

# The History of BUNCIN: The US Bureau of Narcotics Covert Intelligence Network

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Douglas Valentine

An excerpt from Douglas Valentine's "The Strength of the Pack: The Personalities, Politics, and Espionage Intrigues That Shaped The DEA," with an exclusive introduction by the author.

## *Author's Introduction*

I believe that some orientation is needed to understand the information in this excerpt from my book [The Strength of the Pack: The Personalities, Politics, and Espionage Intrigues That Shaped The DEA](#) (TrineDay, 2010). In particular, I mention a number of people whom anyone who has read the book will recognize. But given that this is an excerpt, anyone who has not read the book will need an explanation about who these people are. That information has been edited into the excerpt.

It will also be helpful if the reader knows how I came to gather this rather arcane information. The process started more than 25 years ago when I interviewed former Director of Central Intelligence William Colby for my book, [The Phoenix Program](#) (William Morrow, 1990). Colby agreed to help me and began to introduce me to a number of senior CIA officers who had been involved in the Phoenix program. Evan Parker, the first director of the Phoenix program in Vietnam, was the first person Colby introduced me to.

I remember quite well the curious circumstances of my interview with Parker. I met him at his home in Maryland. He greeted me at the front door, and we went upstairs to his office. Parker in his retirement was a deacon in his church, as well as a student of Welch poetry. For the first two hours of the interview we spoke about our personal interests, including poetry.

After Parker had satisfied himself that I was capable of understanding the intricacies of the Phoenix program, he politely asked if I would like some tea. He had laid out a bunch of documents on the coffee table in front of us, and had indicated that they contained classified information, including a roster of the original staff of the Phoenix Directorate in Saigon. I said I would be glad to have some tea, and he went downstairs. He said he would be gone about 15 minutes, smiled, and tapped the stack of documents.

The moment he went downstairs I opened the roster and furiously began copying down the names on it. About ten minutes later, Parker called from downstairs. He said the tea was ready and that he was about to come upstairs. I closed my notebook and put his documents back the way they were. About a minute later he came up the steps with a tray of tea and some cookies. Parker smiled at me and I smiled at him.

As soon as I got home to Massachusetts, I began tracking down the CIA and military people who had staffed the original Phoenix Directorate in Saigon. I was able to interview many of them for my book. Almost all of them called either Parker or Colby for permission to speak with me, and Colby and Parker always said it was okay. And that is how I came to gather much of the information for my Phoenix program book.

In regard specifically to the excerpt below, one of the people Parker's roster led me to was an army officer who in turn introduced me to Colonel Tully Acampora. The army officer had worked for Tully in Vietnam in a joint CIA-military program, upon which Parker had structured the Phoenix program. I met Tully in a motel in Washington, DC. We struck up a friendship that lasted 20 years and, with Tully, I gained the entrée into the closed society of federal drug law enforcement that would enable me to write my books *The Strength of the Wolf* and *The Strength of the Pack*.

Tully Acampora was a veteran of World War II. He was a counterintelligence officer in Korea, where he worked with the CIA. In 1959, he was detailed to the CIA and served in Rome, Italy, where he met and formed lifelong friendships with federal narcotic agent Charlie Siragusa and CIA officer Hank Manfredi. Through Siragusa and Manfredi, Acampora met Andy Tartaglino, another federal narcotic agent. Andy was Charlie Siragusa's protégé and a good friend of Hank Manfredi, a CIA officer masquerading as a federal narcotics agent in Rome.

Tully introduced me to Tartaglino, who is mentioned in the excerpt below, and who is one of the most important characters in the history of federal drug law enforcement. Andy was the first chief inspector and later chief of enforcement in the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), which existed from 1968 until 1973. Andy was also the first acting deputy administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

With the introduction to Andy Tartaglino, whom I interviewed on several occasions, I was well on my way to writing a book about the fascinating characters that populate the history of federal drug law enforcement.

