 20 years ago and so they updated it geographically, for one thing, and they quite rightly updated it in a gender balance area as well. Because it’s a truer reflection. There are many spies that are women. In 2016, all the decision-making characters should bloody well be women.” Similarly, Debicki who plays Jed, remarks, “There are so many actresses who play these roles, but they know in their hearts that they’re complex, wonderful, layered human beings and yet they’re playing people who are only one strain or another. But, in a genre where women are very often the object of beauty and nothing else, things are changing. Angela Burr is a perfect example of that and so is Jed, who is complex herself.”<sup>162</sup> Within spy fiction there is a heightened awareness of how women are portrayed. Writers and directors are joining together to discuss how each female character should be represented, moving from a sexual object to an empowered female agent. Tom Hiddleston, who plays Pine states, “In order for the show to have the same impact as the book, it had to speak to our political climate now; updated and wedded to the world we live in.”<sup>163</sup> This shows the gender advancement of fictional portrayal of the intelligence community. The fictional accounts now include women in similar capacities and capabilities that are seen in the real intelligence community.

In *Eye in the Sky*, the main character Colonel Powell was originally scripted to be a man but the director opted instead to cast a woman for the role. Gavin Hood made the argument that a female lead would better represent the present day. He stated, ““I really felt that the film would appeal strongly to both men and women... And I didn’t want it to

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<sup>162</sup> Dominic Patten, “‘The Night Manager’ Updates John Le Carré & Revitalizes The Spy Drama – Awardsline.”

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

seem like just a war movie for men.”<sup>164</sup> Roles that were originally cast as men have increasingly been changed to women. There has been an effort to include women in fictional portrayals of the intelligence community. This allows viewers to see women in higher roles within the intelligence community. Young women may be inspired by the fictional portrayals and become aware of opportunities for themselves. The real women of the CIA first broke through the barriers that inhibited their advancement and now the fiction follows the fact. Women are featured in leading roles in fiction.

### Honey-trap Relationships

Before the creation of the formal intelligence community women contributed to intelligence through sexualized roles. There are countless examples of how women used their body to seduce men for military secrets and classified information. Publicity surrounding the sexualized roles diminished as women entered the intelligence community in a more professional capacity. Today, modern fiction regarding female spies often reverts back to the honey-trap relationship.

In *Homeland*, Carrie used the honey-trap technique multiple times to build trust, form relationships, and get information. In the first season, she forms a sexual relationship with Sergeant Brody to get information. Later, her superiors have knowledge of the relationship and listen in via intelligence devices as Carrie seduces Brody. When her superiors have knowledge of this honey-trap relationship it formalizes this act and makes it seem as though it is the norm. In another situation Carrie seduced a young boy and persuaded him to go against his religious views. She felt it was her job to gain his trust and the only way to do that in her mind was through a sexual relationship. In a recap

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<sup>164</sup> Peter Bowen, "Women In Charge."

article of this episode, Price Peterson stated, “but recognizing that Aayan was running out of options, Carrie swooped in and reiterated her (false) promise to help him get asylum in the U.K., and then decided to take it one step further by winning him over so completely that he'd eventually help her take down his own uncle... Carrie seduced that sad, frightened boy with surgical precision.”<sup>165</sup> Throughout the series, Carrie used her body as a weapon against people. She will stop at nothing to achieve her goal and accomplish her personal agenda.

The main characters in the FX series *The Americans* also rely heavily on seduction and the honey-trap relationship. Elizabeth and Phillip are ‘married’ and have two children. This allows them to look like the typical American family but both Phillip and Elizabeth secretly have affairs to get information. Phillip befriends a woman named Martha who is the secretary for an FBI office. He has a relationship with her under a secret alias. He begins the relationship by pretending to work on behalf of the FBI. He uses this as a logical reason to get close to Martha and not appear suspicious. By pretending to work in conjunction with the FBI, Phillip opens up the business relationship with the woman first and then it turns to a sexual relationship. Philip serves as a reminder that even men can use the honey-trap technique to gather information. Often times, the art of seduction is associated with women but female characters are not the only one to use this tactic in *The Americans*. This series is littered with complex relationships fueled by sex and secrets. Yet in the real CIA and other intelligence agencies this tactic is not an acceptable method to gather information. Technology and surveillance has progressed and removed the need for this honey-trap seduction tactic. Elizabeth, Carrie, and Phillip

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<sup>165</sup> Price Peterson, "Homeland Recap: The Spy Who Loved Me."



capitalize on the emotions of other people. They use sexual relationships to push people into a vulnerable state where they can be easily manipulated. The portrayal of seduction within these two fictional sources are very similar, however, they do not accurately portray the real intelligence community.

