

S E C R E T

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: [REDACTED]
Director of Security

SUBJECT: James Speyer KRONTHAL, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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BACKGROUND:

1. Subject is a deceased Agency employee who committed suicide in his Georgetown home on 31 March 1953. Subject was the topic of a Newsweek article "The Soviet's First CIA Mole," published in the 15 May 1989 issue (attachment A). The article makes reference to the book Widows, written by William Corson [REDACTED] and Joseph [REDACTED] & Susan Trento, which alleges that Subject had been co-opted by the Soviets due to his homosexuality. (C)

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EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

- Coordinator of Information (COI)/OSS civilian employee
7 Apr 1942 - Oct 1942
- OSS/Special Services Unit (SSU) Captain, US Army 9 Dec 1942 -
Sep 1946
- SSU/CIG/CIA Sep 1946 - May 1947
- CIA May 1947 - Apr 1952 [REDACTED]
- CIA Apr 1952 - 31 Mar 1953 Training Officer/Operations
- 31 March 1953 -- Found dead at home, apparent suicide
(attachment B) (S)

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WARNING NOTICE
INTELLIGENCE SOURCES
OR METHODS INVOLVED

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[REDACTED]

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ALLEGATIONS IN "WIDOWS":

1. "Widows" alleges that Subject was a homosexual who was sent to Germany by his employer--a NY financial house called Speyer & Co.--to assist in selling artworks the Nazis confiscated from the Jews. It is alleged that the Gestapo found out about Subject's homosexuality, and that the Soviets found this record through a post-war penetration of BND. (U)

2. According to Widows, the Soviets, aware of Subject's proclivities, provided him with "Chinese boys" and filmed him engaging in sex acts with them. Subject was then coerced into providing the Soviets with "packets" of information. The Soviets, who wanted an "agent in place" in the Agency's highest office, eventually told Subject to press for assignment as head of clandestine services. (U)

3. It is further alleged that on 31 March 1953, the night Subject died, he dined at DCI Dulles' home. When Subject returned home, he wrote suicide letters to Dulles, Helms, and his sister and killed himself. Subject's body was discovered the next day by two Officers from the CIA's Office of Security. Lt. Hartnett, the investigating officer with DC's Homicide Squad, was "well-connected with the Agency" and was "charged with cleaning up messes" that the "CIA wanted hidden." (U)

4. Finally, Widows alleges that Subject's file is "buried deep in the archives of the CIA." (U)

AVAILABLE FACTS

1. Subject's Security file was destroyed in the late 1970s and his polygraph file was destroyed in October 1980. These files were destroyed routinely, following established procedures for the destruction of vintage personnel information. Based on information available from soft files, the review of the manuscript of "The New KGB" by Corson/Crowley and related security files, certain facts relating to the KRONTHAL case have been ascertained. (S)

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2. Subject's PHS reveals that Speyer & Co. was his employer from 1934-1938. He left to go back to Harvard when the company was liquidated in 1938. (C)

3. A 31 March 1953 FBI memorandum (attachment C) notes Subject's death and claims the Agency cleared him of allegations of homosexuality. The memo also reports that Subject's name was on Senator Joseph McCarthy's list of subversive Agency employees, a fact of which Subject was aware. (C)

4. A 3 April 1953 FBI memorandum (attachment D) concerning an interview with John W. Ford, Director of State Department Security, notes that he conducted an investigation of homosexual activities among CIA and State employees in 1951 and developed evidence that Kronthal was a homosexual. This evidence included a signed statement from [REDACTED] who had engaged in two homosexual acts with Subject. (S)

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5. Ford further stated that Kronthal was [REDACTED] by the Agency in the early summer of 1951. Ford monitored the test and recalls Kronthal's admission of at least one homosexual act. Ford felt Kronthal was not cashiered because he was a close friend of Allen Dulles and that the Agency felt the activity was in his past. (S)

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6. A 10 April 1953 FBI memorandum reports that DC coroner, Dr. Magruder MacDonald, reported that Kronthal's body had been tested for narcotics without result. Two blood samples from Kronthal were turned over to the FBI Laboratory for analysis. The Bureau Laboratory found no poisons in Subject's blood samples. (C)

7. An 8 December 1954 FBI memorandum (attachment E) details an interview with Agency employee George MUSULIN [REDACTED]. Musulin stated that Subject left a suicide letter that the DC Police found and was of the opinion that Sen. McCarthy had obtained a copy. The Agency had kept the original note, but the DC police had kept a copy. This memo also mentioned that Subject learned his name was on Sen. McCarthy's list and killed himself, rather than face the publicity. (S)

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8. Records also indicate that Kronthal's housekeeper, Lavinia Thomas, was at his house the morning of 31 March 1953. The Agency called Kronthal's house when he failed to show up for work and asked Thomas to wake him. She called him, but could not rouse him. (C)

9. Gould CASSAL and [REDACTED] who were actually with OPs Training (Kronthal's office) and not from OS, went to KRONTHAL's home, found him dead, and searched for Agency-related information. (S)

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10. In 1983 Robert Crowley submitted a manuscript for review by the CIA's Prepublication Review Board, as required by his Secrecy Agreement. The manuscript, coauthored by Corson, contained a discussion of the "Kronthal affair." In a 2 February 1984 letter to OGC Crowley cites material in the public domain concerning Kronthal's case and reveals this additional information:

a. Corson had interviewed Subject's sister, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She stated that Subject's homosexuality was known to her and family members from the time he was 13-14 years old. Rodgers, who was ailing at the time, remains convinced Subject was "murdered by agents of the CIA" and was an addressee of one of three suicide notes left by the Subject.

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b. Also interviewed was [REDACTED] a first cousin of Subject, who related information about Subject's close association with John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles prior to WWII. [REDACTED] also notes Subject's homosexual preferences since late childhood.

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c. Note is made of DC Metro Police records at the National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, which contain Police incident reports on Subject's suicide, including three suicide letters, addressed to: Subject's sister, Allen Dulles (then DCI), and Richard Helms (then Chief of Operations).

d. Corson interviewed Lt. Lawrence Hartnett, DC Metro Police Homicide Squad, in December. Hartnett threatened the two

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Agency officers [REDACTED] Gould Cassal,
[REDACTED] on the scene with arrest for ransacking the
Subject's house and possessions. Hartnett believes this
disturbance of the crime scene made any conclusion except
suicide unsupportable and still retains his investigation
notebook. Hartnett was never satisfied that Subject committed
suicide and believes the Subject might have been murdered. (S)

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11. Former DCI Richard Helms has advised that there was no
thought whatsoever given to Subject being a spy for the Soviets.
(S)

OS ACTIONS:

1. Continue to interview current and former Agency officers
who may have information concerning this case, and attempt to
locate old reference file information from internal and external
sources. (C)

James P. Lynch

Attachments