

## memorandum

DATE: August 2, 1988


REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: Resident Agent in Charge  
Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT: FOIA Request - "The Finders"  
(88-1053 GED)

TO: Glenda Drinkhorn  
Assistant Regional Counsel

Pursuant to your request which was routed through S/A Ramon Martinez, SAC Miami, attached is a copy of RAC/DC Report of Investigation concerning "The Finders."

An index search did not disclose records on any of the individuals named in the FOIA request.

  
LINWOOD ROUNTREE  
Resident Agent in Charge

Attachment

OFFICIAL USE ONLY



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

4200-01 (37), P&PM (Special Agent Handbook)

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| 1. TICS ACCESS CODE | C-3  |
| 2. PAGE             | 1    |
| PAGES               | OF 2 |
| 3. CASE NUMBER      |      |

4. TITLE

FINDERS

5. CASE STATUS

Initial Report   
  Interim Report   
  Dis-Pending   
  Open & Close   
 Index & File   
 Closing Report

6. REPORT DATE

04/13/87

7. DATE ASSIGNED

02/05/87

8. CLASS

I

9. PROGRAM CODE

700

10. REPORT NO

1

11. RELATED CASE FILE NUMBERS

12. UNDEVELOPED LEADS TO

None

13. TYPE OF REPORT

Tort   
  Search Warrant Executions   
  Penalty Case Report   
  Memorandum of Interview   
  Initial Source Documentation   
  Source Debrief  
 Investigative Findings   
 Subpoena Service   
 Surveillance Report   
 Background   
 Request for Collateral   
 Other

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, Senior Special Agent Harrold and I assisted the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) with two search warrants involving the possible sexual exploitation of children. During the course of the search warrants, numerous documents were discovered which appeared to be concerned with international trafficking in children, high tech transfer to the United Kingdom, and international transfer of currency.

|  |                |  |                      |
|--|----------------|--|----------------------|
| 15. DISTRIBUTION                           |                | 16. SIGNATURE (Type Name & Title)                          |                      |
| SAC/RAC<br>SAC/VA Beach<br>RAC/Tallahassee |                | <br>Ramon J. Martinez, Special Agent                       |                      |
| CAVSCR                                     | ARC(E)<br>SE   | 17. APPROVED (Type Name & Title)                           |                      |
| HQ DIV<br>E:EO:SD:G                        | RIB<br>SE      | <br>LINWOOD ROUNTREE, Resident Agent in Charge             |                      |
| IO INT<br>I:S                              | FILE<br>RAC/DC | 18. ORIGIN OFFICE  | 19. TELEPHONE NUMBER |
| OTHER                                      |                | Resident Agent in Charge<br>12310 Pinecrest Road Suite 202 | 447-0554             |



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
CONTINUATION

4200-01 (37), P&PM (Special Agent Handbook)

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| 1. PAGE          | PAGES |
| 2                | OF 2  |
| 2. CASE NUMBER   |       |
| 3. REPORT NUMBER | 1     |

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION:

On March 31, 1987, I contacted Detective James Bradley of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). I was to meet with Detective Bradley to review the documents seized pursuant to two search warrants executed in February 1987. The meeting was to take place on April 2 or 3, 1987.

On April 2, 1987, I arrived at MPD at approximately 9:00 a.m. Detective Bradley was not available. I spoke to a third party who was willing to discuss the case with me on a strictly "off the record" basis.

I was advised that all the passport data had been turned over to the State Department for their investigation. The State Department in turn, advised MPD that all travel and use of the passports by the holders of the passports was within the law and no action would be taken. This included travel to Moscow, North Korea, and North Vietnam from the late 1950's to mid 1970's.

The individual further advised me of circumstances which indicated that the investigation into the activity of the FINDERS had become a CIA internal matter. The MPD report has been classified secret and was not available for review. I was advised that the FBI had withdrawn from the investigation several weeks prior and that the FBI Foreign Counter Intelligence Division had directed MPD not to advise the FBI Washington Field Office of anything that had transpired.

