

# PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS USED IN C.I.A. EFFORT TO CONTROL BEHAVIOR

25-YEAR, \$25 MILLION PROGRAM

New Information About Funding  
and Operations Disclosed by  
Documents and Interviews

(This article was the work of an investigative reporting team consisting of John M. Crewdson, Nicholas M. Horrock, Boyce Rensberger, Jo Thomas and Joseph B. Treaster. It was written by Mr. Horrock.)

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 1 — Several prominent medical research institutions and Government hospitals in the United States and Canada were involved in a secret, 25-year, \$25-million effort by the Central Intelligence Agency to learn how to control the human mind.

The existence of the agency's investigations into behavior and thought control was previously known. But through access to 2,000 C.I.A. documents and wide-ranging interviews, a group of New York Times reporters has developed new information about the cost of the program, the range of its penetration into prestigious research centers, the identities of some institutions, the secret funding conduits of the agency and the concerns about the program expressed by some scientists.

The original research was spurred by the conviction—later proved unfounded—that the Russians and Chinese had developed brainwashing and mind-control devices. But the C.I.A. quickly turned to seeking an offensive use for behavior control. It sought to crack the mental defenses of enemy agents—to be able to program them and its own operatives to carry out any mission even against their will and “against such fundamental laws of nature as self-preservation.”

### Three Foundations Used

It channeled funds through three private medical research foundations. One of these, the Geschikter Foundation for Medical Research in Washington, D.C., is still active. Another, the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology Inc., was disbanded in 1965. A third named in one report was the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, also active, but Dr. John W. Bowers, director of the foundation, said there was no indication it had been a conduit for C.I.A. funding.

The C.I.A. also paid for experiments under the guise of contracts issued by other Government agencies and had access to millions of dollars in behavioral control experiments conducted by the armed services.

By the early 1960's the C.I.A. had grown uncomfortable about the experiments. A 1957 report by the Inspector General noted that the chemical division “had added difficulty in obtaining expert services and facilities to conduct tests and experiments. Some of the activities are considered to be professionally unethical and in some instances border on the illegal,” the report said.

The agency officials were also worried that the reputations of the scientists it contracted with were “in jeopardy.”

Moreover, the agency appears never to have found the secret of mind control, and the documents now public indicate

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that it had little success with interrogations using drugs and hypnosis.

What emerged from extensive interviews with present and former intelligence officers, medical researchers and others was the fact that despite professional misgivings on the part of some medical researchers, the C.I.A. was able to assemble an extensive network of non-governmental scientists and facilities—apparently without the knowledge of the institutions where the facilities were situated.

Among the specific disclosures produced by The Times from the documents and the interviews were the following:

¶Dr. Carl Pfeiffer, a pharmacologist now associated with a private treatment center in New Jersey, conducted LSD experiments for the C.I.A. on prisoners at the Federal penitentiary in Atlanta and the Bordentown Reformatory in New Jersey between 1955 and 1964. He was paid \$25,000 a year through the Geschikter Foundation, he said in a telephoned interview.

¶The Geschikter Foundation contributed to the construction of a \$3 million building at Georgetown University Medical School in Washington, D.C. Newly discovered records indicate that the C.I.A. wanted to “establish at an appropriate university” a forensic medicine department so the project “and allied agency needs could thus be served with complete control, legal performance, and appropriate cover.” A spokesman for Georgetown said that the university was reviewing its records on the construction but that there was no indication the money had come from the C.I.A.

¶Dr. Ewen Cameron, of the Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry at McGill University in Montreal, conducted several experiments on behavior control including the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation on humans for the C.I.A. between 1955 and 1960. The work was paid for by the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology. Dr. Cameron died in 1967. An associate in the research said in an interview that he was unaware that the research has been paid for by the C.I.A.

¶The society, on behalf of the C.I.A., underwrote experiments using tranquilizers and alcohol on mental patients and staff members of the Butler Memorial Hospital in Providence, R. I.

¶The society, although largely controlled by the C.I.A., was set up under the direction of Dr. Harold Wolff, a prominent psychiatrist and leading authority on pain, and gave the appearance of being associated with the Cornell University Medical Center. The society also asked Dr. Wolff and an associate to collect the information about “brainwashing.”