Although seduction widely present in spy fiction, it is not an acceptable form of gathering intelligence in the real intelligence community. Plame and other women in intelligence do not turn to these tactics. After the announcement that Carrie Mathison would be leaving the CIA in the series *Homeland* the real life women in the CIA rejoiced.<sup>166</sup> The female agents at the CIA were not happy with the way Carrie portrayed their work. They noted that Carrie drinks excessively and seduces her way to success throughout her missions. Columnist Maureen Dowd met with women in the CIA and reported, “The C.I.A. sisterhood is fed up with the flock of fictional C.I.A. women in movies and on TV who guzzle alcohol as they bed hop and drone drop, acting crazed and emotional, sleeping with terrorists and seducing assets.”<sup>167</sup> Gina Bennett who has worked for the Agency for twenty-five years stated, “The problem is that they portray most women in such a one-dimensional way; whatever the character flaw is, that’s all they are. . .It can leave a very distinct understanding of women at the agency — how we function, how we relate to men, how we engage in national security — that is pretty off.”<sup>168</sup> When asked specifically about what relationships are like, one woman referred to as Meredith stated,

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<sup>166</sup> Joanna Robinson, "The Real C.I.A. Is Delighted that Homeland's Carrie Mathison Will No Longer Work There."

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

Let's not kid ourselves... For me, working in the Middle East, there's a lot of attraction for Middle Eastern men for Western women. I don't mean necessarily sexually, although they may be thinking that. But curiosity, if nothing else. And we certainly have played that. . . You need to remove [sex] off the table very quickly and clearly. Sometimes it's 'Get your hands off my knee or I'm going to break it,' or you put as many people into the room as you can.<sup>169</sup>

These accounts show the distaste for the portrayal of women in the intelligence community in fictional accounts. These real CIA agents find Carrie Mathison in *Homeland* to be an inaccurate representation of the female intelligence officer.

### Systematic Barriers

Systematic barriers are not as prominent in fictional accounts because viewers are drawn to romance, action, and intensity. Fictional accounts gloss over the systematic factors that inhibit women but there are a few example of how the characters deal with some of these issues. Women in the intelligence community expressed that they felt they did not have female mentors within the Agency. These fictional accounts provide insight to a few different mentoring relationships. The only female mentor relationship is in *The Americans*. This could be the result of the matrilineal structure present in Russia and within the KGB. Claudia feels a special bond between her and Elizabeth because they each know how difficult it is to survive in the world in which they live. Claudia admires Elizabeth's steadfast dedication to the cause. She tells Elizabeth, "I know you will throw yourself in a fire for the cause." Because of this strong dedication, Claudia protects

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<sup>169</sup> Joanna Robinson, "The Real C.I.A. Is Delighted that Homeland's Carrie Mathison Will No Longer Work There."

Elizabeth. She does not tell her superior about when Elizabeth brutally attacked her after Elizabeth's interrogation. This camaraderie between them is similar to the mentoring relationship that women in the CIA felt they lacked during their careers at the Agency.

Carrie heavily relies on a male mentor named Saul Berenson. She looks up to him as a guide and he has saved Carrie countless times from the disasters she got herself into. The show makes it seem as though she cannot stand alone without Saul. She needs the help of the experienced male agent to right her wrongs. The relationship between Carrie and Saul is what the women in the CIA felt they were lacking. Saul chooses to look out for Carrie and help her along as her own career develops. It is clear that they are both exceptional agents but Saul protects Carrie. Similarly, in *The Night Manager*, Angela Burr is portrayed as a strong forceful woman but she has someone helping her. Burr has a friend in the United States who put his own career on the line for her. He trusts that she is making the right call and uses his power to help her investigation. In addition, Burr has someone within MI6 who protects her. These examples show that behind these exceptional female agents are men who help and protect them. A subtle aspect of these fictional accounts is that there are men behind these great female agents. Perhaps this is a subdued way of suggesting that the patriarchy remains strong and in charge. Although women have made it to top leadership positions they are still portrayed as the 'damsel in distress' who needs the male mentors to protect and save them.