No further information will be available. No further action will be taken.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY LESD/TECS:

No action to be taken on the basis of this report.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

4200-01 (37), P&PM (Special Agent Handbook)

|                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. TECS ACCESS CODE<br>C-3 |               |
| 2. PAGE<br>1               | PAGES<br>OF 3 |
| 3. CASE NUMBER             |               |

4. TITLE  
"FINDERS"

5. CASE STATUS  
 Initial Report   
  Interim Report   
  Disp. Pending   
  Open & Close   
  Index & File   
  Closing Report

|                          |                            |                |                        |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 6. REPORT DATE<br>021287 | 7. DATE ASSIGNED<br>021287 | 8. CLASS<br>II | 9. PROGRAM CODE<br>700 | 10. REPORT NO<br>one |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|

11. RELATED CASE FILE NUMBERS

12. UNDEVELOPED LEADS TO  
None

13. TYPE OF REPORT  
 Tort   
  Search Warrant Executions   
  Penalty Case Report   
  Memorandum of Interview   
  Initial Source Documentation   
  Source Debrief  
 Investigative Findings   
  Subpoena Service   
  Surveillance Report   
  Background   
  Request for Collateral   
 Other assistance to local LE

14. SYNOPSIS  
 This office was contacted by the Tallahassee Police Department on February 5, 1987, who requested assistance in attempting to identify two adult males and six minor children, all taken into custody the previous day. The men, arrested and charged with multiple counts of child abuse, were being very evasive with police in the questions being asked of them pursuant the children and their condition.  
 This agent contacted SS/A, Bob Harrold, RAC/Reston, Virginia, and requested telephone numbers and names of police persons in area police departments in an attempt to follow-up on two leads which were a Virginia license number and that the children had commented about living in a Washington, D.C., commune.  
 Subsequently, this office received a telephone call from the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department inquiring about the men and children. This office put the MPD and the TPD in contact with each other.

|   |                  |   |                                  |
|---|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 15. DISTRIBUTION<br>SAC/RAC<br>RAC/JX; SAC/TA; RAC/DC |                  | 16. SIGNATURE (Type Name & Title)<br><i>Walter F. Kreitlow III</i><br>Walter F. Kreitlow III<br>Special Agent |                                  |
| CA/SCR  | ARC(E)<br>SE     | 17. APPROVED (Type Name & Title)<br><i>Fredric D. Haiduk</i><br>Fredric D. Haiduk<br>Resident Agent in Charge |                                  |
| HQ DIV<br>E:SD:G:P<br>CPPU<br>copy                    | RIB<br>SE        | 18. ORIGIN OFFICE<br>Office of Enforcement<br>227 N. Bronough St, Rm 6045<br>Tallahassee, Fl 32301            | 19. TELEPHONE NUMBER<br>965-7608 |
| OTHER   | FILE<br>Original |   | 20. TYPIST'S INITIALS<br>dtv     |





REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
CONTINUATION

4200-01 (37), P&PM (Special Agent Handbook)

|                  |       |   |
|------------------|-------|---|
| 1. PAGE          | PAGES |   |
| 2                | OF    | 3 |
| 2. CASE NUMBER   |       |   |
| 3. REPORT NUMBER |       |   |
| one              |       |   |

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION:

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, this office was contacted via telephone, by sergeant, JoAnn VanMETER of the Tallahassee Police Department, Juvenile Division. Sgt. VanMETER requested assistance in identifying two adult males and six minor children ages 7 years to 2 years.

The adult males were tentatively identified by TPD as Michael HOULIHAN and Douglas AMMERMAN, both of Washington, D.C., who were arrested the previous day on charges of child abuse.

The police had received an anonymous telephone call relative two well-dressed white men wearing suits and ties in Myers Park, (Tallahassee), apparently watching six dirty and unkempt children in the playground area. HOULIHAN and AMMERMAN were near a 1980 Blue Dodge van bearing Virginia license number XHW-557, the inside of which was later described as foul-smelling filled with maps, books, letters, with a mattress situated to the rear of the van which appeared as if it were used as a bed, and the overall appearance of the van gave the impression that all eight persons were living in it.

The children were covered with insect bites, were very dirty, most of the children were not wearing underwear and all the children had not been bathed in many days.

The men were arrested and charged with multiple counts of child abuse and lodged in the Leon County Jail. Once in custody the men were somewhat evasive in their answers to the police regarding the children and stated only that they both were the children's teachers and that all were enroute to Mexico to establish a school for brilliant children.

The children tentatively were identified as Mary HOULIHAN, white female, age 7; Max LIVINGSTON, white male, age 6; Benjamin FRANKLIN, white male, age 4; HoneyBee EVANS, white female, age 3; B.B., white male, age 2; and John Paul HOULIHAN, white male, age 2. The children initially indicated that they lived in tents in a commune in the Washington, D.C., area and were going to Mexico to go to a school for smart kids.

This office contacted the Office of the RAC/DC and spoke with SS/A, Bob Harrold. This agent requested telephone numbers and names of police persons in area departments that might be aware of said activities described by the children and to follow-up on the leads which were the Virginia license number and a check on the men's names with local law enforcement.



