Project MKULTRA
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Project MKULTRA (also known as MK-ULTRA) was the code name for a CIA mind-control research program that began in the 1950s[1], and continued until the late 1960s[2]. There is much published evidence that the project involved not only the use of drugs to manipulate persons, but also the use of electronic signals to alter brain functioning.[3]

It was first brought to wide public attention by the U.S. Congress (in the form of the Church Committee) and a presidential commission (known as the Rockefeller Commission) (see Revelation below) and also to the U.S. Senate.

On the Senate floor, Senator Ted Kennedy said:

"The Deputy Director of the CIA revealed that over 30 universities and institutions were involved in an 'extensive testing and experimentation' program which included covert drug tests on unwitting citizens 'at all social levels, high and low, native Americans and foreign.' Several of these tests involved the administration of LSD to 'unwitting subjects in social situations.' At least one death, that of Dr. Olson, resulted from these activities. The Agency itself acknowledged that these tests made little scientific sense. The agents doing the monitoring were not qualified scientific observers."[4]

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Origins

Headed by Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, MKULTRA was started on the order of CIA director Allen Dulles on April 13, 1953[5], largely in response to alleged Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean use of mind-control techniques on U.S. prisoners of war in Korea.[6] The CIA wanted to use similar methods on their own captives. The CIA was also interested in being able to manipulate foreign leaders with such techniques[7], and would later invent several schemes to drug Fidel Castro.

In 1964, the project was renamed MKSEARCH. The project attempted to produce a perfect truth drug for use in interrogating suspected Soviet spies during the Cold War, and generally to explore any other possibilities of mind control.

Because most of the MKULTRA records were deliberately destroyed in 1972 by order of the Director at that time, Richard Helms, it is impossible to have a complete understanding of the more than 150 individually funded research projects sponsored by MKULTRA and related CIA programs. [8]

Dr. Sidney Gottlieb approved of an MKULTRA subproject on LSD in this June 9, 1953 letter.

Experiments were often conducted without the subjects' knowledge or consent.[9]

The experiments

Central Intelligence Agency documents suggest that the agency considered and explored uses of radiation for the
purpose of mind control as part of MKULTRA. Other early
efforts focused on LSD, which appears to have formed the
majority of research as time went on. Experiments included
administering the drug to CIA employees, military
personnel, doctors, other government agents, prostitutes,
mentally ill patients, and members of the general public
in order to study their reactions, usually without the
subject's knowledge.

The experiments often took a sadistic turn. Gottlieb was
known to torture victims by locking them in sensory
deprivation chambers while under the psychedelic influence
of LSD, or to make recordings of psychiatric patients' therapy sessions, and then play a tape loop of the
patient's most self-degrading statement over and over
through headphones after the patient had been restrained
in a straitjacket and dosed with LSD. Gottlieb himself took LSD frequently, locking himself in his office and
taking copious notes.

Efforts to "recruit" subjects were often illegal even
discounting the fact that drugs were being administered
(though actual use of LSD, for example, was legal in the
United States until 1967). In Operation Midnight Climax, the CIA set up several brothels to obtain a selection of
men who would be too embarrassed to talk about the events. The brothels were equipped with one-way mirrors and the
"sessions" were taped for later viewing.

Fugitive Boston mobster James "Whitey" Bulger is reputed
to have been a voluntary participant in MKULTRA while in
prison.

Some subjects' participation was consensual, and in these
cases, the subjects appeared to be singled out for even
more horrific experiments. In one case, a selection of
volunteers were given LSD for 77 days straight.

LSD was eventually dismissed by the researchers as too
unpredictable in its effects. Although useful information
was sometimes obtained through questioning subjects on
LSD, not uncommonly the most marked effect would be the
subject's absolute and utter certainty that they were able
to withstand any form of interrogation attempt, even
physical torture.
Some believe that once LSD was discovered to be too unpredictable for interrogation, the CIA introduced it to the rising "hippie" movement, perhaps via Al Hubbard, and other related causes in the '60s, as a means of subverting them.

Another technique was connecting a barbiturate IV into one arm and an amphetamine IV into the other. The barbiturates were released into the subject first, and as soon as the subject began to fall asleep, the amphetamines were released. The subject would begin babbling incoherently at this point, and it was sometimes possible to ask questions and get useful answers. This treatment was discarded as it often resulted in the death of the patient from physical side effects of the drug combination, thus making further interrogation impossible. Other experiments involved heroin, mescaline, psilocybin, scopolamine, marijuana, alcohol, and sodium pentothal.