### Obedience to Authoritative Figures

Each of the fictional characters reacts differently to being commanded to kill by their superiors. Elizabeth has been well trained in hand to hand combat and she shows very little mercy during attacks. She kills as if it is a normal occurrence. This portrays her as a ruthless killer with no remorse. The women of the modern CIA are effected by the

choices they make. In the movie *Eye in the Sky*, the pilots who fly the drone express clear distress over the choice they are faced with. They receive the command from their superiors to launch a drone strike but the pilots hesitate. They understand the significance of what firing the drone will do. They know that releasing the button will cause people to die. Even when their superiors are in their ear piece commanding them to do it, they resist because they value human life. This completely contrasts the way Elizabeth kills her targets. There is a reverse relationship. Her command to kill is distant; she receives the message in code without direct human contact. For her, that is enough to persuade her to kill. Most of the time she kills people with her hands or within close range. Even after watching someone die she shows little to no remorse. The pilots in *Eye in the Sky* receive the command right in their earpiece the persuasion is strong and constantly present. Yet they resist and buy more time. When they finally launch the strike, they sit miles away and watch innocent civilians die in an attempt to kill the target. Even though they are half way across the world they show remorse. Elizabeth the KGB agent is portrayed as a stone cold killer and the U.S. military pilots are portrayed as skilled and remorseful soldiers. *Eye in the Sky* is meant to be a more accurate portrayal of the military and Agency cooperation on a mission. It is meant to provide viewers with insight to what actually takes place behind the major operations seen in the news. *The Americans* is a fictional series for entertainment. The manner in which Elizabeth is portrayed is one that captivates an audience with the intention of being dramatic. *Eye in the Sky* is meant to be a raw account of what goes on. Comparing these two sources allows insight as to how fiction compares to reality. *Eye in the Sky* is a more accurate account than *The Americans* in terms of how Agents are compliant to kill orders.

## Motherhood

Motherhood has been identified as a barrier that prevents women from advancing within the CIA. Due to the demanding nature of jobs in the intelligence community, mothers have a difficult time maintaining a work-life balance. This section will examine the relationships between mothers and their children and how children effect work in the intelligence community. In *Homeland*, Carrie Mathison learns she is pregnant with Sergeant Brody's child and is not sure what to do with the baby. She places a higher importance on her career than on motherhood and finds the baby to be a burden. During her pregnancy, Carrie drinks and takes her lithium medication while under intense pressure from her job. This combination of toxins and extreme stress is not a healthy one for a pregnant woman.<sup>170</sup> Carrie's choice to leave her daughter and focus on her career instead of motherhood shows that for some people it is impossible to have both a career and be a mother. She felt no attachment to her daughter, Frannie, and their interactions often seemed distant and cold. Carrie, who had thrown herself into danger and wrestled with criminals in the Middle East, looked as if she was holding a ticking time bomb when she held Frannie. It is an anomaly that Carrie thrives in high pressure situations but looks so alarmed caring for an innocent child.

The most horrific indicator of Carrie's lack of motherly qualities is when she allows her child to sink under the water while giving her a bath. As the baby slips under the water, the scene draws out agonizingly slowly. Viewers were left to wonder whether Carrie would save her child. She eventually pulled the child up out of the water and comforted her. Carrie saw her child as such an enormous burden to the point where she

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<sup>170</sup> Caitlin Gallagher, "'Homeland' Season 3 Recap Can't Emotionally Prepare You for Season 4, But It Will Refresh Your Memory."

contemplated letting her die. After this incident, Carrie uses her job to go back overseas and run away from her child. Carrie's sister stated, "I know what these war zone postings are all about. Making sure there's no place for your daughter there." She continued, "There's not even a diagnosis for what's wrong with you."<sup>171</sup> It is clear that Carrie is suffering from a disorder that causes her to see her own child as a burden and point of weakness.

In order to find a better balance between motherhood and her career, Carrie ultimately decides to leave the CIA. She and Frannie move to Berlin and it seems that Carrie begins a new relationship with her daughter. There is a complete reversal of how she treats Frannie. Carrie lovingly watches over Frannie as she drops her off for daycare or plays in the park. It appears Carrie was at peace with her new job and that she enjoys motherhood. However, once past actions in the CIA resurface and present a threat, Carrie ships Frannie off on a plane to DC where she would be out of harm's way. Once again, Carrie goes back to risking her life and going off her medication to get the job done, while her daughter is on the other side of the world.

