

S E C R E T

14 June 1989

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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1. On 13 June 1989, [REDACTED] SAD/SIB, and [REDACTED] SAD/LIB, interviewed [REDACTED] at his son's residence in [REDACTED]

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2. Prior to the interview, [REDACTED] had an opportunity to review the Widows chapter on James Kronthal. As [REDACTED] is the person who found Kronthal's body, he was interviewed to confirm or discount information and allegations made in the book. What follows are excerpts of the interview, bearing on the Kronthal case.

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Q: Were you in Security at the time of this incident?

A: No, that's all wrong. Gould (Cassal) and I had been instructors in the Training Office.

I had been just moved over to the German Branch and Gould was still in Training. And basically, I was still in Training. (passage omitted) I was hired by Training to be a professor in the Soviet Affairs Branch. (passage omitted)

Then I, because of my German background, wanted to get my period away from Training. I had been three and a half years in Training, so I moved over to the German Branch. And, one morning, the famous morning, I had a phone call from Gould, who was still in Training. He said, I think, I'm not quite sure, but I think he said: [REDACTED] has asked me to drive out to Jim's apartment.

(b)(3)

Q: That's [REDACTED] who?

(b)(3)

A: [REDACTED] She was a close friend, and I think she has since died. But she was a personal friend of Jim Kronthal's. As a matter of fact, the book says the night this happened he had a dinner with Dulles. I think it was [REDACTED] I may be wrong about that.

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WARNING NOTICE  
INTELLIGENCE SOURCES  
OR METHODS INVOLVED

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SUBJECT: Interview with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Q: We never found anything in Mr Dulles' papers that said that. He would usually write down his dinner appointments. . . .

A: Of Course he would. I'm quite sure I would have remembered that in the conversation -- that he had a meeting with Dulles. He may have had a meeting with him some time before, because at that time the Chief of Training was pretty much directly subordinate to the Director, rather than subordinate to the Chief of Operations, or what was then the DD/P, because the training establishment was both Overt and Covert and was one big hodge-podge. But Jim Kronthal was the Chief of Covert Training, though I think at that time he was also responsible for the overt. But, I wasn't, I had been in the covert, but things were changing at that point. I really didn't know Jim that well, because I had moved out of training just about the time he came in.

(b)(3)

Anyway, to get back to the phone call. He said, [REDACTED] says he's supposed to be at a meeting and he hasn't showed up. And she's worried. She thinks we ought to go out to his apartment.

Q: And did she work for us at the time?

A: Yes, (passage omitted) she was the head of the Administrative Training Section, of the Office of Training. (passage omitted) She was a widow. Her husband had been killed during the war and I believe that her wartime experience was both Red Cross and OSS. My guess would be that she was older than Jim Kronthal. (passage omitted) Gould said: My car was in the garage, and [REDACTED] suggested that you could drive me. Well, [REDACTED] and I were good friends. We had next door offices. (passage omitted) Also, the second woman who was closely involved at this time was [REDACTED] wife, Cordelia Dodson Hood [REDACTED].  
(passage omitted)

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Both Cordelia and (her brother) [REDACTED] had been in Germany before the war and had good connections in the German scene. I don't know, but I suspect, reading this book, the [REDACTED] and the Kronthals, [REDACTED] all knew each other in that American community in Germany, pre-WWII.

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Anyway, Cordelia and [REDACTED] were very good friends. And since I knew Cordelia from the old days in college, it was a small world kind of thing. (passage omitted)

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[REDACTED]

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(b)(3)

So, I said sure, and left my office and picked up Gould at the Training Office, which was across Independence Avenue and we headed off to the apartment. I had never been to Jim's apartment. I didn't know where it was, but Gould did.

We got there and the maid, my memory had been it was [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] was perfectly good to me. I knew it was something "ia." But, Gould knew her. He had been in the house many times. As we came in she said "Would you like some coffee?" And she went and brewed up some coffee and showed us the note he had left saying "do not disturb." And we talked to her, and she didn't want us to go upstairs, because she had been told he didn't want to be disturbed. We told her: But he's got an appointment this morning, and he's either forgotten it and it is supposedly an important meeting. Neither of us knew what the meeting was about, because he (Gould) would have gotten it second hand. I would have gotten it third hand. So, we sat down. We figured by the time we'd have a cup of coffee, he'd wake up.

(b)(6)

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Well, when we'd had our coffee, Gould was ready to go back to the office. And I said: Gould, I don't like this. We've got to go up and if the door's locked, then we go back to the office. But, if its open, something, afterall, natural causes whatever. So I went up. Gould stayed downstairs. I went up and opened the door and there was Jim in bed. The story that, I think that's not the way it was. I think he was in bed. He had laid a linen towel across his chest this way (indicates lengthwise across the upper chest) and he was waxy, there was sweat on his forehead, but relaxed face. But he was obviously dead. And on the table next to him was a little tube. (A later phone conversation with [REDACTED] mentioned the tube had military markings) And leaning against the lamp was an envelope, facing the door, with "Richard Helms."

