"Ravenscrag Revisited"

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Read on Monday, 8:00 P.M., January 4, 2010, at the regular meeting of the Indianapolis Literary Club, Park Tudor School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Brainwashing
Repeat and repeat till they say what you are saying.
Repeat and repeat till they are helpless before your repetitions.
Say it over and over till their brains can hold only what you are saying.
Speak it soft, yell it and yell it, change to a whisper, always in repeats.
Come back to it day on day, hour after hour, till they say what you tell them to say.
To wash A B C out of a brain and replace it with X Y Z—this it it.

Selected Quotes: “Ravenscrag Revisited”

“Wherefrom they drank, she straightway cast a charm,
Nepenthe, banisher of sorrow and anger,
Bringing forgetfulness of every trouble..”

“Of all the tyrannies on humankind the worst is that which persecutes the mind.”

“Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Of art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?”

“No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.”

“If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable—what then?” George Orwell, 1984, a novel. New York: New American Library, 1949.

“An uninterrupted stream of fantastic images of extraordinary plasticity and vividness...accompanied by an intense, kaleidoscope like play of colors.”

The goal of the Dachau mescaline (a drug with many of mind altering qualities of LSD) experiments on prisoners was “to eliminate the will of the person examined.”
Walter Neff, German research team member, Dachau. John Marks, 1979.

“It is now clear we are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination by whatever means and at whatever cost. There are no rules in such a game. ...American concepts of “fair play” must be reconsidered. We must develop effective espionage and counter espionage services and must learn to subvert sabotage, and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated, and more effective methods than those used against us.” Former President Hoover.
Indianapolis Literary Club

January 4, 2009

Essay: Ravenscrag Revisited

By Stephen J. Jay MD

Roots of Mind Control

When Sun Tzu (544 BC-496 BC), the Chinese general, wrote: “The Art of War” 2,600 years ago, millennia had passed during which time the art of warfare had evolved in ancient lands. (1, 2) Sun Tzu’s masterpiece offered insights on military strategy, including spying: “...what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge. (3)

Sun Tzu desired to influence others to do his bidding. (4) Since antiquity, humankind has sought to change beliefs through passive, benign and subtle techniques, to active, malign and flagrant means, including torture. Meerloo said that: “The rape of the mind and stealthy mental coercion are among the oldest crimes of mankind.” (5) Early peoples used magic, witchcraft, and forbidden drugs to change minds. (6) Homer’s Helen of Troy, in the Odyssey, served nepenthe in the wine to induce forgetfulness. (7, 8)

In Greek mythology, those who drank from the River Lethe in Hades forgot all they had suffered when they were alive. (9) In Poe’s classic, the student, suffering thoughts of his dead sweetheart cries out: “..thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee, Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore; quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore! Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.” (10)

Throughout American history Sun Tzu’s spy-craft has been evident and no less important to the outcomes of the Revolutionary, Civil and World Wars.

It was in WWII that President Roosevelt authorized, on June 13, 1942, the science-based Office of Strategic Services (OSS), whose purpose was to correct U.S. intelligence deficiencies and wage secret war. (11-13) A preeminent physician said that “Politicians, priests and psychiatrists often face the same problem: how to find the most rapid and permanent means of changing a man’s beliefs.” (14) This was the OSS challenge. The treatment of war neuroses in WWII spurred interest among OSS scientists in novel treatment that would be tested later in mind control studies. (15, 16)
My aims this evening are to trace the origins of mind control research; to review how rational motives for pursuing this “Holy Grail” were subverted; and to reflect on lessons learned for the 21st century.

Birth of Modern Mind Control

The OSS, led by the Wall Street Lawyer, General “Wild Bill” Donovan, assembled researchers to study how to manipulate the enemy. (1-5) They researched chemicals, biologicals, hypnosis, and even magic, paranormal psychology, voodoo, and spell-casting. (6-8) They created a secret “truth drug” committee at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington, DC, and studied the effects of mescaline, barbiturates, scopolamine, and marijuana in unwitting subjects. (9-19)

When Albert Hofmann at Sandoz Company in Switzerland discovered D-Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25) in 1943 and word of its hallucinogenic effects reached American intelligence officers, the die was cast. (20-22) Mind control research would consume the energies and treasure of OSS. (23-27)

By the time the National Security Act was signed by Harry Truman in 1947, creating the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Cold War research apparatus had been established--full of PhDs with CIA experience ready to bring science to spy craft and mind control. (28-33)

America’s Cold War: Fear and Paranoia

American intelligence services had reason to be concerned. (1-7) The Moscow show trials of opponents of Stalin revealed bizarre confessions in court, fueling speculation that novel interrogation techniques were being used. (8, 9) Arthur Koestler (“Darkness at Noon”) and George Orwell (“1984”) wrote of the horrors of totalitarian states, with interrogation of prisoners conjuring images of the Inquisition and Pavlov’s dogs. (10, 11)

The Nuremberg Trials (1945-49) revealed that Nazi doctors experimented with hallucinogenic drugs “to eliminate the will” of prisoners. (12, 17)

Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty of Hungary was arrested in 1948 by communists and accused of treason. At trial, appearing dazed, he confessed to acts he clearly had not committed. (18-21) Had the communists developed new drugs or technologies to extract confessions? (22, 23) An American psychiatrist, who treated American soldiers captured in Korea, viewed the Chinese Communist psychological manipulation with ... “horror and fascination.” (24)

Edward Hunter, a foreign journalist and one-time member of OSS, coined the term “brainwashing” to describe this “psychological warfare.” (25-44) Hunter’s vivid rhetoric stirred fear and paranoia that the U.S. intelligence services lagged. President Truman’s new CIA was charged with solving this problem. (45-53)
CIA and Mind Control