It is apparent that Carrie struggles to balance motherhood and the work of the Agency. She opted not to conjoin the two roles by fleeing from her motherly responsibilities when her job needed her. This show provides a drastic example, which draws viewers due to its dramatic content. Many of Carrie's actions would not be allowed in real life but this show takes on extremes in its portrayal of the intelligence community.

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<sup>171</sup> Hayley Krischer, "Why the bathtub scene on last night's "Homeland" was so uniquely disturbing."

This fictional insight of motherhood in the intelligence community stresses upon some of the real anxieties mothers in the CIA face, but it exaggerates them beyond reality.

Elizabeth from *The Americans* has a different set of troubles regarding motherhood. The matrilineal bond is very prominent in this series as Elizabeth is extremely dedicated to the motherland at all cost. She is also very connected to her own mother although she doesn't see her often. She wants her mother to be proud of all she has given back to the Soviet State. However, in the first few seasons of this show Elizabeth does not appear to have a strong connection to her own daughter, Paige, or son, Henry. At the end of season one, Elizabeth tells Phillip to take the kids if anything ever goes wrong. She admits that he is the one the kids want. It is clear throughout the first season that Elizabeth lacks a motherly bond with her children. She has a very serious demeanor, as if she is always on the job.

Children are often used as bargaining objects in ransoms and hostile situations. Most people panic and would attempt anything to keep their children safe. When Elizabeth is captured and questioned to show loyalty to Russia she is placed in a room full of pictures of her children. This psychological tactic was used to cause her to be paranoid for the safety of her children. It seemed that Elizabeth was on edge after she viewed the pictures of her children but it doesn't stop her from staying focused in the moment on the mission.<sup>172</sup> She didn't have such an emotional reaction to thinking that her kids may be in danger. She kept her emotions hidden.

Each of the characters in the fictional sources takes different measures to separating their children from their work. Elizabeth differs from Carrie because there is

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<sup>172</sup> *The Americans*. Season 1. Episode 6. 17:40.

no separation between work and home life for her. Part of her job is to maintain this home and appear as a typical American family. Perhaps this is the reason she appeared distant from her children because she just viewed them as part of their operation. Carrie sends her daughter to the other side of world when danger is present. She wants to create separation between her career and her daughter in order to keep her safe. Angela Burr from *The Night Manager* does not have that luxury because her child is with her at all times. When she puts herself in danger she puts her child's life in danger too.

*The Night Manager* adapts to the political norms of the present day by casting a woman as one of the lead characters. Le Carré even said the novel had enough "middle aged white men."<sup>173</sup> The woman who plays Angela Burr, was pregnant with her third child at the time of filming and so the writers worked that into the script. Although it was not intentional, it brings modern day issues of motherhood into discussion regarding the show. Bier a co-director of the mini-series stated, "She can be quite rough and tough and still be incredibly endearing," which is why she cast her for this role.<sup>174</sup> Meredith Blake wrote about the decision to cast Burr as a pregnant women in an article in the LA Times. She writes, "Bier and her collaborators saw the actress' condition as an exciting creative opportunity, a way of emphasizing Burr's vulnerability in a ruthless, male-dominated world..."<sup>175</sup> By casting a pregnant women to play Angela Burr, *The Night Manager* takes on a whole new sets of issues, such as how to portray motherhood and balancing work in the intelligence community. The next section will look at specific examples of how

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<sup>173</sup> Amie Gordon, "The Spy Who Became a Woman: New BBC Adaptation of John Le Carré Novel Changes Sex of Secret Agent."

<sup>174</sup> Meredith Blake, "After some Le Carré-worthy twists, 'The Night Manager' arrives with Hugh Laurie and Tom Hiddleston."

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.



Angela Burr grappled with motherhood.

