



# THE BLACK VAULT

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30 November 1953

DCI and DDCI: discussion of the Olsen case. It was agreed that Houston and I would make a thorough investigation and submit our recommendations to the Director.

30 November 1953

HOUSTON, EDWARDS, FIELDS AND SCOTT: discussion of the Olsen case. Scott and Fields will take steps to see that the files are sent up here and the drug impounded.

1 December 1953

GIBBONS: came in to make a strong plea that no disciplinary action be taken on the Olsen case.

2 December 1953

DCI and DDCI: discussed the Olsen case with them.

2 December 1953

WISNER: discussed the Olsen case. He stated that neither he nor Helms knew anything about the intention to make this experiment. He pointed out that Helms had held a staff meeting in May at which Drum and Gibbons were present and had indicated that the drug was dynamite and that he should be advised at all times when it was intended to use it. A memorandum on this was later sent to the Division and TSS which advised that there would be no use without Wisner's permission.

3 December 1953

HAROLD COOPER: talked to him about his reaction to LSD. He stated that he thought application on an unwitting basis was very bad.

3 December 1953

GOTTLEIB: advised that Dr. Abramson would be here tomorrow and would I want to see him. Told him that I would arrange it through Houston.

3 December 1953

DE FLOREZ: came in to say that he thought any reprimands in the Olsen case would be most unfortunate.

ON: reported that he had obtained a favorable ruling on  
Olsen case from BEC.

10 & 11 December 1953

HOUSTON: discussed the Olsen case,

17 December 1953

DDCI: reviewed the Olsen case and advised I would submit it  
to him for disciplinary action

17 December 1953

GIBBONS: came with Drum to advise that Gottlieb had cleared  
with Drum, who was acting Chief TSS.

18 December 1953

EDWARDS and CHADWELL: advised me that Stanley Lovell had  
considerable information about the Olsen case.

22 December 1953

HOUSTON: asked him for papers on Olsen case.

12 January 1954

Advised HOUSTON of comments in GOTTLIEB's files on LSD.

25 January 1954

Meeting with CABELL, WISNER, and HELMS on OLSEN case.

1 February 1954

Discussion with DCI and DDCI on TSS reprimands and TSS meeting  
(deFlores, Drum, Gibbons, Gottlieb, Helms, Houston, Edwards, Cabell  
and Dulles).

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29 August 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Influencing Human Behavior

Any experiment or use of drugs or other techniques for influencing human behavior will be undertaken only with the Director's specific approval and in no case on unwitting American citizens.

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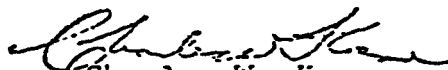
MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General  
ATTENTION : Mr. Allan E. Brody  
VIA : Deputy Director for Administration.  
SUBJECT : Alleged Illegal Domestic Activities  
(Suicide of Frank R. Olson)

1. Reference is made to a 10 July 1975 request from Mr. Allan Brody of your Staff concerning the location of certain documents related to the 1953 suicide of Mr. Frank R. Olson. Mr. Brody requested that the Office of Security review the pertinent files concerning the suicide in an attempt to locate certain memoranda which had been prepared by the then Inspector General (Mr. Lyman Kirkpatrick) concerning the circumstances surrounding Mr. Olson's death.

2. A review of the documents contained in an Office of Security soft file entitled "LSD Material" disclosed several memoranda related to Mr. Olson which were of interest to the Inspector General. During discussions with Mr. Brody and Mr. Scott Breckinridge on 19 July 1975, Mr. Brody requested that he be furnished with a copy of the entire "LSD Material" soft file to aid in his review of the Frank R. Olson matter.

3. Per the above discussions, copies of the entire "LSD Material" file are being forwarded herewith.

4. This memorandum will further serve to confirm that on 10 July 1975 a copy of the entire Office of Security file concerning Frank R. Olson (SF#98 450) was delivered to Mr. Allan Brody per his request upon the authorization of Deputy Director of Security (PSI).

  
Charles W. Kane  
Director of Security

Att

474 (4)

29 JAN 1955

SUBJECT: Frank R. Olson

Mr. Olson, who committed suicide on 23 November 1953, was a civilian employee of the U. S. Army Chemical Corps, then located at Camp Dietrich. At 0500 hours on 20 November 1953, Colonel Sheffield Edwards, then the Director of Security, was called by Bernard Doran who asked for a meeting among Mr. Doran, Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, Dr. Gibbons, and Colonel Edwards. During this meeting, it was related that Mr. Olson had been in New York City during the preceding week undergoing psychiatric treatment from a Dr. Harold Abramson. Mr. Olson had been accompanied by Robert Lashbrook, a TSS employee at that time. Mr. Lashbrook and Mr. Olson had a room at the Statler Hotel in New York City. At 0230 hours, Mr. Lashbrook was awakened by crash and discovered that Mr. Olson had dived through the hotel window. After this incident, Mr. Lashbrook called Dr. Gottlieb and then called the hotel desk which, in turn, called the police.

Drs. Gibbons and Gottlieb related to the Director of Security the fact that on Wednesday and Thursday, 18 and 19 November 1953, a group of individuals from Camp Dietrich and from TSS assembled at a cabin at Deer Creek Lake. Dr. Gottlieb stated that there were seven (7) individuals (not fully identified) from Camp Dietrich and three (3) individuals from TSS. They stated that TSS liaison in connection with the "Special Operations" group at Camp Dietrich, had been kept on an EYES ONLY basis known only to a few persons in the Agency and at Camp Dietrich. It was stated that this liaison was known to Generals Bullene and Creary of the Army Chemical Corps. The purpose of this liaison was to discuss their work on a matter of mutual interest in the sensitive and covert fields.