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
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|------------------|-------|
| 1. PAGE          | PAGES |
| 3                | OF 3  |
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| one              |       |

A short time later this office was contacted by Detective, Jim Bradley of the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department. Bradley indicated that the case here in Tallahassee appeared to be strongly related to a case he was currently working in the Washington, D.C. area.

He stated that the actions of the two men in custody in Tallahassee relative the children just might give his case enough probable cause for search warrants to search premises occupied by a cult group called the FINDERS.

This agent directed Bradley to telephone TPD and discuss with police directly any activities forthcoming relative the instant case.

At this time it was determined that there was no Customs violations found to exist and therefore, this case is being closed pending receipt of additional information.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY LESD/TECS: Create a permanent DRR/TECS record.

IDENTIFYING DATA/TECS-FIN QUERIES:

|   |               |  |
|---|---------------|--|
| AMMERMAN, Douglas Edward<br>(CF-23B attached) | SUBSTANTIATED | NCIC: Negative<br>TECS: "<br>CMIR: "<br>CTR: "<br>FBA: Negative<br>PAIRS: Negative |
|---|---------------|--|


|  |               |  |
|--|---------------|--|
| HOWELL, James Michael<br>(CF-23B attached) | SUBSTANTIATED | NCIC: Negative<br>TECS: "<br>CMIR: "<br>CTR: Negative<br>FBA: "<br>PAIRS: Negative |
|--|---------------|--|

|                                |         |   |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|
| "FINDERS"<br>(CF-23B attached) | ALLEGED | NCIC: NEGATIVE<br>TECS: NEGATIVE<br>CMIR: "<br>CTR: "<br>FBA: "<br>PAIRS: " |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|

MEMO TO FILE

To : Resident Agent in Charge

Date: 02/07/87

From : Special Agent 

Subject: Customs cooperation/interest in  
Tallahassee/Washington MPD child abuse investigation.

On Thursday, 2/5/87, the duty agent, SS/A Bob Harrold, received a call from SS/A Walter Krietlow, USCS, Tallahassee, Florida. SS/A Krietlow was seeking assistance in contacting an appropriate local police agency to coordinate a child abuse investigation in with the Tallahassee Police Department. SS/A Krietlow further requested assistance in checking some names, addresses and a vehicle through the Customs Child Pornography Unit data base, and stated there was some suspicion of the subjects being involved in supplying children for the production of child pornography. Further, he was informed by the Tallahassee Police Department that the children may have been enroute to Mexico from the Washington, D.C. area. The possibility of Customs interest in the investigation due to possible violations of the Child Protection Act of 1984, and the alleged nexus with the U.S./Mexican Border were discussed and agreed upon. SS/A Krietlow related the following background information. SS/A Krietlow was contacted by the Tallahassee Police Department for assistance in identifying six children and two adults taken into custody in the Tallahassee area. U.S. Customs was contacted because the police officers involved suspected the adults of being involved in child pornography and knew the Customs Service to have a network of child pornography investigators, and of the existence of the Child Pornography and Protection Unit. SS/A Krietlow stated the two adults were well dressed white males. They had custody of six white children (boys and girls), ages three to six years. The children were observed to be poorly dressed, bruised, dirty, and behaving like animals in a public park in Tallahassee. The police were notified by a concerned citizen and all eight persons were taken into custody. The subjects were living out of a white 1979 Dodge van, Virginia license no. XHW 557. Upon being taken into custody, the adult white males refused to cooperate, one of whom produced a "business" card with a name on one side and a statement on the other. The statement indicated that the bearer knew his constitutional rights to remain silent and that he intended to do so. Upon interviewing the children, the police officers found that they could not adequately identify themselves or their custodians. Further, they stated they were enroute to Mexico to attend a school for "smart kids." SS/A Krietlow was further advised the children were unaware of the function and purpose of telephones, televisions and toilets, and that the children had stated they were not allowed to live indoors and were only given food as a reward.

After receiving the request from Tallahassee, SS/A Harrold contacted me while I was on official business at Customs Headquarters. He requested that I conduct computer checks on the Customs Child Pornography Unit data base. The checks were to be conducted on the names, addresses, and a vehicle provided by SS/A Krietlow. After conducting the computer checks, I made direct contact with SS/A Krietlow to inform him that all the checks were negative. At that time I was informed by SS/A Krietlow that the Tallahassee police had discovered large quantities of records, to include computer discs and a U.S. passport in the van. From some of these records the police had obtained tentative identification of the two adults, and partial identification of the children. Furthermore, the two Washington, D.C. addresses had been discovered through these documents, one of which was verified through the vehicle registration. I advised SS/A Krietlow I was leaving Headquarters and he would be receiving a response to the remainder of his request from SS/A Harrold. I then left as stated and proceeded to conduct other business in the District.