Assembled to lead this effort were CIA operatives; businessmen turned CIA executives; and researchers. The Dulles family figured prominently in the Cold War: John Foster at State Department; Allen at OSS and CIA, and Eleanor Dulles at the critical State Department’s Berlin desk. (1-3) Richard Helms (1913-2002) was recruited by the OSS. As a young newspaper executive, Helms interviewed Adolf Hitler in 1936. He was national advertising manager of the Indianapolis Times from 1936-38. (4-6)

CIA Director Roscoe Hillenkoetter approved the program “BLUEBIRD” on April 20, 1950. (7-9) BLUEBIRD’s agenda was ambitious: to prevent extraction of unauthorized information from personnel; and to control an individual, using interrogation techniques. (10) At a secret meeting at the Ritz Carlton in Montreal, June 1, 1951, intelligence officials of U.S., Canada, and Great Britain developed mind-control strategies, after reviewing reports of American prisoners being brainwashed. (11, 12)

When Project BLUEBIRD became ARTICHOKE in 1951, CIA research had already concluded that the communists did not have revolutionary techniques of mind control, only the age-old procedures. (13-18) But CIA leaders were determined to find novel methods. (19) The horror of American prisoners confessing before North Korean courts presented political problems for the CIA. (20)

Strategies for mind-control were sought; suitable human subjects for research were needed. The ethics of research on unwitting subjects was a peripheral concern as “patriotic” duty trumped the concept of informed consent, which was central to the Nuremberg Code, the first sentence of which stated: “The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.” (21-25) Using U.S. citizens on U.S. soil as research subjects was problematic for the CIA, legally and ethically. (26)

But, Allen Dulles and Richard Helms challenged scientists to discover “magic potions,” Homer’s nepenthe, a fail-safe means of acquiring the foreknowledge of Sun Tzu. They met little success but pressed on. (27-28)

MKULTRA

On April 13, 1953, Allen Dulles approved a top secret program, MKULTRA, to research biological and chemical materials for clandestine operations, including brainwashing. (1-18) The budget for MKULTRA was $300,000; the program was exempted from oversight.

The master-mind of MKULTRA was Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, from the Bronx. With a PhD in chemistry from Cal Tech and handicapped by a stutter and a clubfoot, his hobby was folk-dancing. (19-24)
On a farm outside Washington, D.C., he raised goats and Christmas trees. Gottlieb was also an assassination plotter. (25-31)

For the next 20 years, Dulles, Helms and Gottlieb would organize an extensive network in the U.S. to research the art and science of mind-control. Their aim of protecting U.S. interests was rational, but their management derelict. (32-35) By the early 1950s, the CIA Inspector General had denounced MKULTRA’s legal and ethical practices. (36)

But Gottlieb persisted and recruited Dr. Harold Wolff from Cornell, a prominent neurologist to create, in 1955, the “Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology.” (37-42) This CIA front-group provided research grants to behavioral scientists in the U.S. and Canada. (43-47)

Dr. Wolff and CIA operatives funded research at 80 institutions, including 44 colleges and universities, 15 research facilities, 12 teaching hospitals, and 3 prisons. (48-52) The Addiction Research Center in Lexington, KY, was funded by federal agencies and CIA front groups. Here, Dr. Harold Isbell performed LSD research on unwitting federal prisoners. (53)

Sidney Gottlieb hired the charismatic George Hunter White to run safe houses, in San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill and New York’s Greenwich Village on Bedford Street, where for ten years they paid prostitutes to lure men and surreptitiously dose them with LSD and other drugs. (54, 55) George White had been an agent of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and had links to organized crime and the pornography industry. (56, 57) White and Gottlieb himself used LSD frequently.

Ken Kesey, author of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” first experienced LSD in an MKULTRA research project in Menlo Park VA hospital. Some attribute the proliferation of LSD in American culture, in part, to MKULTRA. (58-74) Eli Lilly, in 1954, at CIA’s request, synthesized LSD, resulting in an endless supply of the drug. (75, 76)

The most important hub of MKULTRA in North America was found, not in America, but in Canada. The Canadian Defense Research Board, with the CIA, had been studying LSD, other hallucinogens, and sensory deprivation at McGill University in Montreal. (77-80)

Ravenscrag becomes the Allan Memorial Institute.

The shipping magnate, Sir Hugh Allan, built Ravenscrag in 1867 on Mount Royal, overlooking Montreal. (1) In 1940, Sir Montagu and Lady Allan gave Ravenscrag to the renowned Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University. With a grant from Rockefeller Foundation, Ravenscrag became the Allan Memorial Institute in 1944. (2-4)

The Allan was a few hundred feet from the “Royal Vic.” (5) Nearby was the Montreal Neurological Institute where the pioneering neurosurgeon, Wilder Penfield, did brain-mapping
research and lobotomies. (6) McGill was home to Donald O. Hebb, the famous psychologist. (7, 8) And, here, Hans Selye, described his “General Adaption Syndrome” to stress and its relationship to disease. (9, 10) This great institution, acclaimed for academic excellence in the 1940s, and with ties to military intelligence, was about to attract another preeminent scholar who would cast both bright and dark clouds over McGill University. (11)

Donald Ewen Cameron (1901-1967)

Sir Winston Churchill once said: “I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” This description fit the persona of Donald Ewen Cameron, who, while an international leader in psychiatry, was consumed in what experts would later call ill-conceived and unethical “brainwashing” research. (1-14)

This duality of Cameron’s character reminds us of Dr. Jekyll’s reflections near the end of his life: “Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I labored, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering.” (15)

Like the Scotsman, Robert Louis Stevenson, who studied the duality of human nature in his famous novella, Ewen Cameron, was also a Scot, born Christmas Eve 1901, in Bridge of Allan, 20 mi north of Glasgow. (16-19)

Cameron received a diploma in Psychological Medicine at the University of London. A year later, in 1926, he studied psychiatry at Johns Hopkins then left for Brandon, Manitoba, where he organized innovative community mental health services. Cameron pursued his early academic life-calling for a new era in scientific psychiatry but would later call science stifling for advancement of psychiatry. (20) His goal was to close the dreaded psychiatric hospitals and replace them with day hospitals and neighborhood clinics. (21-44)