Angela Burr represents a different portrayal of motherhood than the previous examples. Viewers witness her struggles of pregnancy and work but Burr does not let her pregnancy stop her. She must be careful not to harm her child as she chases after the notorious arms dealer Roper. She was warned by superiors to take it easy, but she was on a mission to take down the man she knew was causing harm to so many people. In the fourth episode Burr reveals why she is so adamant about tracking Roper and stopping his plans. She witnessed Roper selling chemical weapons after seeing them be used to kill innocent children. An article in the Atlantic by Sophie Gilbert points out that Burr acts as a natural grounding in the extreme luxury portrayal of the spy world. Gilbert writes, “But Colman anchors the show’s morality in the fourth episode when she delivers an extraordinary speech revealing why she’s so intent on bringing Roper down, and reminds viewers that his breezy charm hides a capacity for singular cruelty.”<sup>176</sup> Burr could not bear to allow Roper to continue his illegal and inhumane trading practices and so she hunted him ever since.<sup>177</sup> Why was Burr so affected by Roper’s actions and why did Roper not seem to care that he was killing innocent children? One may argue that Burr’s motherly instinct took over. She couldn’t imagine him doing such terrible things to her own children. She put herself on a mission to stop him from harming future generations of children. She took on the role of protecting the children she didn’t even know from Roper and his crew of arms and weapons dealers.

On a more personal basis, Burr places her own family at risk after stubbornly

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<sup>176</sup> Sophie Gilbert, "The Night Manager: From the BBC With Love."

<sup>177</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 4. 7:30 remain.

disobeying her orders to her superiors. After revealing that someone from within the MI6 was aiding Roper from the inside, Burr became even more adamant about getting to the bottom of his illegal actions, no matter the cost. She was threatened and told to stop searching but she still did not back down. One of Burr's superiors named Richard came to her home late at night. He threatens, "For your own safety, do not get in the way... I would not close the door" to which she slammed the door on him. Even while being threatened with no protection in the middle of the night, she remains tough and focused on her job. Since she did not listen her husband was attacked and she was not there to protect him. She comes home to find him lying on the floor after being beaten.<sup>178</sup> She left her family vulnerable while she was working. This also shows how difficult it is to separate work and home life with this type of career. Her work came knocking right on her door. Similarly, Elizabeth's home is essentially an extension of her work. Many of the Phillip and Elizabeth's tasks end up coming into their home. They torture and capture a man in their own garage just feet away from their children. Carrie's work comes home to with her in a more realistic manner. She takes home files and tries to piece together how one man is connected to everything. She turns her home into a workspace for herself to create an intricate web connected places, people, and events. This does not bring a threat directly to her doorstep but it does support the idea that it is hard to separate between work and home life. This is a problem that the women in the intelligence community face as well.

These fictional accounts deal with the similar issues that women in the real intelligence community face throughout their careers. At times the fictional accounts over

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<sup>178</sup> *The Night Manager*. Season 1. Episode 5. 5:17 remain.

exaggerate the reality. As the women of the CIA coined it, the job is not to ‘bed hop and drone drop’ as many of the fictional accounts may suggest. However, these fictional sources do engage with some of the stresses that women of the intelligence community must overcome during their career. Each character deals with the multiple factors differently. For instance, Carrie was able to seduce Agent Brody and she crossed many lines but was not penalized. Carrie symbolizes the women who have become officers and have authorized drone strikes and other operations. Carrie’s actions are often delegitimized by her bi-polar disorder. In addition, she struggles with motherhood, and shows how difficult it can be to balance motherhood and work. She tends to choose one or the other because both raising a child and keeping the job is too much for her. In *The Americans*, Elizabeth defies the role of traditional motherhood and has reversed gender norms with Phillip. He tends to be more emotional while Elizabeth struggles to connect emotionally with her children. She is very rigid and constantly adhering to the mission. She feels relationships are not necessary unless they are for the mission. Angela Burr defies the overly sexualized fictional portrayal of women. She is a pregnant woman who will stop at nothing to bring down Richard Roper.

Overall, the women in the fictional portrayals of the intelligence community tend to still have a very idealist vision about them. There is still a great deal of seduction and portrayal of ‘super woman spy’ who accomplishes the impossible. A CIA agent named Bennet stated that the best fictional portrayal of women in the intelligence community was elastigirl. She stated, “The entire concept for her was flexibility; she became a mom

and a superhero at the same time... Just think of us as a work force of Elastigirls.”<sup>179</sup> One aspect that inhibited women in the intelligence community, and continues to do so, is systematic barriers, such as workplace flexibility, lack of mentorship, lack of feedback, and assignments. These issues are not evident in the fictional accounts. These real life issues that women in the intelligence community deal with everyday do not make it to the fictional portrayal because they do not add intensity and draw viewers to the shows. This section examined how the fictional accounts portray women in the intelligence community and how they deal with the barriers that inhibit their advancement.

