

One-eyed jack

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Diaries reveal secret CIA face of a super U.S. narcotics agent

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This is the first of three articles about George H. White, U. S. narcotics agent and CIA operative, after a study of his diaries and personal papers. White was a central figure in the investigation of one of Houston's biggest police department scandals.

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George Hunter White, first of all, was a super U.S. narcotics agent. A fat Kojak with a gold badge and a taste for Gilbey's gin. Cold blue eyes and a cold smile to match.

But he also was a one-eyed jack, who, for years, showed only one side of his face.

He hoarded the press and magazine pieces done on his international drug busting exploits like an old maid cherishes her high school dance programs.

One of his several scrap books is filled with press clippings on the Houston police department narcotics scandal of 1954.

And George White kept a diary. Sterile, often cryptic jottings in little books, most leatherbound. From 1934 when he cut his milk teeth as a narc on the streets of San Francisco's Chinatown until he died at age 67 of a heart attack in 1975 at his home near San Francisco.

Those diaries and his other personal papers, given by his widow, Albertina, to Foothills College in Los Altos, Calif., have thrust George Hunter White back into the glare of publicity he so dearly loved. And they expose the other side of the face of the one-eyed jack.

George White, his diaries disclose, did clandestine jobs for the OSS during World War II and later for the CIA under the alias of Morgan Hall.

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

As Morgan Hall he was involved in drug experiments to alter human behavior and to find a so-called Truth Drug (T-drug).

It was as Morgan Hall, the diaries show, that White set up so-called safe-houses (protected meeting places) in New York and San Francisco where the drug experiments with marijuana extract and LSD were conducted.

And White took the drugs himself. Once, he wrote, a T-drug cigarette "knocked me out cold."

The White papers had gathered dust in the archives of Foothills College for nearly a year before a U.S. Senate subcommittee, investigating alleged CIA abuses, was tipped by an unknown source.

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of their existence. Committee investigators then swooped down on the little college recently.

Thus, George White, alias Morgan Hall, was unmasked in death as a CIA operative.

The tell-tale diaries show that George White leased apartments, stocked them with booze and had one wired with electronic surveillance equipment so agents could listen in on the effects of the drugs on unwitting human guinea pigs.

He used women, one identified only as Virginia, to bring men to 225 Chestnut on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco in the mid-'50s.

From the White diaries:

May 2, 1955: Rent premises 225 Chestnut for M. Hall. \$200 monthly.

May 3: Gottlieb calls me re Hall accounts.

(Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA's former science chief, testified that the CIA experimented with mind altering drugs. He told a U.S. Senate panel the U.S. intelligence community felt it was essential to keep pace with foreign expertise in the use of mind control drugs.)

July 27, 1955: 225 Chestnut. Met Leo Jones to bring equipment.

(Leo Jones, owner of the Fargo Co. in San Francisco, manufacturers of electronic surveillance equipment, said White hired him to bug the third story apartment. "The listening post for agents was in a concealed back room," Jones said.)

At that time White was district supervisor of the U.S. narcotics bureau in San Francisco.

Again, from the White diaries:

Aug. 16, 1955: Memo re my using TD (truth drug) for self experimentation. Preparing TD's.

The key questions today, still unanswered: How many persons were given LSD and other drugs? Was a physician present? Where are the follow-up studies, if any?

White's role in the mind-bending world of LSD and other drugs is traceable to his



George H. White, narcotics agent, spy and CIA operative.

entry into the U.S. Army in 1942.

Although he was 58 pounds overweight (his normal weight was about 200 on his 5-foot 7-inch frame), he was accepted for training at a British counter intelligence school near Toronto. He describes the school, Oshawa, as a "school for mayhem and murder."

On April 20, 1942, he was commissioned as a captain, AUS, Serial No. 0-90-30-85, and took a commando course in Virginia.

The next diary entry, Nov. 12, 1942: To National City Bank re letter of credit and travel checks; \$5,000 in cash. To Miami. Now the OSS agent is sprung.

Later that year and in early 1943, he writes in his diary that he is in Brazil, West Africa, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Palestine. He met with "ministers of opium" and a "Jno. Wilson, U.S. legation in Baghdad."

His role and assignment in those countries is not explained in the diaries.

His involvement in drug experimentation began after his return to the United States.

May 24, 1943: Washington. With Dr. James Hamilton conducted experiments on T-drug. Volunteer as subject. Knocked myself out with 1 gram cigaret. Dinner at Chinatown.

(Dr. James Hamilton, a psychiatrist living today in San Francisco, has been linked to the CIA activity. He was unavailable for comment. His name appears repeatedly throughout the White papers).

May 25-26: Test T-gas, vapor on self. St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington. With Dr. Hamilton. Preparing T-Drug.

May 27, 1943. NYC. Preparing T-cigarettes, 2 p.m. 2.02 grams. to 4 p.m. high.

Here there's a gap in the diary. Several pages are missing.

In May and June entries he tells of conferences with Hamilton re "tools for victory" packages. And conferring with Harry (presumably Harry Anslinger, U.S. narcotics bureau commissioner) re "poison pen techniques."

No details are given on either the "victory packages" or the "poison pen techniques."

In late August, 1943, White writes of receiving \$500 cash advance for "NY TD experiment. Call Harry re tests undercover work."

How much importance was attached to the drug testing is indicated in the Aug. 31, 1943 entry:

Lv Washington, 7 CIC (counter intelligence) agents to NY. In Belmont Plaza, 49th and Lex. 2d lts. Cooper, Long, Thron; NCO's Newhouse, Powell, Treyn. TD experiments. All in rooms. Meals, etc. served. Candy trials. (LSD presumably also was given the subjects in candy form.)

The Belmont experiments continued through Sept. 12.

White writes: NYC. Home all day. Quarrel with Ruth (his wife before he married Albertina in 1952).

The White papers indicate a successful Truth drug was not developed.