



# THE BLACK VAULT

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Chief, Special Security Division

LASHBROOK, Doctor Robert V.  
749418

1. On 28 December 1953, the Director of Security instructed the Chief, Cover Branch, OSD to set up employment backstopping on the above named individual so that an insurance investigation would not reveal his connection with CIA.

2. The above mentioned Subject was in the company of Mr. Frank R. Olson, OSD #70450, a Department of the Army employee who committed suicide in New York City during November 1953. At that time, certain information was given to the local police authorities and it is the desire of the Agency that Subject's connection with CIA not be revealed in any investigation arising out of the suicide of Olson. Olson's widow has filed a claim with her insurance company for double indemnity as a result of her husband's death. It is anticipated that this insurance company will make a complete investigation of the circumstances of the suicide and will probably attempt to interview Dr. Lashbrook and perhaps some of Olson's co-workers.

3. Dr. Lashbrook advised the New York City police that he was an associate of Olsons. Olson was employed by the Department of the Army, Army Biological Center, Camp Detrick, Md.

4. Dr. Lashbrook was interviewed on 30 December 1953 by a representative of this Division regarding what backstopping was needed to fit in with the statement he had given the New York police. At that time, Dr. Lashbrook stated that he desired that backstopping be made to the Department of the Army, G-4, Research & Development Division, Development Branch with Col. Starny Furuholm and Lt. Col. Jackson Lawrence. These individuals are contacts of the Technical Services Staff of CIA. Dr. Lashbrook stated that he did not desire to be backstopped at Camp Detrick as he felt that that would only draw attention to the installation.

5. It is the opinion of this Division that backstopping in the manner suggested by Dr. Lashbrook would be inadequate and would only serve to arouse the curiosity of additional persons in the Department of the Army, who at this point, have no knowledge of the circumstances of the incident which occurred in New York.

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6. General E. J. Bullene, Commanding General, Chemical Corps, U. S. Army; Col. Vincent Ruvet, Commanding Officer, Army Biological Center, Camp Detrich, Maryland and Major Max Etkin, Security Officer, Camp Detrich, Maryland are all fully cognizant of the facts in this case.

7. The individuals mentioned in the above paragraph are all cleared for Top Secret Liaison by the Security Control Staff of CIA.

8. It has been brought to the attention of this office that the U. S. Army is conducting an independent investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Olson's death and it can be presumed that the Army investigators have become aware of Mr. Lashbrook's clandestine relationship to CIA.

9. On the basis of this information, it is recommended that Mr. Lashbrook's employment be backstopped through the office of General Bullene, Commanding General, Chemical Corps, U. S. Army.

is advised

10. It is further recommended that Col. Vincent Ruvet and Major Max Etkin, the Security Officer of Camp Detrich, Maryland be contacted that any inquiry regarding Mr. Lashbrook should be referred directly to the office of General Bullene and that the Security Office of CIA should be notified of the inquiry.

11. It is believed that this type backstopping is the simplest and most secure under the circumstances. Mr. Lashbrook's belief that to backstop him in any way with Camp Detrich, Maryland would call attention to that installation is not deemed valid as it is a natural thing for a chemist to be associated with an installation such as the Army Biological Center at Camp Detrich and that fact should not create undue interest. It is believed that backstopping through the Logistics Office of the Army would be inconsistent with Mr. Lashbrook's background and might create an undue interest insofar as an insurance investigation is concerned.

12. The Security Office, Technical Services Staff advised a representative of this Division in confidence that he felt that the backstopping with G-4 of the Army would not be compatible with Mr. Lashbrook's background. However, he had been requested by Mr. Lashbrook and Dr. Cottrell of Technical Services Staff to offer this G-4 contact of TSS as a possible backstopping medium.

13. If you concur in these arrangements, the Cover Branch of SSS will undertake to implement them on an expedite basis.

Robert H. Gurnea