I also met, through Tully Acampora, two other important people mentioned in the excerpt that follows. In 1966, Tully was reassigned to Saigon as the CIA's adviser to General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, who gained notoriety in a Pulitzer prize-winning photograph taken during the Tet offensive, in which Loan was photographed shooting a Vietcong guerrilla in the head.

While Tully was in Vietnam on his second tour, as the CIA's advisor to the South Vietnamese special police chief in Saigon, he met and formed a relationship with Fred Dick, the first federal narcotic agent assigned to Saigon. Tully introduced me to Fred, and to William Logay, who served on Tully's staff in 1970. Bill Logay served as Tully's liaison to Fred Dick on narcotic matters in Saigon.

Last but not least, through William Colby, I met and interviewed Lucien Conein, who is also featured in the excerpt below, as the chief of BUNCIN. Conein was a legendary CIA officer who, among other things, prevented a Corsican opium addict from killing Daniel Ellsberg in Saigon. Conein and I formed a friendly relationship, and Conein introduced me to Robert Medell. I interviewed Medell in Coral Gables Florida. Bob Medell and Bill Logay were the two CIA case officers initially assigned to BUNCIN.

Although I interviewed several other characters mentioned in the excerpt below, I felt it would be instructive for the reader to understand how I came to meet and interview the main characters. The excerpt itself is taken from Chapter 17, Covert Intelligence, in my book *The Strength of the Pack*. A list of everyone I interviewed is available at the end of the excerpt. Significant documents are cited as well.

~ Douglas Valentine, July 16, 2010

## **BUNCIN:**

### **Bureau of Narcotics Covert Intelligence Network**

In the Watergate summer of 1972, President Richard Nixon's adviser for law enforcement, Egil Krogh, and his band of Merry Pranksters, commonly known as the Plumbers, were dreaming up new ways to merge the war on drugs with the political war against “campus bums” and Democrats. One of their more bizarre plots wed the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) and the CIA in a program called BUNCIN — the Bureau of Narcotics Covert Intelligence Network.

BUNCIN's stated purpose was to gather long-range strategic intelligence, covertly, for the purpose of “neutralizing”

traffickers. Neutralize was a word that became fashionable after the CIA introduced it into the intelligence community through its Phoenix Program in Vietnam. Neutralize meant to assassinate, kidnap and/or indefinitely detain targeted individuals.

BUNCIN included psychological warfare tactics such as “provocations, inducement

to desertion, creating confusion and apprehension.” [1] BUNCIN psywar operations, in theory, would reduce the ability of drug traffickers to recruit new members by “introducing the certainty of apprehension and detention regardless of their country of residence.” [2]

These tactics had been standard fare for federal narcotic agents since the 1930s. Indeed, The Federal Bureau of Narcotics (1930 – 1968) had been in existence long before the CIA, and the CIA and its forerunner the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) learned many of the tricks of its trade from FBN agents. For example, Garland Williams, the FBN’s Regional Director in New York City in the late 1930s, helped establish OSS training schools in Maryland and Virginia. Williams was also the OSS’s chief of sabotage training and, along with several other FBN agents, trained OSS officers in undercover work, as well as how to elude the security services of enemy nations, something FBN agents had been doing worldwide for 20 years.

Some BUNCIN intelligence activities were directed against senior foreign government officials and, as part of its psychological warfare mandate, were to be “blamed on other government agencies, or even on the intelligence services of other nations.” [3]

It is worth noting, that the BUNCIN tactic of targeting foreign officials and blaming foreign secret services for the havoc wrought by BUNCIN assets was nothing new, as demonstrated in the Delouette Case discussed in Chapter 11. What was new about BUNCIN was that its assets were working for the CIA as well as the BNDD, and that the principal agents would report on “civic and political groups in addition to monitoring the activities of other assets in the net.” [4]

In September 1972, at the instigation of the White House, DCI Richard Helms and John Ingersoll, the director of the BNDD, met at the Hays-Adams Hotel to seal the BUNCIN deal. Helms (already knee-deep in the Watergate cover-up) told Ingersoll that the CIA had prepared files on several drug traffickers in Miami, the Florida Keys, and the Caribbean. He said the CIA would provide Ingersoll and the BNDD with CIA assets, most of whom were anti-Castro Cubans, to pursue known traffickers, as well as to develop information on hitherto unknown targets of opportunity. The CIA would provide operational, technical, and financial support.

