

Addicts Got Drug Payoffs In CIA Tests

By Bill Richards

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Drug addicts at a federal rehabilitation center in Kentucky were "paid off" in morphine and other narcotics for taking part in CIA-funded experiments there during the 1950s, witnesses told a Senate hearing yesterday.

Central Intelligence Agency officials also described a 10-year program of drug experiments on hundreds of unwitting subjects that was conducted in so-called "safe houses" here and on the West Coast.

And a former CIA doctor told of a request by convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt for a mind-altering drug such as LSD which could be absorbed through the skin and administered to an unidentified target in 1972.

The experiments at the federal Addiction Research Center in Lexington, Ky., involved the administration of various drugs including hallucinogens to prisoner volunteers, according to a statement prepared by the CIA.

The intelligence agency said the experiments were funded under the cover of the Office of Naval Research and were carried out by doctors from the National Institute of Mental Health.

James Henderson Childs, a former prisoner at the facility in 1951 and 1952 who now lives in Washington, told a joint meeting of the Senate Health and Administrative Practice and Procedure subcommittee that he volunteered for the program because of the promised payoffs in drugs.

Prisoners who took part, he said, would build up deposits in a "drug bank" which they could collect after finishing with the experiments.

"You would go down there and a guy would look out the door and he'd say 'Where do you want it?'" Childs said. "Most addicts would take it in the arm and then everyone would walk around the halls high."

Another former prisoner, Edward M. Flowers, said he learned of the availability of LSD which was being given to prisoners in cookies during experiments from 1953 to 1955.

"My whole reason for going into the program was to get drugs," said Flowers, who now works for a drug

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rehabilitation program in Alexandria, Va.

The director of the experimental program, Dr. Harris Isbell, said he had to pay prisoners in drugs or time off their sentences because no money was authorized for incentives to take part in the experiments until the mid-1950s.

The CIA experiments, he said, were done to test new drugs as they became available. "The overriding consideration," said Isbell, "was protection of the public. We had these new drugs coming in and they had to be evaluated."

The Lexington experiments were part of a broad CIA drug experimentation program that involved more than 30 universities and private and public agencies, according to CIA documents.

One document that was declassified and turned over to the Senate subcommittee yesterday indicated that LSD research was performed on humans in an unidentified hospital in Massachusetts, a biological laboratory in New York and a "clinic of the record court" in a city in Michigan.

The CIA documents also state that various employees of the intelligence agency took the drugs to prepare them for administering them to others.

The in-house experiments were conducted by the agency's Technical Services Division, which was under the direction of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, and the subjects were told what they were getting.

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In addition to the informed subjects, the intelligence agency also conducted LSD experiments on hundreds of unwitting subjects.

Another CIA document made available by the committee yesterday described those involved in the experiments as "individuals at all social levels, high and low, native American and foreign."

Carl Duckett, director of the CIA's department for science and technology, said most of the records of the experiments were destroyed in 1972, shortly before Gottlieb retired.

From the remaining records Duckett said it did not appear that participants knew they were getting LSD and no followup monitoring was done by the CIA.

Duckett said that Allen W. Dulles, director of the CIA in 1953, approved the program. He also said yesterday that the Justice Department is investigating the destruction of the drug testing records, an act which he said Gottlieb undertook at the direction of then CIA Director Richard Helms.

Details of the Hunt incident were related yesterday by Dr. Edward M. Gunn, a doctor for the CIA from 1955 to his retirement in 1971.

Gunn said Hunt introduced him to G. Gordon Liddy, another Watergate conspirator, during a luncheon arranged by Hunt on March 24, 1972 at the Hay-Adams Hotel here.

"I was asked if I could help them by providing a behavior altering drug which they indicated would be given to an individual who was never identified," said Gunn.

Gunn said he warned the pair that giving the drug to a subject in pill form would be difficult but that research was being conducted on the absorption of drugs such as LSD through the skin.

Hunt never identified the source of his request but noted that his office at the time was in the White House, Gunn said.

Last month Hunt told the Providence Journal that he and Liddy had discussed with a former CIA doctor the possibility of coating the steering wheel of columnist Jack Anderson's car with drugs which would then be absorbed through Anderson's skin.

Gunn said yesterday, however, that he informed Hunt and Liddy that he could not provide them with a drug such as they requested because he was retired from the intelligence agency. He said he never heard about the subject again from Hunt or Liddy.

*Subcommittee on Health (Kennedy)?