

KATHARINE THE GREAT

Phil Graham

pages with attention to "style, placement, and timing" of stories; but the loose, rebellious manner became more obvious. He committed adultery in the company of John Kennedy, a neighbor in Georgetown, often sharing women with him. (Thus was established a political bond.) The tension between promiscuity and marriage which delights the common playboy, however, added to Phil's feeling of fraudulentcy. He was hurting his wife, he was disillusioning their teenage daughter Lally, and providing no example for his sons. He was casting doubt on Eugene Meyer's judgment in giving him the Post. He was, in accordance with the manic-depressive script, bringing about his own downfall.

In 1959 Eugene Meyer was dying, and Agnes asked Phil to make the funeral arrangements. Several days later she wrote to the Reverend Duncan Howlett, the minister of the All Souls Unitarian Church, that Meyer's lung cancer had progressed to a stage that required him to remain in bed, tended by nurses around the clock. She thought he had weakened so much that the end was near. Phil was preparing to leave for Paris in a few days, to join Katharine and the children, and Agnes did not want him to go without discussing what the family would do for the funeral, in case Eugene died before the Grahams returned from abroad. "After all, Eugene is a public figure and there are so many friends and admirers . . . that their feeling for him must be considered. . . . At present . . . he is somewhat better. . . . That is why I urged the Graham family to carry out their plans, made long ago, to give their four children a chance to see something of Europe. If necessary, they can return in a few hours."

Phil went to Paris. It was July; he always liked to take his vacations in the spring or summer. The family was living in a suite in an elegant old hotel. They spent their time touring and shopping. Katharine was at ease there with her perfect French; she ordered the food in restaurants, talked with cab

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Phil, not having been able to exercise his ability to charm. I was a husband and father. The tension between his anxiety about Meyer and his own father; Katharine's fear of the cancer, all added up. One morning he and Katharine went to a week, which Ben Bradley and John Kennedy's, had suggested connections to intelligence agencies about the politics of Europe. He was able to work out an exchange with the bureau chief, the manager: Robin Webb, the Australian diplomat, through the powerful Philip Graham. He was attracted to her. With her sense of the constraints of his position and the desolation of the vacation in France, wanting not just an affair

Eugene died on July 17, a shock from choking on oranges for the funeral. "Eugene is so philosophical that it is an exaltation. I said to Adlai Stevenson weeks ago, 'I am not to be pitied, I am a thing: We should like passage—some of the Songs of Solomon are full of faith in the beauty of life. I never had any official connection with neither one of us . . . [has] it as Eugene is concerned I am not as Dewey said when accused of being a Christian as any of them.'"

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facade. He called the State Department to say that propaganda in Europe was his responsibility now, that it should call its own men home. He punched those who disagreed with him at meetings, shouting, throwing books and water glasses. Kennedy realized that he had made a serious error in judgment. Fearing that Phil would start to talk about the internal workings of COMSAT, he asked Clark Clifford, former intelligence adviser to President Truman, the future head of the National Intelligence Advisory Board, and Kennedy's personal lawyer, to report Phil's activities to him. Clifford could oblige with no trouble because he was already involved with the Grahams' problems as Katharine Graham's attorney and Agnes Meyer's adviser.

If Katharine could have done something, anything, to help Phil, other than continue to love him, which she did, she did not know what it was. "Desperately hungry for reconciliation," Leslie Farber once wrote of the manic depressive, "he becomes increasingly estranged from those loved ones who might conceivably offer him some relief, were it not being demanded of them. . . . Even if the loved one manages not to fall into despair himself, he may still feel himself charged with the responsibility to love, so that in a self-conscious way he attempts to will what cannot be willed. . . ." * If the loved one, that is, the family member, the wife, gives up hope or stops caring, the patient usually loses his remaining hope as well. Katharine must certainly have understood this, but she also, with great sadness and pain, accepted that he would never get better; she had asked Clifford to represent her in divorce. Katharine wanted the settlement to assign control of the *Washington Post*, and all of the *Post* companies,† exclusively to her.

* Farber, "despair and the life of suicide," in *Living, despair, jealousy*, p. 78.