Being a “cloak and dagger” buff, Ingersoll readily agreed. He put Andy Tartaglino, the BNDD’s chief of enforcement, in charge of the project. Tartaglino in turn brought several other senior BNDD officials into the loop, including Ben Theisen, the regional director in Miami, where BUNCIN was based. William Durkin, the chief of criminal investigations, Philip Smith, the chief of special projects, John Warner, the chief of strategic intelligence, and George Belk, the chief of foreign operations, were also in the loop at BNDD headquarters.

CIA officers Robert Medell and William Logay, as suggested by the CIA, were selected by Tartaglino and Ingersoll to run BUNCIN in the field.

Known by his BNDD colleagues as “the Cuban Ghost,” Bob Medell was born in Cuba in 1940. The CIA initially hired him for the Bay of Pigs invasion and afterwards re-hired him to recruit soldiers of fortune (some of whom were drug smugglers) from Spain, Belgium, Argentina and elsewhere, to fight Congolese forces in Africa led by Cubans backed by the Soviets and Chinese. The CIA won the Congo War and Medell’s contract was renewed in 1966 under the Chilean Task Force.

Next Medell was assigned to Panama as a principal agent for CIA officer Lawrence Sternfeld, the chief of station and Manuel Noriega’s case officer. Sternfeld was a case officer to many Cuban exiles, some of whom were BUNCIN agents, including a vice president at Continental Bank. Sternfeld was also close to the Israelis and, according to

Medell, gave them privileged CIA information.

In June 1972, CIA personnel officer George “Jerry” Sohl introduced Medell to BNDD inspector Tom Tripodi. Sohl had been Medell’s case officer during the Congo War and knew many of the CIA’s assets in the exile Cuban community. Tripodi, who had just finished a tour with CIA security in Miami, knew the milieu too; he had even employed some of the Cubans bagged in the Watergate affair.

As Tartaglino's liaison to the CIA, Tripodi arranged for Tartaglino and Ingersoll to interview Medell at a motel in Arlington, far from the rumor mill at headquarters. They hired him and sent him to BNDD Inspections chief Patrick Fuller. Medell worked for three months on the administrative side of Fuller’s secret CIA inspections program within the BNDD. (Fuller’s secret “Twofold” shoofty program is explained in detail in *The Strength of the Pack*.) When BUNCIN was launched in September, 1972, Medell was assigned to it. As noted, he brought to the job Spanish language skills and experience as a recruiter of drug smugglers in far away places like Africa, Bogota and Geneva.

Medell and Bill Logay developed the BUNCIN operational plan based on the standard

CIA principle of developing strategic and tactical intelligence on a long-term basis. Medell, the covert agent, was to have no contact with Logay, the overt agent. Adding another layer to Medell’s cover, only the most senior Miami agents were to know that Logay had a safe house near the airport, and that he and Medell were recruiting anti-Castro Cuban drug traffickers to report on civic and political groups (the sort of intelligence that was bound to please Nixon), as well as on corrupt BNDD agents.

Medell and Logay submitted their plan in November, 1972. Tartaglino approved it and BUNCIN was activated in December. Tartaglino had direct operational control, although CIA officer Lucien Conein, who had been hired by the White House the year before, as an advisor on drug traffickers in the Far East – as well as on Dan Ellsberg, who had, at the time, leaked the Pentagon Papers – was deeply involved in his new job as a senior intelligence agent with the BNDD through a parallel but separate chain of command.

