



# Steinbeck: Citizen Spy

*Brian Kannard*

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## **Steinbeck: Citizen Spy** Brian Kannard

This changes everything we thought we knew about John Steinbeck. After languishing in the CIA's archives for 60 years, a letter is uncovered in John Steinbeck's own hand that shatters everything history tells us about the author's life. Written in 1952, to CIA Director Walter Bedell Smith, Steinbeck makes an offer to become an asset for the Agency during a trip to Europe later that year. More shocking than Steinbeck's letter is Smith's reply accepting John's proposal. Discovered by author Brian Kannard, these letters create the tantalizing proposal that John Steinbeck was, in fact, a CIA spy. Utilizing information from Steinbeck's FBI file, John's own correspondence, and interviews with John's son Thomas Steinbeck, playwright Edward Albee, a former CIA intelligence officer, and others, *Steinbeck: Citizen Spy* uncovers the secret life of American cultural icon and Nobel Prize-winner, John Steinbeck. •Did Steinbeck actively gather information for the intelligence community during his 1947 and 1963 trips to the Soviet Union? •Why was the controversial author of *The Grapes of Wrath* never called before the House Select Committee on Un-American Activities, despite alleged ties to Communist organizations? •Did the CIA influence Steinbeck to produce Cold War propaganda as part of Operation MOCKINGBIRD? •Why did the CIA admit to the Church Committee in 1975 that Steinbeck was a subject of their illegal mail-opening program known as HTLINGUAL? These and a host of other resources leave little doubt that there are depths yet unplumbed in the life of one of America's most treasured authors. Just how heavily was Steinbeck involved in CIA operations? What did he know? And how much did he sacrifice for his country? *Steinbeck: Citizen Spy* brings us one step closer to the truth. This text includes a note in the introduction from Thomas Steinbeck.

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