

of serious reprisals against those responsible and Mugabe was thereafter beyond the reach of his enemies.

With any memoir it is necessary to beware of faulty memory, exaggeration, straightforward lies and simple omission of anything too embarrassing or too compromising. There is no reason to believe that Stiff's memoir is exempt from these difficulties. Nevertheless, he does provide a generally convincing account of a former British SAS soldier's involvement in a campaign of bombing and assassination in Zambia, a campaign to which he brought his SAS training and skills. The revelation that he and Angus Monro, another former British SAS member, were prepared to bomb the Royal Gardens Hotel in London, killing policemen and bystanders as well as Mugabe and his entourage, certainly deserves to be more widely known.

One last point with regard to the involvement of former British SAS personnel in the Rhodesian war: there is no way at present of determining the exact numbers involved, but the likelihood is that it was significant. The Rhodesian commander-in-chief, Peter Walls, had served in the SAS in Malaya, as had the commander of the notorious Selous Scouts, Ron Reid-Daly. A number of other individual former SAS members can be identified, but understandably neither the British government nor the SAS itself are particularly keen to establish the exact numbers. What we do know is that when the Rhodesian SAS finally disbanded at the end of 1980 they received a telegram of commiseration from 22 SAS in Hereford to whom they handed over their mess silver for safekeeping.

Operation Julie revisited: the strange career of Ron Stark, parapolitical alchemist

David Black

Operation Julie, a nation-wide police investigation of LSD production, was launched in 1976. Two years later, although some 60 members of the British 'microdot conspiracy' had been convicted, Detective Inspector Dick 'Leapy' Lee was dissatisfied. The operational commander of 'Julie', Lee was interested in the international connections of the network, but was blocked from probing them by the powers-that-be. One major player he was especially interested in, New Yorker Ronald Stark, was suspected of having CIA connections.

Ron Stark (1938-84) was first convicted in 1962 for making a false job application for government service and imprisoned for parole violation. Between 1967, when his net wealth was recorded as \$3000, and 1968, Stark somehow became a millionaire and moved to a flash residence in Greenwich Village. To some he claimed he to be the scion of the super-rich Whitney family; to others he was the son of a rich biochemist. Stark spoke of having studied biochemistry at various Ivy League universities and of having quit a top secret post at the Department of Defense during the Kennedy administration because the work 'disgusted' him. One scientist who knew Stark says he claimed to have been attached to the CIA 'mind control' project - later revealed as MKULTRA.¹

The Brotherhood of Eternal Love

Stark had world-wide business interests in pharmaceuticals. Behind his various 'legit' fronts, by 1969 he had become one of the world's leading suppliers of LSD, produced at his illicit labs in Europe. Stark also plugged himself into the counter-culture. In America he hooked up with the Brotherhood of Eternal Love (BEL), a Californian motorcycle gang who had transformed themselves, under the influence of LSD and the inspiration of Timothy Leary, into a registered 'church'. By 1969, the BEL had a sizeable share of the market for a less godly, but hugely lucrative business, LSD and marijuana.²

The BEL were short of materials and the capital investment needed to continue LSD production, when, in August 1969, Ron Stark visited their commune with a large bottle of pure liquid LSD, enough for up to ten million trips, and explained that he needed a secure outlet in the US for the LSD he was producing in Europe. He also declared his intention of facilitating the overthrow of both Western capitalism and Eastern Communism by inducing altered states of consciousness in millions of people and claimed that he had a contact with the Dalai Lama's Tibetan freedom fighters and could get the Japanese mafia to

¹ Stewart Tendler and David May, *Brotherhood of Eternal Love - From Flower Power to Hippy Mafia; the Story of the LSD Counterculture*, Panther, London 1984 pp. 174-5; Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion*, Groven Weidenfeld, New York, 1985 p. 249; Martin A. Lee, 'Rasputin of LSD' in *National Reporter*, Fall 1988; Dick Lee and Colin Pratt, *Operation Julie*, W.H. Allen, London 1978 p. 71

