

events get their stories from other journalists. Naturally, the respected journalists or those with the greatest access to information are given plenty of credibility by fellow journalists. For example, press clubs were a focus of CIA activity. A former CIA official told how the manager of the Mexico City press club was a CIA agent who took advantage of his position to influence other journalists. "He used to work very successfully," the CIA man explained to the *New York Times*. "Some guys are lazy. They'd be sitting at the bar and he'd slip them things and they'd phone it in."²⁰

The CIA also realized the threat that honest journalists could be to covert actions. For example, during the Guatemala campaign, *New York Times* reporter Sydney Gruson was kept out of Guatemala. This happened when Allen Dulles complained to the *Times* that neither he nor his brother, John Foster Dulles, believed that Gruson was capable of reporting with "objectivity" on the upcoming revolution (which was manufactured and conducted by the CIA). Arthur Hays Sulzberger complied with the CIA's request and kept Gruson in Mexico City on the pretense that there might be some spillover action in Mexico.²¹

Although the OSS had made extensive *ad hoc* use of journalists, Wisner realized that the CIA's efforts in this area required a more formalized approach. Together with input from his friend and *Washington Post* publisher Phil Graham, Wisner created Operation MOCKINGBIRD. Appropriately named after a bird that can imitate the calls of other birds, MOCKINGBIRD was exposed by Deborah Davis in her book *Katherine the Great*, detailing the life of Katherine Graham, Phil Graham's wife and the eventual longtime owner of the *Washington Post*. Davis wrote:

[A]ccording to a former CIA analyst who had worked on MOCKINGBIRD, each journalist was a separate "operation," requiring a code name, a field supervisor, and a field office, at an annual cost of tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars—there has never been an accurate accounting.²²

Davis wrote that Wisner "owned" respected members of *Newsweek*, CBS, the *New York Times* and many others, according to a former CIA analyst who had worked with MOCKINGBIRD. Carl Bernstein reported similar information in his famous *Rolling Stone* piece from October, 1977, entitled *The CIA and the Media*, in which he outlined how members of all the major media in this country owed some allegiance, whether paid or as volunteers, to the CIA. According to Bernstein, some of the many who have served the CIA wittingly are William Paley, the longtime top executive of CBS; Henry Luce of the Time Inc. empire; and Arthur Hays Sulzberger of the *New York Times*. Also included are members of ABC, NBC, the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters, Hearst Newspapers, Scripps-Howard, *Newsweek*, the Mutual Broadcasting System, the *Miami Herald*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and the John Hay Whitney-owned *New York Herald-Tribune*. Bernstein noted that the most valuable relationships the CIA had were with CBS and the *New York Times*. The only major

media absent from his piece was his own former employer, the *Washington Post*. Davis' book does much to show that both Phil and Kate Graham, in addition to senior editor Benjamin Bradlee, were supportive of the CIA. In Bradlee's case, he visited the Rosenbergs' prosecutors in New York by order of "the head of the CIA in Paris," after which he wrote an "Operational Memorandum" outlining the case against the Rosenbergs that was then disseminated to 40 different countries across four continents.²³ Bradlee later became friendly with Richard Helms, and notified Phil Graham when Helms' grandfather put *Newsweek* on the block. (*The Washington Post* subsequently purchased *Newsweek*.)

How did the CIA pay for all of these propaganda efforts? By skimming off the Marshall Plan funds. Wisner and his group called the funds "candy." CIA agent Gilbert Greenway recalled, "We couldn't spend it all. I remember once meeting with Wisner and the comptroller. My God, I said, how can we spend that? There were no limits, and nobody had to account for it. It was amazing."²⁴

James Jesus Angleton, head of the CIA's Counterintelligence department for 25 years, kept his own slush fund that he did not have to account for which was used in part to pay journalists. According to Bernstein, "Angleton ran a completely independent group of journalist-operatives who performed sensitive and frequently dangerous assignments."²⁵

One could write a book on the CIA's relationship with the media, culture, science, sports, religion (priests were used as cover, and the CIA maintains a close relationship with the Vatican) and other areas in which the CIA leveraged assets to make a dramatic impact around the world. The Church Committee in the '70s devoted a large section in its final report to these activities, and even so, only scratched the surface. But let's focus now on the specific relationships between the CIA and the media as they pertain to the reporting on the assassination of President Kennedy.

The CIA and the Assassination Reportage

Day one coverage of the assassination included reports that "six to eight shots" were fired in Dealey Plaza. But soon, the reports were all consistent—three shots fired. How and why was the story changed? Similarly, Kennedy's throat wound went through a rapid evolution. In Tom Wicker's original article for the *New York Times* on the assassination, Wicker stated that:

Mr. Kennedy was hit by a bullet in the throat, just below the Adam's apple, they said. This wound had the appearance of a bullet's entry ..²⁶

Within a few days, however, the official story had changed: the bullet wound in the throat had morphed into an exit wound. Years later, curiously, Wicker would list for Walter Karp of *Harper's* magazine the hazards to journalists