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<sup>179</sup> Joanna Robinson, "The Real C.I.A. Is Delighted that Homeland's Carrie Mathison Will No Longer Work There."

## Conclusion

Historically, women have been excluded from advancing within the intelligence community. Many factors inhibited women from rising to higher positions within the Agency. As early as the American Revolution, women have played an active role in gathering and passing intelligence from one person to another. However, they were very limited in the roles they could assume. Women were constricted by traditional gender norms. They were expected to be housewives who took care of the children, maintained the home, and remained out of the public eye. However, a few exceptional women capitalized on the limited opportunities presented and sought an active role in the intelligence community.

During the American Revolution, women hid behind the roles society imposed upon them, proving their resourcefulness. Those exceptional women that risked their lives to gather and deliver information became crucial assets to the war effort. One woman was even responsible for passing information to George Washington. The women who spied during these early years went unnoticed but were instrumental in shaping history. They were the pioneers for the women that followed them.

Throughout the American Civil War, women's roles began to change. Both sides recognized the benefit to using women to gather information. Women's roles were still heavily reliant on adhering to the gender norms of the time. Women hosted dinner parties with military commanders to gather intelligence using what was said behind closed doors. These women were hiding in plain sight to spy on the enemy. One woman was sent as a servant to the home of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, showing that women were able to infiltrate one of the highest ranking homes. Women were acting as the ears but no one was expecting them to be listening. As more and more

people began to see the effects of using women as spies more opportunities were available to women.

During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson publicly recognized the sacrifices women had made throughout the war, marking the start of a new age for women as they began to take on larger roles. One of the most notorious spies of this period was Mata Hari. She was known for seducing men to gather information. She represents the sexual role women played in the spy world by using their bodies to get information. This portrayal is widely popular in modern day spy fiction. Although many accounts consider sex the only means of gathering intelligence for women, many other methods were used during this time. Women took on more formal roles serving as cryptologists, code breakers, and translators. Women began to serve in a greater capacity as needed. The pressure of war opened up new opportunities for women to join in the process of gathering intelligence.

With the creation of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II, women with the desired skills served in larger capacities. Most notably, Virginia Hall disguised herself as an old peasant woman and worked in the French trenches. Other women used their bodies to gather intelligence by seducing men who held important information. Those women that were fortunate to receive an education were recruited by the OSS to work as linguists and code breakers. Women serving in the intelligence community became more common but it was still restricted to only those exceptional women who had the skills and specific opportunity available to them.

As the Cold War caused tension between the United States and Soviet Union, women plateaued in the intelligence community. Many of the women were not

transferred to the CIA in the same role they served in the OSS. Eloise Randolph Page is an exception to this. She was transferred to the CIA and held a high leadership position for twelve years, which was extraordinary at that time. She exemplified that it was possible for women to hold these roles, but the majority were inhibited from advancing within the Agency. It was not until after the creation of the CIA that women began to search for careers within the intelligence community.

There were many factors that inhibited women from entering and advancing within the CIA. The majority of women served as typists and secretaries in clerical positions. As gender norms adapted to changing times, women began to take on more active roles. Lack of education and military training prevented women from serving as analysts and agents within the intelligence and operational directorates respectively. As more women became educated, the number of women serving in the Directorate of Intelligence increased. Over time, women began to join the Directorate of Operations and were trained specifically for those positions. In 1992, the CIA produced the Glass Ceiling Study, which showed that forty percent of the whole workforce were women, but only nine percent of the Senior Intelligence Services were women. This demonstrates that the opportunities in the intelligence community had expanded but women were still hindered from advancing to leadership positions within the Agency.

Present day women are still not represented in equal proportions to men in top intelligence leadership positions. There are five major issue areas that challenge the advancement of women in the intelligence community. These include, fostering feedback and development, adequate resources, workplace flexibility, unpredictable hours and allowing for diverse career paths. As women are child bearing, motherhood presents

difficulties for career advancement within the CIA as well. Women often remarked that they were deprived of adequate feedback and mentor relationships, which would have ensured career development. In addition, women felt there was an absence of female mentors willing and able to help guide their career paths. Women with children required workplace flexibility and maternity leave, which were difficult to provide in this particular career due to the demands of the job. Balancing motherhood and a career at the CIA presents a new set of challenges for women within the Agency.