† The empire that Phil had built up from her father's bankrupt newspaper would grow, after his death, to include not only the *Post*, *Newsweek*, and *WTOP-TV*, but *Newsweek Books*, the *Trenton Times* and *Sunday Times*.

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The case never reached the courts, but was negotiated between the lawyers, Agnes pushing and Katharine holding back from filing divorce papers, which would have meant publicly accusing Phil of being insane. But the threat was always there. Agnes believed that if Phil tried to ride out the storm and wait another two years until he could get a divorce on the basis of separation, as Agnes thought he would, then Katharine would have to go to court and prove that he was unfit, mentally, physically, and morally. Agnes felt that Phil would not readily relinquish control because he had no position at all unless he was publisher of the *Post*, but Katharine thought that he would; she knew that he dreaded an open fight even more than she because he obviously could not win it.

A man with a debilitating mental illness is in danger of suicide if the things that make him what he is are lost. If he is very rich, he is able to buy the best medical help, but he frequently uses his position and money to avoid the effects of the therapy.

In early 1963, while the divorce proceedings were in process, Phil flew to Phoenix on a Gulfstream I, a ten-passenger executive jet that the *Post* leased from a charter service, and he put up, with Robin Webb, in a modest residence motel. When he had been there for several weeks, he called Katharine to ask that she send Lally out to see him, which Katharine flatly refused to do. Phoenix was soon the scene of a newspapermen's convention, to which Phil had not been invited. He got wind of it, appeared in the banquet room during a speech, grabbed the microphone, and drunkenly announced to the crowd, many of whom knew him, that he was going to tell

Advisor, Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation (newsprint warehousing), the Washington Post Writers Group (syndication), WJXT-TV (Jacksonville, Florida, a CBS affiliate), WPLG-TV (Miami, ABC), WFSB-TV (Hartford, CBS), Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd. (Nova Scotia, newsprint manufacturing), *International Herald-Tribune* (Paris), and the *Los Angeles Times/Washington Post News Service*.

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them exactly who in Washington was sleeping with whom, beginning with President Kennedy. His favorite, screamed Phil, was now Mary Meyer, who had been married to CIA official Cord Meyer and was the sister of Ben Bradlee's wife, Tony. Mary lived in Ben Bradlee's carriage house, where she had her art studio, and Kennedy visited her there. Bradlee, Phil claimed, kept Kennedy's love letters from her, and from others, in a drawer. As Phil raged, one of the newsmen called Kennedy, who immediately called Katharine, wanting to know if, as a friend, there was anything he could do to bring Phil under control. The call came as Katharine was meeting with the *Post* executives in her home, planning to bring Phil back forcibly and commit him to a psychiatric hospital. She declined the president's offer; Kennedy had done enough. Phil's assistant James Truitt was neither so angry at Kennedy nor so proud. He took the phone and asked Kennedy to send Phil's doctor, Leslie Farber, to Phoenix on a military jet. Phil was brought back to the motel, where he was injected with a heavy sedative, and he was then taken to the airport in an ambulance.

The Gulfstream which had taken Phil to Phoenix in the early spring now carried Katharine Graham to the Phoenix airport. On board with her were John Sweeterman, who had the title of publisher, and Frederick Beebe, the *Post's* attorney and chairman of the board of the parent Washington Post Company. Katharine had little to say to the two men during the long flight. She was worried and sat biting her lip. She was also deliberate and calm.

The ambulance was waiting at the airport. Phil was carried out of it and placed in the Gulfstream jet. He was dressed in pajamas that were spotted with blood from a deep cut his nails had made in the face of one of his captors. After he had stopped struggling, when the sedative had taken effect, he had been bound in a straitjacket. On the flight back to Washington he lay quietly. He and Katharine did not talk. Robin

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Webb went off separately. When Phil regained consciousness, he begged to be allowed to go to George Washington University Hospital, to which Eugene Meyer had donated nearly \$1 million. Katharine obtained a court order committing him to Chestnut Lodge.

