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## DID YOU KNOW? CHARLES MANSON & US PROBATION

### PART TWO

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Our three-part series looking at Charles Manson and his relationship with the federal community supervision system continues this month as we delve into Project MKUltra and the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic.

In 1953, the CIA officially sanctioned Project MKUltra, a top-secret program that aimed to develop mind-control techniques and methods of interrogation. The project was initiated in response to perceived threats from the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, and involved various experiments on both willing volunteers and

unwitting subjects (prisoners, mental patients, and other marginalized groups). These experiments included the administration of drugs such as LSD, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, and psychological torture. As the CIA sought to study the effects of LSD on human behavior and consciousness, some experiments involved dosing individuals without their knowledge, leading to severe and sometimes long-lasting psychological effects. The lack of informed consent and the secretive nature of the program raised significant ethical concerns.

Project MKUltra remained classified for many years, but details began to emerge in the 1970s. The program faced public scrutiny and criticism, leading to investigations by the U.S. Congress. In 1973, amid the Watergate scandal and increased public awareness, the CIA halted MKUltra. The program was officially declassified but many documents related to the project were destroyed, making it virtually impossible to fully understand the extent of the experiments. Some of the alleged and infamous participants of Project MKUltra include James "Whitey" Bulger, Ted Kaczynski, and Charles Manson.

Dr Louis "Jolly" West was a psychiatrist who had been based at Lackland Air Force Base, where he served as the head of the psychiatry division for the U.S. Air Force. He was eventually recruited by UCLA to run the psychiatry department in their neuroscience center. An interesting and unfortunate side note of West's career took place in August 1962 when, as part of his experiments, West dosed a bull elephant at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Oklahoma City with LSD. Shortly after dosing, the elephant began to have seizures and

ultimately died. Another curious anecdote occurred in 1963, when West was appointed as the psychiatrist for Jack Ruby, the assassin of Lee Harvey Oswald. West claimed Ruby to be psychotic and delusional, and suggested further interrogation under the influence of sodium thiopental and hypnosis.

Though West denied his involvement with the CIA and MKUltra, investigative reporter and writer Tom O'Neill <https://tom-oneill.org/>, author of "**Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties**", contacted UCLA and requested access to his papers. O'Neill eventually found letters between West and Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, who founded Project MKUltra in 1950. O'Neill states West was there from 1952 or 1953 and was the main researcher for the program.

West was also affiliated with the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic, a historic healthcare institution which was established in response to the growing social and health-related needs of the youth population in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco during the Summer of Love in 1967. The clinic was founded by Dr. David E. Smith, along with other healthcare professionals, to address the medical and psychological needs of the burgeoning counterculture community in the Haight-Ashbury district. The area had become a focal point for the hippie movement, drawing young people seeking alternative lifestyles. The clinic aimed to provide free and non-judgmental healthcare services to individuals in the community. Along with medical care, the clinic also offered counseling, and treatment for issues related to drug use and mental health. The clinic

adopted a holistic approach to healthcare, recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and social well-being. The staff at the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic often embraced alternative and progressive medical practices. The clinic received support from both local volunteers and medical professionals who were sympathetic to the counterculture movement. Over the years, the clinic evolved and expanded its services. It became part of the larger health organization known as HealthRIGHT 360, which continues to provide comprehensive healthcare and social services.

The following information was obtained from statements made during a 2023 interview of Tom O'Neill by JACOBIN (<https://jacobin.com/2023/05/the-manson-murders-may-have-something-to-do-with-cia-mind-control-experiments>):

*“West had been secretly funded by the CIA for about twenty years to do these Nazi-style experiments on patients and other people. He opened a kind of safe house in Haight-Ashbury in 1967 — around the same time Manson emerged there — and maintained an office at the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic, where he regularly recruited subjects for his research. And it was the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic where Manson was directed to go for his weekly meetings with his parole officer, Roger Smith, the same PO we were talking about earlier, who declined to revoke Manson’s parole despite his escalating criminality. Smith was actually doing amphetamine research through the Free Clinic at the same time he was supervising Manson’s parole. Or, rather, not*

*supervising it – instead letting him do whatever he wanted while he formed his group of sociopathic killers. The Haight Ashbury Free Clinic was run by David Smith (no relation to Roger Smith). Despite his claims that he never accepted any government grants, I've seen the funding papers: he and Roger were both being funded by the government, which the CIA was using as a cover for their research grants. West once called the place “a laboratory disguised as a hippie crash pad.” Another psychiatrist there, James Allen, told me, “We all saw Charlie every day.” According to him, there was no way Jolly didn't know who Manson was, given that Manson was going to the clinic two or three times a week with his girls to get treatment for STDs, pregnancies, things like that. Of course, it wasn't like Manson innocently wandered into the clinic. He had to go there once a week for parole meetings.”*

Next month, we will conclude this series by focusing on the interaction and relationship between Charles Manson, and his U.S. Probation & Parole Officer, Roger Smith.

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