

CONGRESS and the MK-ULTRA WHITEWASH

The bottom line on this whole business has not been written.

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Technical Service Division

On September 20 and 21, 1977, The Senate Subcm. on Health and Scientific Research, composed of Ted Kennedy and Richard Schweiker, held hearings on MK-ULTRA and related CIA behavior control programs. The hearings were prompted by a series of disclosures during the summer which revealed that the CIA's mind-bending initiatives were far more extensive than first recognized. In his opening statement, Chairman Kennedy confessed that he hoped "the next two days of hearings will close the book on this chapter of the CIA's life."

The Subcm. focused primarily on the CIA's drug tests on unwitting civilians. David Rhodes, a former CIA psychologist, told of his MK-ULTRA adventures in San Francisco with Walter Pasternak, a CIA operative who double-timed as an official for the Society of the Study of Human Ecology, which served as a CIA conduit. Rhodes and Pasternak (who has been missing since August 3, 1977, after failing to appear before a joint hearing of the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Kennedy Subcm.) were instrumental in setting up safehouses, which served as field laboratories for testing offensive chemical and biological warfare weapons.

Rhodes explained how unsuspecting subjects were recruited from local bars and lured to a party, where CIA operatives intended to release LSD in the form of an aerosol spray. The Senators sat back in their chairs and relaxed as Rhodes described how another CIA "psychologist," John Gittlinger, tried the spray on himself after discovering the air currents in the room were unsuitable for dosing the partygoers. The audience guffawed at the prospect of grown men tinkering with "government acid," while reporters eagerly scribbled their renditions of the headline-making tale. The mood of the hearings was set from the start.

The myth the CIA was to propagate about itself when under public pressure, became apparent as we heard one account after another of bungling and clumsiness on the part of Agency personnel. By stressing ineptitude, the Company creates the air of the all-too-human "the Good Ford Syndrome . . . Who needs to prosecute a bunch of regular Joe's for fooling with chemicals they could never hope to understand?"

A central figure in the CIA's safehouse experiments, which began in 1962 and lasted until 1965, was the late George Hunter White, a former Lt. Colonel in the OSS and a long-time high-ranking official in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. White, aka "Morgan Hall," hired drug-addicted prostitutes to spike the drinks of unsuspecting customers. LSD, or "Stormy," as safehouse operatives referred to it, was the one substance, according to Agency officials, "that really had fantastic possibilities if used wrongly." Apparently, the CIA found this possibility irresistible.

"These activities," Kennedy explained, in referring to the CIA's surreptitious acid tests, "are part of history, not the current practice of the CIA." And that's as far as it went. The LSD-buffoonery proved to be an effective PR-gimmick, as the Subcm. never sought to probe the obvious CIA-Mafia link represented by White, a man described by former CIA Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick as someone who had "good access to criminal types."

In 1942, for example, White was involved in negotiations with August Del Gracia, a NYC hoodlum tied to Meyer Lansky, for the release of Lucky Luciano from federal prison. In return, the Mob promised to cooperate with allied forces during WWII. Known as "Operation Underworld," this early political alliance between the

Mafia and American Intelligence apparently occurred with the good graces of the Roosevelt administration.

But the Subcm. chose not to pursue this line of inquiry. Nor did either Senator press the point when Robert Lashbrook (a CIA chemist, who served as Gottlieb's right-hand man) claimed he was unable to recall any connection between MK-ULTRA and the CIA's "Executive Action" capability. An unlikely remark, considering that many of the lethal devices intended for use by CIA-Mob hit teams originated in MK-ULTRA gadget shops.

When asked to justify the CIA's fascination with mind control, Gottlieb resorted to the familiar Cold War refrain invoked repeatedly throughout the hearings by numerous witnesses. The original impetus for this work, we are told, stemmed from concern about the "aggressive use of behavior-altering techniques against this country by its enemies." Gottlieb claimed that in the early '50s there was tangible evidence that "both the Soviets and the Red Chinese *might* [emphasis added] be using techniques of altering human behavior which were not understood by the USA and which would have implications of national survival in the context of national security."

