

**MEDICAL CENTER ARCHIVES
OF
NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN/WEILL CORNELL MEDICINE**

**1300 York Avenue #34
New York, NY 10065**

**Finding Aid to the
COMMITTEE ON CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
ACTIVITIES RECORDS**

**Dates of Records:
1945–1988, bulk 1977–1979**

**0.83 Linear Feet
(2 Boxes)**

REFERENCE CODE:

US.NNCORMA.RG02.SG002.001

TITLE:

Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities Records

ABSTRACT:

The Committee on Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Activities at Cornell University Medical College (CUMC) was formed in 1978 in response to negative publicity in connection with the CIA's brainwashing experiments in the 1950s. The Committee on CIA Activities Records document the CIA's activities at CUMC in the 1950s and CUMC's subsequent investigation into those activities in the late 1970s.

CREATOR:

Riker, Walter F., Jr.; Cornell University. Medical College. Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities

PROVENANCE:

Box 1 of this collection was produced by the Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities at Cornell University Medical College. Box 2 was originally part of the collection "The Department of Pharmacology: Walter F. Riker, Jr. (Chairman) Records" but was separated to create this artificial collection by archivist Elizabeth Shepard in 2008.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

The Committee on Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Activities at Cornell University Medical College (CUMC) was formed in 1978 in response to negative publicity in connection with the CIA's brainwashing experiments in the 1950s.

In 1953 CIA Director Allen Dulles approached Harold Wolff, MD, professor of medicine and chief neurologist at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, with reports that the Russian and Chinese militaries had developed scientific methods for controlling human thoughts and behavior. At Wolff's prompting Dulles funded the Human Ecology Study Program at CUMC in 1954 to study human ecology on the basis that a person's environment is a factor in their health. The initial goals of the program were to study the Chinese and Russian methods of controlling behavior and to protect U.S. personnel from those methods. In 1955 the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology (the Society) was established with CIA funding as an independent incorporated body with Wolff as president. The Society's goal was to continue

funding the Human Ecology Study Program, but by 1956 the Society had broadened its scope to include further CIA research into the behavioral sciences. CUMC severed all ties with the CIA in 1957 after disagreements about the scope and purpose of the Human Ecology Study Program, but independent of CUMC Wolff continued his research with the CIA and the Society until his death in 1962. The Human Ecology Study Program continued at CUMC as the Division of Human Ecology, a joint activity of the Departments of Medicine and Psychiatry, under the directorship of Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr., MD until his retirement in 1988.

In 1974 *The New York Times* published an exposé of the CIA's illegal domestic intelligence operations during the Nixon administration (1969–1974). The revelations prompted President Ford to create the Rockefeller Commission to investigate the CIA's past abuses, leading to the discovery that the CIA had conducted mind-control experiments on unwitting subjects under the umbrella of Project MKULTRA in the 1950s. MKULTRA was a wide-ranging project with the goal of identifying mind-altering drugs and developing techniques of psychological torture. Over the course of investigations, it came out that the CIA had conducted the project under the guise of research with more than 80 institutions, including CUMC. Public furor culminated in the publication of John Marks' *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate"* (New York: Times Books, 1979), which documented MKULTRA and the CIA's unethical experiments.

In response to the negative publicity, Dale R. Corson, chancellor of Cornell University, charged Walter F. Riker, Jr., MD, chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at CUMC, with forming a committee to establish the circumstances of CUMC's involvement with the CIA and the scope of the work that had been done under the CIA's sponsorship. The Committee requested declassified documents from the CIA concerning their involvement with Cornell. Riker interviewed CUMC employees who had been involved with the project. Wolff had passed away in 1962, leaving Hinkle, who had been associate professor of clinical medicine at CUMC when Wolff approached him in 1954, as the most knowledgeable participant remaining at the time of the Committee's investigations. Also interviewed were Loring Chapman, PhD, who had been a research fellow in neurology; E. Hugh Luckey, MD, who had been the dean of CUMC; and Helen Goodell, BS, who had been Wolff's research assistant.

Riker's research into the CIA program at CUMC was thorough and he maintained that he had not uncovered any suggestion that it had experimented on people. Riker did, however, call out Wolff's proposed use of "potentially useful secret drugs (and various brain damaging procedures)" on unwitting subjects, though the researchers involved testified that no harmful experiments were ever actually carried out.

The scope of the Committee's task grew unmanageable and, by about 1980, the publicity around Project MKULTRA had begun to fade. The Committee was disbanded without producing a final report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hersh, Seymour M. "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in U.S. Against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents in Nixon Years." *New York Times*. December 22, 1974, 1.

Horrock, Nicholas M. "80 Institutions Used in C.I.A. Mind Studies." *New York Times*. August 4, 1977, 17.

Horrock, Nicholas M. "Private Institutions Used in C.I.A. Effort to Control Behavior." *New York Times*. August 2, 1977, 1, 16.

Marks, John D. *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate": The CIA and Mind Control*. New York: Times Books, 1979.