A short time later, at approximately 11:30 a.m., SS/A Harrold contacted me by radio, and advised me that a Detective Jim Bradley of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) was interested in the information provided by SS/A Krietlow, was in contact with Tallahassee, and would very probably be conducting search warrants in the area later in the day. He also informed me that U.S. Customs was invited to participate due to the continuing possibility of violations of law enforced by the Customs Service. As I was already in Washington, I terminated my other business and proceeded to make contact with Detective Bradley, Intelligence Division, MPD.

Upon contacting Detective Bradley, I learned that he had initiated an investigation on the two addresses provided by the Tallahassee Police Dept. during December of 1986. An informant had given him information regarding a cult, known as the "Finders" operating various businesses out of a warehouse located at 1307 4th St., N.E., and were supposed to be housing children at 3918/3920 W St., N.W. The information was specific in describing "blood rituals" and sexual orgies involving children, and an as yet unsolved murder in which the Finders may be involved. With the information provided by the informant, Detective Bradley was able to match some of the children in Tallahassee with names of children known alleged to be in the custody of the Finders. Furthermore, Bradley was able to match the tentative ID of the adults with known members of the Finders. I stood by while Bradley consulted with AUSA Harry Benner and obtained search warrants for the two premises. I advised acting RAC SS/A Tim Holloran of my intention to accompany MPD on the execution of the warrants, received his permission, and was joined by SS/A Harrold. SS/A Harrold accompanied the team which went to 1307 4th St, and I went to 3918/20 W St.

During the execution of the warrant at 3918/20 W St., I was

able to observe and access the entire building. I saw large quantities of children's clothing and toys. The clothing consisting of diapers and clothes in the toddler to pre-school range. No children were found on the premises. There were several subjects on the premises. Only one was deemed to be connected with the Finders. The rest were renting living space from this individual. He was identified as Stuart Miles SILVERSTONE, DOB/061941, U.S. Passport No. 010958991. SILVERSTONE was located in a room equipped with several computers, printers, and numerous documents. cursory examination of the documents revealed detailed instructions for obtaining children for unspecified purposes. The instructions included the impregnation of female members of the community known as Finders, purchasing children, trading, and kidnapping. There were telex messages using MCI account numbers between a computer terminal believed to be located in the same room, and others located across the country and in foreign locations. One such telex specifically ordered the purchase of two children in Hong Kong to be arranged through a contact in the Chinese Embassy there. Another telex expressed an interest in "bank secrecy" situations. Other documents identified interests in high-tech transfers to the United Kingdom, numerous properties under the control of the Finders, a keen interest in terrorism, explosives, and the evasion of law enforcement. Also found in the "computer room" was a detailed summary of the events surrounding the arrest and taking into custody of the two adults and six children in Tallahassee, Florida on the previous night. There were also a set of instructions which appeared to be broadcast via a computer network which advised participants to move "the children" and keep them moving through different jurisdictions, and instructions on how to avoid police attention.

One of the residents was identified as a Chinese National. Due to the telex discovered referencing the Chinese Embassy in Hong Kong, he was fully identified for future reference: WANG/Gengxin, DOB/092747, POB/Tianjin, People's Republic of China Passport No. 324999, entered the U.S. on January 22, 1987, admitted until December 31, 1987. He is in the U.S. as a graduate student in the Anatomy Department of Georgetown University. His Visa was issued on November 10, 1986, in London, England, number 00143.

During the course of the evening, I contacted Sector 4 to initiate a TECS check on SILVERSTONE, and initiate an archives check on him for the last four years. I also contacted SS/A Holloran to keep him advised of the proceedings and asked for and received permission to contact SS/A John Sullivan of the CPPU to query some names through the CPPU data base. SS/A Holloran told me he would call Southeast Region Headquarters to keep them posted on the proceedings as well. I later contacted SS/A Sullivan for the stated purpose, and in the discussion that followed, I gave him some background on the purpose of the request. I advised him that the information was not for dissemination at Headquarters, that Region was being notified,

and that Region would probably contact Headquarters later if deemed necessary. SS/A Sullivan assured me that the information would go no further until official notification was made by Region. No positive matches were obtained from the CPPU data base. I was later joined at the W Street address by SS/A Harrold. SS/A Harrold advised me that there were extremely large quantities of documents and computer equipment at the warehouse, and that MPD was posting officers inside the building there and sealing the building until morning, in which a second warrant for that premises would be obtained and executed. SS/A Harrold also advised me that the news media had been notified and had been waiting for the execution of the warrant at the 4th Street address. Detective Bradley later stated that the MPD Public Information Officer had been contacted by a Tallahassee reporter. When it became apparent the PIO had no information on the search warrants, the reporter contacted local media representatives and a check of public records containing the affidavits for the search warrants disclosed the locations and purpose of the warrants. Detective Bradley surmised that someone on the Tallahassee Police Department was the original source of information for the press. I advised SS/A Holloran of the involvement of the press, and he stated that he would, in turn, relay the information to Region. SS/A Harrold and I assisted in the transport of the evidence seized pursuant to the warrant and cleared MPD after the press left the area.