Cameron moved to America in 1939 and became an American citizen in 1942; one year later he was appointed Director of the Allan Memorial Institute, which had metamorphosed from Ravenscrag, a family home, to what patients and observers would later describe as a hulking and sinister grey-stone mansion. (45)

Dr. Penfield recruited Cameron and told him he should do two things on arriving at McGill: get Canadian citizenship and learn French. Cameron did neither, a portent of future relationships with academic leaders and the Catholic French-speaking citizens. (46) Cameron established new research laboratories, a network of psychiatric training institutions in Montreal and stated he would transform the Allan into a world class research center. (47)
His fame established, Cameron was one of three North American psychiatrists who evaluated the neurotic and paranoid Deputy Fuhrer, Rudolph Hess, in 1945, at Nuremberg, and found him “not insane.” (48-50) Cameron was also one of five eminent American psychiatrists who met in 1945 to plan how to “help Germans achieve a new image of themselves which would substitute for compulsion to dominate the world.” (51-52)

Cameron was described as a tall and imposing man with pale blue eyes. He moved with athletic grace. (53-57) Critics said he was unscientific; driven to be important; arrogant, feared; impatient; and callous; he “suffered peers badly.” (58-61) One said he was “not an innovator but a scientific magpie.” Another said he was more a priest than a scientist. (62)

Some found Cameron politically astute, decisive; a man of integrity; a great individualist; charismatic, visionary and inspirational. (63-67) Cameron was indeed revered and reviled. (68) A self-described atheist and secular humanist, Cameron saw a competition for psychiatry-organized religion. (69)

From 1943 until his resignation in 1964, Ewen Cameron would manage one of the prestigious psychiatric research institutions in the world. (70-82) He received numerous honors and awards: President of the Canadian, American and the World Psychiatric Associations. (83-95)

A visionary, Cameron sought to prevent in future generations the destructive thinking and behavior of the Nazis. Psychiatry, not government, would shape such sweeping changes. He was supported by a psychiatry profession seeking to emerge from a second-class status in medicine. (96, 97) This was the romantic-heroic era of psychiatry and Cameron was the zeitgeist of the age. (98)

But, among his colleagues, patients, and staff, Cameron’s complex persona was troubling: he was easy to respect, but hard to like. (99-103) A distinguished psychiatrist, wrote that Cameron was “one of the most impressive men I have ever met,” ...“concerned with the well-being of men, regardless of national barriers, race or religion.” (104,105) Cameron’s shortcomings were attributed to hubris, “...accompanied by a failure to assess evidence dispassionately. (106)

Dr. Thomas Ban, a prominent neuropharmacologist who worked as a junior faculty member with Cameron in the 1950s, was not as critical. (107-110) He suggested Cameron’s practice was consistent with that of his contemporaries. Dr. Ban contradicted critics, suggesting that Cameron’s patients were well-informed of research procedures and that informed consent for research was not a common practice of that time. (111-114)

But Cameron’s defenders have been few. When revelations of his “mind-control” research became public in the 1970s, the popular and scholarly press quickly filled with diatribes and screeds that have dogged Cameron’s legacy to this day. (115-120)
Donald Ewen Cameron’s Research at the Allan Memorial Institute (1944-1964)

To understand the origin of this venom, it is necessary to examine Cameron’s research. Impatient with traditional psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, Cameron sought cures for mental illness and an understanding of failing memory in aging. (1-12) Most agree that Cameron’s aging research supported development of geropsychiatry. (13-41)

But his interest was in behavior modification. Common treatments for mental illness, such as insulin coma, lobotomy, and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) had major side effects and often failed. (42-56) Cameron sought novel combinations of drugs and procedures to change aberrant thinking and behavior. (57-72) He thought LSD had potential as a drug-model of schizophrenia, a tool to uncover causes of abnormal thinking and reconstruct normal behavior. (73-76)

Drawing on his knowledge of the limitations of interrogation of prisoners of war, Cameron knowingly pursued brainwashing research. (77) He sought to “blot out psychotic behavior and re-educate the patient.” (78-82) He employed intensive electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), a practice thought by experts at the time to be dangerous and “barbaric,” the equivalent of “electrical lobotomy.” (83) Cameron had spoken publically of “beneficial brainwashing.” (84) He likened his problem to the professional brainwashers—stating that: “patients like prisoners tended to resist the treatment.” (85-92)

He experimented with LSD, often in combination with sleep therapy, ECT, and prolonged psychological and sensory isolation, a technique researched earlier by another faculty member, Dr. Hebb, who had received CIA funds for his work at McGill. (93, 94) Cameron called his mind erasing process: “depatterning.” (95-101) His goal: a “tabula rasa”—the clean slate of Aristotle. (102-103) Once depatterned, Cameron sought to re-educate the patient, using “Psychic Driving.” (104) This procedure required patients to listen to tape recordings of their own “cue statements” for sixteen hours per day, up to a month or more. (105-119)

In 1957, Cameron enthusiastically claimed in the Montreal Gazette nearly 100% success in curing schizophrenia. (120) The psychologist, Dr. Hebb, considered Cameron to be more a politician than a scientist; years later, in an affidavit, Hebb would call him “criminally stupid.” (121)

Unknown to Ewen Cameron’s patients was that his research was funded, in part, by the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology, the front-group of the CIA MKULTRA program. It is uncertain whether Cameron knew the source of funds was the CIA; but, about one-half of his faculty associates believed he did know. (122) Cameron’s MKULTRA sub-project 68 grant was second largest among the 149 MKULTRA projects across North America. (123-130) At least 100 patients were treated by Cameron with the “brainwashing” procedures—without consent. (131,132)
Unveiling the secrets of CIA Mind Control Research

The remarkable story of the CIA mind-control research was almost lost to history. Sidney Gottlieb and Richard Helms terminated MKULTRA in name in 1963, not in practice; by June 1964, MKULTRA had become MKSEARCH which was finally closed in 1972. On Jan 31, 1973, Richard Helms ordered all records of the CIA mind-control programs destroyed. (1-3)

