

The Langley Files: CIA's Podcast
File 008
CIA's Analytic Chief on the Tradecraft Behind the Agency's Assessments

Host #1 – Dee

Host #2 – Walter

Guest #1 – DDA, Linda

(music begins)

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

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

Walter: These are their stories.

Walter and Dee: This is The Langley Files.

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Dee: In our previous episode's trivia, we asked you what the highly classified summary of intelligence the President receives every day is called. Well, in a break from the way we usually do things here on The Langley Files, we'll give you that answer now.

Walter: It's called the President's Daily Brief, or PDB. A compendium of some of the most sensitive information on the planet, compiled by the U.S. Intelligence Community to inform the President of critical developments around the world. And for years, one woman personally briefed the President of the United States on its contents, Linda Weissgold.

Dee: Linda joined CIA as an analyst not long after graduating college; rose through the Agency's ranks working some of the most demanding issues of the day, and eventually became PDB briefer to the President. Now she serves as Deputy Director of CIA for Analysis.

Walter: And she's here with us today to share her story, what makes a good CIA analyst, and why she doesn't expect AI to be doing that job anytime soon. I'm Walter.

Dee: And I'm Dee. Welcome back to The Langley Files.

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Walter: Thanks, everyone, for tuning in to another episode.

Dee: Walter and I are happy to have the opportunity to chat with one of the Agency's most senior leaders.

Walter: That's right. Linda Weissgold, the Deputy Director of CIA for Analysis is here with us today. So, Linda, you've had a long and illustrious career here at CIA, and we thought it might be fun to kick things off by asking you what was day one like for you here at the Agency? What do you remember about that day?

Linda: I remember that day quite vividly, in part because there were so many forms to fill out, and but yet that didn't dampen my enthusiasm. Um, I've often joked that, uh if you really want to have Hollywood tell about the real CIA, it's got to include some travel vouchers and tax forms and things. Um, but seriously, what I guess I remember most about that day, it was a whirlwind. When I started at CIA there were no podcasts, there was no Internet website that you could look at. So it was pretty much a leap of faith, um, to come here. So on that first day, they were really trying to explain CIA to us all. And they were giving us the forms to fill out, all of that. So it was a whirlwind. But what I remember the most was when I was asked to stand up and take the oath. And that is to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. At that very moment, when I took that oath, what I remember was that I was now starting a job that was going to mean a whole lot more to me than the job that I had left.

One other thing, I guess I've been asked a variation of this question at times, which is you know, what would I go back and tell first day me, and what I often say is turn around. Um, it turns out that my husband, now husband, um, entered on duty on the same day I did, and he swears that he saw me because he was sitting right behind me. Um, but I didn't see him. We didn't actually start dating until later. So I would tell first day me to turn around and and take a look.

Dee: That's an excellent tip. Love it.

Walter: Wow. Your paths were literally lining up.

Linda: Exactly.

Dee: That's amazing. Very cool.

Walter: So for listeners who might not be familiar with the way the Agency is structured, um, you oversee the entire Directorate of Analysis.

Dee: And so that means, in Linda's case, it means she oversees all of the analysts and is responsible for the quality of their work.

Walter: So tell us about the path from that first day to now being Deputy Director of CIA for Analysis.

Linda: You know, I didn't start out with the goal of being the DDA or the Deputy Director for Analysis. I'm not really one of those people who plans a career path. I know there are folks out there who have this five year or 10 year plans. That's not me. What I've done my, for my life, is I've taken an approach of trying to be good at the job I'm in, um, and open to opportunities when they present themselves. And so that's one of the first tips I always give our new officers is to be flexible, and opportunities will come your way here.

