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26 December 1950

AD/OSI

Chief, R&amp;E Division

Projecting Electronic Ray

Ref.(a): Memorandum to AD/OSI, 18 Dec 50, subject as above

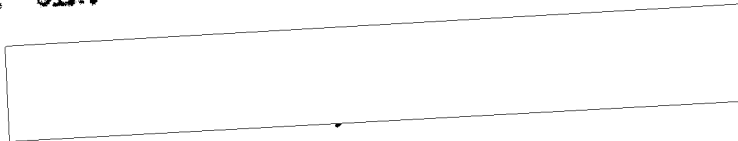
1. In furtherance of investigations of the Projecting Electronic Ray, and in accord with the instructions received in the office of the Director on 20 Dec 50, a second conference was held on Mr. Priest's farm in Hackettstown, New Jersey on 21 December. The information obtained and my observations and conclusions are reported below. They are summarized in a draft of a memorandum for the Director's signature to the President, enclosed.

2. The conference was attended by:

a. Primalta Research and Development Company:

Mr. W. Elvedgett Priest  
 Mr. Arthur W. Marchant  
 Mr. Percy Landolt  
 Mr. Thomas Brunie

b. CIA:



3. In order to meet the conditions stipulated by Messrs. Priest and Marchant, as stated in paragraph 4 of reference (a), an agreement drafted by the legal counselor of CIA was duly signed and witnessed. One copy of this agreement is enclosed for CIA files, one copy was left with Mr. Priest.

4. The basic principle of the Projecting Electronic Ray was disclosed by Mr. Marchant along with a description of the equipment, design and operational aspects and results of tests claimed to have been obtained with a prototype model by Mr. Marchant in the early 30's. The description was based on a drawing prepared by Mr. Marchant on 25 September 1950 from the notes covering his work during the period 1931-34 and supplemented by (a) copy of Marchant's letter to the commanding officer of Watertown Arsenal, Watertown, Massachusetts, of June 1936 (seven pages), and (b) a set of typed notes pertaining to "critical items and specific formulas" of the projector (five pages). The drawing and twelve pages of typed material were obtained by me on a loan basis against a receipt signed by me on behalf of the Agency.

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5. I must admit that I failed to understand the operational claims for the Projecting Electronic Ray, as outlined by Mr. Marchant, and his description of the principle and design details of the equipment. The analysis of these, however, lead me to believe that:

a. The equipment as revealed to me is incapable of producing and maintaining electronic radiation of the kind required for the claimed performance of a prototype equipment built by Mr. Marchant and his associates.

b. Neither Mr. Marchant nor any of his associates have shown the basic understanding of the functional capabilities or usefulness of the individual elements of the "projector" as outlined to me by Mr. Marchant.

c. The "projector" is, in effect, an uncritical attempt to combine several conventional and well-known electronics principles and equipments in the hope that powerful radiation might result and with expectation that sufficient interest might be produced within the governmental circles to furnish Mr. Marchant and his associates with sufficient funds to undertake a basic study of the project.

6. The examination of the material supplied by Mr. Marchant and obtained by me on a loan basis shows that the basic idea for the Projecting Ray was a subject of a secret contract between Mr. Marchant and the United States Army Ordnance issued by the Chief of Ordnance to Marchant and Associates, Inc., in 1936 under Ordnance Contract W-ord-259. An inspection of the contract files reveals that the contract was issued on May 9, 1936, and was cancelled on October 8, 1937, due to the failure of Mr. Marchant and his associates to supply the necessary information and services as stipulated by the contract. The matter of the contract and of Mr. Marchant's claims were reviewed by the Chief of Ordnance, U.S. Army, in 1938, upon instigation of Mr. James Roosevelt and in 1939 as a result of a direct inquiry originated by Senator H. C. Lodge, Jr. In 1940 the matter was reopened by a proposal of a William F. Mahor to modify the basic idea and equipments for use as an airplane detector capable of 200 miles range. In all cases the Army Ordnance review resulted in negative recommendation.

7. Thus far no definite proof of any tests of the projector or of any result of such have been supplied or found in support of Mr. Marchant's claims. It has been ascertained that there appeared an article in a Sunday issue of one of Boston's newspapers published in 1935, which describes the results of some tests with a prototype model as reported by Mr. Marchant to a newspaper correspondent. [redacted] has been requested to obtain and forward to us a copy of this article for information and file. It is doubtful, however, whether the article can be used as a positive proof of Mr. Marchant's claims.

