

Destruction of LSD Data Laid to C.I.A. Aide in '73

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

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WASHINGTON, July 17 — The staff of the Rockefeller commission concluded that the chief of the Central Intelligence Agency's testing of LSD destroyed the drug program's records in 1973 to hide the details of possibly illegal actions, commission sources said today.

These sources said that the chief of the program, Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, a 57-year-old biochemist, was personally involved in a fatal experiment in November, 1953, in which the commission has said a researcher was surreptitiously given LSD, a potent mind-altering drug. The researcher, Frank R. Olson, jumped to his death from a New York City hotel room less than two weeks later after reportedly showing symptoms of anxiety.

The Rockefeller commission staff, on the basis of its investigation, concluded that 20 years after Mr. Olson's death, and 10 years after the LSD experiments were purportedly halted, Dr. Gottlieb ordered the destruction of all the records of the program, including a total of 152 separate files, commission sources said.

The record destruction came shortly after other records had been destroyed by Richard Helms, then director of Central Intelligence, these sources said.

Dr. Gottlieb retired from the agency a few months after Mr. Helms left in January, 1973, they said.

The Rockefeller commission previously reported the destruction of records, on the LSD experiments but did not mention Dr. Gottlieb by name. It also reported a program through the Federal Bureau of Drug Abuse Control in which the C.I.A. had arranged to test LSD on "unsuspecting volunteers" on two programs, one in the West and the other along the East Coast.

Staff sources on the Rockefeller commission said this program was also commanded by Dr. Gottlieb.

For a short time after he resigned from the C.I.A., Dr.

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LSD Report Disputed

Robert V. Lashbrook, a former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, said he believed Frank R. Olson, a scientist who committed suicide in 1953, had knowingly participated in an experiment with LSD. The statement appeared to contradict the Rockefeller commission's finding that Mr. Olson had been given the drug surreptitiously. [Page 6].

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Gottlieb was a paid consultant to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

John Bartels, director of the drug agency at the time, said that Dr. Gottlieb had completed a management study on research facilities on a consultant basis. He later went to Africa, according to C.I.A. sources, and he now lives in the Far East.

The staff of the commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller, which was established by President Ford to look into allegedly illegal domestic operations by the C.I.A. attempted to interview Dr. Gottlieb and was told by the agency that he was unavailable. The New York Times tried unsuccessfully to reach him.

According to intelligence sources, Dr. Gottlieb joined the C.I.A. in 1951, though he had done national security work before that. He was a close associate of Mr. Helms and was promoted to the head of the technical services division of the covert operations branch of the agency, these sources said.

The C.I.A.'s experiments with such hallucinogens as LSD stemmed from World War II concerns over how agents could resist torture in interrogation and could defend themselves against drugs being used by enemy intelligence services. The experimenting was a closely held secret even within Dr. Gottlieb's unit.

One source said he learned of the use of LSD through an anecdote Dr. Gottlieb enjoyed telling.

Dr. Gottlieb, this source said, recounted an incident in which he was returning to Washington aboard an airliner in the nineteen-fifties. He raced up the aisle to ask the stewardess to prepare him a martini.

As he returned to his seat, Dr. Gottlieb's purported story went, a quiet, baldish, pipe-smoking man asked him, "Is that LSD you're drinking?" According to Dr. Gottlieb's story, the well-informed passenger was Allen W. Dulles, then director of the C.I.A.

The Rockefeller commission report said that the testing of hallucinogens was halted in 1963 by the C.I.A.'s Inspector General.

But intelligence sources said that experiments with "exotic drugs" continued after the in-

ternal ban and that this may have been reflected in the records that were believed to have been destroyed.

The tests included drugs that would enable a person to baffle a lie-detector test by a polygraph machine. One source said, however, that these drugs also had a serious effect on the emotions of the person who took it.

According to press accounts, the family of Frank Olson found a "tentative" list of persons who may have attended the session in 1953 at which Mr. Olson was said to have been given LSD. On the list are the names Dr. S. Gottlieb, Dr. R. Lashbrook, Dr. A. Hughes and Dr. H. Bortner.

The Olson family has said that it planned to sue the C.I.A. for damages in what family members called "the wrongful death" of Mr. Olson. Sources on the Rockefeller commission staff said that there may have been illegal aspects to the C.I.A. drug testing program and illegality associated with the destruction of the records. The sources did not specify the precise potential illegalities involved in the program itself.

Three of the men—Dr. Gottlieb, Lashbrook and Bortner—have been identified through intellectual sources as employees of the C.I.A. Dr. Henry Bortner died several years ago after retiring from the C.I.A., according to intelligence sources.

Army Tests Reported

The Washington Post reported today on two other projects in the late nineteen-fifties in which it said LSD was administered to hundreds of soldiers and civilians by the Department of the Army. It said that some of the soldiers had not known they were receiving drugs.

One project was, the Post said, conducted through the University of Maryland Medical School by civilian doctors in the period 1956 to 1961.

Dr. Gerald D. Klee, a Baltimore psychiatrist who was involved in the project, told The New York Times that the research team also used the soldiers for tests of mescaline, a hallucinogenic derived from cactus; tetra-hydro cannibal, a derivative of marijuana that causes an LSD-like reaction, and a mind-disorienting derivative of Mexican mushrooms.

He said the program also tested drugs that would be "antagonists" to LSD. He said he knew of no deaths resulting from the program and that the tests had been done with volunteers.

Another doctor who worked in the same project, Walter Weintraub, was quoted by the Post as saying that the Army had gathered the volunteers by promising them extra leaves and other inducements. "I don't recall we told them they would get LSD but it probably wouldn't have meant anything at that time anyway," he was quoted as saying.

Maj. Gen. Lloyd Fellenz, from

1956 to 1959 the commander of the Army Chemical center at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland, disclosed an apparently separate project by the Army, United Press International reported. The news agency quoted him as saying that LSD testing had been conducted at Edgewood and at Fort Bragg, N.C., and that he had personally been given a dose of LSD that took effect while he was briefing other officers, but had felt no adverse reaction to the tests.

The Department of the Army declined to comment on the LSD programs or to issue any information on the number of soldiers or others involved in the tests.