¶In 1962, a C.I.A. doctor, E. Manfield Gunn, approached Dr. Robert Heath, chairman of the Tulane University department of psychiatry and neurology, a biopsychiatrist who had explored what is described as the pleasure center of the human brain. Dr. Gunn asked Dr. Heath if he would be interested in exploring the “pain center” of the brain. Dr. Heath refused, he said in a recent interview, calling the request “abhorrent.”

### Many Other Projects

These are only a few of what C.I.A. officials privately said were dozens of research projects found in agency records. The program, C.I.A. records indicate, was wound down in 1964, further curtailed in 1967 and finally halted in 1973. Its last phases, code named Often-Chickwit, were conducted in coordination with the Office of Research and Development at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland.

It was a program to acquire and evaluate “compounds believed to have effects on the behavior of humans” and C.I.A. reports say that it was discontinued before tests were made on humans.

Although two Senate committees investigated the C.I.A.'s drug testing in 1975 and in 1976, so many records have been destroyed and so many deletions had been made in the records the senators received that only a fragmentary picture emerged of the extent to which the agency was engaged in behavior control research.

Adm. Stansfield Turner, the Director of Central Intelligence, announced two weeks ago that seven cases of records containing some 5,000 pages of documents pertaining to these projects had been discovered in the agency's archives. He said they had been overlooked in 1975 and 1976.

He will testify on the contents of these newly discovered records before a joint hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Subcommittee on Health on Wednesday. He is expected to disclose that the C.I.A. paid for tests of a “knockout” drug on unwitting terminal cancer patients.

### Papers Being Made Public

The C.I.A., meanwhile, has made available to the Senate committees and is expected to make public most of the newly discovered batch of papers. As of 1975, however, the agency has deleted the names of the actual medical researchers and the institutions that performed the experiments.

Senate investigators acknowledged in private interviews that without these names it was nearly impossible to determine the extent of the testing, the numbers of Americans or other nationalities involved, whether the tests had resulted involved, whether the tests had resulted whether the rights of physical and mental health of the subjects had been considered.

Several C.I.A. memorandums contained comments that show that officials were worried about the ethics and the legality of the experiments they were contemplating.

At the time, the international standard for medical experimentation on humans had been set at the Nuremberg trials for Nazi war criminals. It was adopted by the United States Government in 1953. It said that medical experiments should be for the good of mankind and that a person must give full and informed consent before being used as a subject.

C.I.A.'s interest in behavioral control was organized in 1949 under the code name Bluebird, later changed to Artichoke. The agency's projects grew out of a concern among Western powers that the Soviet bloc had achieved the ability to control men's minds through drugs or brainwashing, then a mysterious and little-understood technique.

It was, apparently, a defensive program at the outset, in which the agency sought a way to insulate its agents from brainwashing attempts. But by the early 1950's, the objectives had shifted, and the programs' goals became offensive.

One C.I.A. memorandum, dated Jan. 25, 1952, described Artichoke as “the evaluation and development of any method by which we can get information from a person against his will and without his



knowledge." The memo asked whether it were possible to "get control of an individual to the point where he will do our bidding against his will and even against such fundamental laws of nature as self-preservation?"

#### Scientific Intelligence Unit

In the beginning project Bluebird-Artichoke was directed by the C.I.A.'s Office of Scientific Intelligence, which had access to all secret and public scientific research in this field being done by the military services.

The C.I.A. was also able to conduct research through military contracts. For 11 years, the agency tested mind-altering drugs, mainly LSD, on prisoners at the United States Public Health Service hospital in Lexington, Ky. The money was channeled through the Office of Naval Research, and the project ostensibly was seeking a substitute for codine as a mild-mannered pain killer.

Dr. Harris Isbell, who conducted the research between 1952 and 1963, kept up a secret correspondence with the C.I.A. (usually with a man identified only as "Ray" in the documents) in which he reported on LSD and several other drugs that the agency wanted tested, the agency's documents disclosed.

Dr. Isbell was an eager experimenter. On one occasion he wrote his contact, "I will write you a quick letter as soon as I can get the stuff into a man or two." He also arranged to purchase drugs for the C.I.A. from European pharmaceutical concerns that thought they were shipping the drugs to a public health official.

#### Testimony in Senate

Dr. Isbell made a brief appearance before the Senate Health subcommittee in 1976 and conceded that he had been in contact with the C.I.A. But he was never asked to explain why he continued to test LSD for a decade in a program that was ostensibly to develop a mild pain-killer. Several independent researchers said that LSD would never have been considered for this purpose.