The evidence Gottlieb cited to support this quintessential Cold War rationalization was hardly definitive. The CIA pushed the false story that the USSR bought up the world's supply of LSD in the early '50s. Furthermore, according to Gottlieb, a senior American diplomat *might* have been drugged while accompanying Nixon on his trip to Russia in 1971, although no evidence was offered to back up this contention.

As it turns out, the Cold War party line was a cover story all along. In response to questions whether the CIA should continue testing drugs on unwitting subjects, on 11/9/64 then-Deputy Director Richard Helms warned that the Agency's "positive operational capacity to use drugs is diminishing, owing to a lack of field testing. With increasing knowledge of the state of the art, we are less capable of staying up with Soviet advances in this field."

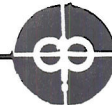
But only a few months earlier, Helms stated in a 6/26/64 memo to J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel for the Warren Commission, that "Soviet research in the pharmacological agents producing behavioral effects has consistently lagged about five years behind Western research. . . . There is no present evidence that the Soviets have any singular, new, potent drugs, or that they are particularly expert in the use of such drugs to force a course of action on an individual."

"In summary," Helms concluded, "there is no evidence that the Soviets have any techniques or agents capable of producing particular behavioral patterns which are not available in the West. . . . Some of the more esoteric techniques such as ESP or, as the Soviets call it, 'biological radio-communication,' and psychogenic agents such as LSD, are receiving some overt attention with, possibly, applications in mind for individual behavior control under clandestine conditions. However, we require more information than is currently available in order to establish or disprove planned or actual applications of various methodologies by Soviet scientists to control the actions of particular individuals."

Helms' candid appraisal of Russian mind control capability directly contradicts not only his own public statements, but also the testimony of most of the witnesses called before the Kennedy Subcm. In 1973 Helms ordered Gottlieb to destroy all CIA documents relevant to the operational employment of behavior control techniques developed since WWII. The files were destroyed, Gottlieb explained, because of a "burgeoning paper problem."

Would it not have been in the interest of national security, however, to at least keep records of the information accumulated by the CIA during the past three decades—especially in light of Stansfield Turner's own admission that America's enemies were supposedly still active in these areas? Turner recently recommended against calling Helms to testify before Congressional committees probing intelligence matters, fearing that the former CIA Director might reveal secrets that would have a detrimental effect on the Agency. Both the Senate Intelligence Committee

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ABC's *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*

The AIB believes the following letter, which was submitted to the New York Times in response to a Times editorial of 10/9/77 on ABC's program, The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald, serves as a general response to the overall criticism of the program.

When the *Times* adds to its attack on the ABC's "docudrama" on Oswald the complaint that "a veritable industry has grown up" around the Kennedy assassination, it should realize that it is only staring its own failures in the face.

Among all newspapers, the *Times* towers supreme in the defense of regular thinking on the JFK issue and has fiercely refused over the years to acknowledge the shortcomings of the official theory, even when Congress itself has seen the need to re-open the case. Then of all newspapers, how can the *Times* now have the cheek to rebuke ABC for "gross irresponsibility" when ABC responds to a growing public sense of official bamboozlement in this matter by permitting the expression of a counter-theory based on the conspiracy hunch?

True, as the *Times* says, "From the beginning, the Kennedy assassination has been beset by inadequate investigation and overwrought imagination." Yes, and was the most "inadequate investigation" of all not that of the Warren Commission itself, as it studiously avoided such critical questions as Oswald's ties to the U.S. intelligence community and Ruby's ties to organized crime? Was the most "overwrought imagination" not that of the Warren lawyers who gave us the absurd thesis of the single-bullet in order to obviate the numerous indications that shots were fired at Kennedy from a place Oswald could not have been?

The "docu-drama" form has serious flaws, probably fatal ones; but the most pitiable thing about ABC's "Oswald" is that it is not less well documented, not less provable, not indeed more fictional, than the self-styled "factual and objective" treatments of the event offered over the years by the big voices of the mass media such as the *Times* and CBS. Agreed, docu-drama is not form for the final orderly presentation of the facts. But the form arises nonetheless (a) because people so badly need a realistic-feeling conception of what happened to the President and our government, and the Warren theory does not satisfy this need; and (b) because the main stream media news bureaus have been so pre-committed over the years to a policy of brushing off and smearing the Warren critics, smugly resuming silence, then sighing "What, again?" every time they rediscover they have not yet sold the lone-assassin fantasy to the masses.