Many years ago, when I took my very first management job, I found out years later that the members of that team actually vote, took a vote, and said that they were confident that I would be running the Directorate someday. Um, I was really humbled when I heard that, partly because I remember apologizing a lot to them for all the mistakes a first-time manager makes. But it turns out that they were actually pretty good analysts. Um, so the coin of the realm at CIA, at least for the Directorate of Analysis, is expertise. So I spent time developing that expertise on the Middle East for the first 15 years of my career as either an analyst or a manager, and then, like so many others, 9-11 changed the course of my career, and I was asked to lead our analytic effort on Al Qa'ida's plans and intentions and then later to do cross-Directorate work on terrorism. And it was this work that really exposed me regularly to then DCI Tenet. And, um I think it was probably also why I was offered the opportunity to be President Bush's briefer. And then that

exposure to how policymakers use intelligence was one of the best learning opportunities that I had, and that really helped prepare me for my job I'm in today. So it was a little bit of a circuitous path, um, but it was one that really, I think, was based on expertise and getting good at each job that I was in as I was doing it.

Walter: I think that's an important point, just very quickly, because the movies make everything about covert action. And obviously that's something that CIA has the authority to do with and as directed by the President. But the bread and butter of the work here is really supporting decisionmakers, gathering information, analyzing it, and presenting it. And so you're saying that your time with those decision-makers really helped make you a better analyst?

Linda: Absolutely. When you see how intelligence is used by a policymaker you are much better at both doing it and reviewing it. So you know how important it is to be clear in your judgments, the timing of the information. Nothing is worse than having the President of United States look at you and say something like, "So did you not agree with the decision I made? Or did you not know I've already made the decision?" So again, there are a lot of things that I learned from being a Presidential briefer that made me, I think, much more prepared to help teach that to others.

Dee: I'm so I'm glad you brought up being a briefer. I know that in general, a lot of folks understand the concept of what the President's Daily Brief is, but the briefers themselves. Can you maybe, from your experience, kind of tell us what a day in the life of a PDB briefer actually is? Like, what time do they get up in the morning? What time do they get home? What's that work-life balance? Was there one?

Linda: Poor. Look, being President George W. Bush's briefer was one of the hardest and the most rewarding jobs that I've had at the Agency. But no two Presidents are alike in how they want their intelligence information delivered or how they process information. The briefer's job isn't to become the expert. It's to represent the expertise of the analysts. But it's also to be able to answer that first line of questions to anticipate the the maybe the second round of questions as well, so that the President can have faith in what he is reading or what he's being told. Also, you need to understand what's on the President's calendar. You need to take the pulse of where policy conversations are so that you can really be the most helpful in that discussion. But I really think it's about, most importantly, we need to be able to inform those discussions, and note I say inform and not influence, and that's a really important point. So when you ask what, um, the average day was like, so I would usually get up at about 12:01 in the morning. I used to like to do that because it was a whole lot easier to say I had gotten up Tuesday morning, than any the night before.

Walter: Makes a difference.

Linda: Um, and then, um, I would do what was the equivalent I think of, like cramming for finals every day. You're really trying to, as I said, understand the articles that the analysts have prepared, making sure you can answer those questions. I would go and brief wherever the President was six days a week. We were there first thing in the morning to brief him, and I would brief. I would then come back with taskings and feedback. You know, I never found a way to do this personally in less than 12 to 14 hours a day. Then I would go and I'd pick up our son from elementary school and I would take him to activities, and then I'd go to bed around six or seven. Wash, rinse, repeat. Um, I am convinced that the other mothers at Taekwondo probably thought I had a drinking problem or something, cause you learned to sleep wherever you are when you're really that tired. So I would be in the corner at Taekwondo sound asleep with, like, 25 kids yelling "hi ya" right at the top of their lungs. Um, but it was, as I said, one of the best experiences I had.

Dee: So how long, if you don't mind me asking, how long is a normal assignment, like how long did you do that for?

Linda: So I was told when I first took the job that it was going to be for a year. I ended up doing it for over two years because during that time there was the transition from CIA owning the PDB process to the creation of the DNI, to then the DNI starting to come to the PDB briefings, and myself and my partner in briefing we were the continuity. Um, so I ended up doing it for over two years.

Dee: Wow, that's a long time.

Walter: And you said wherever the President went, you delivered the briefings. That means you traveled with the President during that time.

