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Subject: Jazz salads in Cafeteria  
Feedback: Hi - I've sent comments about the jazz salads being misadvertised before, but yesterday takes the cake. The Jazz Salad was supposed to be a Sonoma Grape and Proscuitto salad. This was advertised on the on-line menu, and on the sign above the salad (sometimes they are different). This is one of my favorites, so I stand in line and notice there are no grapes. Grapes are in the title of the salad. I asked about them, and the server pointed to the cherry tomatos, said they were red grapes. I said, "no, those are tomatos, sooooo should I just get grapes from the salad bar". She didn't really give an opinion - but I did get grapes from the salad bar, and I did tell the cashier about it (she asked me to write a note - I hope you got the note). I do not condone putting salad bar items into a Jazz salad (I have been known to get a separate container for salad bar items to add to my jazz salad) but felt justified in this case.

However, when an item is in the title of the Jazz Salad, please make an effort to include this item in the actual salad. Thank you.

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## Spies Like Us: Why and How We Should Demystify American Intelligence

Matthew F. Ferraro

ON OCTOBER 21 | IN INTELLIGENCE REFORM

In response to a Freedom of Information Act request, this summer the CIA released private emails between agents and agency higher-ups about an important internal matter. The emails did not concern potential counterintelligence threats, metadata collection, or terror plots but something far more universal: complaints about the CIA's [cafeteria food](#). One [email](#) complained that there were not enough grapes in the mysteriously named "Jazz Salad," another opined that the sandwich bread was too hard, and a third griped that Langley's Burger King franchise did not carry the Dollar Menu. Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*

dubbed its satirical news story about the emails “[Zero Dark Foodie](#).”

And so it has come to this. In the era of the Wikileaks document dump and the Snowden breach, aggressive reporting and permissive information access laws, America’s once ultra-secretive intelligence apparatus has come into the light. While employee emails about stale cafeteria food are mundane, their disclosure is emblematic of a larger effort to make the national security bureaucracy more accessible to the public.

If done correctly, this kind of openness can be beneficial to the country and to intelligence gathering. First, since they operate within a democracy, the agencies need to be seen as legitimate to maintain public trust. That trust is crucial for the agencies to recruit top talent and maintain Congressional support, which has [flagged](#) since the Snowden disclosures. Second, in an age characterized not by privacy but by transparency—by the profusion of social media, embedded reporting, and near-universal information access through the Internet—the public has come to expect near-total openness from all of its public institutions. Everything, from [blog posts](#) by soldiers in the field to behind-the-scenes [videos](#) of the White House, is expected to be in the public sphere. But, third, intelligence services—by their very nature—cannot operate with total transparency without jeopardizing the secrets upon which our national security depends.

Successfully navigating these tensions, between the openness the public demands and the secrecy needed for successful espionage, is one of the central contemporary challenges of American intelligence.

Recent moves by the intelligence agencies, even the cafeteria email disclosures, are efforts to find a middle path between openness and secrecy. As they chart this difficult course, I believe they should be guided by three principles.

First they should seek to humanize themselves. The intelligence agencies suffer from reputations as large, hulking, and faceless institutions. They must show that they are made up not of imposing black boxes but of individual Americans who labor in the service of their country and who cherish the same freedoms and rights as everyone. In recent months, the CIA has helped to do that by, among other things, joining Twitter. With nearly three-quarters of a million followers, [@CIA](#) posts self-aware, often irreverent messages, and its cheeky [first posting](#) (“We can neither confirm nor deny that this is our first tweet”) was re-tweeted some [300,000 times](#).

The intelligence agencies should not stop with Twitter. They should take a page from the military, [the institution in which the public has the most confidence](#), and expand their public engagement, lowering the walls between their officers and the public. Small yet meaningful reforms should include liberalizing the pre-publication review processes to which all former and current intelligence officers must adhere before publishing work on their field, so that more former (and even current) officers can take part in public discourse. The agencies could also encourage broader participation by officers in [academic conferences](#) and allow more [media interviews](#).

Second, the agencies should do more to familiarize the public with their methods. “Intelligence does not work as it is portrayed in films—a single agent does not make a startling discovery that

leads to dramatic, last-minute success," a group of former intelligence officials wrote in [May 2014](#). "Success is the product of the efforts of teams of dedicated individuals from many agencies, using many tools and techniques, and working together to assemble fragments of data from many sources into a coherent picture." A more realistic public understanding of how intelligence officers piece together bits of intelligence to form a mosaic understanding of threats could lead to greater acceptance of the programs that have come under particular scrutiny after the Snowden leaks.

To that end, the intelligence agencies should launch a robust public education effort explaining where the James Bond version of intelligence gathering falls short. Among other actions, the agencies should increase their outreach to universities and help develop curricula for intelligence classes. Another simple yet meaningful step would be for the CIA or NSA to develop a [TED Talk](#) or online video to describe the intelligence process, illustrating how it functions with the same kind of visual acuity as videos from the [Khan Academy](#) website that demystify abstruse academic concepts.

Third and finally, the agencies should openly recognize error. The public is more likely to forgive mistakes when the agencies admit them forthrightly. The revelation that CIA officers improperly accessed Senate Intelligence Committee computers involved in an investigation of Bush-era programs provides a case-in-point. It was an [internal agency inquiry](#), which CIA Director John Brennan initiated and made public, that found that five CIA employees searched Senate Intelligence Committee files. Brennan apologized to Congress and appointed a former Senator to lead an internal

personnel board to mete out punishments to the offending agents—a serious disciplinary action. While Brennan’s apology and the internal review did not please all Senators, Committee Chairwoman Senator Dianne Feinstein called it a “positive step.”

With an unprecedentedly open intelligence bureaucracy, the public is increasingly aware of what the agencies are doing—including serving evidently substandard cafeteria food. More than ever, the public can question or check those activities with which it [disagrees](#). And a citizenry well-informed of the realities of intelligence work will be able to serve that role all the better.

*Matthew F. Ferraro (@MatthewFFerraro) is an attorney and former intelligence officer. He has held staff, policy, and operational positions with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the CIA. The views expressed here are his own.*

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