Certainly the ABC "Oswald" was much more speculative than it pretended to be, but that is also true of the Warren Commission's no-conspiracy theory. The *Times* may pretend to have caught ABC's story in fatal exaggeration, but one suspects the real reason for the *Times'* editorial fury is that for the first time ever on a prime-time mass medium there has been presented a generally intelligent and well-informed reconstruction of the Kennedy assassination that begins to take account of the strong case Oswald might have built in his defense and that does not shrink from troubling signs that a conspiracy might have been afoot.

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The *Times*, *Newsweek*, and other media giants chose to attack ABC for factual errors and innuendo in one particular area—the dramatized phone call from LBJ to the prosecutor (Ben Gazzara). The *Times* said, "There is no evidence that Lyndon B. Johnson interfered in any way with investigations of the assassination." *Newsweek* said, "There is not a shred of evidence that Johnson ever intruded in the assassination investigation." LBJ's very act of setting up the Warren Commission for the purpose of squelching

"... rumors of the most exaggerated (sic) kind that were circulating in this country and overseas" was itself an intrusion (From an internal WC memo by Melvin A. Eisenberg, dated 2/17/64, entitled "First Staff Conference (1/20/64)"). This memo goes on to detail LBJ's talk with Earl Warren regarding the chairmanship of the Commission: "Some rumors went as far as attributing the assassination to a faction within the Government wishing to see the Presidency assumed by President Johnson. Others, if not quenched, could conceivably lead the country into a war which could cost 40 million lives. No one could refuse to do something which might help to prevent such a possibility. The President convinced him that this was an occasion on which actual conditions had to override *general principles*."

The Schweiker-Hart Report included reference to an 11/25/63 memo from Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach to Presidential Secretary Bill Moyers which says in part (SHR, p. 23): "The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial. Speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or (as the Iron Curtain press is saying) a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists."

In sections of this memo which have not previously been made public, Katzenbach wrote: "Unfortunately the facts on Oswald seem about too pat—too obvious (Marxist, Cuba, Russian wife, etc.). The Dallas police have put out statements on the Communist conspiracy theory, and it was they who were in charge when he was shot and thus silenced. . . . We can scarcely let the world see us in the image of the Dallas police when our President is murdered. . . . We need something to head off public speculation or Congressional hearings of the *wrong sort*."

Perhaps even more to the point, Texas researchers Penn Jones (*Forgive My Grief*) and Larry Harris and Gary Shaw (*Coverup*) have reported in their books that LBJ called Dallas Police homicide chief Will Fritz asking him to halt the police probe on the morning of 11/23/63, saying "You've got your man."

Although the AIB has serious reservations about the premise of ABC's dramatized history, we think the words attributed to LBJ by ABC are a fair summary of the LBJ-Katzenbach position.

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and the Kennedy Subcm. have already stated that they have no intention of investigating CIA mind-control activities any further.

What was Helms trying to cover up? Recently released documents indicate that the CIA's mind control programs were explicitly *offensive* in orientation. An early CIA memo dated 1/25/52, pertaining to Operation Artichoke, asks the following: "Can we get control of an individual to the point where he will do our bidding against his will and even against such fundamental laws as self-preservation?" Indeed, this was perhaps the ultimate goal of the CIA's behavior-control programs. How successful was the CIA in realizing its dream of a Manchurian Candidate? Because the records are sketchy, at best, we are left only with suggestive hints and innuendos.

But one thing is certain. The moral sense that gave rise to this secret research is still very much with us. CIA memos justify the administration of dangerous drugs "under conditions of war"—a meaningless proposition, since in the covert war, victory is never absolute. The only guidelines adhered to by intelligence operatives were their own personal judgments. No one, to date, has been reprimanded or brought to task for participating in these activities.

The Cold War chickens have come home to roost, and Congress, once again, has shown with flying colors that it is no match for Big Brother.

NOTE: *The AIB urges anyone who has been victimized by CIA or related mind-control activities, or who might otherwise have pertinent information to share on this subject, to contact our office.*

