Buying a piece of anthropology

Part Two: The CIA and our tortured past

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This is the second part of a two-part article by David Price examining how research on stress under Human Ecology Fund sponsorship found its way into the CIA's Kubark *interrogation manual (for Part 1 see our June issue). This issue of* ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY *also features a short comment by Roberto González on the use of Ralph Patai's* The Arab mind *in training interrogators who worked in Iraq, including at Abu Ghraib (p. 23). See also news, p. 28, for a pledge initiated by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists in response to anthropologists' concerns around this issue.* [*Editor*]

Back in 1994, my curiosity concerning interactions between anthropologists and the Human Ecology Fund (HEF) was raised when I found published announcements of anthropologists receiving HEF funds in old newsletters of the American Anthropological Association (AAA).[1] One article listed nine HEF grant recipients: Preston S. Abbott, William K. Carr, Janet A. Hartle, Alan Howard, Barnaby C. Keeney, Raymond Prince, Robert A. Scott, Leon Stover and Robert C. Suggs (FN, 1966[2]). I tried to contact each scholar, and Howard, Scott and Stover replied to my initial inquiries about their HEF-sponsored research.[2]

In late 1994 I wrote to Alan Howard and Robert A. Scott, asking what they remembered about the Fund, their research and if they knew of the Fund's connection to the CIA. When I emailed Howard at the University of Hawaii, asking him what he knew about the CIA's covert funding of their research, Howard expressed anguished surprise, replying, 'Agh! I had no idea' (AH to DHP 11/2/94). Howard had remained in contact with Robert Scott, to whom he had forwarded my correspondence. Scott later wrote me a letter detailing how he came to receive the funds:

> [I] had absolutely no idea that the Human Ecology Fund was a front for anything, least of all the CIA. As far as I knew it was a small fund that was controlled by Harold Wolff and used to support projects of various types concerning the study of stress and illness in humans. Its connection with the CIA only came to my attention some years later when Jay Schulman… wrote an article exposing the connection.[3] Obviously if I had known of such a connection at the time I would never have accepted money from them. I should also explain that the money we got from them was used to support library research I was doing at the Cornell Medical School on studies of stress and that the final product was a theoretical model for the study of stress in humans.
>
> I will explain how I came to know about the Fund in the first place. The period of time would have been roughly from 1961-1963. I finished my doctorate in sociology at Stanford University in 1960 and then received a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in medical sociology from the Russell Sage Foundation. I spent the first year at Stanford Medical School and then moved on to the Cornell Medical School for a second year of work… I was interested in studying stress and illness and the work of Harold Wolff, his colleague Larry Hinkle and others was far closer to the mark. I therefore arranged to transfer my post-doc to a unit headed by Hinkle and with which Harold Wolff had an affiliation. The name of that unit was The Human Ecology Studies Program. At the time I was there, Larry Hinkle was completing a study of stress among telephone operators working for New Jersey (or was it New York) Bell Telephone company and he was also beginning a study of stress and heart disease among a group of executives for the New Jersey Bell Company. He invited me to participate in the analysis for the first study and to advise him about the design of several of the instruments used in connection with that project. At the same time, I was also working with Alan [Howard] on an article about stress and it was in connection with this work that I received support from the Fund. Or at least I think that is the reason why I acknowledged the Fund in our paper… I do remember that either Hinkle or Wolff or both suggested that I write a letter to the Fund requesting a modest level of support for our work (I can't remember the amount, but I am reasonably certain it came to no more than a few thousand dollars)…
>
> It will be obvious to you from reading this that I knew Harold Wolff for a brief period of time during this period. As I recall, Wolff [died] either in 1962 or 1963. From the manner in which the matter was handled I gained the impression that he had available to him a small fund of money that could be used to support research and writing of the sort I was doing and he gave me some for my work. At that time there were lots of small pots of money sitting around medical school and there was no reason to be suspicious about this one. Moreover, Wolff was a figure of great distinction in neurology and was well known outside of his field as well. For all of these reasons I simply assumed that everything was completely legitimate and was astounded when the connection between the Fund and the CIA was disclosed.
>
> … I should also mention that during the course of our collaboration Alan [Howard] and I co-authored a second paper on cultural variations in conceptions of death and dying which was also published and in which there is an acknowledgment to the Fund.[4]
>
> […] My association with the Human Ecology Studies Program came to an end early in 1964. In September of 1963 I left the program to become a Research Associate on the staff of Russell Sage Foundation in order to conduct a study they had just funded. As I recall, for a short while during the fall of 1963 I [spent] a small amount of time at the Human Ecology Study Program advising project members about various issues involving their research on heart disease, but this eventually fell by the way side as I became more deeply drawn into the new project. (RAS to DHP 11/2/94)

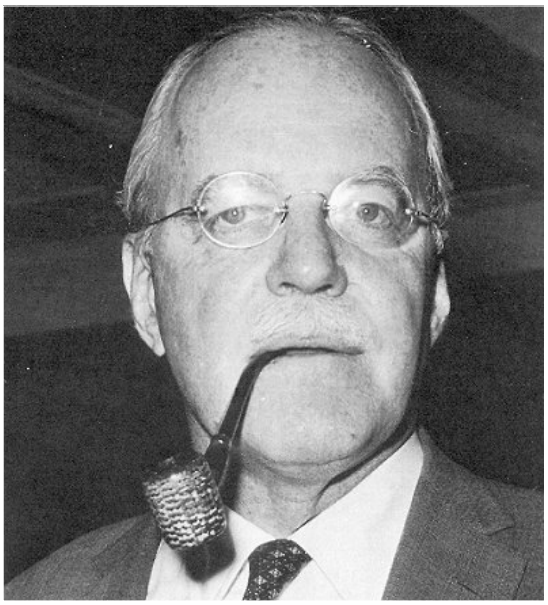


Fig. 1. Allen Dulles (1893-1969), who authorized MK-Ultra as CIA Director of Central Intelligence.