While in army intelligence in the early 1960s, BUNCIN’s administrative officer, Rich Kobakoff, had served in Morocco and the Mideast in a military unit commanded by Conein. The unit was under CIA control and included Colonel Joseph Lagattuta, who bounced back and forth between the CIA and the army throughout his career. Lagattuta, like Kobakoff, would later work for secret intelligence chief Conein in the DEA.

After working with Conein in the Mideast, Kobakoff joined the CIA in 1962. He stayed with the CIA until April 1972, when, as part of a reduction in force that dove-tailed with the end of the Vietnam War, he was assigned to the BNDD’s Office of Strategic Intelligence, where Conein had also landed. CIA officer Jerry Sohl made the arrangement. Within the BNDD’s Office of Strategic Intelligence, Kobakoff handled the Middle East, except Turkey, which was covered by CIA officer George Oakey.

Kobakoff officially resigned from the CIA in October 1972, and at this point became the intelligence desk officer for Office of Strategic Intelligence domestic east operations. He was, concurrently, Conein’s administrative aide for the BUNCIN project’s finances, logistical and technical support.

Kobakoff began his BUNCIN assignment by obtaining, from Tartaglino’s safe, a handful of classified reports which had not gone into the BNDD’s investigative files. These top-secret files referenced the CIA agents, almost all of whom were exile Cubans, who were to become BUNCIN assets. Kobakoff and Clarence Cook, an African American desk officer at BNDD headquarters, then flew to Miami to meet Medell and Logay.

## **BUNCIN Begins**

When Medell arrived on the scene, Conein was already running BUNCIN operations through an older Cuban man

with assets in the targeted areas of Florida and the Caribbean. This older Cuban man occupied an office adjacent to chief inspector Pat Fuller's at BNDD headquarters. He was married to a rich woman in Maryland who owned race horses. Unfortunately, the older Cuban man had Democratic Party friends in Miami, and President Nixon's hatchet man, Egil Krogh (who was in charge of BUNCIN's political targeting) doubted his loyalty; so BUNCIN informant Ricardo "Monkey" Morales introduced the older Cuban man to a pretty young girl. In the finest CIA sexual blackmail tradition, Morales acquired photographs of the older Cuban man and the pretty young girl naked and snorting cocaine. The photos were passed around, the man had a disabling heart attack, and Bob Medell stepped in to replace him.

In this "political" regard, Pat Fuller, whose Office of Inspections provided some communications equipment to the BUNCIN agents, told me quite bluntly that BUNCIN had two agendas. As with the CIA's secret inspection program, Operation Twofold, there was a box within a box. One agenda "was told" and had a narcotics mission. The other was secret and had a partisan political agenda. Instructions for the secret political facet of BUNCIN emanated, according to Fuller, from Egil Krogh, and were passed through Conein to his OSS comrade and veteran CIA officer E. Howard Hunt and Hunt's partner in the Ellsberg and Watergate break-in, G. Gordon Liddy. Hunt and Liddy used BUNCIN intelligence to direct their infamous Gemstone team, staffed by exile Cuban terrorists.

Egil Krogh's political chain of command in BUNCIN featured Howard Hunt's favorite exile Cuban terrorist Manuel Artime, as well as Rolando Cubelas Secades, an exile Cuban terrorist working for the chief of the CIA's "Cuban Group" in 1972, Nestor Sanchez. Bob Medell's rabbi in the CIA, Sanchez's exile-Cuban terror operation had a unilateral CIA agenda which, under cover of BUNCIN, targeted Fidel Castro.