Chestnut Lodge lies on eight gently rolling acres in Rockville, a town in Maryland about fifteen miles outside Washington, and looks like a small college campus. There is a colonial-style main building that was once an old hotel, four apartment-dormitories that house altogether eighty patients, two suites of doctors' offices, a recreation area, which gives the sanitarium a clubby atmosphere, student nurses' residence, and several lovely stone houses which the most dedicated doctors inhabit. There are oak trees, dirt pathways, asphalt roads, fields for team sports, and openings to a residential street in Rockville that are not barred. Most of the patients are young, almost youths, with a chance to get well and begin their lives again. Phil Graham was one of the oldest patients there; he had already had his chance at life and had lost it.

Chestnut Lodge is one of the most expensive psychiatric hospitals in the country: it cost more than \$1,500 per month in 1963, when Phil was there; \$4,860 per month today. It is also one of the finest. It was the first hospital that did *not* use electric shock or lobotomy in the treatment of psychoses, those disorders that Sigmund Freud, who treated neuroses, thought to be "inaccessible as yet to psychoanalytic method." Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, a student of Freud's, lived and worked at Chestnut Lodge for twenty-two years after her emigration from Nazi Germany. Fromm-Reichmann made psychosis "accessible to psychoanalytic method" by using classical psychoanalysis, which addresses the intellect, with an added sensitivity to emotional reaction. She herself was "highly sensitive," wrote a colleague, "—otherwise she could not have accompanied her patients so fully into the depths of despair, into the horror of loneliness, into the frantic impulses

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Washington bureau. Bradlee's father, she vaguely remembered, had been president of the Cosmos Chemical Corporation and had done business with her father, founder of Allied. Bradlee claimed, during their interview, to have no politics, no opinion on the war, but he did say that he would hire no "son-of-a-bitch reporter" who was not a patriot. He had recently refused a promotion to New York—Washington was his turf, his inside track—and now he wanted desperately to regain his momentum within the corporation. Katharine asked him what he wanted, alluding to Friendly's job, and since that day is now seen as the beginning of the fortuitous Graham-Bradlee partnership, his remark has been preserved by chroniclers of the occasion: "I'd give my left one for it."

Katharine put him in as assistant managing editor and he immediately started agitating for Friendly's retirement. "Don't be in such a hurry," Friendly told him nervously. Katharine, for her part, was not sure that she would keep him. "I hardly knew him"—she was conscious mainly that he had said around town that there was nothing wrong with Phil that a good divorce wouldn't cure—"and didn't like him at all."

Ben Bradlee was considered by some members of the Washington press to be insensitive and ruthless, professionally and socially. He was indiscreet about having been on intimate terms with Kennedy, one aspect of which was that his sister-in-law Mary Pinchot Meyer, who had lived in Bradlee's renovated garage, had been Kennedy's lover. Mary Meyer had been murdered in October 1964. She was killed near her house, or by the C & O Canal in Georgetown, shot or stabbed—the location, even the manner of her death, varies with each account. Immediately after she died, James Angleton, the CIA's chief of counterintelligence, searched her apartment for a diary she had kept about Kennedy and took it to CIA headquarters, supposedly to burn it, although because of his training he never destroyed any document. A year later, when Bradlee went to

the *Post*, the slaying was still unsolved (it has never been solved); Bradlee was uncharacteristically silent about it.

Nineteen fifty-six. Ben Bradlee, recently remarried, is a European correspondent for *Newsweek*. He left the embassy for *Newsweek* in 1953, a year before CIA director Allen Dulles authorized one of his most skilled and fanatical agents, former OSS operative James Angleton, to set up a counterintelligence staff. As chief of counterintelligence, Angleton has become the liaison for all Allied intelligence and has been given authority over the sensitive Israeli desk, through which the CIA is receiving 80 percent of its information on the KGB.* Bradlee is in a position to help Angleton with the Israelis in Paris, and they are connected in other ways as well: Bradlee's wife, Tony Pinchot, Vassar '44, and her sister Mary Pinchot Meyer, Vassar '42, are close friends with Cicely d'Autremont, Vassar '44, who married James Angleton when she was a junior, the year he graduated from Harvard Law School and was recruited into the OSS by one of his former professors at Yale.