Modern fictional sources provide an insight to some of the issues women struggle with in the intelligence community. Of the four fictional sources used in the previous chapter, three of the sources show how difficult it can be to balance motherhood and a career at the CIA. All four sources have a strong willed woman in a lead role. These fictional sources do not provide an insight to the many years that women have battled to earn a place within the intelligence community. They do not pay tribute to all the women who spent their career at the hands of men, chipping away at the barriers that prevented their advancement. But these fictional sources serve to show that women are no longer prevented from leadership positions. Women can and do serve in high positions within the Agency and the overwhelming change in spy fiction characters demonstrates this.

Women have made tremendous improvement over the last half century. From typists and secretaries to the ‘sisterhood’ at Alec Station who helped track down Osama bin Laden, women have become an integral part of the intelligence community. Their roles have evolved over time as they have successfully broken down and debunked the barriers that once inhibited them. Women have shown that the CIA is no longer the “Old



Boys' Club'". They are now employed at nearly equal rates to men within the Agency. However, there is still room for improvement. Women still do not occupy the top positions and there has yet to be a female Director of the CIA. As demonstrated in this thesis, action plans were developed as barriers and inequalities were identified. Following the action plans, positive changes were made to include women in greater capacities. It is clear the CIA understands the importance of a diverse workforce. The current status of the CIA is very close to breaking down the final barriers that inhibit women from the top leadership positions within the Agency.

So this raises question of the importance of comparing the real evolution of women in intelligence to the evolution of spy fiction. Fiction provides its creators with a medium to express contemporary political and social anxieties. Specifically, spy fiction allows viewers to assess the current status of the intelligence community. Brett F. Woods states that "fiction follows fact" in the creation of spy fiction. In other words, the works of fiction provide historical insight to the intelligence community. I believe that the evolution of women in the intelligence community has been revolutionized by its depiction in spy fiction. Today's spy fiction often portrays women as the lead agents. The days of James Bond representing the iconic spy with his illustrious women, are out of date. Previously, well known spy fiction novelists John le Carré and Ian Fleming had exclusively written novels with the male spies who secretly save the world and have love affairs with very beautiful women. Women served a singular role in their novels; sexual objects. Intelligence is no longer solely a man's profession, and this is reflected in both the real world and spy fiction. As equal opportunity in the real world emerged, the same

could be said of roles in fiction. This new image of the empowered female spy will guide the next generation of women in intelligence.

The nature of work of the intelligence community often excludes it from entering mainstream society. However, fiction is able to provide an insight to the spy world and in the process reveals what is typically kept from the public. A major advance of spy fiction over the past few decades has been the depiction of women in the intelligence community and the roles that they play. Today's generation of children can now gather around television and watch series that portray women equally to men, and believe that they too can take on leadership positions within the intelligence community. This new era of spy fiction contributes to the evolution of women in intelligence. As film and television increasingly feature women, the intelligence community is positively impacted and people will become more comfortable with the idea of women in these roles.

The advancement of women in the intelligence community was made possible by many trailblazing women whose contributions to intelligence are reflected in spy fiction. However, just as these remarkable women have played an important role in progressing the status of women in intelligence, spy fiction also plays a role today. Thus, for as much as fiction follows fact, fiction holds the potential to be a powerful tool in shaping the next generation of women in intelligence. The increased participation of women serves as the catalyst for this evolution of women in intelligence but the fiction also has a political and social impact. Fiction can help reshape what is socially accepted. As the public is more exposed to certain norms, values, and practices, they become more widely accepted. This can be applied to the fact that women are increasingly taking on positions of higher

leadership in the intelligence community. Women in the intelligence community are becoming the norm.

While there is no explicit connection between fact and fiction, collectively they create positive change in the present and for the future. The fictional portrayal of women in the intelligence community has changed in conjunction with the change in history. Fictional women have transitioned from sexualized objects, to be the strong, empowered leaders, that were once only cast as men. Similarly, in the modern intelligence community, women have the opportunity to serve in the distinguished positions, that were once only offered to men. Women's role in the intelligence community has drastically evolved through the perseverance of trailblazing women who continued to push back against the patriarchy. Women are taking on greater roles in leadership positions within the Agency. Spy fiction is reinforced and strengthened by the evolution in the intelligence community. I am hopeful that within the next decade we will see a woman fill the role of Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. There is great promise for the next generation of women in intelligence.

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