² Tendler and May, op. cit. pp. 174-5

smuggle LSD to dose the Chinese occupiers.³

The authors of *Acid Dreams*, Martin and Lee and Bruce Shlain, note that Ron Stark's 'fateful appearance at the Idylwild ranch', coincided with certain 'unpleasant changes'. Some of the old guard had to 'retire' after skirmishes with the law, notably Stanley Owsley, the maker of 'Orange Sunshine', his protégé, Tim Skully (who had originally wanted to give acid away free), and superbrat, Bill Mellon-Hitchcock, the BEL's money-launderer. Not long after Stark turned up, BEL founder, 'Farmer John' Griggs died of poisoning in circumstances his friends regarded as suspicious.⁴

Stark in Britain

Before clinching the deal with the BEL, Stark had been making some contacts in England among the radical psychiatry movement of R.D. Laing and the Tavistock Institute. One of these was David Solomon, an American researcher and writer on LSD and cannabis. Solomon had been working with Richard Kemp, a drop-out science student, and his partner, Dr. Christine Bott, to synthesize some powerful liquid cannabis. Solomon had also obtained a supply of the LSD base, ergotamine tartrate, for a shot at LSD production, and Kemp managed to make some at a makeshift lab in Liverpool.

Shortly after meeting Stark in Cambridge in Summer 1969, Solomon invited Kemp to come meet 'a man with a million dollar inheritance'. Stark convened a meeting at the Oxford and Cambridge Club on London's Pall Mall with Kemp, Simon Walton, Stark's Scots assistant, plus Solomon and his friend Paul Arnaboldi (then famous as 'Captain Bounty' in the TV chocolate ad). The Great British LSD Plot was thus hatched within weeks of Stark's first meeting with the Brotherhood in California. Stark also introduced Kemp to the Brotherhood's chemists, Nick Sand and Lester Freidman. Kemp was soon working wonders at Stark's lab in Paris and in the first run turned out a kilo of LSD.⁵

In May 1970 Kemp and Stark, with the BEL's chemists, held talks lasting four days on the future of the 'Atlantic Brotherhood'. Kemp was unhappy. He had been assigned to work on a new project to synthesize THC to make a new brand of liquid cannabis as strong as LSD and as cheap to produce. But money promised was not forthcoming, Stark discouraged visits by Kemp's partner Christine Bott, and Kemp felt 'sexually harassed' by the bi-sexual Stark. Worse, Kemp had been pulled up by British Customs during a trip with Walton from France in Stark's Ferrari to buy equipment. During a search of the car, the Customs had found documentation of a massive purchase of the LSD base, ergotamine tartrate, but failed to see its significance.⁶

When Stark moved his laboratory from Paris to Orleans, he claimed he had been warned about an impending raid on the lab when, 'by chance', he ran into an old pal who worked with the CIA station in London. By this time Kemp had had enough and decided to quit working with Stark. He returned to England in

late 1970 and teamed up with Henry Todd, an accountant recruited by David Solomon. In mid-1971, as production began in Britain and the distribution network was being set up, Stark crossed the Channel in one last attempt to dissuade Kemp from branching out independently.⁷

When differences between the 'idealist' Kemp and the 'bread-head' Todd became unresolvable - Todd wanted to dilute the elixir to boost profits - it was decided to split into two independent networks. Todd centred his operation on the Thames Valley, while Kemp and Christine Bott moved out of London to North Wales and set up a lab with Paul Arnaboldi at Plas Llysin near Carno.⁸ Amazingly, for the first half of the seventies, the British Acid Underground - thanks to Stark's role as catalyst - happily churned out hundreds of millions of tabs to satisfied customers, without anyone in authority realising how big the business had become.

The BEL scatters

Following a series of raids on the BEL in America, by early 1973 the authorities estimated that some 20 members were in hiding or in exile - including Stark. Timothy Leary ended up in Afghanistan, after fleeing the US, but the US Embassy evidently knew he was coming and got the Afghan authorities to deport him back to the USA. Ron Stark visited Afghanistan at least once with a plan to set up BEL facilities for making hallucinogenic THC derivative from Afghan hash oil. Thanks to Kemp's efforts, Stark had worked out the first eight of the fourteen stages of the THC synthesis. Stark had a minister of the Afghan regime in his pocket to set up a penicillin factory as a front, and a 'contact' with the US embassy: the BEL's chief hash supplier in Kabul, Aman Tokhi, worked there as a 'maintenance supervisor'.⁹