Krogh ran this political operation under cover of BUNCIN until his January 1973 appointment as Secretary of Transportation. Krogh did this directly with Lou Conein, apart from Tartaglino or anyone else in the BNDD. Under cover of BUNCIN, Conein, Hunt, and Sanchez used their exile Cuban assets to assassinate and kidnap people in Colombia and Mexico for the CIA. To whom Krogh passed his mantle is unknown, but BUNCIN's White House sponsors sent BUNCIN assets to gather dirt on Democratic Party politicians in Key West; and, among other non-drug law enforcement matters, foiled an assassination attempt on Henry Kissinger. [5]

Bob Medell's primary job as BUNCIN's covert agent was recruiting principal agents to run agent nets and anti-drug smuggling operations not only in Miami, but "throughout the Caribbean and South America." [6] In doing this he posed as Robert Martin and formed Robert Martin Enterprises, a "national" consulting firm near Miami International Airport, where Logay kept the safe house. Both Medell and Logay ventured into Latin America on BUNCIN assignments.

Medell set up a nominee account in the Miami Bank and started running agents in March 1973. He briefed Ingersoll that month on his recruitment of assets in Miami, the Caribbean and New York, and about his plans to penetrate the Cuban side of Santo Trafficante's organization based in Tampa. At this point analysts in the BNDD's Office of Strategic intelligence began to research files by BUNCIN assets related to the Trafficante organization.

Medell and Logay folded their agent contact reports into National Intelligence Requirement (NIR) reports. The NIRs were hand carried from Logay's safe house to Homestead Air Force Base and flown to Andrews Air Force Base. From there they were delivered to headquarters via the Defense Department's classified courier service and handed to Tartaglino. Tartaglino reviewed the NIRs and distributed them to his senior staff; they in turn compiled investigative files and a Narcotics Intelligence Requirement List.

The Defense Department was in charge of emergency planning and provided BUNCIN agents with special communications equipment. The CIA supplied forged foreign IDs that allowed BUNCIN assets to work for foreign governments or intelligence services. [7]

As noted, BUNCIN assets targeted the Cuban side of the Trafficante family (his daughter had married a Cuban) and its drug and gambling operations. Medell hired several notorious Cubans to carry out this task. The assets knew



Medell was CIA. They all had worked for the CIA before, and they believed they were working for the CIA again. And many were double agents working for the CIA as well as the BNDD, and FBI.

Medell's Principal Agent was Bay of Pigs veteran Guillermo Tabraue, whom the CIA paid a whopping \$1400 a week. While receiving this princely sum, Tabraue was participating in the "Alvarez-Cruz" multi-million dollar drug smuggling ring. A compatriot in anti-Castro political actions of Howard Hunt's friend, Manuel Artime, Tabraue ran his operation out of a jewelry store in Miami, reporting on Cuban civic and political groups with connections to crime boss and hall of fame drug trafficker Santo Trafficante and his banking partner, Meyer Lansky. Through Tabraue's sub-agents in the construction, drug and gambling rackets, Bob Medell developed counter-intelligence information on how Manuel Noriega's security forces in Panama were investigating CIA agents in Panama and Colombia.

Another important BUNCIN agent reporting to Medell was CIA contract officer Grayston Lynch in Key West. A tough World War II veteran of Omaha Beach, Lynch joined the Special Forces in 1955 and the CIA in 1960. He was one of two Anglos to hit the beach during the Bay of Pigs invasion and thus was trusted by the exile Cubans. He had also served with BUNCIN chief Lucien Conein "all over" the world.

On behalf of the CIA, Lynch was already running agents from Miami into Latin America when Conein hired him into BUNCIN. Lynch's main job was to identify "suppliers at the other end," largely through contrabandista pilots. An experienced sailor, he also penetrated an exile Cuban smuggling ring belonging to Francisco Chanes Rodriguez (of Iran-Contra infamy), owner of the CIA front companies Ocean Hunter and Mr. Shrimp. Chanes' fisher men had contact with Cuba's fishing fleet and exchanged all sorts of information and items.

Yet another miscreant BUNCIN asset, Sixto "Tito" Mesa in Key Biscayne, was one of the most powerful drug smugglers in the anti-Castro, exile Cuban community. (Mesa was intimately connected to Rafael "Chi Chi" Quintero and Thomas Clines of Iran-Contra and Edwin Wilson infamy). According to Lynch, Tito offered him \$80,000 to hire Cuban mercenaries for President Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. Such was the double-dealing underworld in which the BUNCIN agents navigated.

