

Was Hornberger Working

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

For The CIA?

By GARY SAMPSON

Five months ago Ronald Hornberger — a 22-year-old Kent State University student — disappeared in the dense jungle terrain of eastern Guatemala.

Since that time a jungle of misinformation, distortion and "no comments" has come from Hornberger's family, Government sources and Guatemala about what happened to him and what he was doing in that guerrilla-infested country.

The latest revelation — that the body shipped here from Guatemala last week probably is not Hornberger's — serves only to deepen the mystery.

THE TRUTH is that the people who know the facts aren't talking.

The State Department has told Hornberger's family not to talk to the newspapers. Asked why, the State Department says "no comment."

Hornberger's activities were not so secret in Guatemala, however. A local amateur radio operator says Hornberger's activities were widely known in Guatemala.

An investigation into the case by the Beacon Journal reveals two possibilities. It appears that Hornberger was either a very adventurous, very fearless ETA young man or an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

HERE IS what the Beacon Journal has been able to find out about Hornberger's activities and motives just prior to his trip.

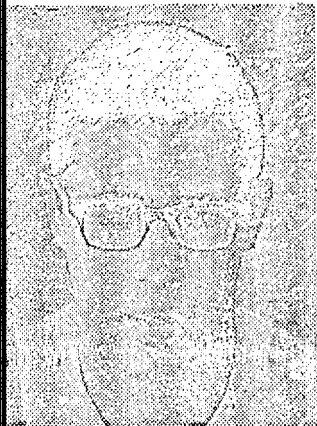
Hornberger made two trips to Washington, D. C., during the Summer shortly before leaving for Guatemala in late August.

Hornberger had a folding "British jungle carbine" in his suitcase when he started his trip to Guatemala.

Hornberger had a copy of a mass-circulation magazine that contained an article about Guatemalan guerrillas when he left.

they drove him to I-71 just outside of Akron where Hornberger began his hitch-hiking trip — had this to say about him:

James Oberdorfer, 2984 Hud-



RONALD HORNBERGER
...missing five months

Background

Ronald Hornberger of Cuyahoga Falls, a former Army "Green Beret" who served in Vietnam, disappeared in September, 1968, after a mysterious trip to Guatemala. The U. S. government and Guatemalan authorities have twice identified bodies as Hornberger's. The second body was shipped here last week and is now at the Cuyahoga County Morgue for tests. However, Cuyahoga Coroner Samuel Gerber has said he cannot positively identify it and other sources indicate it is not Hornberger's. Hornberger, who lived with his mother, Gladys Foley at 1607 Broadway, gave several reasons for his trip, but speculation is growing that he was on a government mission.

'He was a likeable guy, a friend.'

FOIAb3b

CPYRGHT

son Dr. Cuyahoga Falls. Ronald talked about politics quite a bit. Anything mentioned about socialism or things socialistic would make him livid. Even though he had been a "Green Beret" in the Army he refused to take GI Bill money from the Government because he considered that socialistic. He was a man with very definite viewpoints."

BERDORFER, a senior in geography at Kent State, said Hornberger told him he was going to Guatemala to hunt jaguar.

"But I was suspicious," Oberdorfer said, "You don't go hunting for jaguar with a carbine. I saw that he had one folded

up in his suitcase when he left.

"He was a likable guy and a friend of mine," Oberdorfer continued, "but I thought at the time that he was pretty far out. Before he went to Washington during the Summer he wanted to jump behind the lines in North Vietnam. But when he came back from Washington the second time he only talked about Guatemala, no more North Vietnam."

HORNBERGER told the other friend something different.

Jerry Wray, of 230 West av., Tallmadge, said Hornberger told him he was going to do an article about the Reds in Guatemala.

"I asked him," Wray said, "if that wasn't just a front. You aren't really going down here for that are you?"

Wray said Hornberger laughed and said, "I can't tell you the details, but my mission is different than what I told you."

"Besides that," Wray continued, "he didn't talk much about his trip except to say he had a hard time getting a gun permit for Guatemala."

WRAY, who worked with Hornberger at Goodyear during the Summer, said Hornberger showed a lot of interest in Guatemala.

"I thought it was pretty funny," Wray said. "To be so far away he was really concerned about the Reds in Guatemala. It bothered him very much."

Both Wray and Oberdorfer said they liked Hornberger.

Said Wray, "I hope he did whatever he had to do because I don't believe it would have been wrong in any way. He was really a nice guy."

BERDORFER said Hornberger was a "good and generous friend," but added "To look at him you would say he's a nice fellow, outgoing, a good student and so on, but if you touched a nerve, something that went against his grain, you would immediately have a long argument on your hands."

Hornberger's teachers at Kent State remember him the same way.

Mrs. Linda Gates, an instructor of French, said, "I liked him very much personally from what I knew in class. He was definitely not the type to be a bounty hunter or a fanatic although he could be called an adventurer."

Mrs. Velia Pryce, also a French instructor, agreed.

"I WAS impressed by his brightness and alertness in class. He never talked about politics and he was always dressed presentably."

More information about Hornberger's disappearance came from amateur radio operator Hiram Fisher, 1177 Jason st., Akron.

"He was a liaison man between a search party looking for Hornberger in Guatemala and his family here