Dr. Isbell declined to grant an interview to The New York Times.

Dr. Isbell was part of a network of contractors working secretly on C.I.A. experiments with LSD. The agency often sent information or tips from one to another.

For instance, the C.I.A. kept Dr. Isbell apprised of the work of Dr. Harold A. Abramson, a prominent New York pediatrician. Dr. Abramson sent a little noted telegram to the Senate Health subcommittee in 1975 in which he reported that he did work on LSD with the C.I.A. at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital.

"This research was supported by the Geschikter Foundation at its inception and later by the Macy Foundation," he wrote. Dr. Abramson's name first emerged publicly when it was disclosed that he had treated Dr. Frank Olstn, an Army biochemist who committed suicide after being given LSD in a C.I.A. experiment in 1953.

Another researcher whose work was coordinated with Dr. Isbell's was Dr. Pfeiffer, a New Jersey pharmacologist who said he was approached in 1955 by Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, a pharmacologist at C.I.A., and another man. "They flashed their badges—they were employees of the company," Dr. Pfeiffer said.

Dr. Pfeiffer estimated that he had administered LSD to some 80 to 100 prisoners at the Atlanta prison and the Borden-town reformatory. He said that all the subjects had given "full informed consent." Dr. Pfeiffer said, however, that under wartime conditions administering LSD to unwitting subjects might be justified.

He said in an interview that he did not know of any untoward results of the agency-supported experiments but that some prisoners had later written that using LSD had worsened their criminal careers.

The agency's entry into the field of behavior control was widespread and on varying levels. For instance, Dr. Louis Jolyon West, chief of psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles, and director of the Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, was asked to make a study of LSD by Dr. Gottlieb. He, too, was paid by the Geschikter Foundation.

"As far as the Geschikter fund was concerned, what Gottlieb told me was that he was an employee of the C.I.A. and that they had an interest in this problem which I could see they did and possibly should have at that time," Dr. West said in a telephone interview.

But the agency's role or intentions were not so clear to others. In the mid-1950's the C.I.A. approached Dr. Wolff at the Cornell University Medical School and asked him to prepare a report on brainwashing based on classified information and examinations of victims of Soviet and Chinese methods.

Dr. Wolff had been a close friend of Allen W. Dulles, then Director of Central Intelligence. Dr. Wolff and Dr. Lawrence B. Hinkle Jr., his associate, formed a research corporation called The Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology Inc., to fund the brainwashing study.

But in 1956 the C.I.A. wanted to support other research through it, Dr. Hinkle said in an interview, and assigned Col. James L. Monroe, an Air Force expert on brainwashing to be the society's executive director and treasurer. The Cornell people, with the exception of Dr. Wolff, because of his friendship for Mr. Dulles, bowed out, Dr. Hinkle said.

#### 'No Human Experimentation

"We set it up as a way of providing funds for our research—we didn't have any intention of its being used to support other people," he said. Dr. Hinkle said that "absolutely no human experimentation was done on a project at New York Hospital or Cornell Medical Center and none was done by anybody connected with Cornell."

Dr. Hinkle said that the human ecology society mechanism "we set up to provide our research with funds was being used in ways that didn't seem consonant with the role of a medical center."

"I feel and felt at the time that our trust had been abused," he said.

Among the projects funded by the society under Colonel Monroe's direction was research in Canada by Dr. Ewen Cameron, conducted on patients at the Allen Memorial Institute of Psychiatry at McGill University in Montreal.

Leonard Rubenstein, an experimenter who was paid directly by the human ecology society and worked with Dr. Cameron, remembered Colonel Monroe. "It was directly related to brainwashing," he said about the project in a telephone interview. "They had investigated brainwashing among soldiers who had been in Korea. We in Montreal started to use some [of these] techniques, brainwashing patients instead of using drugs."

Mr. Rubenstein said he had hoped that brainwashing techniques could speed up treatment of psychiatric patients eliminating bad feelings and attitudes.

Experiments were done on nonpatients as well. Among them, Mr. Rubenstein said, was one on sensory deprivation in which some 20 to 30 nurses were placed in dark, silent rooms for periods of about half an hour. He said: "That's a long time. One particular nurse, I remember, thought there were snakes coming out from under her chair. She was listed a few months later as a schizophrenic and she had to go to the hospital." Mr. Rubenstein added that an experience such as this could have a profound effect on some people.