MK-Ultra

Headed by Dr Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA's MK-Ultra project was set up in the early 1950s largely in response to alleged Soviet, Chinese and North Korean use of mind-control techniques on US prisoners of war in Korea. The project involved covert research at an estimated 30 universities and institutions in an extensive programme of experimentation that included chemical, biological and radiological tests, often on unwitting citizens. It was not until the 1970s that this programme was exposed, but by that time many scholars from a wide range of disciplines had been implicated.

This paper benefited from comments by Alexander Cockburn, Alan Howard, Robert Lawless, Steve Niva, Eric Ross, Robert Scott, Jeffrey St. Clair and three anonymous AT reviewers.

1. One *Fellow Newsletter* article announced that William Carr had 'joined the staff of the Human Ecology Fund in March', and that the Fund contributed to the financing of Raymond Prince and Francis Speed's film *Were ni! He is a madman*, which documented the treatment of Yoruba mental disorders (FN 1964[5]: 6). The May 1962 issue of the *Newsletter* invited anthropologists to apply for funds.

2. Leon Stover wrote that his HEF grant was arranged by 'a close friend who worked

At the time both Howard and Scott were unaware that the research funds they received came from the CIA. Their accounts of their interactions with HEF make sense, given

Physical torture	Distress rating
Palestinian hanging*	3.8
Suffocation/asphyxiation	3.8
Electric torture	3.7
Falaqa**	3.6
Burning of parts of body	3.6
Forced extraction of teeth	3.6
Stretching of the body	3.5
Beating	3.5
Hanging by hands or feet	3.5
Needles under toenails or fingernails	3.4
Beating over the ears with cupped hands	3.4
Pulling/dragging/lifting by hair	3.2
Psychological manipulations	
Sham executions	3.7
Witnessing torture of close ones	3.6
Threats of rape	3.6
Threats against family	3.4
Witnessing torture of others	3.4
Threats of death	3.3
Threats of further torture	3.2
Fluctuation of interrogator's attitude	2.9
* Hanging by the wrists tied at the back	
** Beating the soles of the feet	

The average amount of distress that participants recalled feeling in various torture situations (rated on a scale of 0 to 4)

NEW SCIENTIST

Fig. 2. Table summarizing the results of a study comparing distress ratings of 300 torture victims from Yugoslavia, comparing psychological with physical torture. (See Khamsi, Roxanne. Psychological torture 'as bad as physical torture'. New Scientist*, 5 March 2007.)*

how Wolff and Hinkle shielded participants from any knowledge of CIA involvement or of the MK-Ultra project.

In 1998 I published an article briefly describing MK-Ultra's use of the HEF to channel CIA funds to anthropologists and other social scientists, but as the *Kubark counterintelligence interrogation* manual had not yet been declassified, I did not mention or connect Scott and Howard's research with MK-Ultra's objective of researching effective models of interrogation (Price 1998; for more on MK-Ultra, see Part 1 of this article). It was not until I read Alfred McCoy's book *A question of torture* (2006) that I noticed the relevance of their research on stress for *Kubark*. Until then I had assumed that their work was funded to reinforce an air of (false) legitimacy for the HEF – much as I interpreted the funding of anthropologist Janet Hartel's study of the Smithsonian's Mongolian skull collection. However, McCoy clarifies that research on stress was vital to MK-Ultra (e.g., McCoy 2006), and HEF-sponsored research projects selectively harvested research that went into design of effective 'coercive interrogation' techniques.[5]

> [T]he CIA distilled its findings in its seminal *Kubark Counterinsurgency Interrogation* handbook. For the next forty years, the *Kubark* manual would define the agency's interrogation methods and training program throughout the Third World. Synthesizing the behavioral research done by contract academics, the manual spelled out a revolutionary two-phase form of torture that relied on sensory deprivation and self-inflicted pain for an effect that, for the first time in the two millennia of their cruel science, was more psychological than physical. (McCoy 2006: 50)

Wolff, Hinkle, HEF, MK-Ultra and *Kubark*

The US Senate's 1977 hearings investigating MK-Ultra's co-optation of academic research did not identify the individual academics who co-ordinated HEF's research for the CIA. Senator Edward Kennedy interrupted CIA psychologist John Gittinger's testimony as he was about to identify HEF staff cognizant of CIA secret sponsorship of academic research. Kennedy told Gittinger that the committee was 'not interested in names or institutions, so we prefer that you do not. That has to be worked out in arrangements between [Director of Central Intelligence] Admiral Turner and the individuals and the institutions' (US Senate 1977: 59).[6]

John Marks first documented how cardiologist Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr and neurologist Harold G. Wolff became the heart and mind of Human Ecology's CIA enquiries. Hinkle and Wolff were both professors at Cornell University's Medical School, and after CIA Director Allen Dulles asked Wolff to review what was known of 'brainwashing' techniques, a partnership developed in which 'Hinkle handled the administrative part of the study and shared in the substance [of research]' (Marks 1979: 135).