There is no evidence that the CIA (or anyone else) has actually succeeded in controlling a person's actions through the "mind control" techniques that are known to have been attempted in the MKULTRA projects. The file destruction undertaken at the order of CIA Director Richard Helms in 1972 makes a full investigation of claims impossible.

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Budget

A secretive arrangement granted a percentage of the CIA budget. The MKULTRA director was granted 6% of the CIA operating budget in 1953, without oversight or accounting.[1]

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Canadian experiments

The experiments were even exported to Canada when the CIA recruited Albany, New York doctor Ewan Cameron, author of the psychic driving concept which the CIA found particularly interesting. In it he described his theory on correcting madness, which consisted of erasing existing memories and rebuilding the psyche completely. He commuted to Montreal every week to work at the Allan Memorial Institute and was paid $69,000 from 1957 to 1964 to carry out MKULTRA experiments there. The CIA appears to have
given him the potentially deadly experiments to carry out since they would be used on non-U.S. citizens.

In addition to LSD, Cameron also experimented with various paralytic drugs as well as electroconvulsive therapy at 30 to 40 times the normal power. His "driving" experiments consisted of putting subjects into drug-induced coma for weeks at a time (up to three months in one case) while playing tape loops of noise or simple repetitive statements. His experiments were typically carried out on patients who had entered the institute for minor problems such as anxiety disorders and postpartum depression, many of whom suffered permanently from his actions.

It was during this era that Cameron became known worldwide as the first chairman of the World Psychiatric Association as well as president of the American and Canadian psychiatric associations. Cameron had also been a member of the Nuremberg medical tribunal only a decade earlier.

Revelation

In December 1974, The New York Times reported that the CIA had conducted illegal domestic activities, including experiments on U.S. citizens, during the 1960s. That report prompted investigations by both the U.S. Congress (in the form of the Church Committee) and a presidential commission (known as the Rockefeller Commission) into the domestic activities of the CIA, the FBI, and intelligence-related agencies of the military.

In the summer of 1975, congressional hearings and the Rockefeller Commission report revealed to the public for the first time that the CIA and the Department of Defense had conducted experiments on both cognizant and unwitting human subjects as part of an extensive program to influence and control human behavior through the use of psychoactive drugs such as LSD and mescaline and other chemical, biological, and psychological means. They also revealed that at least one subject had died after administration of LSD.

Frank Olson, a United States Army biochemist and biological weapons researcher, was given LSD without his knowledge or consent in 1953 as part of a CIA experiment and allegedly committed suicide a week later following a
severe psychotic episode. A CIA doctor assigned to monitor Olson's recovery was supposedly asleep in another bed in a New York City hotel room when Olson jumped through the window to fall ten stories to his death.

Olson's son disputes this version of events, and maintains that his father was murdered due to his knowledge of the sometimes-lethal interrogation techniques employed by the CIA in Europe, used on Cold War prisoners. Frank Olson's body was exhumed in 1994, and cranial injuries suggested Olson had been knocked unconscious before exiting the window.

The CIA's own internal investigation, by contrast, claimed Gottlieb had conducted the experiment with Olson's prior knowledge, although neither Olson nor the other men taking part in the experiment were informed the exact nature of the drug until some 20 minutes after its ingestion. The report further suggested that Gottlieb was nonetheless due a reprimand, as he had failed to take into account suicidal tendencies Olson had been diagnosed as suffering from which might well have been exacerbated by the LSD.

Subsequent reports would show that another person, Harold Blauer, a professional tennis player in New York City, died as a result of a secret Army experiment involving mescaline.

The congressional committee investigating the CIA research, chaired by Senator Frank Church, concluded that "[p]rior consent was obviously not obtained from any of the subjects." The committee noted that the "experiments sponsored by these researchers . . . call into question the decision by the agencies not to fix guidelines for experiments." (Documents show that the CIA participated in at least two of the DOD committees whose discussions, in 1952, led up to the issuance of the memorandum by Secretary of Defense Wilson which initiated the project.)