Medell hired many agents from Manuel Artime's anti-Castro organization, which financed their operations throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, and Mexico largely through drug smuggling. Among them were the Villaverde brothers (who helped set up the terrorist organization CORU in Mexico a few years later), and Artime's three principle deputies – Felix Rodriguez, Chi Chi Quintero, and Ricardo Chavez.

Howard Hunt had been Artime's CIA case officer for years, and Artime's anti-Castro milieu had worked for Ted Shackley when he ran the CIA's Miami station in the mid-1960s. In 1973, as chief of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, Shackley appointed his trusted friend, Tom Clines, as chief of operations in the Caribbean. Clines had worked for Shackley in Miami and Laos (where he and Shackley advised General Vang Pao, the CIA's premier narcotics trafficker in the region), and knew every Cuban of importance in the exile community, including, as noted, Tito Mesa. BUNCIN assets worked closely with Clines.

Carlos Hernandez Rumbault was the last infamous BUNCIN agent I shall mention. A member, like Tabraue, of the Alvarez-Cruz drug smuggling network, Rumbault in 1969 inexplicably did a u-turn on the main drag in Mobile, Alabama, pulled into a gas station, parked beside a police cruiser, got out of the car and surrendered, saying, "You got me." He had hundreds of pounds of marijuana in his car. Rumbault was duly arrested and prosecuted, but had not been sentenced when he inexplicably "volunteered" to work for the BNDD during its monumental Operation Eagle, which netted some 120 plus drug smuggling anti-Castro Cubans – many of whom were exonerated and soon went to work for the BNDD. Tabraue generously posted his bail, and Rumbault went to work for the BNDD too. As a reward for making several cases, he was sent to Costa Rica as a double agent where he became second in command of the Costa Rican federal narcotics unit.

Rumbault worked closely with BNDD agent Arthur Sedillo in Costa Rica making heroin and cocaine cases.

Not coincidentally, around the time of Rumbault's arrival in Costa Rica, fugitives from American justice Robert Vesco and Santo Trafficante popped up in the country. Both were friends of Costa Rican President José Figueres, and Rumbault was soon spying on them for BUNCIN chief Lucien Conein. Criminals in Costa Rica had their own private armies, and Rumbault's tactics were brutal. Jerry Strickler, the Chief of the BNDD's Latin American Division, told me that Rumbault formed a vigilante squad with President Figueres' son and an assistant attorney general, and that together they wiped out rival narcotics gangs. Rumbault liked to use a machine gun.

The State Department wasn't happy about that, but bigger trouble was brewing. As Strickler recalled, "Costa Rica's president had an American wife and she had directed her son to become supportive of the BNDD." The BNDD wanted drug smuggler cum fugitive from American Justice Segundo Coronel de Torop, and the president's son grabbed him and agreed to bring him back. The president's son, accompanied by the head of the Costa Rican narcotic unit and Rumbault, flew Coronel to Miami.

Alas, Coronel was wanted on a Customs indictment and Customs Agent Al Seely was waiting at the Miami airport when they arrived. As Coronel stepped off the plane, BNDD Agent Pete Scrocca put a handcuff on one wrist and Seely cuffed the other. Strickler had to call US Attorney Tom Puccio in New York to get Seely to back off.

Meanwhile, the shock waves from this ridiculous bureaucratic showdown alerted an Alabama prosecutor to the fact that Rumbault was working for the BNDD and had been in the States. He immediately summoned Rumbault back for sentencing. But like every anti-Castro, exile Cuban agent in BUNCIN, Rumbault had a CIA "get out of jail free card." Complicating the matter, Guillermo Tabraue wanted back the \$20,000 he had posted for Rumbault's bond, and was threatening to have his professional hit men kill him unless he got it. Strickler asked his boss George Belk to pay Tabraue in order to protect Rumbault.