A respected neurologist who specialized in migraines and other forms of headache pain (Blau 2004), Wolff had experimentally induced and measured headaches in research subjects at Cornell since as far back as 1935 (SN 1935). Hinkle conducted research at Cornell from the 1950s until his retirement (AMWS 2005, vol. 3); his early career focused on environmental impacts on cardiovascular health. Together, Hinkle and Wolff studied 'the mechanisms by which the individual man adapts to his particular environment, and the effect of these adaptations upon his disease' (Hinkle 1965). Wolff died in 1962, a year before the CIA produced its *Kubark* manual; Hinkle remained at Cornell for decades, later retiring to the comforts of suburban Connecticut.

Hinkle and Wolff pioneered studies of workplace stress, effects of stress on cardiovascular health and migraines that brought legitimacy and helped make HEF grant recipients keen to collaborate (Hinkle and Wolff 1957). By the mid-1950s, Hinkle and Wolff also studied the role of controlled stress in 'breaking' and 'brainwashing' prisoners of war and communist enemies of state. They became experts on coercive interrogation and published their study on 'Communist interrogation and indoctrination of "enemies of the state" in Communist countries' (1956). But they also produced a 'classified secret' version of this paper for CIA DCI Allen Dulles (Rév 2002). Whilst passing secret reports along to the CIA, Wolff produced HEF-funded public research publications studying interrogation, such as his 1960 publication 'Every man has his breaking point: The conduct of prisoners of war' (see also HEF 1963).

MK-Ultra funds encouraged scholars to contribute to their study of brainwashing and coercive interrogation, supposedly benefiting military and intelligence branches by helping them to train spies and troops to better resist interrogation techniques. Later, this research was secretly used in the production of the *Kubark* manual, which became less a guide to resisting interrogation than an interrogation manual to be used against enemies – with some forms of coercion that violated the Geneva Convention.[7] Such dual purpose became a recurrent practice in the work of scholars operating within MK-Ultra's shrouded network.

While studies by Wolff and Hinkle and other HEF-funded scholars had medical implications, their work also had practical relevance for CIA interrogation techniques. Wolff and Hinkle established research of interest to *Kubark* by establishing a research milieu at HEF whilst keeping their connections to the MK-Ultra programme well hidden. In the early 1960s independent scholars undertook their own work and shared ideas with others working in similar areas, resulting in cross-pollination of ideas.

Though it remains unclear exactly how independent academic models of stress were worked into MK-Ultra's objectives, continuities are evident between Howard and Scott's 1965 stress article and *Kubark's* guiding paradigms.[8] John Marks claims that the HEF '*put money into projects whose covert application was so unlikely that only an expert could see the possibilities*' (Marks 1979: 170; my italics).[9] McCoy argues that the CIA funded HEF projects to gather information, encouraged by Wolff or by CIA officers involved in the *Kubark* manual. A declassified 1963 internal CIA memo stated that 'a substantial portion of the MKULTRA record appears to rest in the memories of the principal officers' (CIA 1963a: 23), so it seems HEF findings were mostly incorporated informally.

Because the CIA destroyed most of its MK-Ultra records in 1972 (Marks 1979), we do not know who drafted

for the Fund', but after I sent him further documentation on the CIA's role in funding his research, he did not respond (LS to DP 11/28/94).

3. Sociologist Jay Schulman was part of Human Ecology's programme studying Hungarian refugees (Greenfield 1977, Stephenson 1978, US Senate 1977).

4. Another HEF-sponsored research project undertaken by Howard funded the organization of data collected while conducting fieldwork on Rotuman sexuality (Howard & Howard 1964). Howard later co-authored a paper (with no connection to HEF) examining symbolic and functional features of torture traditionally practised by the Huron on prisoners-of-war and other cultural groups (Bilmes & Howard 1980).

5. McCoy speculates that Stanley Milgram's research was covertly CIA funded under such programmes, but Milgram's biographer disputes even the possibility that Milgram was unwittingly funded (cf. McCoy 2006, Blass 2006).

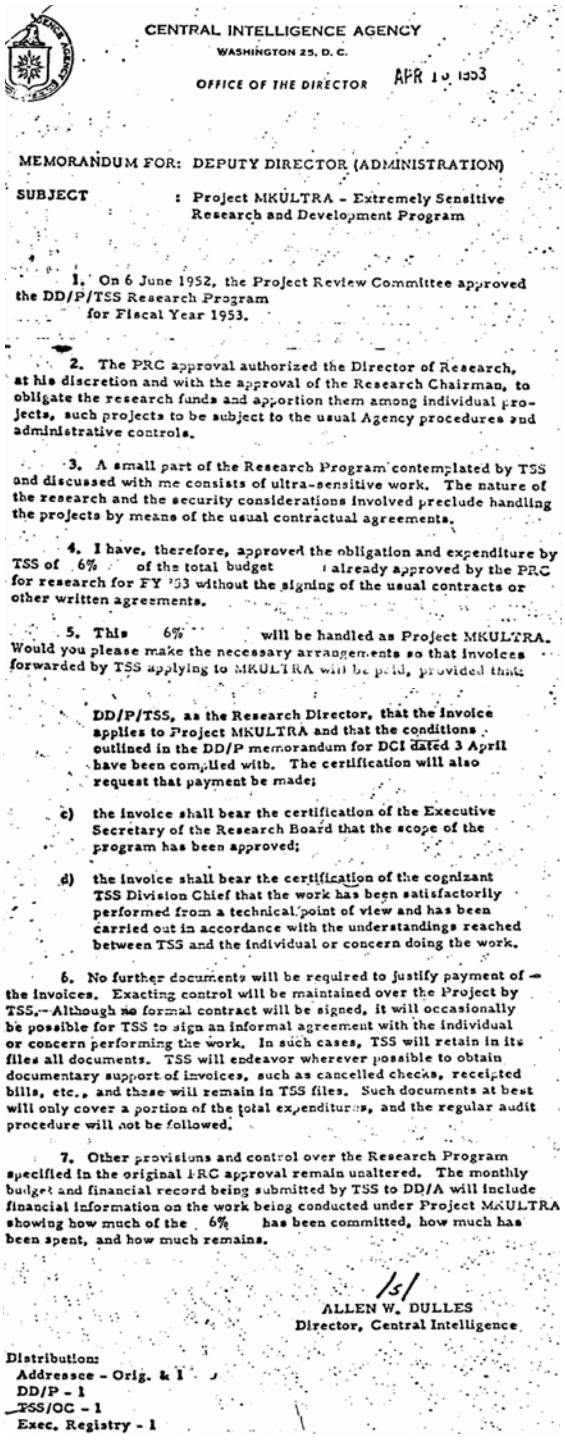
6. DCI Stansfield Turner mistakenly testified that the Privacy Act prevented the identification of scholars working on MK-Ultra projects at Human Ecology (US Senate 1977). Harold Wolff was dead and thus had no rights under the Privacy Act.