Linda: We did, we traveled with him both domestically and overseas. I just recently saw him. Uh, I did a presentation at the Bush Center and we were reminiscing a little bit about this. And I remember I did one session with him. I traveled with him to China, and I was very excited because I was going to get a little bit of time off to go actually see the Great Wall. And so I go in and I give my briefing to him in the morning and he looks at me and says, "what are you gonna do today?" And I said, "Well, sir, I'm going to go see the Great Wall." He kind of looked at me and said, "We're just gonna let you wander around? You know all kinds of things," I think to myself inside voice, "no, I am going to see the Great Wall today." And in the end, it all worked out fine.

Dee: And you saw the Great Wall?

Linda: I saw the Great Wall.

Dee: Ok. Just making sure.

Linda: As we were, as I was waiting for the van to go, he drove by in his limo and he the window rolled down and he looked at all the people I was sitting with or standing there with, and he said something to the effect of "Don't let her get into trouble" and drove off.

Dee: Excellent.

Walter: So if I could also ask, what is it like, you know being PDB briefer, you have to deliver all sorts of updates. What is it like delivering bad news to the most powerful person on the planet?

Linda: So that's what the DA is created for, not just to deliver bad news, but to deliver the news that we think people need to hear, and to do it objectively. So it's never easy to tell any policymaker that whether it be, you know, a policy that they've created isn't working or news they don't want to hear. So it's why it's so important for us to be able to explain why we think what we think. That is when I've been asked what is the basis of DA tradecraft? That's it. You have to be able to explain why you think what you think and be ready for pushback. I've always said that what we say shouldn't just be taken as an article of faith. We should be ready when someone pushes back to be able to explain it. Um, so it's not easy. I've had some very difficult conversations over the years whether it be with the President or Congress or others, but, that to me is a form of analytic courage that we all need to have here in the DA, um and be ready for it.

Dee: I know we're throwing out a lot of acronyms right here. So let's just pause a second. So DA is the Directorate of Analysis, and you had mentioned before the DNI, which is the Director of National Intelligence as well. So you talked a little bit about being a briefer, and then you just kind of explained the overall insights of what the DA is meant to do. Can you maybe give some insights into the daily life of an

analyst outside that of a briefer? Um, what that work really entails. Talk a little bit about their everyday life in that role.

Linda: Sure. Um, you know one of the things that I loved about being an analyst was that there really is no day that is the same. You never know what the day is going to bring. You might have a plan, but world events have a different plan. So intelligence analysis is sometimes likened to trying to do a puzzle with a bunch of the pieces missing, pieces from another puzzle thrown in, you don't have a picture on the box of what it's supposed to look like, and you're supposed to try and figure out what the picture is at the end. But what I like to say about analysis is that it really is about creating new insight. And that's what our analysts do every day. You might cover an individual country or a topic like, say, emerging technology. But as an analyst, you need to go past what is happening to explain why it's happening. And what are the implications of that. Um, bluntly put, everyday analysts at CIA makes sense of the world for, as you said, some of the most powerful and important people in it. I mentioned earlier that we inform, we don't influence. I think it's really important to tell people if they're interested in making policy, that CIA isn't the place for them to be. When CIA was created back in 1947, President Truman, he wanted an organization that would give him unbiased intelligence about the world. And that's why analysis has been one of the core missions of CIA since the very beginning. And when you look at the world beyond our borders today, I think it's pretty easy to see that the Directorate of Analysis is still very needed. Every situation abroad is different. There's a cultural context that needs to be put behind each and every one of them, and our mission requires deep knowledge of the world. So that's what we need in our analysts.