Stung by a series of failures in intelligence, including the Bay of Pigs, Helms was replaced by President Nixon, who appointed James Schlesinger to head the CIA; Schlesinger began to probe past CIA misdeeds. (4-7) Senator Sam Ervin had already held congressional hearings on widespread domestic spying, including CIA infiltration of the National Student Association and academia in the 1950s and 1960s. (8-17)

Gerald Ford appointed Vice-President Rockefeller to investigate CIA abuses. (18, 19) Senator Frank Church held hearings on assassination programs and behavior-control research. (20-22) But little substance came of these hearings, since most records had been destroyed. (23)

But, overlooked in the volumes of testimony was a key to the doors of secrecy: a passing reference to a government employee who had allegedly jumped from a New York hotel window to his death after a CIA official covertly put drugs into his drink. This caught the attention of a little known investigative reporter. (24-28)

John Marks, a former intelligence officer, had become a free-lance writer, collaborating earlier with Victor Marchetti on a book about the CIA. (29) Marks used the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and pressed the CIA for documents. Two years later, in 1977, the CIA found 16,000 pages of financial history that had been misfiled and mistakenly not destroyed. (30-32)

In 1979, 20 years after Richard Condon had written the, “Manchurian Candidate,” John Marks published his classic: “The Search for the Manchurian Candidate” that focused on the CIA mind control programs. (33-31) Pandora’s Box had been pried open.

Over the next ten years, Congressional committees, reporters, and litigants would reveal the scope of CIA mind-control research, known within the agency as the “family jewels.” (52-89) The story of the government employee who allegedly committed suicide would sharpen the edges of criticism.

Story of Frank Olson (1910-1953)

Dr. Frank Olson, a biochemist from the University of Wisconsin, worked in the 1930s as a researcher at Purdue University’s Agricultural Experimental Station in Lafayette, IN. In 1942, he began government service in top secret biowarfare, first at the Army’s Edgewood Arsenal, then at Camp Detrick. (1) Ten years later, it was reported that, at age 42, he committed suicide by
jumping to his death from a tenth floor room at Statler Hotel in New York City. (2-15) According to his family, Dr. Olson had no history of depression. (16) Devastated with his unexplained death, attributed by the CIA to suicide, the Olson family lived for more than two decades with the sorrow and incomprehension of the act.

Then, in 1975, Alice Olson read that a man who had committed suicide in 1953 had been drugged by the CIA. Mrs. Olson realized the man was her husband and father of their three children. (17-21) For 22 years, the CIA had covered up the fact that Dr. Sidney Gottlieb had spiked Mr. Olson’s Cointreau with LSD and meretran at a CIA retreat, November 19, 1953.

Alice Olson sued the U.S. President Gerald Ford personally apologized, and, in 1976, Congress authorized payment of $750,000 compensation to Mrs. Olson. (22-27)

MKULTRA Settlement: Val Orlikow v. United States

The flames of these revelations were about to spread. John Mark’s book came to the attention of Dr. Harvey Weinstein in 1979. (1) An American academic psychiatrist, Dr. Weinstein thought the mystery of his own father’s illness might at last be known. (2-6) His father, in the 1950s, had mild depression and was admitted to the care of Ewen Cameron at the Allan. Mr. Weinstein became an unwitting participant in Cameron’s research and never fully recovered. (7)

Other Canadian unwitting participants in Cameron’s research had been harmed, some with permanent amnesia from intensive ECT. (8) Plaintiffs had been admitted to the Allan with depression, anxiety or alcoholism. Many were treated with LSD “trips”; depatterning, psychic-driving, and prolonged sensory deprivation. (9) A lawsuit followed.

The case, Orlikow, et al v. United States, involved Val Orlikow, wife of a member of the Canadian Parliament, and eight other plaintiffs, including Harvey Weinstein’s father. Mrs. Orlikow had been admitted to the Allan with post-partum depression and became one of Cameron’s unwitting research subjects. (10-18) Dr. Weinstein engaged prominent Washington civil rights attorneys; the suit was filed December 11, 1980. (19-25)

The CIA was accused of: 1. Failure to supervise human research; 2. Negligent funding of “extra-hazardous experimentation” –the “brainwashing” count; and 3. Negligent funding of experimentation on patients who had not volunteered—the Nuremberg count. (26) The government defense was that Cameron was doing the research anyway and the CIA was simply buying goods off the shelf. (27)

Eight years later, in 1988, the CIA settled for $750,000, the largest amount of money given to foreign citizens by the U.S. in a lawsuit. The Canadian government, often siding with the CIA against the Canadian plaintiffs, in the end, also paid victims of mind-altering treatment. (28-43
Evidence reviewed by the court included MKULTRA Subproject 68 that provided more than $60,000 to support Cameron’s brainwashing experiments. Failure to obtain informed consent was a major legal point in the final decision. (44-46) The CIA Inspector General, in 1963, called MKULTRA activities illegal and unethical. Former President Truman and the Medical Director for the CIA were highly critical of MKULTRA. Cameron admitted publicly in 1963 that his research had been a failure. (47)

Reflections of a third year medical student: Allan Memorial Institute, summer, 1965.