7. History repeats itself, as US interrogators recently drew on their torture resistance training to develop abusive techniques with data from the SERE programme (DoD 2006, Soldz 2007b).

8. Kleinman's consideration of *Kubark's* fundamental philosophical approach to interrogation summarized *Kubark's* paradigms as relying on: psychological assessment, screening, the creation and release of controlled stress, isolation and regression, which are all used by interrogators to 'help' the interrogation subject 'concede' (Kleinman 2006).

9. Marks described a 1958 HEF grant studying inner-city youth gang members in which sociologist Muzafer Sherif had no idea that the CIA funded the project to model how to manage KGB defectors. An MK-Ultra source told Marks the CIA learned that 'getting a juvenile delinquent [gang] defector was motivationally

Fig. 3. The 1953 CIA memo from DCI Allen Dulles authorizing MK-Ultra.



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR APR 1 0 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ADMINISTRATION)

SUBJECT : Project MKULTRA - Extremely Sensitive Research and Development Program

1. On 6 June 1952, the Project Review Committee approved the DD/P/TSS Research Program for Fiscal Year 1953.

2. The PRC approval authorized the Director of Research, at his discretion and with the approval of the Research Chairman, to obligate the research funds and apportion them among individual projects, such projects to be subject to the usual Agency procedures and administrative controls.

3. A small part of the Research Program contemplated by TSS and discussed with me consists of ultra-sensitive work. The nature of the research and the security considerations involved preclude handling the projects by means of the usual contractual agreements.

4. I have, therefore, approved the obligation and expenditure by TSS of 6% of the total budget already approved by the PRC for research for FY '53 without the signing of the usual contracts or other written agreements.

5. This 6% will be handled as Project MKULTRA. Would you please make the necessary arrangements so that invoices forwarded by TSS applying to MKULTRA will be paid, provided that:

a) DD/P/TSS, as the Research Director, that the invoice applies to Project MKULTRA and that the conditions outlined in the DD/P memorandum for DCI dated 3 April have been complied with. The certification will also request that payment be made;

c) the invoice shall bear the certification of the Executive Secretary of the Research Board that the scope of the program has been approved;

d) the invoice shall bear the certification of the cognizant TSS Division Chief that the work has been satisfactorily performed from a technical point of view and has been carried out in accordance with the understandings reached between TSS and the individual or concern doing the work.

6. No further documents will be required to justify payment of the invoices. Exacting control will be maintained over the Project by TSS. Although no formal contract will be signed, it will occasionally be possible for TSS to sign an informal agreement with the individual or concern performing the work. In such cases, TSS will retain in its files all documents. TSS will endeavor wherever possible to obtain documentary support of invoices, such as cancelled checks, receipted bills, etc., and these will remain in TSS files. Such documents at best will only cover a portion of the total expenditures, and the regular audit procedure will not be followed.

7. Other provisions and control over the Research Program specified in the original PRC approval remain unaltered. The monthly budget and financial record being submitted by TSS to DD/A will include financial information on the work being conducted under Project MKULTRA showing how much of the 6% has been committed, how much has been spent, and how much remains.

/s/
ALLEN W. DULLES
Director, Central Intelligence

Distribution:
Addressee - Orig. & 1
DD/P - 1
TSS/OC - 1
Exec. Registry - 1

Kubark or the details of how HEF research made its way into the manual. However, *Kubark's* reliance on citations from HEF-funded research, and testimony at the 1977 Senate hearings stating that MK-Ultra research was used to develop interrogation and resistance methods, demonstrate that HEF research was incorporated (US Senate 1977).

The 1977 Senate hearings on MK-Ultra programmes detailed the CIA's failures to find esoteric means of using hypnosis, psychedelics, 'truth serums', sensory deprivation tanks or electroshock to interrogate unco-operative subjects. John Gittinger testified that by 1963, after years of experimentation, the CIA realized that 'brainwashing was largely a process of isolating a human being, keeping him out of contact, putting him under long stress in relationship to interviewing and interrogation, and that they could produce any change that way without having to resort to any kind of esoteric means' (US Senate 1977: 62). With *isolation* and *stress* having become the magic bullets for effective coercive interrogation, it was in the context of this shift away from drugs and equipment that Human Ecology sponsored Howard and Scott's stress research. The 'coercive interrogation' techniques *Kubark* described shade into torture by the application of intense stress or isolation in order to induce confessions.