United States. Commission on CIA Activities within the United States. *Report to the President by the Commission on CIA Activities within the United States*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities Records document the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) activities with Cornell University Medical College (CUMC) in the 1950s and CUMC's subsequent investigation into those activities in the late 1970s. They include declassified documents requested from the CIA dating from their involvement with CUMC in the 1950s and reports from the CUMC Human Ecology Study Program in the late 1950s and early 1960s concerning their research. They also include materials dating from the Committee's investigations in 1978 and 1979 such as transcriptions of testimonies from witnesses and participants taken by the Committee and its head, Walker F. Riker, Jr., MD; newspaper clippings relating to the public's discovery of Project MKULTRA; internal reports and correspondence, including reports in which Riker documents his findings, and the reports submitted to Riker by participants such as Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr., MD, created during the investigation into CUMC's involvement with the CIA; official reports from the Human Ecology Study Program; a small amount of correspondence from the Society for the Study of Human Ecology; and correspondence with John Marks concerning the content of his soon-to-be-published book *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate"* (New York: Times Books, 1979).

With the exception of the Society for the Study of Human Ecology's correspondence, internal documents produced by the Human Ecology Study Program are largely absent.

ARRANGEMENT:

Due to their different provenance, the contents of Boxes 1 and 2 were kept separate and arranged independently. The folders in each box are arranged chronologically.

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LANGUAGE OF MATERIAL:

English

PROCESSING NOTE:

The Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities Records were minimally processed by a previous archivist at an unknown date. Newsprint was wrapped in acid-free tissue and documents were housed in acid-free folders.

The collection was then reprocessed in 2023 by St John Karp, Medical Center Archives Intern. The finding aid was written by St John Karp with assistance from Amanda Garfunkel, Chiyong (Tali) Han, and Nicole Milano in 2023. During the reprocessing, folders were renamed, reviewed, and ordered chronologically within each box. No materials were separated or deaccessioned.

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ACCESS POINTS:

Brainwashing
 Cornell University. Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College
 Dulles, Allen, 1893-1969
 Hinkle, Lawrence E., 1918-2012
 Human ecology
 LSD (Drug)
 Medical ethics committees
 Project MKULTRA
 United States. Central Intelligence Agency. Office of Scientific Intelligence
 Wolff, Harold G. (Harold George), 1898-1962

PREFERRED CITATION:

Item Name or Identification; Box #, Folder #; Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities, 1945–1988 (Medical Center Archives of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY).

RELATED MATERIAL:

Reports and records from the Division of Human Ecology can be found in “The Records of the Division of Human Ecology, Cornell University Medical College, 1956–1974”, which include a small amount of Harold Wolff, MD’s work with the Human Ecology Study Program.

CONTENTS LIST:

Box 1:

Folder:	Description:
1	Harold Wolff: Publications and Bibliographies, circa 1945–1963
2	Central Intelligence Agency: Freedom of Information Act Documents re: Human Ecology Study Program (Folder 1 of 3), 1954–1963, 1977
3	Central Intelligence Agency: Freedom of Information Act Documents re: Human Ecology Study Program (Folder 2 of 3), 1954–1963, 1977
4	Central Intelligence Agency: Freedom of Information Act Documents re: Human Ecology Study Program (Folder 3 of 3), 1954–1963, 1977

- 5 Harold Wolff and Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr.: Congressional Testimony, 1956 June 19
- 6 New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center Public Affairs: Press Releases and Correspondence, 1977–1979
- 7 Newspaper Clippings, 1977, 1984
- 8 Eamon Brennan: Precis of Two Chapters from John Marks’ “The Search for the ‘Manchurian Candidate’”, 1978
- 9 Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr.: Statements to the Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities, 1978–1979
- 10 Walter F. Riker, Jr.: Correspondence, 1978–1979
- 11 Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities: Witness Testimonies and Statements, 1979
- 12 Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities: Notes and Memoranda, circa 1979
- 13 Orlikow et al.: Claim Against the United States of America for Injuries from Central Intelligence Agency Brainwashing Experiments, circa 1987

Box 2:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Cornell University: Policy on Classified Research, 1948, 1979 |
| 2 | Central Intelligence Agency: Freedom of Information Act Documents re: Human Ecology Study Program, 1955–1961 |
| 3 | Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr. and Harold Wolff: Reprints, 1956–1961 |
| 4 | Cornell University Medical College Human Ecology Study Program: Annual Reports, 1957–1963 (Restricted-PHI) |
| 5 | Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology: Correspondence, 1960 May–June |
| 6 | Walter F. Riker, Jr.: Correspondence, 1977–1988 (Restricted-PHI) |
| 7 | Newspaper Clippings, Press Material, and Drafts from John Marks’ “The Search for the ‘Manchurian Candidate’”, 1977–1979 (Restricted-PHI) |

- 8 Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr.: Statements to the Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities, 1978–1979 (Restricted-PHI)
- 9 Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr.: Testimony to the Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities, 1979 February 5 (Restricted-PHI)
- 10 Walter F. Riker, Jr.: Correspondence with John Marks, 1978 October–November (Restricted-PHI)
- 11 E. Hugh Luckey: Testimonies to the Cornell University Medical College Committee on Central Intelligence Agency Activities, 1979 February 5 and 22 (Restricted-PHI)