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The Bizarre Tale of a CIA Operation

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The apartment was a small duplex with a magnificent view of San Francisco Bay and with a Central Intelligence Agency spy named Morgan Hall who had a taste for martinis.

For hours Hall would sit perched on a portable toilet watching behind a two-way mirror while his employee, a drug-addicted prostitute, entertained unsuspecting visitors and slipped each one an exotic chemical or biological agent.

Details of this bizarre scene were supplied in the latest group of documents released by the CIA yesterday and in interviews with persons familiar with the project the intelligence agency code named "Operation Midnight Climax."

The 1,647 pages of financial records refer to the San Francisco scheme under the more businesslike title of Subproject 42. It pictures Hall as an agent more possessed with financial worries than voyeurism.

"Money urgently needed to pay Sept. rent," Hall apparently wrote to his CIA superiors back in 1956, underlining "urgently."

The financial documents show Hall repeatedly and anxiously reminding

CIA headquarters to send more money. His bills for the apartment include Toulouse-Lautrec posters, a picture of a French can-can dancer and one item marked "portable toilet for observation post."

When someone apparently rammed a downstairs neighbor's car parked across the street from the apartment, Hall quickly settled up out of his own pocket rather than risk blowing his cover to a nosy insurance investigator, according to the documents.

William Hawkins, now an electronics engineer in Santa Clara, Calif., said Hall used the name George White when he was called to install bugging equipment in the apartment at 225 Chestnut St. in San Francisco.

Hawkins, then a part-time student, said he had no idea that the apartment was being used by the CIA.

Hawkins said Hall always referred to the apartment as a "pad," and kept photos of manacled women wearing black stockings in cabinets by the front window. "He kept a pitcher of martinis in the refrigerator," he said, "and he'd watch for a while as I installed a microphone and then slip off."

Although Hall called himself "George White," bills by Hawkins

company for the bug installations were sent to "Morgan Hall," Hawkins said. The apartment was listed in the San Francisco telephone directory under Hall's name between 1956 and 1958.

Hawkins originally made his information known to freelance reporter Paul Avery for San Francisco radio station KSAN. A second bugging expert who worked on the apartment confirmed the story to The Washington Post.

Hall was identified as the operator of the CIA apartment in San Francisco during a hearing into the intelligence agency's clandestine drug and mind control activities by the Senate Subcommittee on Health. CIA officials have said he died two years ago.

The CIA documents released yesterday were part of the agency's top secret MK-ULTRA mind control experimental program conducted during the 1950s and 1960s. Among them is a telephone receipt for \$60.50 with a scribbled explanation from Hall: "Calls made by addict prostitute while under covert observation — necessary in connection with undercover investigation..."

The documents list the purpose of Hall's apartment as a place to field test "offensive" chemical and biological warfare weapons. The project apparently began in the early 1950s and lasted until at least 1965. A memorandum indicates that the project may have extended still later as part of another CIA program known as MK-SEARCH.

Other MK-ULTRA documents released yesterday described:

- A scholarly project to assess in psychological terms the impact of Communist ideology on the population of an Asian nation, apparently China, although the name was deleted.

- A "human ecology" study of low-income youths at basketball playgrounds, to discover, among other things, how to channel "socially undesirable modes of behavior, exemplified in delinquency, into more constructive modes."

- A study of chemical characteristics (LSD and other compounds) as part of the agency's program to "control human behavior." An ambitious project was designed to screen in "human trials" effects such as "anti-convulsant, anti-spasmodic and

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