Because *Kubark* was an instruction manual, not an academic treatise, no authors are identified. Although a few academic sources are cited, most sources remain unacknowledged. HEF-sponsored work cited included: Martin Orne's hypnosis research, Biderman and Zimmer's work on non-voluntary behaviour, Hinkle's work on pain and the physiological state of interrogation subjects, John Lilly's sensory deprivation research, and Karla Roman's graphology research (CIA 1963b).

Kubark discussed the importance of interrogators learning to read the body language of interrogation subjects, which the HEF-funded anthropologist Edward Hall pursued. Several pages of *Kubark* describe how to read subject's body language with tips such as:

> It is also helpful to watch the subject's mouth, which is as a rule much more revealing than his eyes. Gestures and postures also tell a story. If a subject normally gesticulates broadly at times and is at other times physically relaxed but at some point sits stiffly motionless, his posture is likely to be the physical image of his mental tension. The interrogator should make a mental note of the topic that caused such a reaction. (CIA 1963b: 55)

In 1977, after public revelations of the CIA's role in directing HEF research projects, Edward Hall discussed his unwitting receipt of CIA funds through the HEF to support his writing of *The hidden dimension* (Hall 1966). Hall conceded that his studies of body language would have been useful for the CIA's goals, 'because the whole thing is designed to begin to teach people to understand, to read other people's behavior. What little I know about the [CIA], I wouldn't want to have much to do with it' (Greenfield 1977: 11).[10] But Hall's work, like that of others, entered Human Ecology's knowledge base, which was selectively drawn upon for *Kubark*.

The HEF provided travel grants for anthropologist Marvin Opler and an American delegation attending the 1964 First International Congress of Social Psychiatry in London. The Wenner-Gren Foundation also provided funds for a 'project in the Cross-Cultural Study of Psychoactive Drugs which was presented at the Congress', where Opler presented a paper under that title (Opler 1965).

Though not known to be funded by HEF, Mark Zborowksi established a position at Cornell with Wolff's assistance, where he conducted research for his book examining the cultural mitigation of pain, *People in pain* (Zborowski 1969, Encandela 1993). *Kubark's* approach to pain referenced Hinkle and Wolff, and incorporated many of Zborowski's ideas. Anthropologist Rhoda Métraux assisted Wolff and Hinkle's research into the impact of stress among Chinese individuals unable to return to China (Hinkle et al. 1957). When Wolff learned that Rhoda Métraux would not be granted research clearance by the CIA, he lied to her about the nature of their work (Marks 1979). Hinkle later admitted that this HEF project's secret goal was to recruit skilled CIA intelligence operatives who could return to China as spies. Métraux's unwitting participation helped collect information later used by the CIA to train agents to resist Chinese forms of interrogation (Marks 1979).

It is not clear why the HEF sponsored anthropological research on grieving; perhaps they recognized in bereavement a universal experience of intense stress and isolation mitigated by culture, or perhaps the CIA was interested in studying the impact of mourning on POWs coping with the loss of fellow soldiers. Medical anthropologist Barbara Anderson received HEF funds to write an article on 'bereavement as a subject of cross-cultural inquiry' (see Anderson 1965).[11] Though HEF only funded the write-up of their stress article, Alan Howard and Robert Scott also

not all that much different from getting a Soviet one' (Marks 1959: 159; cf. HEF 1963).

10. Hall's previous work in *The silent language* discussed the role played by cultural expectations in the interrogation of Japanese prisoners in the Second World War (Hall 1959).

11. Marvin Opler arranged Barbara Anderson's HEF support (Anderson 1965).

12. Howard recalls that although the paper was submitted in 1961 it was not published until 1965, owing to delays caused by the death of Franz Alexander, one of the paper's peer reviewers (AH to DHP 6/5/07).

13. Prohibitions that were enacted in the 1970s after knowledge of MK-Ultra, COINTELPRO and other unregulated intelligence programmes became known to the public and Congress.

AAA 2007. 'Update: AAA Adopts Resolutions on Iraq and Torture, 7 June 2007'. Available at:http://www.aaanet.org/press/PR20061211.htm

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— 1963b. *Kubark counterintelligence interrogation [manual]* [declassified].

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— et al. 1957. Studies in human ecology: Factors governing the adaptation of Chinese unable to return to China. In: Hoch, Paul H. and Zubin, Joseph (eds) *Experimental psychopathology*, pp. 170-186. New York: Grune & Straton, Inc.
— and Wolff, H.G. 1956. Communist interrogation and indoctrination of "enemies of the state": Analysis of methods used by the Communist state police. *AMA Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 76: 115.
— 1957. The nature of man's adaptation to his total environment and the relation of this to illness. *AMA Archives of Internal*

produced an article entitled 'cultural values and attitudes toward death' (Howard and Scott 1965/66). Although the authors acknowledge HEF for making their collaboration possible they stress that they did not notify the HEF of this paper. Like the stress article, this paper was chiefly based on Howard's research into bereavement in Rotuma, which was sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (see Howard and Scott rejoinder below). This focus on the way grief produces isolation and alienation aligned with HEF's broader interests and fit into *Kubark's* interest in regression and psychic collapse.

Howard and Scott investigated the impact of enculturation on the grieving process. They recognized that cultural norms and behavioural practices shaped experiences of isolation which, in turn, created different conditions of stress for grieving individuals. The first half of their article examined American ways of death, grieving and alienation, drawing on Scott's sociological perspective, while the second half used Howard's ethnographic knowledge to examine Rotuman Polynesian attitudes to death, how they are socialized to experience isolation differently and how these differences translated to different cultural reactions to death.

