

Records 6-2

CIA Vital Materials Officer

16 November 1951

CIA Custodian of Vital Materials

Operation of the Vital Materials Repository

1. In compliance with your request of 7 November for information concerning my relations with the Resident Manager, [redacted] regarding operation of the Vital Materials Repository, the following paragraphs of this memorandum outline such relations for the nine weeks from 17 September to date that I have been on duty as the Custodian.

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2. During the nine weeks that I have been on duty as the CIA Custodian of Vital Materials at [redacted] and assigned to the Resident Manager's staff as the Records Management Officer, some misunderstanding has arisen between myself and the Resident Manager with regard to control and operation of the Repository. Although all minor difficulties to date have been resolved amicably, still the paramount question remains unanswered in my mind. This question revolves around control of the Repository and the Custodian. Clarification of the actual seat of authority is in order.

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3. The Resident Manager views the Repository as an integral part of the [redacted] establishment. The Custodian, because of his assignment as the [redacted] Records Management Officer and therefore a member of the Resident Manager's staff, is directly under the command of the Resident Manager in all matters, taking orders from no one except insofar as Agency regulations direct otherwise as concerning procedures established for handling receipt of transferred materials and the establishment of file plans and actual physical arrangement of filed material.

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These views were most recently expressed following a visit to the Repository vault area by two Office of Operations, Contact Division employees assigned to the [redacted] and with emergency assignments as alternate custodians. As you will remember, the visit and above information concerning the visitors was reported to you as requested. In turn the Services Officer was informed and, since neither of you were aware of the emergency assignment of the two OO/C employees, the Services Officer contacted the Advisor for Management for clarification of the situation. The Advisor for Management immediately called the Resident Manager who reminded him of the previous assignment of the OO/C men by higher authority. At this juncture, I was called to the Resident Manager and reminded that he was, after all, my superior and in complete charge of the Repository so that if he desired to take visitors into the vault area it was his prerogative and he would have good reason to do so. I was also informed that if any doubt existed in my mind

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as to what to report to the Vital Materials Officer, I should clear through him. Although I stated there had been no doubt whatsoever in my mind as to the propriety of my reporting visitors to the Vital Materials Officer since I had been ordered to do so, I was given to understand substantially the same things as reported in the first paragraph under number three above and in addition that it would be best if all my actions were cleared through the Resident Manager, not carrying out orders from anyone unless authorized to do so by him.

4. Before assignment as the Custodian my conception of and indoctrination in the control arrangements was on an entirely different basis. My understanding was that CIA Regulation [] established a records management program for the Agency, charging the Services Officer with operational supervision of the program through a CIA Records Officer designated by him and, as established by [] the records management program included the establishment and operation of a vital materials repository. It was by belief that the Services Officer, through a records of vital materials officer, controlled the entire vital materials program from collection to storage and use in the event of need and that I, as Custodian, was responsible to the Services Officer, through the Vital Materials Officer, and to no one else. In point of fact, during my final briefing before assuming my duties as Custodian, the Services Officer personally informed me that ".....you are not to take any orders from..." the Resident Manager. It was also my understanding that the Custodian was assigned as a member of the Resident Manager's staff only as a matter of convenience with regard to cover, pay, leave, transportation, etc.

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5. Since these divergent conceptions of my responsibilities do exist, the present situation is somewhat difficult and often embarrassing to me because of the misunderstandings which arise as a result of attempting to serve two masters. I have no desire to appear in the light of a trouble maker or seem disloyal to my superior, whoever it may be, but rather carry out my responsibilities and do my job in the best possible manner. Therefore, I would appreciate clarification of the matter at hand in all its ramifications, the decision, if different from the views held by the Resident Manager, to be communicated to him through appropriate higher authority.

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Custodian of Vital Materials

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