

One-eyed jack

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CIA spy, narc left revealing view of his work

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In the sunset of a life filled with adventure and intrigue, George Hunter White, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operative and narc, wrote a revealing "Dear Sid" letter.

A copy of the letter along with his diaries, scrapbooks and other personal papers is in the archives of the Electronics Museum at Foothills College, Los Altos, Calif.

The White papers were left to the college last year by his wife, Albertina.

The "Dear Sid" letter was written on Nov. 21, presumably 1972, three years before White died of a heart attack at age 67 at his Stinson Beach home in Northern California.

Sid, the recipient of the letter is Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, the former CIA chief chemist, who recently testified before a U.S. Senate subcommittee investigating the CIA and its super-secret MK-Ultra project. That project, headed by Gottlieb, dealt with giving unwitting human guinea pigs LSD and other mind-altering drugs.

White has been identified by witnesses and his own diaries as active in the MK-Ultra project, earlier called Bluebird and Artichoke.

The contents of the diaries revealed that George White had played the role of a one-eyed jack successfully for some 30 years. The public knew him as a U.S. narcotics agent. The other side of his face, his work

as a spy and CIA operative, came to light after his death.

Excerpts from his Dear Sid letter:

"It's pleasant to be remembered these days since nature has speedily been decimating the ranks of my friends and acquaintances. I'll be 64 next June and in spite of cirrhosis, diabetes and cardiac, I'll probably outlive most of my contemporaries. I need nothing and envy no one."

While then writes of reading a story in Newsweek about Richard Helms, then head of the CIA.

"I was favorably impressed with the company's reported trend. (The CIA is

often referred to by its agents as The Company.)

"It may come as a surprise to you but as far back as OSS (Office of Strategic Services, the World War II spy agency and precursor of the CIA), I firmly believed that all information collected in the field was sent post-haste to Washington, and filed in funeral gray steel cabinets by purified acolytes.

"Then, so the rumor went, on Sunday the high priests would gather to kneel and pray before their repositories of sacred writings. The missionaries in the field were happy in their faith.

"The fruit of their labors were being

used to propitiate the angry gods. Of course, I was a very minor missionary, actually a heretic, but I toiled wholeheartedly in the vineyards because it was fun, fun, fun.

"Where else could a red-blooded American boy be, kill, cheat, steal, deceive, rape and pillage with the sanction and blessing of the All-Highest. Pretty good stuff, brudder.

"I feel we could save a lot of money these days by licensing spies in various categories, demanding reciprocity, of

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course. If you've real secrets, you don't want the competition to know about (should there be a "you"), handle it the same way you do anything else you're ashamed of. Like, man, I don't care if the FBI taps my phone. I'm going to do my crime planning while swimming in the ocean. Real cool. Keep in touch, regards, GHW."

White's widow has refused to take telephone calls from newsmen.

"She told me that too many stories about her husband are twisted and unfair," said Estelle McLaughlin, an architect at Foothills College, repository of the White papers. "But she said that she felt that everything her husband did was proper and justifiable because he was in the service of his country and he did what he was ordered to do."

George White's name, through his diaries, has been linked to the case of Dr. Frank Olson, an Army employee, who worked for the CIA in 1953, during the time White ran safe houses (protected meeting places) in New York City.

Olson had been given LSD. Ten days later he leaped to his death from the 10th floor of a New York City hotel.

A slip of paper was found in one of his

pockets. The paper bore the initials, "G.W." and "M.H." and the address, 81 Bedford St.

Morgan Hall was George White's undercover name as a CIA operative, and 81 Bedford was the address of one of the safe houses Morgan Hall had rented in New York.

The evaluation of any man's diaries and papers at the best is a risky business.

Often, facts necessary to clarify motivation or behavior patterns are missing or hard to come by.

In the final analysis, perhaps the best explanation of the spy business and its bizarre activities was provided by George Smiley, John LeCarre's fictional super-spy master.

"To be inhumane for defense of our humanity, harsh for defense of compassion."

The business left Smiley emotionally bankrupt.

Tuesday: White in Houston.