I mentioned earlier also being objective. That's a hard balance to strike. We all have views about how our country should act. But as analysts at CIA, it's your analytic judgments have to always reflect your best, uh, the best information and the strongest tradecraft, not your personal opinion. So analysts need to be able to talk about what they know, what they think they know, what they don't know. The way we do that, it's a team sport. Regular day, you're going to be interacting. You're not just sitting at your desk, by yourself writing a piece, you know, an analytic paper. You are interacting with your colleagues. You're interacting with the collectors of that information. You're trying to test your arguments. We're having very strident debates. Uh, and you know, we're really trying to make sure that we can get to the crux of a position, and why we think what we think. And so a lot of that is, um, being up for pushing your analysis, being up for talking to people. You can't just have a lone wolf. We hire people who are comfortable engaging with our liaison partners, engaging with policymakers. And so it's, you need to be more than just a good writer. You need to be a good team player.

Walter: When you talked earlier about the role CIA analysts play in providing insights in in a day and age in which there's so much information out there, and our policymakers and decision-makers have access to so many different sources of information, what do you see as the niche, the the unique value add that CIA analysis brings to the table.

Linda: So, as I said, I don't think that CIA should try and compete with the think tanks or with the cable news networks, as important as they are. I think what we provide is knowing that we have that tailored access to our customers, to their calendar to their time, to their thinking, their goals, and that tells us what they need to know when they need to know it. Um, we also have access to very sensitive information that is often acquired at great risk and cost. And honestly, we have access to CIA's reputation. That's what gets us the chance to be heard. All of that is very different than the cable news network or the think tank. And so, as I said, I don't think we're trying to compete. We fill a very different place in a policymaker's day. But we also have to be very cognizant of the fact that we are not their only source of information. We should never be upset when they ask us about something based on what they heard from the cable news or the think tank, or frankly from another individual that they met themselves. Uh, you know, they

talked to a world leader, and so when they want to say to us something along the lines of - but that's not what that leader told me. Then we need to be able to come back and explain - yes, he may have told you that, but here's why that probably wasn't true.

Dee: So I do want to ask this question. On one of our previous episodes, we had a guest that was talking about the evolution of CIA over the 75 years and how the tagline of CIA being “pale, male, and Yale” has changed over time. So from your perspective, how has being a woman at CIA changed from when you started in terms of your career progression, and now you being a top leader yourself?

Linda: Our Agency and American intelligence itself has always benefited from the skill and dedication of women officers. We actually have an exhibit here in our building devoted to CIA's World War II predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services. In that exhibit, you're going to find a small sample of the stories about female OSS veterans who were active in everything from analysis, to psyops, to agent operations, and personnel vetting. And you may be surprised because I know I was that to find out that nearly a third of the 13,000 who were serving in OSS were women. Now I was fortunate myself to have many women serve as role models during my time here at the Agency. But I'll also say that we reflect American culture, and when I first started, it was rare for a woman to rise to the senior ranks and have a family. But things change, and I'm very proud to have been in my position at a time a few years ago when all five of our Directorates were run by women. Today in the DA, we have gender parity at all ranks from the most junior grades through the most senior, and the fact that I'm the fourth woman to lead the Directorate, that that's neither pioneering nor groundbreaking, that's a sign of progress, and I think, actually a point of pride.

Walter: There's actually a time in my own career when all of my managers up to the CIA Director, or up until the CIA Director, were women officers.

Linda: There was a great picture that was taken where Gina Haspel was leaving, and not only were all five Directorates run by women, but, um, some of our most senior parts of the organization - our Chief Financial Officer, our General Counsel, the head of our Diversity and Inclusion Office, the, I could go on and we actually took a picture. And I remember at the time for a while I didn't want to talk about it because I didn't want to be remembered as a good female leader, I just wanted to be remembered as a good leader. And one day, several of us, um, the Directorate heads, we sent out a message to the workforce on something, and it was kind of an innocuous message. But we all signed it, and we started getting notes from female officers who were quite taken aback because they hadn't really focused on it. And they were saying things like, I never thought I'd see the day when, um, all the Directorates would be run by women. And so I changed my mind, and I realized that we probably should start talking about it more. But we started talking about it in the context of how things had changed and how far we had come. And what I realized was that many of our newer officers, they didn't want to talk about that. What they wanted to talk about was how far we still had to go. And so again, I kind of changed my narrative once more to focus on that, to talk about that there are still places that we need to improve. This is the month of Women's History's Month, and I think that it's something that is important for us to continue to focus on, that there's always room for improvement. Like I said, we're a continuous learning organization, so we should continue to improve there too.

