

104-10124-10147

Chief, TSD/Security

21 April 1960

Chief, Security Staff, OL

Identi-Kit

REFERENCE: Memo from Chief, TSD/Security, to Chief, SS/OL, dated 21 March 1960, Subject as above.

1. On 5 April 1960 the undersigned interviewed Chief Hugh C. McDonald, Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department, in his office, Room 123, New Court House Building, located at 111 North Hill Street, Los Angeles, California. (Telephone: MADison 5-3414, Extension 61401.)

2. The attached "Face Building" article taken from the February 1960 issue of the "Science and Mechanics" Magazine, was reviewed and discussed. Chief McDonald stated that he was aware of the article and had talked with Mr. Courtney Owens, Sales Manager of Townsend Engineered Products, regarding the indication of "underwritten by an arm of the U. S. intelligence".

3. The article was written by a free lance reporter by the name of Joseph Frank. Writer Joseph Frank was present at a press meeting in Chief McDonald's office at the time the information regarding the Identi-Kit was made public, however, Chief McDonald made it very clear that the sponsor of the program was not mentioned and that a general figure of \$60,000 to \$65,000 was given as the cost of the project. Chief McDonald thought back and then stated that he had announced the sponsor as being "an Eastern customer".

4. Chief McDonald stated that he was at a complete loss as to how the writer associated the sponsor with any intelligence component of the government. He believed that it was a "shot in the dark" assumption by writer Joseph Frank.

5. Chief McDonald was very much disturbed by this article and stated that if he could uncover any information regarding same he would promptly notify the appropriate Agency persons.

6. On 8 April 1960, the undersigned interviewed Mr. Courtney Elwell Owens, Sales Manager of the Townsend Engineered Products Co., Santa Ana, California. He was granted a Secret contract security authorization on 26 January 1960. Mr. Owens was [redacted] and a [redacted] was taken from him.

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SUBJECT: "Identi-Kit"

7. Mr. Owens stated that he was not aware of the sponsor (until now), but he had assumed that the Agency was involved. Mr. Owens has worked in the government in Washington, D. C., and he stated that this project sounded like it would be of Agency interest.

8. When Mr. Owens came to Los Angeles, he worked as a free lance reporter between April 1957 and December 1957. He stated that all articles written by him were under his true name and that no "pen-name" was ever used. He did not know of a Joseph Frank.

9. Mr. Owens stated that he has a very close contact with Mr. Divonon, Los Angeles OO/C Office, but did not indicate if the subject of the Identi-Kit had ever been discussed. Mr. Owens gave the undersigned the attached press notices that he uses in connection with his publicity program. It is noted that none of the releases reveal Agency interest; however, the newspaper "Independent" quotes Chief McDonald as stating "the pilot model cost more than \$87,000".

H. Edward Jones
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Security Officer, SS/OL

APPROVED:

John M. Curran
JOHN M. CURRAN, CHIEF, SS/OL

Attachment

Distributions:

- Orig. & 1 - Addressee w/a
- ① - Chief, PSD, OS (Attn: Mr. Svendiman) w/a
- 1 - Chief, SB/PhysD/OS w/a
- 1 - Mr. Travis, OO/C
- 1 - Co. file (Townsend) w/a
- 1 - Chrono

OL/SS:HEJones:bjw/2817 (21 April 60)