Stark had taken over Bill Mellon-Hitchcock's role in the BEL of money-launderer and procurer of LSD production materials. In 1972 Stark's lawyer in Paris, Sam Goekjian, who had drawn up the charters for Stark's front companies, was investigated by IRS agents and asked about Stark's BEL connections. The DEA, who had just rolled-up much of the BEL network in the US, organised a follow-up raid on Stark's Belgian laboratory on the campus of Louvain le Neuve, near Brussels, but Stark escaped, spiriting away the BEL's investments for his own purposes.¹⁰

An Inspector Lee calls

In November 1974 Inspector 'Leapy' Lee,¹¹ who had been running Operation STUFF (Stop Unlawful Free Festivals) in Thames Valley, began to have doubts about the official view on LSD use. According to the Home Office, annual seizures of 20,000 tabs means that 'the use of LSD in Britain was restricted to a small number of people'. Lee approached the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit (CDIU), who 'denied having any information which showed LSD to be a problem'. It would

3 Lee and Shlain op. cit. p. 248

4 Lee and Shlain op. cit. pp. 245-6; Tendler and May op. cit. p. 160. See also Timothy Leary's *Flashbacks - an Autobiography*, 1983.

5 Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 350; Tendler and May op. cit. pp. 177-82. Lee and Shlain (p. 288) mistakenly credit Kemp rather than Stark with having produced the kilo Stark took to Idylwild. In fact Stark and Kemp barely met and didn't begin working together on LSD until the end of 1969.

6 Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 377

7 Tendler and May op. cit. p. 186; Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 337

8 Ibid. p. 50

9 Tendler and May op. cit. p. 230

10 Ibid. pp. 171

11 For those without a detailed memory of pop trivia, a 'Leapy Lee' had one hit record in Britain around this time. Hence Lee's nickname.

take Lee another three years to fully discover that 'since 1970 an illicit organization had been manufacturing around 20,000,000 tiny LSD tablets [a year] and selling them to two-thirds of the world'.¹²

After his arrest in 1977, Richard Kemp insisted that all of the links between the British networks and the BEL had been broken in 1970. 'Leapy' Lee, however, knew that Ron Stark had passed through London in Spring 1973 while on the run from US authorities and had obtained a false passport here.¹³ Lee wanted to find out more but was blocked from on high; possibly, he suspected, to prevent questions arising as to why action hadn't been taken years earlier. He had learned that the Home Office drugs inspectorate had submitted a report as early as 1971 which noted the exports of tartrate to America from Britain and furthermore suggested that LSD microdots seized across the world 'originated from one common source which, in all probability, was somewhere in Britain.'

First hints of the Welsh connection

In Spring 1975, when evidence began to point towards an LSD supply source in Wales, Lee learned that the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit had been withholding information from him on 'a number of leads pointing to an LSD conspiracy in the United Kingdom....the information had been withheld from all drug squads except the Metropolitan.' Lee learned that a year previously Detective Inspectors Godfrey and O'Hanlon of the CDIU had travelled to Canada to hear Kemp's former tableteer, Gerry Thomas, name Kemp, Bott and Solomon as LSD conspirators. On returning, O'Hanlon was suspended and subsequently sentenced to eight years imprisonment for corruption. D.I. Godfrey did initiate an investigation of a trip by Solomon to Switzerland to meet Leary; but, in Lee's words, the Met then 'botched' a raid on Solomon's London home and missed some documents he had concerning Leary's secret negotiations over a contract for his book *On the Run*. Godfrey and CDIU lost track of Richard Kemp and Christine Bott.¹⁴

Lee discovered that an investigation as far back as 1971 had been getting near the truth but had collapsed when the gang under surveillance by the Thames Valley Squad and Customs were robbed of money and drugs by officers of the Met! According to Detective Constable Martyn Pritchard of the Julie squad, the 1971 investigation did reveal enough to register suspicions 'that a big LSD factory was in business.'¹⁵

