

# D.C. Doctor At Center of Bizarre Case

## Missing Food Expert Believed Murdered On Amsterdam Visit

By **Barnard L. Collier**  
Herald Tribune News Service

Sometime after 4:30 last Sunday morning, one of the world's top authorities on nutritional pathology, a Washington doctor named Richard H. Follis Jr. disappeared without a trace in Amsterdam.

Chief Inspector Piet Landman of the Amsterdam police says the 56-year-old doctor probably fell into one of the city's many canals and drowned during the howling Atlantic gale that raked Holland that weekend.

But despite extensive dragging, the body of Follis has not been found.

In Europe, the press is headlining the doctor's disappearance and hinting broadly that somehow the CIA is involved. In Washington the doctor's colleagues scoff at the idea of any intelligence connection.

In London usually reliable intelligence sources say that the doctor was almost certainly murdered, but they refuse to say how or why they arrive at that conclusion.

Meanwhile, bizarre and conflicting information surrounding the case continues to mount. A State Department security official says "almost nothing about it jibes."

The doctor's background is impressive and impeccable.

A graduate of Yale University (1932) and Johns Hopkins Medical School (1936), Baltimore-born Follis, the son of a famous surgeon, taught for several years and then in 1955 became an employe of the Veterans Administration. That same year he was detached for work at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, but the VA continues to pay his salary.

His home is at 4915 Albe-marle-nw. He and his wife Edith have four children.

Since 1955, the doctor has made more than a score of trips to odd corners of the world on survey work in nutrition. In 1959 he was in Saigon and the villages of Vietnam, in 1960 in Thailand. He also visited as far as the West Indies, Burma, Lebanon,

Colombia, Jordan and "a few

ple of other places I can't find in the record," said one of his co-workers.

A few of Follis's trips were made to attend medical conferences, but most were to carry out field studies in his specialty: the cure and prevention of goiter. He was also an expert on dwarfism and growth retardation in children.

On Thursday, Dec. 2, Follis took an Eastern Air Lines shuttle from Washington to New York and left for Amsterdam on nonstop Pan American jetliner flight 74. He arrived in Amsterdam on Friday morning and that day, according to his friends here, kept an appointment with a Dutch expert in the field of vitamin A deficiency and childhood blindness that results from it.

According to the Amsterdam police, Follis returned to the old, traditionally elegant Schiller Hotel in the heart of the somewhat garish downtown district.

From that point on the information becomes widely garbled.

Follis's friends, his family and colleagues say that he was a man of "absolute punctuality," "sober," "a seasoned traveler," "a man who kept pretty much to himself."

Yet, after what inspector Landman said was "a long Friday night in several clubs near the hotel" Follis did not telephone a Dutch nutrition expert named Andreas Querida at Leiden University as he had written he would.

Follis, according to Landman, was seen in his hotel room until about 2 p.m. Sat-



**DR. RICHARD H. FOLLIS JR.**

... may have been slain

urday and then went down to the lobby where he appeared to witnesses to be "very distracted."

That night, Landman says, the doctor again visited some of the clubs at which he had been the previous night, and a man fitting his description was last seen by witnesses at about 4:30 a.m. near a club called the Moulin Rouge—"about 50 yards from a canal and about 100 yards from the Schiller Hotel,"

"Witnesses say he looked very ill," the inspector says. "It was very windy and rainy that morning and even some cars blew into canals. I think that kind of accident happened to the good doctor."

Nevertheless, Amsterdam police are searching for three "disreputable gentlemen" who left the club at the same time as Follis did.

A search of Follis's hotel room showed that he had not slept in his bed for at least one night and possibly two. All his luggage was intact, including most of the \$500 expense money he carried.

The next day, Landman called what State Department officials here consider a "really strange" press conference to announce the fact that Follis was missing and that he had fallen into a canal. For a few days, the inspector's explanation seemed good enough.

But one Dutch official contacted by the Herald Tribune News Service said: "The body ought to have turned up days ago. The police have a formula based on body weight and such and they can tell within a few yards where a man will pop up if he falls in."

A diplomat from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington says: "Those canals are in concentric circles and are as calm as a fish pond. I think it is impossible for him not to have surfaced by now. I think he must be somewhere else—or weighted down, in which case he did not have a simple accident."

Follis's superiors late this week sent one of their representatives, also a research doctor, from Ankara, Turkey, to Amsterdam to try and determine what seems to be going on and to identify the doctor's body—or the doctor himself—if he somehow turns up alive.

"There is something terribly phony about all of this," says Dr. Allan Forbes, a Defense Department medical supervisor and the Follis family physician. "After a week I know nothing for sure and suspect everything."

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