Mr. Rubenstein said that the human ecology society had funded the research for about three years and he knew of no connection with the C.I.A. "I really, honestly, can't tell you where the infor-



## Known Programs In C.I.A.'s Project Bluebird/Artichoke

### Through private medical research foundations

#### SOCIETY FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Formed by Dr. Harold Wolff and Dr. Lawrence B. Hinkle Jr. of Cornell University Medical Center—Disbanded in 1965

#### Dr. D. Ewen Cameron

(Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal) Brainwashing techniques and other experiments on patients and staff.

#### Dr. Robert W. Hyde

Testing, including LSD, on patients and staff at Butler Health Center, Providence, R.I., and Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Boston.

#### GESCHIKTER FUND FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Registered in the name of Dr. Charles F. Geschikter of Georgetown University, Washington—In existence

#### Dr. Harold A. Abramson

(Mount Sinai Hospital) Tests of LSD at hospital, funded first by Geschikter, then by Macy Foundation.

#### Dr. Louis Jolyon West

(Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, University of California at Los Angeles) Study of LSD.

#### Dr. Carl Pfeiffer

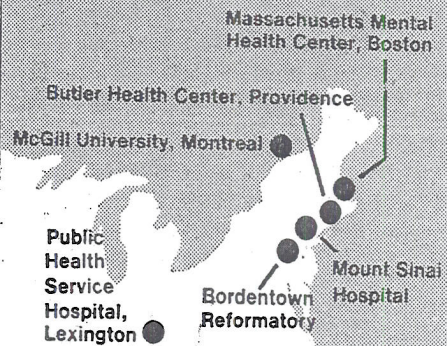
Testing of LSD on prisoners at Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta and at Bordentown, N.J., Reformatory.

### Through the military

#### OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

#### Dr. Harris Isbell

Testing of mind-altering drugs, including LSD, at U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Ky.



● Testing Sites

● U.C.I.A.

● Federal Penitentiary, Atlanta ●

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mation filtered—I'm sure it was all published," he said.

Dr. W. S. Hirschfeld, vice principal, research, at McGill said today that the university refused to accept grants for research that must remain secret and has "not knowingly had undertakings with the C.I.A."

Colonel Monroe, who now lives in Kingsland, Tex., said there was nothing sinister in the society's ties to the C.I.A. In an interview, he said that "only about 25 to 30 percent" of the society's annual budget of \$1. to \$1.5 million came from the agency. He said that additional support came from other foundations and private donors.

"We were doing a great deal of research on drugs, all right," he said, "and some of the drugs appeared to have some significance for interrogation." Colonel Monroe said that he occasionally briefed C.I.A. directors Allen W. Dulles and Richard Helms on the findings of the society.

"I would hope the C.I.A. benefited from some of our research, wouldn't you," Colonel Monroe added. "If they're going to make judgments about foreign powers, they've got to know how people function."

#### Prediction of Reactions

According to the society's annual report in 1957, it did finance LSD experiments by Dr. Robert W. Hyde, now deceased but then a psychiatrist at the Butler Health Center in Providence, R.I. The report said "the first phase of the experiments" by Dr. Hyde "consisted of developing a background knowledge of the variables affecting a subject's reactions to LSD."

Dr. Hyde and his associates also compared the effects of LSD with alcohol, trying to predict "the reaction of a given subject to a given situation." The number of people who were given LSD is not known but, according to an associate, the experiments were done on doctors, nurses and attendants at the Boston Psychopath-

ic Hospital [now the Massachusetts Mental Health Center], before Dr. Hyde transferred to Butler.

Neurosurgery and electroshock are clearly the most controversial and dramatic of mind-control methods and, because of this, warnings were raised within the agency about these methods. In 1952 a C.I.A. document said that "the severity of the treatment, possibility of injury and permanent damage to the subject and the highly experienced personnel required rule these techniques out for the present."

Nevertheless, the agency showed interest in these processes. Dr. Heath, a noted biopsychiatrist at Tulane University, said that a C.I.A. doctor had approached him after a symposium in New Orleans in November 1962 and suggested that he might want to explore the brain's "pain system."

As part of his private research, Dr. Heath had performed psychosurgery and had pioneered in implanting "depth electrodes" in the brain, identifying with these electrodes areas he called the pleasure and pain centers of the brain. At the time he was pursuing research on the pleasure center, seeking ways to treat schizophrenic patients.