According to the information furnished by Dr. Gottlieb to Colonel Edwards, on the evening of 19 November, it was decided to experiment with the drug LSD and for the members present to administer the drug to themselves to ascertain the effect a clandestine application would have on a meeting or conversation. Dr. Gottlieb stated that a "very small dose"

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of LSD was placed in a bottle of Cointreau and that all present except two (2) individuals, had a drink thereof. Mr. Olson was included in this group. Dr. Gottlieb reported that the drug had a definite effect on the group to the point where they were boisterous and could not continue the meeting or engage in sensible conversation. Dr. Gottlieb stated that Mr. Olson, along with others, complained of wakefulness during the night.

The information contained in Colonel Edwards' memorandum for the record indicates that the LSD was administered with the knowledge of those present. However, a memorandum of conversation contained in I.G. files, dated 1 December 1953, and bearing the signature block of the then Inspector General, indicates that the LSD was given to eight (8) of the individuals present, but that they were not told what they had been given until 20 minutes afterwards. However, the use of some drug of the LSD type had been discussed with Camp Dietrich representatives by Dr. Gottlieb and they all had agreed that an unwitting experiment would be useful.

On Tuesday, 24 November 1953, the Commanding Officer of Special Operations, Colonel Ruethe (sic) called Dr. Gottlieb and stated that Mr. Olson appeared mentally depressed. Dr. Gottlieb then suggested that Mr. Lashbrook take Mr. Olson to New York City to be treated by Dr. Abramson. From that point there were a series of psychiatric treatments in New York City until 28 November when it had been planned to place Mr. Olson in a sanitarium called Chestnut Hotel near Rockville, Maryland. Because Messrs. Lashbrook and Olson had not been able to make plane reservations, they stayed overnight at the Statler on 25 November when the suicide occurred.

Subsequent to this incident, the matter was investigated by the I.G. staff, which recommended to Mr. Allen Dulles that Mrs. Gibbons, Drumm, and Gottlieb be reprimanded. I. G. investigation determined that Mr. Frank Wisner and Mr. Richard Helm were not aware that this experiment was to be conducted.

Files of this Office reflect no indication that this experiment was part of any formal project.

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On 26 November 1953, around 0230, a civilian employee of the U. S. Army Chemical Corps located at Camp Dietrich, Maryland committed suicide by jumping from a window at the Statler Hotel in New York City. The Army civilian and six (6) other individuals from "Special Operations," a part of the Army Chemical Corps at Camp Dietrich, along with three (3) individuals from CIA had attended meetings at a cabin at Deer Creek Lake during the period 13-19 November 1953. The purpose of these meetings, which took place once or twice a year, was to discuss matters of mutual interest between this Agency and the Army Chemical Corps. On 19 November, according to a statement made by an Agency employee present to the then Director of Security of the Agency, it was decided to experiment with the drug, LSD. A very small dose of LSD was placed in a bottle of cointreau and eight (8) of the ten (10) persons present had a drink. Two (2) of the individuals present did not drink the cointreau since one (1) was a teetotaler and the other had a heart condition.

Files of this Agency reflect a conflict with respect to the administering of the LSD since a memorandum written by the then Inspector General of the Agency indicates that the individuals present were not told that the drug was LSD until some 20 minutes after its ingestion. However, this memorandum does indicate that an Agency representative had discussed the possibility of an actual use of the drug and that Army representatives had agreed that this would be a valuable experiment.

After the ingestion of the drug, a definite effect was seen on the group in that they became boisterous and "happy." The Army civilian, who later committed suicide, complained of wakefulness that evening.

On 24 November 1953, it was reported that the Army civilian appeared mentally depressed and he was taken to New York City to be treated by a psychiatrist. He was treated five (5) or six times in New York City during the week prior to 28 November and on 27 November it was decided that he should be placed in a sanitarium for treatment. He was to be admitted to the Chest Hill Sanitarium near Rockville, Maryland. On the night of 28 November 1953, he and an Agency employee stayed overnight at Statler Hotel in New York City since they could not get plane reservations to Washington until the next day. It was in the early morning hours of the next day that the Army civilian committed suicide.

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A statement from the psychiatrist who examined the Army civilian indicates that, according to this individual's own statement, he had been delusional for a long period of time, had inordinate guilt feelings regarding his pension and disability pay and had been so depressed and agitated in March of 1953 that his wife felt he should see a doctor.

On 9 December 1953, it was determined by this Agency that the death of this individual had resulted from circumstances arising out of an experiment undertaken in the course of his official duties for the U. S. Government.

An investigation of this incident was conducted in 1953 by the Inspector General of the Agency and the Director of Central Intelligence reprimanded the Agency employees involved.

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IDENT LIST

Army Civilian

Frank R. Olson

CIA Employees

Dr. Sidney Gottlieb  
Mr. Robert Lashbrook  
Mr. (FNU) Hughes

CIA Employee (New York City):

Robert Lashwell

Examining Psychiatrist

Dr. Harold A. Abramson

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30 Jan 1975

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

VIA Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: Alleged Illegal Domestic Activities  
(Frank R. Olson)

1. Attached in true name format is a summary of information in Office of Security files together with copies of pertinent documents concerning an incident involving ingestion of LSD.
2. Also attached in sterile format is a summary of Office of Security files concerning this incident.
3. Please advise if you desire additional information concerning this matter.

Charles E. Hape  
Director of Security

Atts

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[REDACTED]

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