Also at Harvard in 1943, as undergraduates, were Bradlee and a man named Richard Ober, who will become Angleton's chief counterintelligence deputy and will work with him in Europe and Washington throughout the fifties, sixties, and early seventies. Both Bradlee and Ober were members of the class of '44 but finished early to serve in the war; both received degrees with the class of '43. Ober went into the OSS and became a liaison with the anti-Fascist underground in Nazi-occupied countries; Bradlee joined naval intelligence, was made a combat communications officer, and handled

* Technically, the KGB, the secret police of the Soviet Communist party, was not formed until 1954, a year after Stalin died. It superseded several of Stalin's internal security and intelligence agencies that had been so autonomous as to threaten even the party apparatus. Before 1954 Angleton charted the divisions within Soviet intelligence as well as its activities in foreign countries.

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classified and coded cables on a destroyer in the South Pacific. He then worked for six months as a clerk in the New York office of the American Civil Liberties Union, an organization that promotes various progressive causes, including conscientious objection to war. This job, so out of character for the young patriot, may or may not have been an intelligence assignment.

In 1956 Ben and Tony Bradlee are part of a community of Americans who have remained in Paris after having been trained in intelligence during the war or in propaganda at the Economic Cooperation Administration. Many have now addressed themselves to fighting communism, a less visible but more invidious enemy than nazism had been. Some of them, like Bradlee, are journalists who write from the Cold War point of view; some are intelligence operatives who travel between Washington and Paris, London, and Rome. In Washington, at Philip Graham's salon, they plan and philosophize; in foreign cities, they do the work of keeping European communism in check.

Bradlee's childhood friend Richard Helms is part of this group. He has written portions of the National Security Act of 1947, a set of laws creating the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency, the latter to support the CIA with research into codes and electronic communications. Helms is the agency's chief expert on espionage; his agents penetrate the government of the Soviet Union and leftist political parties throughout Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia.

Angleton and Ober are counterintelligence, and run agents from Washington and Paris who do exactly the opposite: they prevent spies from penetrating American embassies, the State Department, the CIA itself. Head of the third activity, covert operations, is Phil Graham's compatriot Frank Wisner, the father of MOCKINGBIRD, whose principal operative is a man named Cord Meyer, Jr. Meyer was a literature and philoso-

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phy major at Yale and is consequently well liked by Angleton, who when at Yale thought himself a poet and edited a literary magazine. Meyer is married to Tony Bradlee's sister, Mary Pinchot Meyer, the woman who later became Kennedy's lover and was murdered in 1964.

Among the fascinating and glamorous Americans of Paris, London, and Rome, the Meyers are more fascinating and glamorous than the rest. Mary was the most brilliant and beautiful girl in her class at Vassar and is now a painter, beginning to be critically recognized. Cord is an attractive, articulate figure whose evolution as an anti-Communist has given him a unique understanding of Communist trends in European trade union and Third World liberation movements. Because of this specialized knowledge, he is, as few men are, considered within the agency to be indispensable.

Meyer served as a marine on Guam and emerged from the war an ardent one-world advocate. He became an aide to Harold Stassen at the San Francisco Conference to form the United Nations, but believed that so loose an association of nations could not succeed; in the late forties he founded United World Federalists, an organization that promotes world government as the way to end war forever. "Within a decade," Meyer predicted, "the world will be organized into one political unit. The only question that remains to be settled is, what form?" The one-world movement was exceptionally strong after the first nuclear bombs were dropped, and the magnetic Meyer became the spiritual leader of it all, overshadowing other people in other groups. He commissioned a film from Pare Lorentz, *The Beginning or the End*, that was to be the definitive statement about the dangers of the atomic age and commanded various organizations to sponsor it, while refusing to accommodate their views in the script.

In 1950 he then began to coordinate with Robert Maynard Hutchins and Elizabeth Mann Borgese of the Committee

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to Frame a World Constitution, at the University of Chicago, who were about to achieve leadership by organizing a conference of the world's major progressive groups to be held in 1951 in Rome. Meyer at some point strangely had started accepting money from the conservative McCormick family and was, he said, interested in contributing to Hutchins's conference. "You might send all the details to me," he wrote to Mrs. Borgese on World Federalist letterhead. She obliged by providing him with a "plan of action" by which they would try to secure "the cooperation of other not specifically federalist organizations (political parties, trade unions, scientific and religious organizations, etc.) who . . . should be invited to join . . . because to make them work on specific world federalist problems is the best method of penetrating them with federalist propaganda." She gave Meyer a list that included the International Cooperative Alliance, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the Indian Socialist party, and the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism, which, Mrs. Borgese noted, "represents national democratic and socialist parties in all of the French, British, and Belgian colonies. In the Cameroons alone it counts 300,000."