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✓ The contract and all material pertaining to it was downgraded to "unclassified" on 30 July 1947.

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8. In an attempt to verify my opinion of the basic technical principles of the Ray producing equipment, and of Mr. Marchant's claims, I discussed the available information and material with Dr. Robertson, WSEG, Mr. R. L. Clark and several members of OSM. The results of these discussions were as follows:

- a. There is no indication that the equipment is capable of meeting any of the claims of Mr. Marchant and his associates.
- b. There exists no reason for any further action by CIA.
- c. If the investigations so far made by CIA cannot be terminated, the project should be transferred to the National Inventors Council for a thorough technical review, inspection, and judgment.



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- (a) Draft of memo from the DCI to the President
- (b) Copy of agreement between CIA and Mr. Priest
- (c) One drawing
- (d) 12 pages of typed material

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Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence

18 December 1950

Chief, Physics and Electronics Division

Projecting Electronic Ray

1. In accordance with your request, I visited Mr. W. E. Priest on 16 December 1950 at his farm in Hackettstown, N. J. I was accompanied by [redacted], who handled the preliminary investigations and arrangements for the visit.

2. No specific technical information on the Projecting Ray, its principle of operation or its potentialities were made available to me at this meeting, as Mr. A. Marchant, who is claimed to be the originator of the Ray, and who is working on the technical design of the pertinent equipment, was not present.

3. The discussions with Mr. Priest and his assistant left me with the following observations and impressions:

a. The Projecting Electronic Ray at this stage is a promotional project, the purpose of which is to obtain adequate funds from the U. S. Government for research, development and design of an equipment "capable of delivering powerful electronic energy to a distance in excess of a few hundred yards to cut trees, minerals, and metals, and to destroy life" by conversion of a sharply tuned electronic ray into heat.

b. No factual information on technical principles or details of producing the Ray is known to Mr. Priest, and his activities are guided by the potentialities of the Ray as derived from his belief that Mr. Marchant is capable of producing such Ray and from the claimed fact that a prototype of the Ray-producing equipment, as built by Mr. Marchant, was used as a glass and metal cutting tool and was destroyed by Mr. Marchant when he recognized the full significance of the potentialities of the Ray.

c. In this promotional project, Mr. Priest has a vested interest derived from his support to the project by the exploitation of his intimate contacts with the high authorities in Washington. The key technical factor is, however, Mr. Marchant. It is apparent that he is reasonably cautious in sharing his ideas on the Electronic Ray, and any attempt to formulate an opinion on the feasibility of production and potentialities of the Ray must involve direct contact with him.

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4. A direct contact with Mr. Marchant is predicated on the following conditions, as stipulated by Mr. Marchant and stated to me by Mr. Priest:

- a. Positive assurances must be given to Mr. Marchant that his ideas and principles, as these pertain to the Electronic Ray, will be duly protected and no attempt to exploit them be made by the government without his concurrence and approval.
- b. Due credit will be given to Mr. Marchant for his ideas if any use of his ideas and principles are made by the government.
- c. All negotiation for such uses will be made through the Primalta Research and Development Company.

5. Provided that the above conditions are met, Mr. Marchant is anxious to meet with the U.S. Government representatives as soon as feasible, preferably by Wednesday, 20 December 1950.

6. My personal opinion and recommendations are as follows:

- a. <sup>as indicated</sup> The general pattern of the Projecting Electronic Ray developments so far induces me to think that there is nothing revolutionary in it, and that it is in effect nothing but an outright promotional scheme.
- b. But for the fact that the President and his personal friend are involved, I would recommend that we drop our participation in the project.
- c. In view of the manner in which we have been involved in the project, however, I would recommend that the investigations be continued and that a duly authorized representative or representatives of the government be instructed to contact Mr. Marchant.
- d. In view of the specific requests for assurances contained in paragraph 4 above, I recommend that the Director's opinion be obtained on the advisability of transferring the responsibility for contacts with Mr. Marchant to RDB or other suitable organizations, or the advisability of requesting participation and support from such organizations to CIA in further investigations.
- e. If this cannot be done forthwith, I recommend that the CIA  be directed to request a postponement of a visit to Mr. Marchant from this week, as recommended by Mr. Priest, to a more suitable time.