Dee: Absolutely.

Walter: Could you tell us about a time when you did face pushback?

Linda: So let me link that back to that last question. So many years ago, I did an assignment overseas, and my boss made it very clear on my first day when I got there that he wasn't happy at all that

headquarters had sent a young woman to do this job. He frankly didn't think that our foreign partners would be supportive of a young woman working with them. I learned a whole lot from that experience. First and foremost, what I learned was that there were many quarters of the Agency that did support me being there, and that was including both senior managers and colleagues, and knowing that I had their support made it much easier for me to work through the issue to have the courage to work through the issue. The second thing that I learned was that at CIA, as I'm sure in many other places, a shared sense of mission goes a long way. It's a very powerful tool, and I used the Agency's culture of mission achievement to win my boss over. I was very up front with him, and I told him that I was sure that he wanted our mission to succeed as much as I did. So I flat out told him, look, I just need two things from you. I need you to give me a chance to show that I could do the job, and I needed his support to make sure that our partners didn't think they could go around me. In the end, it all worked out. He actually became one of my biggest supporters. Things worked fine. I think he might have been underestimating our liaison partners. They were all good with it. But as I said, I took away from that the need for to make sure that people understand that they have support, that one individual doesn't define an organizational culture. Uh, and so again, I try and pass that along to others as well and make sure that I, I pass along, pass forward, if you will, that support whenever I can.

Walter: Thank you for sharing that.

Dee: I was going to say that's great coming from the top down - to have that kind of voice echoing those sentiments. So let's shift just a bit to current national security landscape. You must have seen a lot of changes in Russia throughout your time as an analyst. But can you tell us a little bit about the role CIA played in warning of Putin's invasion of Ukraine? And how analysis contributed to that?

Linda: So CIA was not surprised when Putin invaded Ukraine. As our Director has publicly said, we are all extremely proud of the work that our officers did prior to the invasion to provide our policymakers and our allies warning. Our ability to provide this kind of analysis, I personally believe was fueled by the deep expertise that our analysts have on Russia. We have officers who have literally been working it for decades as an account, and we're fortunate to have this level of expertise in multiple other areas as well. One of the amazing things I think about at CIA is that when folks come here, they usually stay. You get hooked on the mission. That's what happened to me. I didn't think I was going to be here for 37 years. But you don't have to stay working on the same account. You can if you want to for your career. Um, but you also don't have to become a manager in order to rise through the ranks. Roughly I guess, about 20 years ago now, we created the Senior Analytic Service, and what it did was it allowed our officers to remain analysts and to continually develop that expertise on topics like Russia, and as I said, move up through the ranks without any need to go into management. I think that's probably one of the most impactful changes that has occurred in my tenure here at CIA. So that's why I think we actually made the call on Russia. In addition to, there was a lot of really exquisite collection. The expertise behind that, to interpret that, and know what it meant was something that we should be very proud of.

Walter: Well, could you describe a moment in your career where you thought to yourself - wow, I'm so lucky to be here. And then maybe conversely, a moment where you looked up and thought - oh, my God, how did I get here?

Linda: Does today count?

Walter: Wait, for which?

Linda: For being just here. Seriously, I never thought that there'd be a day that I would be sitting and doing a podcast at CIA. And I do think I'm incredibly lucky to be here. And I think I mentioned earlier, I

never thought that I would have the privilege to lead the Directorate of Analysis, and I do consider it a privilege. There are many days, though, when CIA has had successes that the world doesn't know about. They are successes that make us all safer. So I think if you're asking me about the days when I feel incredibly lucky to be here, those are the days that I relish the most, the ones that we celebrate together, but but privately. Um, on the other side of that ledger, uh, I know far too many officers who are on our Memorial Wall. Um, there are 139 stars on that wall today, representing officers from multiple Directorates who made the ultimate sacrifice. And that includes analysts. I personally believe that the best way that we can honor those sacrifices is to do exactly what, Walter your question asked, which is to examine how did this happen and to live up to that ethos of continuous learning, to do the best to minimize the possibility of something like that happening ever again. So there's been lots of highs, and there's been lots of lows, and I would like to prefer that we focus on the highs, but never forget those lows.