Following the recommendations of the Church Committee, President Gerald Ford in 1976 issued the first Executive Order on Intelligence Activities which, among other things, prohibited "experimentation with drugs on human subjects, except with the informed consent, in writing and witnessed by a disinterested party, of each such human subject" and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Commission. Subsequent orders by Presidents
Carter and Reagan expanded the directive to apply to any human experimentation.

Following on the heels of the revelations about CIA experiments were similar stories about the Army. In response, in 1975 the Secretary of the Army instructed the Army Inspector General to conduct an investigation. Among the findings of the Inspector General was the existence of the then-still-classified 1953 Wilson memorandum.

In response to the Inspector General's investigation, the Wilson Memorandum was declassified in August 1975. The Inspector General also found that the requirements of the 1953 memorandum had, at least in regard to Army drug testing, been essentially followed as written. The Army used only "volunteers" for its drug-testing program, with one or two exceptions. However, the Inspector General concluded that the "volunteers were not fully informed, as required, prior to their participation; and the methods of procuring their services, in many cases, appeared not to have been in accord with the intent of Department of the Army policies governing use of volunteers in research."

The Inspector General also noted that "the evidence clearly reflected that every possible medical consideration was observed by the professional investigators at the Medical Research Laboratories." This conclusion, if accurate, is in striking contrast to what took place at the CIA.

In Canada, the issue took much longer to surface, becoming widely known in 1984 on a CBC news show, the fifth estate. It was learned that not only had the CIA funded Dr. Cameron's efforts, but perhaps even more shockingly, the Canadian government was fully aware of this, and had later provided another $500,000 in funding to continue the experiments. This revelation largely derailed efforts by the victims to sue the CIA as their U.S. counterparts had, and the Canadian government eventually settled out of court for $100,000 to each of the 127 victims.

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U.S. General Accounting Office Report

The U.S. General Accounting Office issued a report on September 28, 1994, which stated that between 1940 and 1974, DOD and other national security agencies studied
hundreds of thousands of human subjects in tests and experiments involving hazardous substances.

The quote from the study:

... Working with the CIA, the Department of Defense gave hallucinogenic drugs to thousands of "volunteer" soldiers in the 1950's and 1960's. In addition to LSD, the Army also tested quinuclidinyl benzilate, a hallucinogen code-named BZ. (Note 37) Many of these tests were conducted under the so-called MKULTRA program, established to counter perceived Soviet and Chinese advances in brainwashing techniques. Between 1953 and 1964, the program consisted of 149 projects involving drug testing and other studies on unwitting human subjects...[10]

Legal issues involving informed consent

The revelations about the CIA and the Army prompted a number of subjects or their survivors to file lawsuits against the federal government for conducting illegal experiments. Although the government aggressively, and sometimes successfully, sought to avoid legal liability, several plaintiffs did receive compensation through court order, out-of-court settlement, or acts of Congress. Frank Olson's family received $750,000 by a special act of Congress, and both President Ford and CIA director William Colby met with Olson's family to publicly apologize. Previously, the CIA and the Army had actively and successfully sought to withhold incriminating information, even as they secretly provided compensation to the families. One subject of Army drug experimentation, James Stanley, an Army sergeant, brought an important, albeit unsuccessful, suit. The government argued that Stanley was barred from suing under a legal doctrine—known as the Feres doctrine, after a 1950 Supreme Court case, Feres v. United States—that prohibits members of the Armed Forces from suing the government for any harms that were inflicted "incident to service."

In 1987, the Supreme Court affirmed this defense in a 5–4 decision that dismissed Stanley's case. The majority argued that "a test for liability that depends on the extent to which particular suits would call into question
military discipline and decision making would itself require judicial inquiry into, and hence intrusion upon, military matters." In dissent, Justice William Brennan argued that the need to preserve military discipline should not protect the government from liability and punishment for serious violations of constitutional rights:

The medical trials at Nuremberg in 1947 deeply impressed upon the world that experimentation with unknowing human subjects is morally and legally unacceptable. The United States Military Tribunal established the Nuremberg Code as a standard against which to judge German scientists who experimented with human subjects. . . . [I]n defiance of this principle, military intelligence officials . . . began surreptitiously testing chemical and biological materials, including LSD.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, writing a separate dissent, stated:

No judicially crafted rule should insulate from liability the involuntary and unknowing human experimentation alleged to have occurred in this case. Indeed, as Justice Brennan observes, the United States played an instrumental role in the criminal prosecution of Nazi officials who experimented with human subjects during the Second World War, and the standards that the Nuremberg Military Tribunals developed to judge the behavior of the defendants stated that the 'voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential . . . to satisfy moral, ethical, and legal concepts.' If this principle is violated, the very least that society can do is to see that the victims are compensated, as best they can be, by the perpetrators.

