

SPY QUOTES



“It’s part of a writer’s profession, as it’s part of a spy’s profession, to prey on the community to which he’s attached, to take away information - often in secret - and to translate that into intelligence for his masters, whether it’s his readership or his spy masters. And I think that both professions are perhaps rather lonely.” – **John Le Carré**

“Good tradecraft keeps espionage routine and boring.” - **Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius**

“Spy novels are traditionally about lone wolves, but how many people actually live like that?” – **Alan Furst**

“For a while you wondered whether the fools were pretending to be fools, as some kind of deception, or whether there was a real efficient secret service somewhere else. Later, in my fiction, I invented one. But, alas, the reality was the mediocrity. Ex-colonial policemen mingling with failed academics, failed lawyers, failed missionaries and failed débutantes gave our canteen the amorphous quality of an Old School outing on the Orient Express. Everyone there seemed to smell of failure.” – **John Le Carré** on his time in MI5 in the 1960s.

“‘Spy’ is such a short ugly word. I prefer ‘espionage’. Those extra three syllables really say something.” – **Howard Taylor**

“There will come a time when it isn’t, ‘They’re spying on me through my phone’. Eventually, it will be, ‘My phone is spying on me’.” – **Philip K Dick**

“Study after study has shown that human behaviour changes when we know we’re being watched. Under observation, we act less free, which means we effectively *are* less free.” – **Edward Snowden**

“In civilizations without ships, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure and the police take the place of corsairs.” – **Michel Foucault**

“Much of the work was pure drudgery. They [MI5] wanted intelligent people but the work is dull. It’s bloody boring wading through people’s phone taps. People talk about how the dog is getting on or that they bought some potatoes today.” – **An unnamed ex-MI5 officer, quoted in Hollingsworth and Fielding’s *Defending The Realm*.**

“Out of every ten scripts I get sent, seven are fairly generic about an American guy who gets the girl and is involved in underground espionage activity.” – **Jim Sturgess**



“It takes a very strong head to keep secrets for years and not go slightly mad. It isn’t wise to be advised by anyone slightly mad.” – **C.P. Snow**

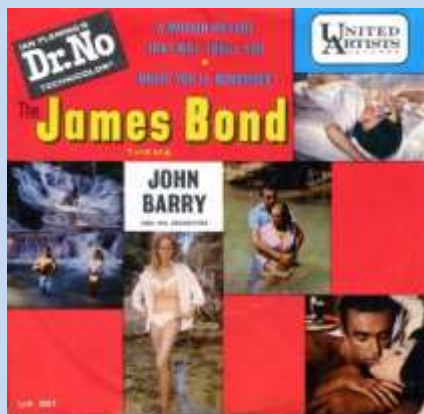
“When we’ve got these people who have practically limitless powers within a society, if they get a pass without so much as a slap on the wrist, what example does that set for the next group of officials that come into power? To push the lines a little bit further, a little bit further, a little bit further, and we’ll realize that we’re no longer citizens: we’re subjects.” – **Edward Snowden**

“When I was in Venice I thought that perhaps masked naked men, orgies and unlimited spying are an accompaniment of maritime powers in decline.” - **Nancy Mitford**

“And we did have fun. For five years we bugged and burgled our way across London at the State’s behest, while pompous bowler-hatted civil servants in Whitehall pretended to look the other way.” – **Peter Wright in *SpyCatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (1987)**

“This is the wonderful thing about espionage, nothing exists any more.” – **William Stephenson**

“Every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies.” – **Jane Austen**



“It is essential to seek out enemy agents who have come to conduct espionage against you and to bribe them to serve you. Give them instructions and care for them. Thus doubled agents are recruited and used.” – **Sun Tzu (6th Century BC)**

“Nothing that I write is authentic. It is the stuff of dreams, not reality. Yet I am treated by the media as though I wrote espionage handbooks.” - **John Le Carré**

“If a book cover has raised lettering, metallic lettering, or raised metallic lettering, then it is telling the reader: hello, I am an easy-to-read work on espionage, romance, a celebrity, and/or murder. To readers who do not care for such things, this lettering tells them: hello, I am crap.” – **Paul Collins**

“What do you think spies are: priests, saints and martyrs? They’re a squalid procession of vain fools, traitors too, yes; pansies, sadists and drunkards, people who play cowboys and Indians to brighten their rotten lives.” - **John Le Carré**

“The men of the FBI, with hardly an exception, were proud of their insularity, of having sprung from the grass roots. They were therefore whisky-drinkers, with beer for light refreshment. By contrast, CIA men flaunted cosmopolitan postures. They would discuss absinthe and serve Burgundy at room temperature.” – **Kim Philby**

Sources: BrainyQuote, Goodreads, ForbesQuotes, Hollingsworth and Fielding’s *Defending The Realm* (1999).