In 1952 Meyer showed up as a CIA official in Washington knowing the names and activities of these same trade union and national liberation organizations, and the public story was that he had defected from the one-world movement because he had suddenly seen that world government was in danger of being Communist. This transformation, so out of character for a man of his methodical intellect, caused people within the movement to believe that World Federalism may have been a lengthy intelligence assignment.

It is 1956, then, and Ben Bradlee's brother-in-law is stationed as a covert operations agent in Europe. He travels constantly, inciting "student" demonstrations, "spontaneous" riots and trade union strikes; creating splits among leftist factions; distributing Communist literature to provoke anti-

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Communist backlash. This localized psychological warfare is ultimately, of course, warfare against the Russians, who are presumed to be the source of every leftist political sentiment in Italy, France, the entire theater of Meyer's operations. In Eastern Europe his aim on the contrary is to foment rebellion. Nineteen fifty-six is the year the CIA learns that the Soviets will indeed kill sixty thousand agency-aroused Hungarians with armored tanks.

All of this goes on quite apart from his marriage. Mary does not have a security clearance, so he cannot tell her what he is doing most of the time. They begin to drift apart, and Mary draws closer to her sister and to Ben. When in the late fifties her marriage to Cord ends, she goes to live with Tony and Ben in Washington, where *Newsweek* has transferred him, and sets up her apartment and art studio in their converted garage.

The reaction of the intelligence community to Bradlee's presence in Washington is mixed: he is one of them, but he is not. Agency men would not as a rule trust journalists. Bradlee was a particular problem to them because he knew them so well, and they did not trust him to keep a secret.

Helms in 1961 does successfully use Bradlee as a conduit to Phil Graham, to mask the agency's interest in the *Post* buying *Newsweek*; but then Bradlee will not do Angleton the simple favor of recommending to Kennedy that he appoint Cord Meyer ambassador to Guatemala. This does not arise out of journalistic honor but is because he has made the prior judgment that Kennedy does not like Meyer and will refuse. (Bradlee is wrong; Kennedy and Meyer later get along well discussing plans for a demonstration in the Dominican Republic.)

And now Bradlee and Kennedy are cavalierly discussing Meyer's former wife. "Mary would be rough to live with," *

* As quoted in *Conversations with Kennedy*.

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Kennedy and Bradlee have agreed. At one of those parties that the women, best of friends, are always organizing, Cord cannot restrain himself from lunging across the table and trying to choke Bradlee. Angleton experiences similar impulses. It is only a matter of time, Angleton feels, until Bradlee makes a serious mistake, as he eventually does with the publication of *Conversations with Kennedy*, in which he mentions that Mary Meyer was murdered, but only in a footnote. A former *Post* editor named James Truitt is enraged at this; according to Truitt, Bradlee has forced him out of the paper in a particularly nasty fashion, with accusations of mental incompetence, and now Truitt decides to get back at Bradlee by revealing to other newspapers his belief that Bradlee's story on the Cord Meyers in *Conversations with Kennedy* was not the whole story; that Mary Meyer had been Kennedy's lover and that the day of her murder, James Angleton of the CIA searched her apartment and burned her diary. Their feud unnecessarily implicates Angleton, to his disgust and bitterness.