Belk objected at first, noting that Tabraue had purchased the services of several corrupt BNDD agents and cops in the Miami area. Strickler pressed the issue and Belk eventually relented. Federal officials convinced the governor of Alabama to make the prosecutor stop the extradition proceedings in the interests of national security. They also got the State Department to pull in its horns.

## **The Mississippi Riverboat Gambler**

According to Rich Kobakoff, BUNCIN was an experiment in how to finesse the law. The end product was intelligence, not seizures or arrests. But it was under-funded, and kept getting handed around, and no one had the time to properly manage it. Kobakoff might have added that BUNCIN was also subverted by a personality conflict between diminutive Latino Bob Medell, nick-named "El Anano" (the Evil Dwarf), by his detractors, and big blustery Anglo Bill Logay, a former college football player and Oakland cop whom Tully Acampora described as "the original Mississippi riverboat gambler."

Medell felt that institutional racism fueled his personnel problems with Logay, and ruined BUNCIN and, personally, his career. Medell complained that while CIA case officers appreciated his talents and were only concerned about results, Special Projects chief Phil Smith and BUNCIN overt agent Bill Logay put conformity to the "tough cop" ideology above everything else. Medell said that most BNDD managers were infected with this racist creed and were not respectful of peoples' rights. He said they behaved like "an American Gestapo." As an example he points to BNDD Agent Howard Safir, who at the time was Phil Smith's personal liaison to BUNCIN, and later achieved fame as police commissioner in New York City. Medell described as Phil Smith's "enforcer." Assigned to Special Projects, Safir, according to Medell, was "ruthless; callous; the worst; a man who would plant five pounds on someone just to get them to go to work."

When Logay appeared on the scene, Medell was already working with Lou Conein and Rich Kobakoff. Logay had been CIA Station Chief Ted Shackley's bodyguard for a year in Vietnam, and in 1970 returned to Saigon to work

under Tully Acampora as a CIA special police liaison officer in Precinct 5.

Acampora understood that Logay, the Mississippi Riverboat Gambler, should have been a conman or perhaps a cop, but not a CIA agent. So he made Logay his drug coordinator and introduced him to the BNDD Agent in Saigon, Fred Dick. Logay and Dick clicked and in June 1971, Dick suggested to Logay that he join the BNDD. Acampora agreed that it was a good idea and recommended Logay to Andy Tartaglino. Tartaglino despised Fred Dick and would not have accepted Logay on Fred Dick's word alone. But Acampora was a dear friend of Tartaglino's mentor, Charlie Siragusa, and had worked closely with Andy Tartaglino's other mentor Hank Manfredi for years in Rome on collateral CIA-FBN operations.

Based on Acampora's recommendation, Tartaglino sent the required paperwork to Saigon, where in January 1972 Logay was hired into the BNDD. Upon arriving in the States, he completed the mandatory twelve week basic training course. Tartaglino assigned him to Miami where he quickly struck up a friendship with Fred Dick's old partner from St. Louis, Regional Director Ben Theisen. Within a week Logay was tossing down shots with Theisen and a group of freewheeling BNDD agents. Theisen assigned Logay to the regional intelligence unit, and Logay started working undercover cases in Jamaica, Aruba, and the Bahamas.

In October 1972, Tartaglino summoned Logay to Washington and introduced him to BNDD Director John Ingersoll. By Logay's account, Ingersoll asked him to help establish a CIA-type operation directed at Cubans in South Florida. The goal was to get strategic intelligence, as well as to offset an OMB report that was highly critical of the BNDD's intelligence capabilities. Bob Medell was to be the covert agent, Logay the overt agent, and only Miami Regional Director Ben Theisen was to know what he was doing. Logay agreed.

After the meeting, Tartaglino told Logay that BNDD Chief Inspector Pat Fuller wanted to see him. Logay went to Fuller's office, and Fuller asked him to spy on Theisen and the freewheeling BNDD agents in Miami as part of the secret CIA Two-Fold inspections unit.