The article cited environmental factors in stress from Wolff, Hinkle and the HEF research, and drew upon Kubzansky's chapter on 'the effects of reduced environmental stimulation on human behavior' in Biderman and Zimmer's HEF volume *The manipulation of human behavior* – the source most heavily cited in *Kubark* (Howard and Scott 1965/66). Out of the vast universe of writings on death and bereavement, Howard and Scott's selection of this prison study illustrates how Human Ecology's environment influenced its sponsored studies. There is nothing sinister or improper in their citation of these studies, but their selection shows how HEF's network of scholars informed the production of knowledge. Some of Howard and Scott's views of isolation reflected HEF's focus on the isolation and vulnerability of prisoners:

> While a fear of death may stem from anxieties about social isolation, it seems equally true that the process of becoming socially isolated stimulates a concern about death…When social isolation is involuntary… the individual experiencing separating from others may become obsessed with the idea of death. (Howard and Scott 1965/66: 164)

For CIA sponsors looking over these academics' shoulders, death and bereavement formed part of a broader thematic focus on isolation and vulnerability.

Stress models and the culture of *Kubark* research

Howard and Scott's HEF grant supported their library research and their writing-up. Scott was based at Cornell, where he had contact with Hinkle, Wolff and other HEF personnel, while Howard wrote in California and never visited Cornell. Prior to 1961 they submitted a copy of their HEF-sponsored paper developing a 'proposed framework for the analysis of stress in the human organism' to the journal *Behavioral Science*, and following normal procedures, a copy of the paper was submitted to their funders (RS to DP 6/11/07, Howard and Scott 1965).[12] In his 1977 Senate testimony, Gettinger described how CIA funding of Human Ecology allowed it to be 'run exactly like any other foundation', which included having 'access to any of the reports that they had put out, but there were no strings attached to anybody. There wasn't any reason they couldn't publish anything that they put out' (US Senate 1977: 59). Beyond whatever 'normal' conversations or 'friendly' suggestions there might be, this was the principal way that the HEF research findings were channelled to the CIA, who then selectively harvested what they wanted for their own ends.

Scott and Howard's work fit Wolff's larger (public) programme of studying stress and health, as well as Wolff's (both public and secret) programme studying the dynamics determining the success of techniques of 'coercive interrogation'. The two authors worked together on this model even before they heard of the HEF, and both claim they would have undertaken the work even without HEF's funding (RS to DP 6/11/07). The HEF's half-yearly report described Howard and Scott's research as developing an 'equilibrium model… based upon a view of man as a "problem solving" organism continually confronted with situations requiring resolution to avoid stress and to preserve well-being' (HEF 1963: 24). In the world of academic scholarship this was innovative research; but from the perspective of the CIA, 'avoiding stress' took on different meanings.

Howard and Scott's 1965 article on stress was 'reverse engineered' for information on how to weaken a subject's efforts to adapt to the stresses of interrogation. Thus, when they wrote that 'stress occurs if the individual does not have available to him the tools and knowledge to either successfully deal with or avert challenges which arise in particular situations,' they were simultaneously scientifically describing the factors mitigating the experience of stress (*their* purpose), while also unwittingly outlining what environmental factors should be manipulated if one wanted to keep an individual under stressful conditions (*their hidden CIA patron's* purpose) (Howard and Scott 1965: 143).

Their 1965 article reviewed literature on how stress interfered with gastric functions, and could cause or increase frequency or severity of disease. They described how individuals cope with stressful situations through efforts to 'maintain equilibrium in the face of difficult, and in some cases almost intolerable circumstances' (ibid.: 142). The research cited in their work included studies of human reactions to stressful situations such as bombing raids, impending surgery and student examinations.

Howard and Scott's innovative 'problem-solving' model for conceptualizing stress began with the recognition that individuals under stress act to try and reduce their stress and return to a state of equilibrium. The model posited that 'disequilibrium motivates the organism to attempt to solve the problems which produce the imbalance, and hence to engage in problem-solving activity' (ibid.: 145).

Under coercive interrogation, subjects would be expected to try and reduce the 'imbalance' of discomfort or pain and return to a state of equilibrium by providing the interrogator with the requested information. Their model could be adapted to view co-operation and question-answering as the solution to the stressful problem faced by interrogation subjects, so that rational subjects would co-operate in order to return to their non-coercive state of equilibrium. This philosophy aligned with a basic *Kubark* paradigm that

> The effectiveness of most of the non-coercive techniques depends upon their unsettling effect… The aim is to enhance this effect, to disrupt radically the familiar emotional and psychological associations of the subject. When this aim is achieved, resistance is seriously impaired. There is an interval – which may be extremely brief – of suspended animation, a kind of psychological shock or paralysis. It is caused by a traumatic or sub-traumatic experience which explodes, as it were, the world that is familiar to the subject as well as his image of himself within that world. Experienced interrogators recognize this effect when it appears and know that at this moment the source is far more open to suggestion, far likelier to comply, than he was just before he experienced the shock. (CIA 1963b: 65-66)

Thus a skilled interrogator 'helps' subjects move towards 'compliance', after which subjects may return to a desired state of equilibrium.

Howard and Scott found that individuals under stress had only three response options. They could mount an 'assertive response', in which they confronted the problem directly and enacted a solution by mobilizing whatever

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resources were available; they could have a 'divergent response' in which they diverted 'energies and resources away from the confronting problem', often in the form of a withdrawal; or they could have an 'inert response' in which they react with paralysis and refuse to respond (1965: 147). They concluded that the 'assertive response' was the only viable option for an organism responding to externally induced stress: if these findings are transposed onto an environment of coercive interrogation, this would mean that co-operation was the only viable option for interrogation subjects.