Cue the spooks

That the security services regarded LSD as an issue of 'national security' was confirmed when Lee began to follow leads on Ron Stark and discovered that the security services had been on the trail before him. When Lee went to see the security services about the loan of some high-tech surveillance equipment, he briefed them on 'the suspected international level of LSD trafficking and, more particularly, the probable involvement of terrorist groups like Baader-Meinhof and the Angry Brigade'. Lee had noticed that the network he was investigating had 'a

cell-like structure similar to that used by terrorist groups'. Lee was referring to the system of pre-arranged meetings places and dead letter-box drops in tins buried under trees to deliver the LSD to the distributors and collect payment.¹⁶

Lee had begun to suspect terrorist connections when, during surveillance of the Let-It-Be Commune in Wiltshire, a car used by a dealer suspected of working for the LSD network turned out to have been 'linked' in some (unspecified) way to the West German Red Army faction. A check on an associate of the distribution network in Wales showed him to be 'an associate of the Angry Brigade'. Although none of those arrested in Operation Julie were charged with political offences, the supposed 'terrorist connection' did emerge in the pre-trial press coverage. The *Daily Mirror* ran a piece on how Kemp and his colleagues were 'allegedly' preparing to put LSD into the water supply.¹⁷ Documents from police files on the defendants' alleged political views were also circulated to the media. Richard Kemp, for example, was described as a 'left-wing revolutionary.....his motive for suspected acid activity: a catalyst of British revolution by youth brought on by the use of LSD'. Kemp told the police that he had supported festivals such as Windsor and Glastonbury and had given money to Release, the drugs legal help-line, and had supported 'Head politics' (but refused to name which groups).¹⁸

In fact the only drug dealers of an significance during this period with terrorist 'connections' of whom we know were Howard Marks - through the maverick Irish 'republican' Jim McCann - and Ron Stark. According to Tendler and May's book on the BEL, FBI reports passed on to the DEA in California and to the British police 'only showed what Stark was not, not what he actually was'. Inspector Lee's informant, 'Nancy', 'strongly suspected that Stark was involved with the CIA and had friends in the American Embassy'.¹⁹

In 1972 Hamilton Macmillan, an MI6 officer and nephew of the former Tory Prime Minister, recruited Howard Marks, his old chum from Balliol College, Oxford, to spy on Jim McCann, a hash smuggler whom MI6 believed was a Provisional IRA contact in Amsterdam. Macmillan gave no indication that he knew Marks was already doing business with McCann, or that he knew Marks' name and address had turned up in the address book of arrested IRA volunteer, Dutch Doherty. (The address had been passed onto Doherty by McCann). MI6 did not appear to realise that the IRA had rejected McCann's efforts to involve them in drugs and that he was using his contacts with republican activists to boost his credibility as a smuggler.²⁰ Macmillan's scheme went awry when Marks decided to let McCann in on the secret of his 'deal' with MI6. (MI6's admitted involvement later sank the prosecutions of both men.) When the police learned of Marks' operation after his disappearance in 1974, they suspected that until 1973 he had been dealing with the BEL, and from then on with its remnants.

Ron Stark was not far from Marks' and McCann's scene. In 1971 McCann had taken two American journalists from the

12 Lee and Pratt op. cit. pp. 12-18

13 Ibid. p. 290

14 Ibid p. 47. See also Cox, Shirley and Short, *The Fall of Scotland Yard*, Penguin, 1977.

15 Martyn Pritchard and Ed Laxton, *Busted!*, Mirror Books, London, 1978

16 Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 100

17 *The Leveller* April 1978

18 Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 290.

19 Ibid p. 337

20 David Leigh, *High Times*, Heinemann, London 1984, p. 68

London-based 'head' magazine, *Frendz*, to Belfast, and, while showing them round, tried to fire-bomb Queens University and got them all arrested and charged. It was one of the Americans, Alan Marcuson, who subsequently put McCann in touch with Marks through another old Oxford friend, Graham Plinston.²¹ In London, Stark, who was sniffing around radical circles, contacted the solicitor representing the American pair. He expressed some interest in McCann and promised financial support, which never came to anything.²² Stark was thus poking his nose into the Marks-McCann operation nearly two years before MI6's Macmillan recruited Howard Marks.