I was a fellow at Southwestern Medical School, Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas, in the early 1970s. Driving home one evening, switching channels, I heard part of a sentence: “...CIA sponsored mind-control research at Allan Memorial Institute in the 1950s...” (1) I almost drove off the road. Instantly, I recalled the summer of 1965, when I was an Indiana University School of Medicine student on an externship at the “Royal Vic” in Montreal, assigned to the Allan. (2-9)

I remembered stories of nurses and students about sleep deprivation and sensory isolation research at McGill and references to Cameron’s unusual research; and, I remembered the strange treatments: insulin coma; apomorphine aversive therapy; “truth” serum interviews; intravenous RNA; and depatterning as well as psychic driving, where patients wore football helmets with microphones that played the endless loops as in Carl Sandburg’s poem, “Brainwashing.” (10) What I had heard on the radio made sense. (11-13)

Cameron unexpectedly left the Allan in August 1964. But, I saw depatterned patients on a locked ward in summer 1965, sucking from baby bottles, incontinent, incoherent and crawling on the floor. There had been a transition after Cameron left when some of his research had continued. This is what I had witnessed. Cameron’s successor ordered a study of the controversial research; results showed treatments caused more harm than benefit; research was stopped in 1966. (14) An unfortunate legacy of Cameron’s research was public fear of mental health treatment, particularly ECT. (15-32)

Ewen Cameron died September 8, 1967, at 65, of an apparent heart attack, while climbing Street Mountain with his son, in the Adirondacks, near Lake Placid, N.Y. Celebrated in life, vilified in death, Cameron once said prophetically regarding his legacy that “we are apt to fall victim to our own circumstances...and characteristics”—perhaps a fitting epitaph. (33-37) Cameron’s life-long goal of winning the Nobel Prize for curing schizophrenia had ended. (38)

Ironically, at another Montreal psychiatric hospital, Verdun Protestant, Heinz Lehman, in 1954, discovered the effectiveness of chlorpromazine, the advent of effective drug therapy for mental illness. Lehman spoke fluent French and learned of the drug from the French literature. He would become internationally famous and psychiatry would never be the same. (39)
Allen Dulles, Richard Helms and Sidney Gottlieb took the full story and secrets of MKULTRA to their graves. (40-43) It has been almost 60 years since Frank Olson’s mysterious death at the Statler Hotel.

The Olson family, never satisfied with the government’s version of the circumstances of Dr. Olson’s death, has pursued the truth. In an 826 page book released last month, evidence suggests the family was wise to question the facts. (44)

Some believe that Sidney Gottlieb’s aim in drugging Dr. Olson was to interrogate Olson regarding his inappropriate violation of secrecy regarding a CIA experiment in the French village, Pont-St.-Esprit, on the Rhone River, August 16, 1951, where several villagers died and others were sickened. Thought initially to be an outbreak of ergot poisoning from contaminated bread, conclusive evidence was never found. Recent research suggests the CIA was researching the effects of aerosolized LSD in this village in the south of France. (45, 46)

An investigative reporter and two prosecutors, Steve Saracco and Dan Bibb, in U.S. District Attorney Robert Morgenthau’s Office in New York City, have suggested that Pierre Lafitte and Francois Spirito, both criminals with long CIA ties, murdered Frank Olson at the Statler Hotel. (47) Olson was thought to have become an intelligence risk to the CIA.

Lessons Learned: A Cautionary Tale

The story of CIA mind control research is as interesting as it is unsettling—a cautionary tale, with Shakespearean witches potions, conspiracies, and human tragedy. What lessons might we learn from this tale? I’ll finish this evening with four observations and questions we must consider:

First, our nation in the Cold War had compelling need for secret information to protect its interests; but the pursuit of remedies suffered malign and inept management, with tragic social, ethical, legal and human rights consequences. (1-27)

We might ask the question: “To what ends are secrets of the state acquired and preserved—to advance the interests of the state, the individual, or both? Who prescribes the ends we seek?

Second, MKULTRA engaged public and private research institutions and prestigious scientists, in secret, human experimentation. (28-34) In President Dwight Eisenhower’s “Farewell Address to the Nation,” January 17, 1967, he warned of the “Military-Industrial Complex” but added that: “The prospect of domination of the nation’s scholars by federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present—and is gravely to be regarded.” (35-39) MKULTRA undermined public trust, an outcome predicted by Eisenhower. (40-77) Regarding what some have called: “The military-academic complex” we might ask the question: To whom are government and research institutions accountable? Who decides? And How?
Third, the CIA mind control research programs, including MKULTRA, violated U.S. law and basic ethical and human rights tenets. (78-106) Much of MKULTRA research was unscientific, an ethical issue addressed by Pope Pius XII in his 1952 statement: “The Moral Limits of Medical Research and Treatment,” where the necessity of informed consent and the moral liability of human research not of the highest value were reviewed. (107)

Ewen Cameron and other MKULTRA researchers failed to obtain consent. (108,109) Yet, in 1900, Dr. Walter Reed, commissioned by the U.S. Surgeon General to find the cause of Yellow Fever, obtained informed consent for the dangerous human experiments. (110) And modern standards for consent were laid out in the Nuremberg Code in 1949. But, it would be years before researchers would widely adopt these standards. (111-119) It was not until Dr. Beecher and Dr. Pappworth of the U.S. and U.K respectively wrote in the 1960s of abuses in human research that attention was focused on the problem. (120-133)

Debate continues whether Cameron’s failure to obtain consent for his research violated standards at the time. There has been reluctance of the medical profession and psychiatrists to impugn Cameron’s character. (134) But, many dispassionate observers, weighing all factors, considered Cameron’s research to be unethical. (135)

We might ask the question: How can the American public be assured that all government agencies adhere to the rules of law and ethical conduct? Who is responsible?

Fourth, Some patients of Ewen Cameron called his research torture. (135) To many, “coercive interrogation,” “brainwashing,” and “mind control” are forms of torture, a point being debated today in government, academia, and in medical professional and science organizations. (137-155) Robert Jay Lifton, renowned expert in torture, said Cameron’s research was similar to brainwashing procedures used in Chinese prisons. (156)

Physicians have participated in interrogation despite ethical standards of the American Medical Association and American Psychiatric Association that prohibit such involvement. (157-62) Psychologists have been conflicted regarding their role in interrogations. (63-66) In 2008, the American Psychological Association, in a break with longstanding tradition, voted to ban psychologists’ participation in interrogations. (167-74)

We might ask the question: Whose responsibility is it to provide oversight in human research conducted or supported by government intelligence agencies? In the case of MKULTRA, the government, Congress, national health professions’ organizations, and universities failed to protect the public from dangerous and unethical treatment.