This is the only Supreme Court case to address the application of the Nuremberg Code to experimentation sponsored by the U.S. government. And while the suit was unsuccessful, dissenting opinions put the Army—and by association the entire government—on notice that use of individuals without their consent is unacceptable. The limited application of the Nuremberg Code in U.S. courts does not detract from the power of the principles it espouses, especially in light of stories of failure to follow these principles that appeared in the media and
professional literature during the 1960s and 1970s and the policies eventually adopted in the mid-1970s.

In another law suit, Wayne Ritchie, a former United States Marshall, alleged the CIA laced his food or drink with LSD at a 1957 Christmas party. While the government admitted it was, at that time, drugging people without their consent, U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel found Ritchie could not prove he was one of the victims of MKULTRA. She dismissed the case in 2005. See Image:Ritchie.pdf

Conspiracy theories

There are also conspiracy theories which claim that the MKULTRA project was also linked with the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Some have argued that there is evidence that the assassin, Sirhan B. Sirhan, had been subjected to mind control, though such ideas are generally dismissed, largely because the supporting evidence is rather scant.

Pop culture references

* The Richard Condon novel The Manchurian Candidate, and its film adaptations, portrays the assassination of an American presidential candidate by a brainwashed US soldier [http://www.winstonsmith.net/jfkshortartretfromind.htm in a manner which evidenced numerous parallels to the JFK assassination, despite the fact that the novel and John Frankenheimer's original film adaptation were released prior Kennedy's murder.
* In the movie Conspiracy Theory, Mel Gibson's character was a subject in the MKULTRA experiments.
* The movie Jacob's Ladder contains a plot element in which soldiers in Vietnam are involuntarily subjected to mind-altering drugs.
* See The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, and Ken Kesey
* The band mk Ultra took their name from these projects.
* In the song "Let Robeson Sing" (about Paul Robeson), The Manic Street Preachers refer to MKULTRA as having made Robeson paranoid.
* A reference to MKULTRA is made in The X-Files episode, "Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space'".
* Electronica artist The Orb produced a track called "MK Ultra".
* Drum and bass artist Skynet produced a track called "MK Ultra".
* Noise rock band Green Magnet School have a song named "MK Ultra" on their final album.
* Underground Hip Hop artist Immortal Technique mentions MK ultra in his Anti-Bush track "The 4th Branch", on the album Revolutionary Vol. 2
* Lustmord side project Terror Against Terror created a track called "Stalker (MKULTRA Mix)".
* The conspiracy comic series Vector 13 did an issue on MKULTRA, although there was little to do with the actual project except the name.
* Stephen King's novel Firestarter dealt with two characters who'd been subject to psychedelic drug treatments as part of college experiments, with mind-altering results.
* Author Matthew E. Clairmont's first book, Lesser Minds: The Michael Enslow Project, mentions a fictional CIA mind-control project from the 1960s and 1970s called ED-EXCEL, in which researchers used LSD, heroin and physical and sexual abuse to establish coercion. The upcoming trilogy makes numerous references to this project that mirror MK-ULTRA.
* The professional wrestler Sterling James Keenan's finishing move is called the MK Ultra.
* Rock band Muse included a photograph of the MKULTRA documents in the lyric booklet enclosed with their fourth album, Black Holes And Revelations.
* The Chicago-based hardcore punk band mk ultra (unrelated to the above-mentioned group) also used the name.
* The Role Playing Game Conspiracy X lists the MKULTRA program as a project to help defeat the Greys. The Game states that the MKULTRA subjects were released in the late 60's and that two eventually met up, married and produced offspring with super-enhanced psychic abilities. This led directly to the Ruby Ridge incident.

http://www.conspiracyx.com/

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See also

* Project ARTICHOKE
* Project BLUEBIRD
* Project CHATTER
* CIA cryptonyms
* CIA operations
* Brainwashing
* Sidney Gottlieb
* Louis Jolyon West
* MKDELTA
* MKNAOMI

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2. ^ U.S. Congress: The Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Foreign and Military Intelligence (Church Committee report), report no. 94-755, 94th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976); p. 392 "According to the CIA, the project [MKULTRA] was decreased significantly each budget year until its complete termination in the late 1960s."