(b)(3)

So, I left, didn't touch anything. I went downstairs and told them, though I waited until the maid was somewhere else and told him (Gould) he was dead. He's committed suicide. And, of course, Gould said: How? And I said: "I'm absolutely convinced it was an L-tablet." (passage omitted)

And now, so now what do we do? So I said: the note says "Dick Helms." And both of us knew Dick. Dick had been the East European Division and had moved on to be the Chief of Operations for the DD/P.

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[REDACTED](b)(3)  
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And I said: "Well, there's going to be a problem here. How do we handle it." And he said: I think we ought to call Dick. He had the number and he rang him up and said: I can't talk to him. So, I took the phone, and besides, he said: You found him. And, Gould was very upset. He was quite emotionally disturbed. Again, it was a close friend, whereas I hardly knew Jim. In fact I had likely seen him twice before.

So I told Dick Helms what had happened. And he said: Stay there, call the police, and I will get Shef Edwards there before the police get there, which, of course, didn't happen. Shef didn't arrive until the police had been there and the whole, the ambulance and the whole thing had been screaming around for a long time.

And the man who came in said he was chief of the District detectives office (Lawrence Hartnett) and who was the man upstairs. I said James Kronthal. And, of course, we had to go through the spelling. And he said: Where did he work? And I said "CIA," because I had asked Dick, "What do I say?" And he (Helms) said: Tell them the truth. Don't try to avoid anything. So I said "CIA". And he (Hartnett) said: Aeronautics? CAA? And I said: "No, CIA." And he said: What's that? (passage omitted)

So, there I was. I couldn't believe that the chief of detectives of the District Police wouldn't have been contacted and briefed, and that procedures would have been worked out for this kind of a thing. Well, about that time, Shef Edwards came in, and I can't remember who came with him, but he was a man, I can't remember his name, but he was rather famous. He wore a hearing aid in those days with a wire that went down to a belt. . . .

Q: Gaynor?

A: Yes, Paul Gaynor. (passage omitted) So then, he had never met the Chief of Detectives, and there was a hell of a lot of . . . "What are you doing here?" from the police. And so, he (Edwards) showed his badge. He was able to convince them (the police) that we were no longer needed. That we should be allowed to go. So at that point Gould and I (passage omitted) went back to his office. I went back with him, because he wanted me to be with him when he told the people in Training what had happened.

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[REDACTED](b)(3)  
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So then we talked to [REDACTED] And she was really upset. She said: I don't really understand it. We had a date, tonight. He had talked to me last night about our getting together again. She said: I just don't understand it. And tears and stuff. We left her.

(b)(3)

Later that afternoon I went with Gould to Cordelia's apartment down in [REDACTED] because the women had asked that we talk to them about what had happened. So, we sat around with Cordelia and [REDACTED] and another women who I had never met before and whose name I don't recall. And that was just about it.

(b)(6)

(b)(3)

The next day the press . . . I went home early. I told my wife: If the newspapers call, just say "no comment" and hang up. Something's happened. (passage omitted) Something in the office the newspapers are onto. Don't talk to them. (passage omitted)

Cordelia was the grand woman of the Agency at that time. She had worked with Dulles as his 'girl Friday' [REDACTED] And, her husband, [REDACTED] later husband, was the file clerk boy [REDACTED] office. The joke was that Mr Dulles could never remember his name. He always referred to him as "Cordelia's husband." I think [REDACTED] whole career was damaged by that. Those of us who new Cordelia used to joke about that.

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Q: At the time you all found the body, between then and when Shef Edwards and Paul Gaynor arrived, did you all look around the house or anything like that?

A: We just sat back down at the kitchen table. As a matter of fact, it wasn't much more than seconds, minutes before the police were at the door, once I called them. The sirens, we couldn't have been sitting more than a minute before they were there.

Q: Do you remember any other notes? The book alleges there were notes to Dulles and his sister there.

A: We didn't see any. The only thing on the bed, side table, and I was only there for a few seconds, didn't touch a thing, but I was there long enough that when the police came down with the letter and Shef, I think, took the letter at that point. The had gotten enough bona fides to get the letter from them for Dick Helms.

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[REDACTED]

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

And, this is only hearsay, but I think I heard through Gould that Dick had told him that the letter had said in it: "They're after me." So, I had assumed that it was the polygraph and he was being reinterrogated by Bruce Solie, I assume, at that time.

Q: There were some allegations, and you read in the book, that he was homosexual. . . .

A: At that time, homosexual activity in the Agency was not a big thing -- if you confessed it. In other words, if, during your polygraph test . . . I knew several. In fact, Gould Cassal, to my mind, was a homosexual. He left the Agency very shortly thereafter. He felt it had wrecked his career. (passage omitted)

Q: Was there any talk at the time, like the book alleges, about the Soviets?