The remarkable thing about Katharine hiring Bradlee was that she was able to sacrifice her personal feelings for the sake of the newspaper. She had decided to try him on the advice of Walter Lippmann, who had known Bradlee's parents and had tutored him in the fundamentals of journalism. Lippmann had suggested Bradlee, so three months after he was hired, Katharine wanted Lippmann to tell Al Friendly that Bradlee was going to have his job. "Have you thought about returning to writing?" Lippmann asked him gently one day, as they were eating lunch together. No, Friendly hadn't, and he was not pleased. The hurt was all the greater because Bradlee had once been his underling at ECA. Later that afternoon he confronted Katharine, who had hoped to avoid just such a scene. "Is this what you want?" he asked her mournfully, standing at the door of her office, while she stared

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unhappily at her desk. "I would rather have heard it from you." Katharine was preoccupied with the paper's corporate, political, and journalistic problems, as well as with moving into a position to be able to solve them, but she lacked the force of a comprehensive vision (even her determination to have an executive shake-up had disintegrated with Friendly's tears); and Bradlee, who did indeed have a vision, began to spend long nights at her R Street mansion, working out his ideas with her. He was coming in only five months after the Newspaper Guild had bullied Katharine into the \$200-per-week wage settlement, and she told him that she wanted a man to control the newsroom the way Jack Patterson controlled the truckers. Reporters, she said, had to be broken of their union mentality ("Unions interfere with freedom of the press"), editors had to be made to respect her; whereupon Bradlee, whose own loyalty, he knew, was by no means as clear to her as Patterson's, put forth the all-encompassing proposition that she could become as powerful in Washington as the president.

After settling the matters of salary (estimated at \$150,000) and stock (with an estimated value of half a million dollars), Bradlee informed his wife that the dedication required of him in this venture was going to "cost you a year" of marriage. It was a marriage already traumatized by Mary Meyer's death, and Bradlee threw himself into his work with frenzy, not only because of ambition, but to escape the anger and guilt that hung over him at home. The year stretched into two, then three, his relationship with Tony deteriorating as the one with Katharine improved, until by 1969 the marriage was not worth saving, and Bradlee moved into an apartment in the expensive Watergate complex on the Potomac River and asked Katharine to make him president of the Washington Post Company, replacing former Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius. Katharine by this time understood him as well as he thought he knew her,

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 eted the country, so that the first
 t all about Vietnam was alarmist:
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 ist come to the aid of the demo-
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s elected president, the public re-
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 settle old grievances, to promote
 rome the basis for military action.
 hrow Castro in the Bay of Pigs
 to enter Southeast Asia: it was
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Katharine tried to help Johnson
 became too serious for advertising
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was formed in 1956 in order to help get
 a of increased involvement in Vietnam—
 a man named Elliot Newcomb, a partner
 O-Oram, which earlier had signed a con-
 penses to represent the Diem government

notion that people believe what they are deceived into be-
 lieving, the president began to think that Communists were
 manipulating the American youth, rather than that they were
 unwilling to fight his badly conceived war. "Ho Ho Ho Chi
 Minh" was their slogan, "NLF [National Liberation Front] is
 gonna win." The movement was a battleground for their
 "hearts and minds."

As preposterous and desperate as this idea was, Johnson
 acted on it. He began ordering up regular reports from the
 intelligence agencies, FBI, CIA, army, and navy, who were
 already reporting to him on civil rights/Black Power activities.
 The assignment, for both movements, was to find evidence of
 foreign influence. Johnson became increasingly frustrated as
 they could not find it and insisted that their methods were de-
 ficient, that the evidence was there. As a result of this pressure,
 CIA director Richard Helms, through his deputy Thomas
 Karamessines, authorized counterintelligence chief James
 Angleton, on August 15, 1967, to establish an "intelligence
 collection program with definite domestic counterintelligence
 aspects" and "some sort of system by [Angleton's deputy] Dick
 Ober for the orderly coordination of the operations" among
 all the intelligence agencies.*

The agencies buried their long-standing rivalries to co-
 operate on mail intercepts, phone taps, monitoring meetings,
 the use of LSD to pump people for information, and surveil-
 lance of "U.S. Negro expatriates as well as travelers passing
 through certain select areas abroad. Objective is to find out
 extent to which Soviets, Chicoms [Chinese Communists] and
 Cubans are exploiting our domestic problems in terms of
 espionage and subversion." Ober's organization, which re-
 ported, in priority, to the CIA, the FBI, the president, and

* Karamessines's memorandum to Angleton, August 15, 1967, reprinted in
 the "Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the
 Rights of Americans" (the Church Commission Report), p. 690.