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**DEC 11 1950**

Assistant Director for Scientific  
Intelligence  
Assistant Director for Operations

Primalta Research and Development Company,  
Hackettstown, New Jersey

1. The attached report contains all of the information that the Contact Division of this Office was able to obtain through discreet local inquiries on the Primalta Research and Development Company and the individuals associated with it. This report is submitted in response to your informal request to Mr. Osborn of the Contact Division on Friday, 8 December 1950.

2. This Office will be happy to take whatever further action you consider desirable to support your report to the DCI on this matter. Based on the limited information we have been able to obtain in the relatively short time allotted, it would appear that Mr. Priest may be the innocent victim of opportunism in the persons of Dr. Gardner and Mr. Marchant.

**GEORGE G. CARY**

Attachment: As stated above

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Report on request by AD/OSI for information as to background and general reputation of following individuals:

1. Mr. Arthur Marchant  
Woburn, Massachusetts
2. Mr. Wells Priest  
Deer Crossing Farm  
Hackensack, New Jersey  
Primalta Research and Development Corp.
3. Dr. Daniel Gardner
4. Percy Landolt

1. Mr. Marchant

Address, 44 Warren Avenue, Woburn, Massachusetts. Is about 68 years of age and has wife and two daughters. He is unknown in scientific circles in Boston and is not listed in New England roster of professional engineers.

He has a reputation as an eccentric inventor and some years ago the Boston Globe carried a feature article describing his invention of a powerful "death ray". He lives in respectable section of Woburn and is generally thought of as a quiet, stable individual.

2. Mr. Wells Priest

Has lived in the Hackensack area for over ten years, came from St. Louis, Missouri, where he was reputed to have been a lawyer and a judge of some court there. He is between 60 and 65 years old, married to a former Miss Cox (now 92-93 years old) of Budd Lake, New Jersey. None of our informants know of the Primalta Research and Development Company as such, however, his minister knows that he is in the process of organizing a research laboratory and is doing some type of confidential work. There is a Dr. Daniel Gardner working with him but nothing is known about him or his background.

Priest has boasted of his gold mining interests out west (U.S.), has real estate deals around St. Louis and his contacts with high officials in Washington. The minister saw a letter addressed to Priest from President Truman that was of a social nature. Priest claims intimate friendship with General Vaughn, Aide to the President. He claims to have been a Vice President of the Third Avenue Transit System in New York City and also to be a relative of Congressman Priest of Tennessee.

He lives on Allamuchy Road about one mile outside of Hackensack in a large (8 to 10 rooms), well kept house, has frequent visitors from New York State, travels to New York City about once a week, appears well off financially, ap-

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parently retired and living on returns from investments, has started several business ventures in Hackettstown area, such as raising chickens, without any apparent success. His neighbor considers him intelligent, a good secure citizen and an emotionally stable individual who has had only minor illnesses during the past ten years. During World War II, he was a member of the local draft board. None of the three informants had anything adverse to say about Priest and all felt he was a "normal" individual who was prone to boast a little.

Priest apparently has two associates in his new X Company. Dr. Daniel Gardner and a Thomas Brunce, who lives at the Priest's home. Our informants were unable to supply us with details on either Gardner or Brunce.

Records of Port Intelligence Officer, New York Port of Embarkation, dated 20 December 1941, indicate that Priest has an ID Number 297619 assigned. This is presumed to have been for loyalty check purposes possibly for overseas movement. This communication further classifies Priest as a boiler maker with home address at that date as Hackettstown, New Jersey. No indication of completed investigation appears from records seen. No information is available on Primalta Research and Development Company.

### 3. Dr. Daniel Gardner

Born in USSR on March 15, 1878

Professor Metallurgy and Chemistry in St. Petersburg, Russia from 1911 to 1914.

From 1914 to 1925 taught chemistry in London - University unknown.

1925 to 1940 with Sarbonne in Paris

In 1940 to Colombia, S.A., entered U.S. at various times, but first entry in 13 May 1944 from Barranquilla, Colombia

Has written FBI many times on "hot leads" - in 1943 wrote that he was in touch with a Russian by the name of Gubrilovich who had just arrived in this country and who had an invention that could kill mice at 50 yards by death ray.

Was involved at one time in a tantalum mine in Canada which turned out to be a swindle. No firm evidence that he was directly implicated.

First army records indicate that Daniel Gardner has aliases, i.e., Daniel Gardener and it is believed that the FBI will have further file on this individual. Gardner alias Gardner is considered to be a Chemist.

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4. Peru Lindolt

Nothing available.

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