Dr. Heath said that Dr. Gunn, then chief of the C.I.A.'s medical service division, had tried to persuade him to investigate the pain center, explaining that funds could be provided to legitimate medical research foundations and arguing that the Russians were investigating the same areas.

Dr. Heath said that he had found the suggestion "abhorrent." He added: "I took the stand if I were going to be a spy, I'd be a spy. I wanted to be a doctor and practice medicine."

Dr. Heath said that he felt that the offer violated the physician's Hippocratic oath because it promised no benefit to the patient or mankind.

Dr. Gunn confirmed that the C.I.A. had

been "very interested" in Dr. Heath's work but said, "There was no effort in anything I was connected with to get someone to do something they weren't already doing."

"As far as I know," said Dr. Gunn, "he [Dr. Heath] would have had to have done all his work through the National Institutes of Health. I wasn't offering anyone any money."

Dr. Heath has acknowledged agreeing to do one research project for the agency in 1957 after an agent asked him to test a purported brainwashing drug on monkeys and then, if practicable, on a prisoner at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola.

Subsequently Dr. Heath learned that the drug he was to test was bulbocapnine, a substance he had already tested in cats. He said he told the agent, "This was no secret drug. He could find it in the literature. You can't wash any brain with bulbocapnine." He said that he had tried the drug on several monkeys but never on humans. C.I.A. records show that Dr. Heath was paid \$200 for the monkeys.

There is disagreement over why the C.I.A. chose to camouflage its support of mind control research by channeling money through ostensibly private medical foundations. One former member of the C.I.A.'s technical services division said in an interview that secrecy had been used to protect the researchers from peer group pressure should it be known that they were working for the agency.

A C.I.A. report said that the agency's chemical division "had added difficulty in obtaining expert services and facilities to conduct tests and experiments. Some of the activities are considered to be professionally unethical and in some instances border on the illegal," the report said.

#### 'High Sensitivity' Noted

Another C.I.A. report said: "Many phases of the research in the control of human behavior involve a high degree of sensitivity. The professional reputations of outside researchers are in jeopardy since the objectives of such research are widely regarded as anti-ethical or illegal."



A C.I.A. source who declined to be identified said that to his knowledge all the researchers knew they were working for the agency. Other former intelligence officers said the agency had sought to hide its involvements so that Soviet intelligence services would not know that the agency was interested in the research.

One member of the ecology society's board for several years was Carl Rogers, the eminent clinical psychologist, then at the University of Wisconsin and now at the Center for the Study of the Person in La Jolla, Calif.

"Mr. Monroe had read one of my books and he approached me," Dr. Rogers said in an interview. Dr. Rogers said that Colonel Monroe had told him that the society was supported by the C.I.A. and that the society wanted to give Dr. Rogers a grant because "they wanted to fund some straight projects to lend credibility to the foundation."

In some cases, the C.I.A. role may not have been fully known.

The Geschikter Foundation, for instance, is registered in the name of Dr. Charles F. Geschikter, a prominent pathologist associated with Georgetown University in Washington. The foundation still exists and as recently as 1971 made a \$40,000 grant to Georgetown, a \$10,000 payment for "special studies for doctors" and a \$4,000 grant to Howard University in Washington.

The Times made repeated attempts to interview Dr. Geschikter on whether the foundation disbursed private moneys as well as Government aid and whether he was aware that the foundation had been used by the C.I.A. He referred a reporter to Vincent Fuller, a Washington lawyer representing Georgetown University.

Mr. Fuller said that Georgetown was investigating what relationship, if any, it may have had with the C.I.A. and would have no comment until this full record of events could be formed. He said that he had advised Dr. Geschikter that he could not represent both him and the university.

The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation is one of the most respected and largest medical research groups in the world. With assets over \$50 million, it funds projects throughout the country and abroad.

The Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology was disbanded in 1955. Many of its principals became part of another C.I.A.-backed organization, the Psychological Assessment Associates Inc., which operated in Washington until the mid-1970's.

The C.I.A.'s medical research apparatus was one of its most closely held secrets. In 1967, when President Johnson ordered an investigation of the agency's funding of private educational research, the agency officials in charge of the report were told not to disclose the three funds involved in the medical program, according to Victor Marchetti, a former C.I.A. official who worked on the report.