The Future
The good news is that many of these questions have been addressed since the revelations of MKULTRA. (1-4) There have been advances in scholarship and public policy regarding the complex legal and ethical issues raised by MKULTRA.

Unfortunately, the current global war on terror has created a 21st century “Cold War.” The issues of torture; human rights; and clandestine research, have re-emerged. (5-8) The question of whether physicians in the U.S. military are physicians first, soldiers first, or physician-soldiers has been raised. (9)

The conduct of human research in vulnerable populations, including the mentally ill, has increased; protecting research subjects remains a challenge. (10-25)

Technology complicates our job. Today, the intersection of advanced brain research in universities and national defense is the subject of intense discussion, since machine-brain interactions in battle could rob soldiers of ethical choices. (26, 27) How ethical will non-human, robots or drones be?

Public knowledge of MKULTRA resulted from investigative reporters, the Freedom of Information Act, a Congress willing to probe government agency abuses, and access of citizens to the courts. (28, 29) Threats to these public goods are threats to democracy and the protection of human rights.

Just last month, two articles appeared in the New York Times that showed the relevance of MKULTRA to contemporary American debates. In the first, the White House and Supreme Court effectively voided part of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); In the second case, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco reviewed a case involving secrecy, torture, and presidential power and whether the government can block a trial by arguing that certain evidence is a “state secret” and cannot be revealed in court. (30, 31)

Many words have been “spilled” over these complex questions; but, consensus has been elusive.

**Conclusion:**

It seems likely that the teachings of Sun Tzu about spy-craft and the search for a modern day “Nepenthe” will continue in the 21st century. A visit to the internet or the National Library of Medicine today shows that the insatiable thirst for the power to control another person’s mind and behavior is unrelenting. Of such challenges, Albert Einstein said: “The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

SJay 1/4/10
Indianapolis Literary Club

January 4, 2010

Essay: “Ravenscrag Revisited”

Essayist: Stephen J. Jay M.D.

Annotated Time Line: Donald Ewen Cameron (1901-1968)

1901: Cameron born Christmas Eve, Dec 24. Son of Reverend Duncan Cameron, ministry to people of Bridge of Allan, a town 20 mi north of Glasgow.

1908-1913: Stirling High School, Glasgow

1913-19: Glasgow Academy

1924: M.B., University of Glasgow (graduated Alpha Kappa Kappa)

1925: Diploma, Psychological Medicine, University of London

1925: Began work in psychiatry at Royal Mental Hospital, Glasgow under D. K. Henderson, who had been exposed to teaching of Adolf Meyer.


1928: Left Hopkins for the famous Burghoelzlzi Clinic, Zurich, Switzerland, to study with Hans W. Meier, successor of Eugen Bleuler. Met A.T. Mathers, provincial psychiatrist for Province of Manitoba, who had worked on staff of Boston Psychopathic Hospital.

1929-1936: Manitoba Provincial Mental Hospital, Brandon, Manitoba. Arrived at onset of the dust bowl and worst depression in Canadian history. Organized mental health services for Western Manitoba. Developed a network of 10 clinics in Brandon—the forerunner of community mental health models of the 1960s. Pursued clinical research and wrote papers.

1931: Became member American Psychiatric Association

1933: Published article: “Mensuration in Psychoses”, suggesting a growing need for more exact methods of measurement in psychiatry.

1933: Married (would have 4 children)

1935: First book published: “Objective and Experimental Psychiatry”—called for psychiatry to study human behavior in a rigorous scientific fashion. Called for comparing actual with predicted results and technical accuracy. Quantitation in the form of statistical analysis; checks to subjectivism; trained
observations with instrumentation; repetition under controlled circumstances. “To break through this artificial use of false etiology and of false non-progressing classification which the observational method has thrown out like a cocoon around the body of psychiatric knowledge, we need a new methodological weapon.” P24.

1936: M.D. with distinction, University of Glasgow.

1937: Fellow in American Psychiatric Association

1936-1938: To Massachusetts as resident director of Research Division at Worcester State Hospital. Resident director of research. The first psychiatrist in North America to use insulin coma therapy to treat schizophrenia.

1938: Professor of Psychiatry at Albany Medical School in New York State. Certified, American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry, and licensed to practice medicine in state of New York.

1939-43: Professorship of neurology and psychiatry Albany Medical College, Albany NY. Also held professorship of neurology and psychiatry, Russell Sage School of Nursing. Noted as a thoughtful teacher—a psychiatrist who could bridge the gap between organic, structural neurologists and psychiatrists. Published papers: schizophrenia; psychotic syndromes; aging and memory—a life-long interest.

1942: Became American citizen

1943: Joined faculty of McGill University. Arrived in Montreal at Windsor Station, met by T.E. Dancey, senior district military psychiatrist for Montreal.

1943: Cameron predicts in (The Montreal Star) that the Allan will become one of the most prominent psychiatric institutions on the continent.

1944: Allan Memorial Institute opens with Rockefeller grant. Cameron opens several research units at the Allan

1945: At Nuremberg, Germany, evaluated Rudolph Hess (Nov 15-19, 1945), one of three psychiatrists from North America (with one from France) that concluded Hess “is not insane at the present time in the strict sense of the word.”


1950: Published book: “General Psychotherapy: Dynamics and Procedures”. At the time: Prof of Psychiatry, McGill University; Psychiatrist-in-chief, Royal Victoria Hospital; Director, Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry. In Preface Cameron draws on “...psychiatric concepts but also of those used in psychology, sociology and anthropology.” He emphasizes “magnetic tape recordings of therapeutic
periods as a means of illustrating special points and procedures.” “To protect the identity of the patient, these records have been altered...”