A: No. Cordelia became just about the number one CI/CE investigator and did a lot of work following cases independently, often, of Angelton, and for the director, Mr Dulles, still. If she had had any suspicion, she would have told us. What we talked about that afternoon was his mental state, and they all, the three women there knew him and Gould knew him, and they all felt he was depressed. And they knew he had fits of depression before. And the question was asked, if I remember, did he every say to you, the girls were all talking, did he ever say to you he was going to commit suicide. And they all said "no." But they also thought he was often so deep in depression when they had known him before, that they were really surprised that he hadn't succeeded.

Q: Did you ever subsequently find out who he had the meeting with? Was it another polygraph?

A: No, no, I, my guess is that it was some training meeting. There was a lot of reorganization going on at that time, and my guess was it was a weekly or monthly meeting, but with a little more importance that morning because they were going to discuss the reorganization.

Q: The say in the book that the police officer, the homicide detective was well known as a trouble shooter for the Agency. It didn't give you that impression?

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[REDACTED]

(b)(3)

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A: Heavens no. He didn't even know what the hell was going on. He didn't know what CIA was. Never heard of it before. My impression of the man was that he wasn't a very bright bulb, quite frankly.

Q: He said he almost arrested the two of you while you were there.

A: I think he was thinking about that. I mean, he was lost. When I did use the word "intelligence" his mouth dropped open. And he had a vague idea that this was something that was a little more than usual. And he did say something, now its coming back, I have a feeling that he said: That's why I was sent over here in such a hurry, or something like that. I don't know whether Dick had called him too, or whether somebody had called a higher up, and word had come down from the commissioner.

Q: The man who wrote this section, William Corson, it has been alleged that he was a trouble shooter for Allen Dulles, he was an unofficial aide.

A: The face is familiar. I don't know where I've seen him. I've seen him somewhere before.

Q: He was a Marine Corps officer before and was in Naval Intelligence.

A: It may be, I spent three and a half years with the SOD, Special Operations Division, and we had contact with all kinds of ex-military types. One of my jobs was to write exposes of exposes. My job as intelligence chief was when this kind of a story would come out that involved any of the paramilitary ops, i had to go and say, prepare for my chief the answer he would give if there were any news queries, what he was allowed to answer. Particularly about the arms dealers. This was in the early seventies.

Q: Did Trento try to contact you?

A: No, no one ever tried to contact me. (passage omitted) There are lots of stones unturned. I went back through my list of names of people who would have had knowledge, and none of them appear in the book. Of courses, Dick helms. He was a close personal friend.

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SUBJECT: Interview With [redacted]  
[redacted]

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Gordon Stewart [redacted] Hugh Cunningham [redacted] and Jim's predecessor [redacted] He was the first chief of training when it was combined OSO/OPC. I was hired by OPC and we had that great split in those days. That's one of the reasons I didn't know Kronthal that well, was he was on the other side of the fence. In those days people were very jealous of their backgrounds, and though I had not been in the OSS during the war, I was MIS. (passage omitted) John Bross [redacted] chief of EE, knew Jim well. The other person who was then on the staff of EE, was Peter Sichel [redacted] who was involved in the Berlin thing and Otto John, which ended in his departure from the Agency; then, I starred [redacted] Dick Helms first wife. She was a close friend, and if I remember correctly visited me in [redacted] when I was Chief of Station. And we brushed on this whole thing. And my memory is she, was a good friend of Cordelia's and [redacted] We talked over old times and old names, common friends. (passage omitted)

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Q: I guess the bottom line for us, as you mentioned, was that there was no inkling that you were aware of that he had anything to do with the Soviets, espionage, or anything along those lines.

A: I'm absolutely convinced that Cordelia, with her background, would have explained to us that, what we were told, that was that he said "they're after me" was because there was an investigation going on. She would have been right in the middle of that investigation.

Q: Was there any thought that he had been involved with the Nazis while in Germany, that whole part of the story?

A: This I would doubt seriously. The business with the art? I can't understand what that's all about, because, though I didn't know him very well. I had been involved with the art stuff as MIS. My room in Munich was decorated with the Durer portrait of the man in the yellow coat. (passage omitted) The unit I belonged to with the military was an intelligence assault force and our job was to seize intelligence objectives, and they included the art treasurers of Germany. And, I can't imagine -- though it's possible -- that his suicide was over just that. (passage omitted)

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SUBJECT: Interview With [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

(b)(3)

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Q: There was an investigation back in 1951 and some homosexual allegations uncovered out [REDACTED]. . . and this list of people (b)(1) had gotten to Senator McCarthy, and that was a contributing factor (b)(3) as well. If he was depressed about the polygraph and such. Is there any indication of that at the time?

A: That may have very well have been part of it, but McCarthy didn't come up that day. (passage omitted)

(b)(3)

(b)(6)

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