3. ^ The referenced sentence was originally sourced from here; it is not obvious what the context of this reference was.

4. ^ This quote is from the Opening Remarks by Senator Ted Kennedy during the August 3, 1977 meeting of the U.S. Senate Select Committee On Intelligence, and Subcommittee On Health And Scientific Research of the Committee On Human Resources; online version from the Schaffer Library of Drug Policy, a unofficial website.

5. ^ Church Committee; p. 390 "MKULTRA was approved by the DCI[Director of Central Intelligence] on April 13, 1953"

response to alleged Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean uses of mind-control techniques on U.S. prisoners of war in Korea."

7. ^ Church Committee; p. 391 "A special procedure, designated MKDELTA, was established to govern the use of MKULTRA materials abroad. Such materials were used on a number of occasions."


9. ^ ibid. "The congressional committee investigating the CIA research, chaired by Senator Frank Church, concluded that 'prior consent was obviously not obtained from any of the subjects.'"

10. ^ Quote from "Is Military Research Hazardous to Veterans Health? Lessons Spanning Half A Century", part F. HALLUCINOGENS 103rd Congress, 2nd Session-S. Prt. 103-97; Staff Report prepared for the committee on veterans' affairs December 8, 1994 John D. Rockefeller IV, West Virginia, Chairman. Online copy provided by gulfweb.org, which describes itself as "Serving the Gulf War Veteran Community Worldwide Since 1994". (The same document is available from many other (unofficial) sites, which may or may not be independent.)

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Government Documents

  o A link to the first page on MKULTRA.
  o A link to the first page on Frank Olson.
* [3] U.S. Senate: Joint Hearing before The Select Committee on Intelligence and The Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research of the Committee on Human Resources, 95th Cong., 1st Sess. August 3, 1977
* [6] Office of the Director of Central Intelligence (ODCI): Studies in Intelligence - Fifteen DCIs' First 100 Day
* Entire MKULTRA Document Archive

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Articles

(sorted by date)

* [9] "Woman awarded $100,000 for CIA-funded electroshock" - CBC news, 10 June 2004
* [10] "Brainwash victims win cash claims" - Sunday Times, October 17, 2004

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Books
* 80 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time, by Jonathan Vankin and John Whalin, chapter 1, "CIAcid Drop".
* The Mk/Ultra Secret, by Frank Camper, Christopher Scott Publishing (February 1997), ISBN 1-889149-02-0

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Essays

* Mind Control: The Rosetta Stone of the JFK Assassination, by Jerry Leonard

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External links

* The Frank Olson Project – a website created by Frank Olson's family to explore the issues surrounding his death.
* Declassified MKULTRA Documents at the Black Vault – the full 4-CD collection of MKULTRA (and related) FOIA documents, online.
* Mind Control and MKULTRA by Richard G. Gall
* Declassified MKULTRA Project Documents
* Video: "Meet the first President of the World Psychiatric Association" - Free Press international 18 March 2005
* The Most Dangerous Game Downloadable 8 minute documentary by independent filmmakers GNN
* MKULTRA & CIA Mind Control Multimedia - Archive of MKULTRA and other CIA Mind Control projects.
* Results of the 1973 Church Committee Hearings, on CIA misdeeds, and the 1984 Iran/Contra Hearings
* XXVII. Testing and Use of Chemical and Biological Agents by the Intelligence Community
* List of MKULTRA Unclassified Documents including subprojects
  * The WHY? Files - MKULTRA
  * Bluebird: Deliberate Creation of Multiple Personality by Psychiatrists, by Dr. Colin A. Ross
  * U.S. Research on Hypnosis and Mind Control Begins
  * The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate", by John D. Marks
  * Amy Goodman Interviews Professor Alfred McCoy of the University of Wisconsin. [11]
* The Perfect Assassin: Lee Harvey Oswald, The CIA and Mind Control, by Jerry Leonard. Evidence that MKULTRA-victim Oswald assassinated JFK along lines of declassified CIA memo on mind control.