In the context of MK-Ultra's interest in developing effective interrogation methods, these three responses took on other meanings. Interrogation subjects producing an 'assertive response' would co-operate with interrogators and provide them with the desired information; subjects producing a 'divergent response' might react to interrogation by mentally drifting away from the present dilemma, or by fruitless efforts to redirect enquiries; subjects producing an 'inert response' would freeze – like the torture machine's victims in Kafka's *Penal colony*.

Kubark described how interrogators use 'manipulated techniques' that are 'still keyed to the individual but brought to bear on himself', creating stresses for the individual and pushing him towards a state of 'regression of the personality to whatever earlier and weaker level is required for the dissolution of resistance and the inculcation of dependence' (CIA 1963b: 41). In *Kubark*, successful interrogators get interrogation subjects to view them as liberators who will help them find a way to return to the desired state of release: '[a]s regression proceeds, almost all resisters feel the growing internal stress that results from wanting simultaneously to conceal and to divulge… It is the business of the interrogator to provide the right rationalization at the right time' (ibid.: 40-41). *Kubark* recognized that the stress created in an interrogation environment was a useful tool for interrogators who understood their role as helping subjects find release from this stress.

> [T]he interrogator can benefit from the subject's anxiety. As the interrogator becomes linked in the subject's mind with the reward of lessened anxiety, human contact, and meaningful activity, and thus with providing relief for growing discomfort, the questioner assumes a benevolent role. (ibid.: 90)

Under Howard and Scott's learning model, the interrogator's role becomes not that of the person delivering discomfort, but that of an individual acting as the gateway to obtaining mastery of a problem.

Howard and Scott found that once an individual conquers stress through an assertive response, then 'the state of the organism will be superior to its state prior to the time it was confronted with the problem, and that should the same problem arise again (after the organism has had an opportunity to replenish its resources) it will be dealt with more efficiently than before' (1965: 149). When applied to coercive interrogations, these findings suggest that subjects will learn to produce the desired information 'more efficiently than before'. But as *Kubark* warned, this could also mean that an individual who endured coercive interrogation but did not produce information on the first try might well learn that he can survive without giving information (CIA 1963b, CIA 1983).

One of *Kubark*'s techniques, called 'Spinoza and Mortimer Snerd' described how interrogators could ensure co-operation by interrogating subjects for prolonged periods 'about lofty topics that the source knows nothing about' (CIA 1963b: 75). The subject is forced to say honestly s/he does not know the answers to these questions, and some measure of stress is generated and maintained. When the interrogator switches to known topics, the subject is given small rewards and feelings of relief emerge as these conditions are changed. Howard and Scott's model was well suited to being adapted to such interrogation methods, as release from stress was *Kubark*'s hallmark of effective interrogation techniques.

Kubark described how prisoners come to be 'helplessly dependent on their captors for the satisfaction of their many basic needs' and release of stress. The manual taught that:

> once a true confession is obtained, the classic cautions apply. The pressures are lifted, at least enough so that the subject can provide counterintelligence information as accurately as possible. In fact, the relief granted the subject at this time fits neatly into the interrogation plan. He is told that the changed treatment is a reward for truthfulness and as evidence that friendly handling will continue as long as he cooperates. (CIA ibid.: 84)

Translated into Howard and Scott's stress model: this subject mastered the environment by using an 'assertive response' that allowed him/her to return to the desired state of equilibrium. There remain basic problems of knowing when a 'true confession' is actually a false confession – offered simply in order to return to the desired state of equilibrium.

This research on stress gave the CIA access to an elegant cross-cultural analytical model explaining human responses to stress. It did not matter that the model was not produced by scholars for such ends; the CIA had its own private uses for the work they funded. As Alan Howard clarifies, the abuse of their work was facilitated by the CIA's secrecy:

> I could liken our situation to the discovery of the potential of splitting atoms for the release of massive amounts of energy. That knowledge can be used to create energy sources to support the finest human endeavors or to make atomic bombs. Unfortunately, such is the potential of most forms of human knowledge; it can be used for good or evil. While there is no simple solution to this dilemma, it is imperative that scientists of every ilk demand transparency in the funding of research and open access to information. The bad guys will, of course, opt for deception whenever it suits their purposes, and we cannot control that, but exposing such deceptions, as you have so ably done, is vitally important. (AH to DP 6/7/07)

Unwitting past, but witless present?

Use of CIA funds to commission research covertly was common. The Human Ecology Fund was one of many CIA funding fronts; among the most significant exposed fronts from this period are the Beacon Fund, the Borden Trust, the Edsel Fund, Gotham Foundation, the Andrew Hamilton Fund, the Kentfield Fund, the Michigan Fund and the Price Fund, but a number of academic presses, including Praeger Press, also served as CIA conduits (Roelofs 2003, Saunders 1999). Given the Church Committee finding that between 1963 and 1966, 'CIA funding was involved in nearly half the grants of the non-Big Three foundations [Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie] in the field of international activities', perhaps the most remarkable feature of this HEF research is only that we can connect its CIA funding with the project it was used for – *not* that it was financed by CIA funds (US Senate 1976:182).

However, it does not take CIA funding for anthropologists to produce research consumed by military and intelligence agencies. During the 1993 American military actions in Somalia I read a news article mentioning an ethnographic map issued by the CIA to Army Rangers. Because of my interest in ethnographic mapping, I wrote to the CIA's cartographic section requesting a copy of this map. A CIA staff member responded to my query, informing me that no such map was available to the public. This CIA employee also politely acknowledged that she was familiar with a book I had published while a graduate student that mapped the geographical location of about 3000 cultural groups (Price 1989). Given the CIA's historic role in undermining democratic movements around the world, I was disheart-

Fig. 5. The August 1965 issue of the journal Bioscience *featured Human Ecology research at Cornell and elsewhere.*

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ened that they were using my work, but I should not have been surprised. Obviously nothing we publish is safe from being (ab)used by others for purposes we may not intend.