Walter: Well put.

Dee: Just following up on our last episode. In case you didn't know, we actually had the Chief Technology Officer on the last episode, and we were chatting with him about current trends in technology. Um, how those trends are impacting not only private sector but also governmental functions. Out of curiosity, and you can share with us, uh, is ChatGPT or AI going to be taking over the world? And if so, are they gonna be taking away some jobs from CIA?

Linda: So it's a funny story. I did a previous public speaking engagement, and I was asked a very similar question. So the next day I'm driving to work, and I heard my voice on the radio saying that I didn't envision chatbots taking over analysts' jobs anytime soon. Now I almost drove off the road when I heard that because I'm not used to being a public figure, I'm not used to hearing my voice on the radio, and also, I also thought I had said more insightful things than that in the interview, and that's what they chose to focus on, but ok.

Dee: It's the hot topic.

Linda: Um, AI can do amazing things. Absolutely. And we already use it here at CIA to help analysts stay on top of an ever expanding amount of data. So don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that it's not something that we are using and want to use more. But one of the most valuable and difficult aspects of our work is being able, as I said earlier, to explain why we think what we think. I often say that this is the aspect of our tradecraft that is ultimately what separates CIA analysis from say, pundits on TV. You can't do that, right now at least, with something like a chatbot. You know when I was President Bush's briefer, he used to routinely ask why if everyone in the intelligence community was seeing the same information, did we reach different conclusions? And the answer, the answer usually came back to that there were different levels of emphasis that analysts in different organizations were placing on sources of information or historic precedent. That kind of rigorous, transparent examination of a thought process isn't something that a chatbot's going to do. And I really don't see us using and presenting information to the President if I can't explain that. What we do is far too important, and if I have to say to him at some point, well, the black box just told me so, I don't think he should accept that. So until we can understand the proprietary algorithms that go into, um, chatbots. Until we can understand totally what information it is scraping in order to get to some sort of analysis, there's a lot that's going to go into that before I think we're going to be ready to even use that as a basis for our analysis.

That being said, I do think that AI can save analysts time. It can help them stay on top of data. It can, uh, maybe even be the starting point for brainstorming. Already we use AI to do things like, I call it kind of the Amazon effect. Um, as I said there's a lot of data that officers have to go through, and it's a little bit

like - so you've been looking at this research over here. You've been watching, you've been looking at these purses. Would you like these shoes? They might go with them. Same thing, you've been reading this material, perhaps you'd like to see this data over here is one thing that we are already are using AI for as well as many other techniques. But it's not going to take over the world or take away our jobs anytime soon.

Walter: So you're saying, uh, at CIA, for the foreseeable future, it'll be very much human in the loop from here on out.

Linda: Absolutely. There's, I think, there's going to have to be a human in the loop. I also think that part of our job, as I said, that new insight, some of that comes from creativity, and you have to spark that creativity, and I think it's gonna be a long time before AI gets to a point where it's going to be able to do the kind of unexpected.

Walter: So if people are very much still needed here at CIA, who should consider a job as a CIA analyst, and what do they need to know going into that interview?

Linda: We accomplish our mission as analysts through the skilled use of what I call analytic tradecraft, and a lot of that touches on standards - how to think critically, how to weigh raw information that's often contradictory and almost always incomplete, how to assemble and test arguments, and how to use words and visuals in a concise, clear, and compelling way. But if what you're asking me, Walter, is kind of for a secret that I can share, I'm going to give you two.

Walter: Oh wow.