Chapter 10: Use of Adjuvants in Psychotherapy: Drugs; ECT; Insulin; Drawings. Discusses “disinhibiting drugs” sodium amytal or pentothal. Cameron notes the earliest use of “disinhibiting drugs” as psychotherapeutic adjuvants was by Obermeier in 1873, who reported on the use of ethyl alcohol. (Cameron ’50, p238) Cameron describes his use of nitrous oxide administration, repeated several times in 15 minutes producing mild convulsions. Psychotherapy follows. P239. Cameron uses a case to illustrate the value of the procedure. P240. Also, ether, insulin, ECT. After ECT during returning consciousness psychotherapy may be carried out. P248. Other drugs: Benzedrine, dexadrine; desoxyn for psychotherapy of schizophrenia. P249 Value of recording and play back for physician and patient study. P254.

1952: President, American Psychiatric Association

1953: A modern wing built at the Allan Memorial Institute under Cameron’s leadership to house expanding teaching and research activities.

1953: President of American Psychiatric Association. Psychiatrist-in-chief at Royal Victoria Hospital and Director, Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry. Consultant at Montreal General Hospitals and Verdun Protestant Hospital, Montreal.


1953: Cameron conceived a technique he called “psychic driving” (subjecting patients to repeated verbal messages (positive and negative) for 16 hours/day from tape recordings based on interviews with the patient.

1955: CIA Study group became the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology based at Cornell University--the source of some of Cameron’s mind control research funding.

1956: Major treatise on brainwashing, originally written as a report for Technical Services Division of CIA in 1956; It was published 1956 by Hinkle and Wolff from Cornell: “Communist interrogation...” Archives of Neur and Psychiatry. Soon after Cameron received CIA MKULTRA funding for his research.

1957: Received the Adolf Meyer Memorial Award for “meritorious contributions in behalf of improved care and treatment of the mentally ill, inside and outside the institution.”

1957: (Feb 25) Allen Dulles approved Cameron’s grant proposal (2yrs, $38,186) with Society for Investigation Human Ecology acting as a cover. John Marks states that Cameron may have been an unwitting investigator for CIA, but Dr. Thomas Ban in an email communication with Stephen J. Jay MD on 3/15/09 stated he had told Marks this when Marks interviewed Dr. Ban, but Dr. Ban later realized his assessment of Cameron’s knowledge of the relationship between his grants and CIA was incorrect.


1960: (August 26) last payment from Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology grant to Cameron: Cashiers check for $4,777.

1961: President, World Psychiatric Association

1963: Dr. Wolff and Monroe (Cornell University & Society of IHE) visited Allan and Cameron Nov 21 and were dissatisfied with Cameron’s results. Monroe said he would not be recommending that the SIHE support any new grants.

1963: Cameron thought French-speaking members of McGill faculty were trying to “railroad him” out of the institution in the wake of a highly critical report of Quebec’s mental hospitals that singled out the Allan for using the greatest number of electroshocks—in 1961, 12,000 electrical treatments amounting to 60,000 separate shocks given to thousands of patients.”

1964: Cameron abruptly resigns from McGill faculty and the Allan Memorial Institute August 31, 1964.

1964: Left Montreal for Albany as Director of Psychiatry and Aging Research Laboratory at VA Hospital and Albany Medical College.

1968: (Sept 9) Cameron died from “heart attack” while climbing a mountain near home with his son. No autopsy was done. Records from Allan allegedly destroyed by Cameron’s family.


1979: John Marks book: The Search for the Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind Control, The Secret History of the Behavioral Sciences, was published and featured a major section on the Allan Memorial Institute and D. Ewen Cameron’s role in MKULTRA.


1983: John W. Gittinger, CIA psychologist who was project monitor for the Society for IHE (subproject 58) testified in his deposition that Ewen Cameron’s research proposal had been solicited by Colonel James Monroe, executive secretary of the Society IHE at his (Gittinger’s) request. This testimony contradicted CIA testimony that the ideas were Cameron’s and he approached the SIHE.

2010: A full accounting of the life and professional career of Donald Ewen Cameron awaits the historian’s pen. Lack of access to many secret government documents regarding CIA mind control research (from 1940s to the present) prevents accurate accounting of potentially illegal and unethical mind control government sponsored research on unwitting Americans citizens.

Selected references from which the above information obtained:


Foster S. (ed.) The project MKULTRA compendium: the CIA’s program of research inn behavioral modification. Lulu.com, 2009


SJay

Jan 4, 2010
Indianapolis Literary Club

“Ravenscrag Revisited”

Stephen J. Jay, M.D.

Monday, January 4, 2010

Acknowledgments:

I am grateful to many persons who aided my research for this essay over the past two years; some help was dutiful and gracious, some unexpected from those piqued to curiosity by the topic. Thanks to all.

Thomas Ban, MD, retired professor emeritus of Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University, and former faculty member, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University, was a junior member of Ewen Cameron’s research team with Drs. Levy and Rubinstein. Dr. Ban is the sole known survivor of this group. According to Dr. Ban: “I am actually the only one who could give you authentic information on the Cameron way.” (Personal communication, Dr. Ban to Stephen J. Jay MD, March 12, 2009. Dr. Ban offered insights into Ewen Cameron’s research, including the issue of informed consent.

Tonia Charpentier, Library Assistant, Eric D. Wittkawer Library, Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry, McGill University Health Center, Montreal, Quebec. Ms. Charpentier informed me that the Allan hasn’t “officially kept any archives” and has no papers or other materials regarding Ewen Cameron. She did provide AMI Annual reports of faculty activities.

Anne Daniels, Archivist, Health and Medicine, The University of Western Ontario, provided information on Dr. Voojtech Kral, including selected papers of Dr. Kral from his tenure with the Department of Psychiatry, 1972-88. No record of Dr. Kral’s communications with D. Ewen Cameron, regarding their common interest in aging research, was found by Ms. Daniels. Dr. Kral was on the faculty of the Allan Memorial Institute, Montreal during D. Ewen Cameron’s tenure. Ms Daniels found no information regarding whether Dr. Kral was involved in Cameron’s mind control research.

