

Cloak and Dagger



Nowadays, a spy can easily dispose of a secret message he's received just by pressing the Erase button on his telephone answering machine or, in the case of email, the Delete key on his computer. But in the olden days – i.e., the 1960s and 1970s – covert communications were often entrusted to vinyl records. And they didn't burn, they wouldn't fit in a garbage disposal, and most creditable spook organizations considered burying them in rabbit warrens a security risk. What to do? As Agent X29V-B (a.k.a. "Bob") here demonstrates, your only recourse was to eat them. This could be rough on agents who hadn't had their digestive tracts upgraded to an armor plating (chitinoplasty). The vinyl often broke into sharp little spears, and more than one member of the counterintelligentsia wound up in the emergency room with a hemorrhaging esophagus, putting a new spin on the term "cloak and dagger." So for now, the modern spy is safe. For his sake, let's hope that the impending experiment consigning surreptitious information to a DVD is a complete and utter failure.