The questions asked but not answered

Stark was in prison in Italy in 1977 when Macmillan was posted to the British Embassy in Rome. Macmillan would have been in an ideal position at the MI6 station there to help Lee obtain the documents seized by the Italian police when they arrested Stark in 1975.²³ But the papers didn't arrive until a year after Lee made the request, by which time his investigation was being wound up. Stark's papers included formulas for the synthesis of LSD and THC, some of which were identical to Kemp's; documents on the BEL's tartrate dealings in England; letters to Stark at his laboratory in Belgium from Charles Adams, an 'economic counsellor' at the American embassy in London; and draft letters from Stark to Wendy Hansen, American vice-counsel in Florence which discussed the possibility of a coup in Italy (for which, he said, conditions, were not yet ripe).²⁴

This raises this question: if Stark, the catalyst of the British LSD explosion, was an American asset, would his agency have allowed him to break the law and endanger the national security of America's most senior partner in NATO? The answer might be 'yes' if the agency had a joint covert operation with their British counterparts - say in the area of 'counter-terrorism' - which was important enough to justify the risks. Stark was in prison in Italy from 1975-79 following his involvement with a gang of drug-dealing fascist terrorists. But he rubbed shoulders in prison with leading members of the Red Brigades, while maintaining contact with secret intelligence agencies on the outside. He is suspected by some of involvement in the Moro kidnapping.

In 1979 Stark appealed against his 14 year sentence. According to the judge who granted him bail and thus allowed him to flee Italy, 'an impressive series of scrupulously enumerated proofs' suggested 'that from 1960 onwards Stark belonged to the American secret services' and had 'entered the Middle East drug world in order to infiltrate armed organisations operating in that area and gain contacts and information about European terrorist groups' - a statement which raises as many questions as it answers.²⁵

21 Ibid. pp. 40-50

22 Tendler and May, op. cit. p. 274

23 Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, Brandon, Kerry, Ireland, 1983, pp. 223-5 and 258

24 Lee and Pratt op. cit. p. 334; Philip Willan, *The Puppet-Masters: the Political Use of Terrorism in Italy*, Constable, London, 199, p. 312.

25 Willan, op. cit. p. 309; Lee and Shalin op. cit. p. 281; Martin A. Lee in *National Reporter*, Fall 1988

From Parapolitics to Deep Politics

Mike Small

Deep Politics and the Death of JFK

Peter Dale Scott

University of California Press

(paperback edition, with new preface)

1996, \$14.95

'The key to understanding *Deep Politics* is the distinction I propose between traditional conspiracy theory, looking at conscious secret collaborations towards shared ends, and deep political analysis, defined as "the study of all those political practices and arrangements, deliberate or not, which are usually repressed rather than acknowledged".'¹

Peter Dale Scott's new paperback edition of *Deep Politics* begins to develop conspiracy theory away from its one dimensional past, towards a more authentic understanding of what is wrong with Western political culture. The preface is perhaps more important than the rest of the book which contains the usual immaculate research from Scott, but is written in a fashion that defies all but the most dogged reader. What Scott is beginning to articulate about politics is interesting and new, and may represent the long awaited maturing of conspiracy theory beyond a complex form of real-world Cluedo, into a genuinely useful forum for political analysis.

His thesis is a development from two other books of his: *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies and the CIA in Central America*; ² and *The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era*.³ Scott effectively had the story documented three years before the recent 'revelations' by a San José newspaper that clients of the CIA had been allowed to introduce crack cocaine into black neighbourhoods in California. These are 'revelations' which make the FBI's COINTELPRO look like hi-jinks, and it is Scott's hope that by bringing them to the surface we can illuminate aspects of our political culture which we will want to change. Scott's evolving position represents an analysis of his own progress in trying to understand the relationship between the *procedural democracy*, the *criminal establishment* and the *secret state*. Specifically his questions are: what are we going to do about the fact of their close interaction? And why is our civil society unable to respond to this fact? His work spans many countries, over three decades, though his chief focus is the United States. His conclusions are a major confrontation to pluralist political theory, researchers in parapolitics, and ordinary citizens about the state of their democracy.

His reflection stams from an appreciation of, and a discomfort with, the consensus that has emerged about the activities of the leading Western States - what has been termed

¹ *Deep Politics* p. xi

² Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, University of California Press, 1991

³ Peter Dale Scott, Jonathan Marshall and Jane Hunter, South End Press, Boston, 1987.