Martina Darragh, MLS and Kathleen A. Schroeder, MD, MS, National Reference Center for Bioethics Literature, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Bioethics Library, Georgetown University, kindly reached their data bases for references regarding MKULTRA, CIA, Allan Memorial Institute; D. Ewen Cameron; and LSD.

Nancy L. Eckerman, Ruth Lilly Medical Library, Special Collections Librarian, History of Medicine and Nursing, Indiana University School of Medicine, provided assistance in difficult- to- find sources and international archives. The RLML interlibrary staff: Michael Wilkinson and Sherry Kieper graciously processed innumerable orders.

Robert Faggen, PhD, Barton Evans and H. Andrea Neves Professor of Literature, Claremont McKenna College offered personal insights into Ken Kesey’s life and his early use of LSD in CIA sponsored (MKULTRA) research at the Menlo Park, California Veterans Hospital. Dr. Faggen is Kesey’s biographer.
Jennie Ferris, Reference Assistant, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, provided annual faculty rosters for Allan Memorial Institute for 1965-66, for the time I spent as a medical student extern studying at the Royal Victoria Hospital and Allan Memorial Institute. She found no collections of papers, correspondence for Donald Ewen Cameron.

David N. Gibbs, Associate Professor History and Political Sciences, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. offered suggestions for obtaining primary source information regarding Ewen Cameron. Author of “First Do No Harm”: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia, as well as articles about the CIA, Dr. Gibbs was unable to answer the question of whether the CIA was involved on the McGill campus in the 1950s-60s as they were on U.S. campuses.

Jeremia Heinik, M.D., Director Margoletz Psychogeriatric Center, Ichilov Hospital, Tel Aviv. Senior clinical Lecturer in Psychiatry, Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University. Dr. Heinik shared knowledge about V.A. Kral, MD, a colleague of Ewen Cameron, and early director of geriatric psychiatry at Allan Memorial Institute, Montreal, Canada.

John Hoffins, Law Library, McGill University, Montreal, provided access to microfilm of the McGill Daily for the period: 1963-66. This provided valuable historical context in which the events of Dr. Cameron's work at the Allan occurred. Little information was found about Cameron’s research at the Allan.

Alan Jay, graduate student (chemistry), Portland State University, Portland Oregon, provided scholarly publications regarding psychedelic agents used in CIA sponsored mind control research.

Barbara Lewis, Nora Hiatt and Pamela Perry, WFYI and IUSM, Sound Medicine, WFYI Channel 20, 90.1 FM, responded with interest to the suggestion to explore reasons why many Americans fear psychiatric treatment, especially, ECT. The interview with Drs. E. Meslin and S. Jay emanated from this discussion and aired June 1, 2008. Accessible by internet.

Helen McGonigle, Attorney at Law, Brookfield, CT, provided useful information on her summary of her paper: The Law and Mind Control- A look at the law and government mind control through 5 cases: CIA v Sims; US v Stanley; Orlikow et al v US; Kronisch v US et al and Heinsich et al v Sweet et al 1999. She provided information regarding the 80 institutions disclosed as participants in the CIA MKULTRA sponsored research.

Eric Meslin, PhD, Director, Indiana University Center for Bioethics, Associate Dean for Bioethics, Indiana University School of Medicine, Professor of Medicine, Medical and Molecular Genetics and Philosophy provided important information relevant to former colleagues who had direct knowledge of D. Ewen Cameron’s work at the AMI. He suggested sources of valuable information regarding the Orlikoff vs. U.S. law suit involving former patients of Ewen Cameron’s. Dr. Meslin interviewed me on WFYI Channel 20, 90.1 FM, Sound Medicine regarding the MKULTRA research in Montreal. Program: Dark History of Electroshock Therapy, aired June 1, 2008.

Joel Paris MD, Chair, Department Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal, CA, provided information regarding faculty at the Allan Memorial Institute in the mid-1960s. No archives or other communications
among Cameron and faculty are preserved at either the Allan Memorial Institute or McGill University Library.

Nan Rong, PhD, IUPUI Department of Public Health kindly acquainted me with the proper pronunciation of Sun Tzu’s name (like “soon” “ds” as the end of “seeds” or “words”). Also Dr. Rong noted that Sun Tzu’s original full name was “Sun Wu” and that “Tzu” is just a respectful suffix added to the last name (Sun).

Allen Schmetzer, M.D. Professor of Psychiatry, Indiana University School of Medicine, offered valuable personal and professional insights into the CIA mind control research. He shared thoughts regarding stigma associated with psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. As an expert in Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) he provided scientific bases for contemporary use of ECT and reflections on the use by early researchers of “intensive” ECT.

Edward Shorter, PhD, author and medical historian, and friend from Wabash College days, offered me information regarding the history of ECT, the subject of one of his books: Shock Therapy, 2007.

Blair Tindall, author of Mozart in the Jungle and Psychedelic Palo Alto (2000), musician and storyteller, provided contact information for Vic Lovell, PhD, a retired psychologist who was involved as a “guinea pig” in CIA funded LSD experiments at Menlo Park VA, along with Ken Kesey, author of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”

Harvey M. Weinstein MD, MPH, Associate Director, Human Rights Center, Clinical Professor, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Weinstein offered personal reflections on his medical student days at the Allan (he was there in 1967, two years after I was there). Dr. Weinstein is author of important books regarding his father, a patient treated by Ewen Cameron at the AMI. Dr. Weinstein’s father was one of nine plaintiffs who successfully sued the U.S. over the MKULTRA and related mind control research.

Hugh Wilford, Associate Professor of History, California State University, Long Beach, CA, and author of “The Mighty Wurlitzer”, which concerned CIA activities, was unfamiliar with details of the CIA MKULTRA program. Dr. Wilford was unable to answer the question regarding the circumstances of Dr. Cameron’s leaving the AMI in 1964.

Daniel Wikler, PhD, Mary B Saltonstall Professor of Ethics and Population Health, Department Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston offered important personal and professional insights into CIA funded research, the Frank Olson case, and the ethical implications of these events.

SJJ Ravenscrag

4 Jan 2010