Logay was confounded and amazed. He had already bonded with Theisen, who was famous for consuming a fifth of Johnny Walker Red and a wholesome quart of milk as a chaser every evening. Logay retreated to Tartaglino's office and said he'd be glad to do the BUNCIN job, but refused to be a spy.

Tartaglino agreed and let Logay off the hook. But in a dramatic coincidence, Theisen was on the same flight that took Logay back to Miami. When Logay told him what Fuller had proposed, Theisen wept at the realization that people at headquarters were secretly plotting against him. Theisen immediately told his deputy Tom Hurney about Fuller's secret CIA inspection program, and about BUNCIN. Hurney's reaction was typical of the majority of BNDD agents: he could not understand why BUNCIN was needed or why BUNCIN agents were allowed to keep unregistered informants. "If you become corrupt in methodology," he said, "you become part of the problem."

Or, as Logay astutely observed, "We all committed felonies."

Bill Logay was assigned full time to the BUNCIN "overt" office on 36th Street in Miami. He reported to Tartaglino. Through Tartaglino's staff coordinator, some of his reports were sent to Jerry Strickler at the Latin American desk in enforcement. Medell dealt directly with Conein, and that caused communication problems with and for Logay.

As Rich Kobakoff explained, Medell knew nothing about the BNDD and Logay was vulgar and disparaging when telling him what to do, so "Medell got disenchanted."

Medell was sensitive about cultural issues, Logay was politically incorrect, and they clashed. Defending his actions, Logay claims that Medell was a CIA "shoofly" for Fuller and not qualified to run agent nets. It also hurt that Medell was Conein's golden boy, and that Rumbault passed Medell hot tips on Robert Vesco in Costa Rica. Worse, Medell did not follow Logay's orders or introduce him to important BUNCIN assets like Rumbault and Monkey Morales. Medell's excuse was that the Cubans didn't trust Logay. This forced Logay to report what Medell said, without being able to verify it.



Nevertheless, Logay eventually forged a relationship with senior BUNCIN asset Guillermo Tabraue, with whom he had lunch once a month. Tabraue always trying to do him little favors and Logay, having been tutored by Fred Dick, had a hard time resisting. On one occasion Tabraue presented a pair of expensive diamond earrings for Logay's wife, Loretta, a CIA officer. Logay brought them home and Loretta tried them on, but Logay gave them back. He told Tabraue, "I can't afford them."

Indeed, and America cannot afford the criminal CIA.

*Douglas Valentine is the author of two definitive books on the War on Drugs, [The Strength of the Wolf: The Secret History of America's War on Drugs](#) and [The Strength of the Pack: The Personalities, Politics and Espionage Intrigues that Shaped the DEA](#). He is also the author of [The Phoenix Program](#), one of the most critically-acclaimed books ever written about the CIA. This excerpt from Strength of the Pack is reprinted with permission.*

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*Persons interviewed and or cited for this article include:*

John Ingersoll, Andrew Tartaglino, Robert Medell, William Logay, Tom Tripodi, Rich Kobakoff, Grayston Lynch, Thomas Clines, Jerry Strickler, Tom Hurney, Tully Acampora.

*Endnotes:*

1. Special Agents William Logay and Robert Medell to Andrew Tartaglino, Deputy Director for Operations, "Project BUNCIN — Operational Plan," November 2, 1972, p. 2 (The Hill Collection).
2. Ibid.
3. Alan A Bock and John C McWilliams "On the Origins of American Counterintelligence: Building a Clandestine Network," Journal of Policy History, VI. 1, No. 4, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989, pp. 361-369.
4. "BUNCIN Summary" (The Hill Collection).
5. "Development of Covert Collection Techniques in Drug Law Enforcement, The Experimental Operation," p. 17 (The Hill Collection).
6. Project BUNCIN Proposed Budget for FY 1974 (The Hill Collection).
7. "BUNCIN Summary" (The Hill Collection).



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