Howard and Scott strove to understand the role of stress in disease; that hidden sponsors had other uses for their work was not their fault. But if anthropologists today proceed as if such things do not happen, sooner or later we shall find ourselves in a position where we can no longer convincingly claim disciplinary ignorance of malign use of our research. We need to come to terms with how such agencies covertly set our research agendas and selectively harvest the resulting research. Sometimes we may need to follow Delmos Jones' Vietnam War-era example of withholding materials from publication when there is a risk of abuse by military and intelligence agencies (Jones 1971).

Anthropologists' and other social scientists' reluctance to contribute knowingly to interrogation research would have hampered CIA progress in these areas of enquiry. The understanding that such research was ethically improper presented obstacles to CIA efforts to design effective interrogation and torture methods, and these obstacles limited the direct knowledge that the CIA acquired through the necessarily circuitous means they then had to operate by. Thus, in some limited sense, open, ethical research practices inhibited the development of even more unethical interrogation methods that could have been developed by *witting* social scientists operating under conditions of secrecy.

In post-9/11 America anthropologists increasingly work for military and intelligence agencies in various capacities. Not all of this work is ethically problematic, but with the removal of prohibitions[13] on CIA domestic operations under the Patriot Act, academics in the US are today even more likely to be targeted for their expertise by members of the intelligence community than they were back in the days of MK-Ultra. New programmes like PRISP and ICSP bring covert intelligence agencies onto our campuses, along with intelligence funding.

Recent revelations about the use of so-called 'behavioural science consultation teams' reveal contemporary efforts to harness social science findings for coercive interrogations (DoD 2006, *Democracy Now* 6/1/07, Soldz 2007a). Abuse of detainees at Guantánamo Bay, in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in the CIA's network of secret 'rendition' prisons involves tweaking techniques described in *Kubark* (Fair 2007, Gordon and Fleisher 2006, Mackey and Miller 2004).

New concerns are emerging about the use of social science in torture. The American Psychological Association (APA) grapples with the ethics of psychologists participating in interrogations. The APA's anti-torture policy now specifies 19 specific acts as constituting torture and states that they should not be used in interrogation, yet it permits psychologists to be present during interrogations, supposedly to help curtail abuse (APA 2007). However, psychologists working in such settings can as easily be drawn into interrogations that involve torture as other personnel. With the Bush administration and CIA leadership on record as claiming that 'water-boarding' is not torture, where does that leave psychologists?

Members of the AAA have recently adopted a resolution declaring that the AAA condemns the use of torture and the use of anthropological knowledge in torture (AAA 2007). Critics of this resolution (e.g. McNamara 2007) reject the suggestion that anthropological research has been involved in developing torture techniques. Of course, as Martha Huggins (2004) notes in her classification of the ten conditions for state-sanctioned torture, even torturers typically do not call what they are doing 'torture'. Those who torture also prefer anonymity and would deny any relationships they may have to such practices. This suggests it is unlikely anyone would admit to having involvement in torture. But this should not hold us back from revealing past and present relationships of our discipline to torture.

As Huggins also argues, torture becomes systemic unless revealed and marked off as such and as I have argued here, new information has become available that shows how anthropological knowledge *has* been applied to devising coercive interrogation techniques in the past. Also, we now know that Tony Lagouranis, who joined Abu Ghraib as an interrogator after the torture scandal broke, has described how Patai's *The Arab mind* was abused by military personnel attempting to help interrogators dehumanize Arab enemies (Lagouranis and Mikaelian 2007). We must take this backdrop to the involvement of our discipline into account if we are not to become complicit.

Given the abuse of power we have already witnessed and the uncertain future we face in relation to the security state that perpetrated this, how far should we permit our professional involvement to go in this matter? We need more awareness of the political nature and uses of our work. As long as we publish in the public arena, anyone can use our findings for ends we may not approve. But we also analyse and *advocate* on the basis of data we collect, and have a degree of control over our own interpretations. Though secrecy may limit our knowledge of how our research is deployed by the security state, we must continue to expose and publicize known instances of abuse or neglect of our work.

Those who lead calls for social scientists to design improved interrogation methods (see ISB, Gross 2007) claim to do so in order to move away from torture towards a more humane interrogation, but they fail to acknowledge the irony that those they hail as pioneers of scientific interrogation were key CIA MK-Ultra-funded scientists who unethically commissioned and mined research for this purpose (Shane 2007). As a discipline we cannot afford to condone torture; were we to allow our work to be used for such ends we should become 'specialists without spirit, sensualists without hearts' (Weber 1904: 182). ●

Alan Howard and Robert Scott respond:

As David Price points out in his article, we were deeply dismayed to learn that the Human Ecology Fund, which provided a summer stipend to write our article on stress, was a front for the CIA, and that the paper might have been used to generate torture procedures. We are firmly opposed to any actions that are degrading to human dignity under any circumstances, including warfare. All of our contributions to the health and welfare literature have been written with the goal of alleviating human suffering, not using it to gain hegemonic advantage.

There is one point in Price's article we would like to clarify. Although we acknowledged HEF in our paper on cultural attitudes toward death for making our collaboration possible, they had nothing to do with sponsoring it. In fact, we did not inform them we were writing on the topic, nor did we provide them a copy of the article. If the CIA became aware of it they did so by scouring the academic literature, just as they must have for other articles relevant to the degradation of prisoners for the purpose of eliciting information.