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5 June 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: KRONTHAL, James Speyer

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1. On 5 June 1989 the undersigned interviewed Harlan Westrell [redacted] the retired chief of the Counterintelligence Branch of OS, at his home [redacted] Westrell was interviewed concerning any information he may have about Subject's case. This memorandum is to report topics covered in the interview and document Subject's and Westrell's file.

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2. The following information was obtained during the course of the interview:

a. Westrell was chief of the CI Branch of OS and did not directly investigate the Kronthal case. Paul Gaynor [redacted] [redacted] was investigating all cases involving HA.

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b. The Soviets were attempting to blackmail co-optees through weaknesses, such as HA, during this period. Blackmail potential was being carefully investigated [redacted] investigations of Agency employees. Subject had returned from overseas and was scheduled for a polygraph. It is believed that his HA would have been seen as a vulnerability and Subject's career would have been over. Rather than submit to the polygraph, ending his career, Subject committed suicide.

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c. Westrell stated that Subject's suicide came as a "great shock" to the Agency, DCI Dulles, and C/OPS Helms. There was no indication at the time that Subject was connected with the Soviets or any other intelligence service.

d. It is believed that Subject committed suicide using an OSS poison capsule, called and "L-pill," which could not be detected by autopsy. These capsules were given to OSS agents in case of capture. Subject, being ex-OSS, would have had access. Westrell recalled that while he was a security officer in Frankfurt, he personally disposed of remaining stocks of these OSS pills.

WARNING NOTICE
INTELLIGENCE SOURCES
OR METHODS INVOLVED

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e. Westrell had no information of the Subject's suicide notes. Neither did he recognize the name or have information on Corson as an aide to DCI Dulles, though he admitted it would have been possible.

f. As concerned the McCarthy list of subversive Agency employees, Westrell stated that Subject was on the list, but not a prime target. Many of the names on the list were from the Germany bases and concerned busted operations. McCarthy alleged that these bad operations were due to communists and subversives, but Westrell, who investigated the allegations against Agency employees, said most of the problems were due to "stupid operations" and poor tradecraft.

g. Westrell gave the writer several names that may have been related to the Subject's case and the McCarthy hearings. These files will be reviewed for useful information.

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