

To Our Readers: The story of William C. Wood -- who was assigned a CIA code name at one time and called "Bill Boxley" by Jim Garrison -- is at least as intriguing as his 19-month employment as Garrison's JFK investigator.

Wood had been running Mafia characters into jail as a reporter for the Denver Post -- just by exposing them and cooperating with authorities -- when he was first approached by the Central Intelligence Agency to become a "spook."

After playing James Bond to secure the job, Wood was made an operations officer, assigned to train CIA agents to infiltrate foreign powers and perform certain programs. The more than two years he worked for the CIA are a dark period in his life, one that he is careful in making reference to "because many of those operations are still underway."

Wood described his job as teaching classes in what an upstanding citizen wouldn't want to know. For example, he taught foreign agents one course in "defense against police investigations." In a nutshell, that bit of educational uplift informed the spook students how to pull off a job and leave no traces for police to begin investigating.

MANY OF THE revelations concerning the CIA that have surfaced in recent months are what Wood lived with for those more than two years in the early 1950s.

At one of his foreign training locations, for example, Wood's chief interpreter fell ill.

The head of Wood's station called a meeting of the operations officers to discuss what should be done with the interpreter. It was the station chief's idea that the poor man should be told he was going to a hospital and then disposed of -- i.e., thrown out of an airplane.

The other operations officers tend-

ed to agree with the station chief. Wood didn't.

"You're not going to murder _____," Wood told his fellow officers. "Not while I'm here. I'll blow the whistle on you if you try it!"

Soon after Wood was shipped back to the states, never to learn what happened to his interpreter.

He was assigned to train case officers at the old CIA center near the Lincoln Memorial.

Arriving in Washington, Wood began to drink. All of his drinking, he said, took place in a bar called the "Keyhole Cafe," a hang out for CIA agents and other intelligence officers.

SOMETIME DURING December of 1952, after a day's work in a secured building, Wood was walking along the reflecting pool leading up to the Lincoln Memorial. He doesn't recall what happened; all he knows is that suddenly two men were at his side. His clothes were covered with blood, and the two men told Wood that he had fallen on his face. He had bitten a hole through his tongue.

Wood needed a rest. He took a leave and returned to his family in Texas, whereupon he came down with pneumonia. His leave was extended and by the time he had returned to Washington, the CIA built a new training center in Virginia. The center was code named "isolation," although the men dubbed it "Desolation," primarily because it was so remote to civilization.

Wood balked at making the move. One morning in January of 1953 he was to travel with another officer to "isolation," but he remained in bed, more than a bit hung over.

While asleep, several CIA supervisory personnel came into his room, trying to find out what troubled him. One was a doctor -- a shrink.

As the shrink examined him, Wood apologized for his condition. "It's not your fault -- it's ours," the doctor responded.

From then on Wood experienced a series of blackouts, "something like a temporary but strange state of unconsciousness," he recalled.

"I thought it was my drinking," he said. "But I don't know now. Doctors could find nothing wrong with me. And believe me -- I've got evidence that I sought medical help."

It was about this time that the CIA began to experiment on its personnel with LSD.

His blackouts led him from one problem to another. Finally, a security officer whom Wood believes was James McCord of Watergate fame came to his assistance and Wood off-handedly suggested: "For two cents, I'd get out of this mess."

MCCORD -- OR WHOEVER he was -- jumped at the remark, and in less than a week -- "one of the fastest processes I've ever seen" -- Wood was once again a citizen.

The night before he was scheduled to make his permanent parting with the CIA, Wood went to his hotel room and ordered a bottle of whiskey. Wood drank from the bottle and left it on his dresser. He then laid down in bed, only to observe, by and by, a thin shaft of light strike the wall opposite his door. He turned and watched as a hand reached in the door, took the bottle and then moments later replaced it. What, if anything, was slipped into the bottle Wood doesn't know. He has no proof that he was drugged with LSD or any other chemical, and he has no regret about having served in the CIA. But he does recall not having touched that bottle again -- and getting out of town as fast as he could.

About the CIA, Wood says, "They were good to me," only moments later detailing how the agency could have stuck him in a mental hospital to rot for the rest of his life.

As for his drinking, Wood proudly points out that by the time he came to the Garrison investigation, he had not had a drink in some ten years -- and he didn't touch a drop all during the 19 months that he worked for Big Jim.

And the blackouts discontinued until today doctors now find his condition normal.

WOOD'S INTEREST in the Kennedy assassination was nearly an immediate one.

He recalls that he was being fitted for glasses in Florida when news of the killing was first broadcast by radio.

By the time Ruby murdered Oswald, he was convinced that something was awry. "It was a classic gangland execution, but with a twist. As more and more information came out about the assassination, I read 'intelligence,'" he said, meaning typical of the covert operations he taught while in CIA.

Wood believes that all of the operatives involved in the murder of JFK are probably dead today.

"Taking Oswald out (killing him) was just the beginning. It was a casebook study in intelligence operations, and if I know those boys, they wouldn't have left anyone around to point fingers."

But he hasn't given up on the case. Something -- some group -- made it happen, he's convinced.

THE MORNING after he completed his bylined story below, he telephoned to say he just got a new lead.

"If we can only get this guy to sit still for a polygraph test ..."

---The Editor.