Linda: Okay, so beyond the skills, um, in tradecraft, there's also values that are equally important to being a good analyst. I think I already spoke about some of those - commitment to objectivity, the need for humility, being a team player that's open to the perspective of others, and in fact, probably the most important question that we have to ask ourselves every day is how might I be wrong? Um, so you have to have those values and talk about those when you're going to apply, if you're going to apply to CIA. The second thing I would say is that if you're thinking about applying to CIA - it's okay to talk about patriotism. It's gonna resonate with the person doing your interview because that's probably what brought that officer to CIA as well. And our recruiters are employees who are taking a rotation, uh, to spend time bringing in the next generation. It's a really important job. But they may be thinking a little bit about do I want you sitting in the cubicle next to me? So again, not being afraid to sound a little corny, talk about the patriotism, and really make us know why you want to come work here.

Dee: All fair points. Good tips too. So I need to know if you could do any other job here at the Agency that you have yet to try. What would it be?

Linda: Um, I can't say that I haven't occasionally had the day dream of being DCIA for a day, maybe, and making a few changes to our work processes. Um, but ultimately, look, I've loved my career here at CIA, and I don't have any bucket list items remaining. Um, I feel very fortunate about that.

Walter: Well, when you ultimately retire Linda and and walk out over the seal, through the lobby one last time, what do you hope your legacy here will be?

Linda: I can say I think with with real confidence, um, that I've helped to keep my family and our country safer during my tenure at CIA. And that is really an amazing feeling that I hope some of our listeners will someday get the chance to have. But ultimately, I think, and I hope that my legacy is going to be the people that I've worked with and hopefully influenced positively along the way. The 37 years

has been a good long run. As I said, when I first came here, I didn't think I'd stay that long. But when I step aside, probably in the not too distant future, I'm extremely confident that CIA is going to be in good hands going forward because I look around and the next generation of officers are incredibly talented, and I just hope that in some way I've helped influence their path.

Dee: Well, that was great, and Walter and I are very appreciative for you taking the time to come on the show, talk to us here on The Langley Files. Wealth of information, great expertise. We appreciate your time. Thank you so much.

Linda: It's been a real pleasure. Thank you.

Walter: Thanks Linda.

Walter: Wow, 12:01 AM every morning.

Dee: Every morning, and she did it for two whole years.

Walter: Yeah, plenty of people at the Agency do an overnight from time to time, or even a night shift for a stretch, but two years.

Dee: Two years. So how about we do some trivia?

Walter: Let's do it. So as a refresher, we posed a two-part question in the last episode. The first part was this product, first established in 1961 in response to President Kennedy's request for a summary of the day's important intelligence matters, was initially known by an acronym that had a very unique pronunciation. As the deliverable evolved under President Johnson, it eventually was renamed to a more recognizable title and acronym, which is still used today. So the questions were, what's the original acronym and its pronunciation? And what's the current day name and its pronunciation?

Dee: So we already provided you the one answer. The current day name for this daily summary is indeed the President's Daily Brief, otherwise known as the PDB. And Linda did speak to this. But just for your reference, the PDB contains intelligence analysis on national security issues and is briefed only to the President, the Vice President and a select group of officials whom the President designates to receive the briefing.

Walter: And for those who are really well versed in presidential or national intelligence history, you may know that the original name for this brief was the President's Intelligence Checklist or the PICL.

Dee: I do love the name PICL.

Walter: I wish they'd stuck with PICL, although I guess PDB better captures it.

Dee: I think it does.

Walter: So now to today's trivia question.

(music)

Dee: So this question comes to us from our friends over at World Factbook. This European country is known for rugged hills and low mountain terrains, where more than 40% of its population resides within 100 kilometers of its capital city, and it is strategically located on major air and sea routes between North America and Europe. What country are we describing?

Walter: Should have asked Linda this.

Dee: Should have.

Walter: The answer will be revealed in the next episode. Or folks can head over to the World Factbook on CIA.gov and try to find it right now.

Dee: And that's it for this episode of The Langley Files. Until next time...

Walter: We'll be seeing you.

(music starts)

Dee: So so the folks that work overnight ... what keeps their adrenaline going?

Walter: Mission man ... and vending machines.

Dee: (chuckles)

(music ends)