On Friday, 2/6/87, I met Detective Bradley at the warehouse on 4th Street, N.E. I duly advised my acting group supervisor, SS/A Don Blutworth. I was again granted unlimited access to the premises. I was able to observe numerous documents which described explicit sexual conduct between the members of the community known as finders. I also saw a large collection of photographs of unidentified persons. Some of the photographs were nudes, believed to be of members of Finders. There were numerous photos of children, some nude, at least one of which was a photo of a child "on display" and appearing to accent the child's genitals. I was only able to examine a very small amount of the photos at this time. However, one of the officers presented me with a photo album for my review. The album contained a series of photos of adults and children dressed in white sheets participating in a "blood ritual." The ritual centered around the execution of at least two goats. The photos portrayed the execution, disembowelment, skinning and dismemberment of the goats at the hands of the children. This included the removal of the testes of a male goat, the discovery of a female goat's "womb" and the "baby goats" inside the womb, and the presentation of a goats head to one of the children.

Further inspection of the premises disclosed numerous files relating to activities of the organization in different parts of the world. Locations I observed are as follows: London, Germany, the Bahamas, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Africa, Costa Rica, and "Europe." There was also a file identified as

"Palestinian." Other files were identified by member name or "project" name. The projects appearing to be operated for commercial purposes under front names for the Finders. There was one file entitled "Pentagon Break-In," and others which referred to members operating in foreign countries. Not observed by me but related by an MPD officer, were intelligence files on private families not related to the Finders. The process undertaken appears to have been a systematic response to local newspaper advertisements for babysitters, tutors, etc. A member of the Finders would respond and gather as much information as possible about the habits, identity, occupation, etc., of the family. The use to which this information was to be put is still unknown. There was also a large amount of data collected on various child care organizations.

The warehouse contained a large library, two kitchens, a sauna, hot-tub, and a "video room." The video room seemed to be set up as an indoctrination center. It also appeared that the organization had the capability to produce its own videos. There were what appeared to be training areas for children and what appeared to be an altar set up in a residential area of the warehouse. Many jars of urine and feces were located in this area.

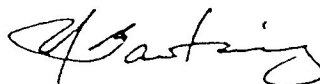
I should also mention that both premises were equipped with satellite dish antennas.

I discussed the course of action to be taken by MPD with Detective Bradley. He stated he was only interested in making the child abuse case(s). I was assured that all of the evidence would be available to U.S. Customs in furtherance of any investigative/criminal action pursued. MPD personnel were to begin around the clock review and sorting of the evidence until completed. Customs will have access after this is accomplished. This will include several U.S. Passports discovered during the search.

Upon leaving the 4th Street premises, I encountered a news media representative and was asked the reason behind U.S. Customs involvement in the investigation. I advised the reporter that I could not discuss anything and referred her to the RAC/DC. I left immediately thereafter.

There is no further information available at this time. It should take three to five days for all the information to be sorted, reviewed, logged by the MPD. I will maintain contact with Detective Bradley until the evidence is again accessible.

Respectfully submitted,



Ramon J. Martinez  
Special Agent, USCS



# Through a glass, very darkly

*Cops, spies and a very odd investigation*

**T**he case is almost seven years old now, but matters surrounding a mysterious group known as the Finders keep growing curiouser and curiouser.

In early February 1987, an anonymous tipster in Tallahassee, Fla., made a phone call to police. Two "well-dressed men" seemed to be "supervising" six disheveled and hungry children in a local park, the caller said. The cops went after the case like bloodhounds—at least at first. The two men were identified as members of the Finders. They were charged with child abuse in Florida. In Washington, D.C., police and U.S. Customs Service agents raided a duplex apartment building and a warehouse connected to the group. Among the evidence seized: detailed instructions on obtaining children for unknown purposes and several photographs of nude children. According to a Customs Service memorandum obtained by *U.S. News*, one photo appeared "to accent the child's genitals."

The more the police learned about the Finders, the more bizarre they seemed: There were suggestions of child abuse, Satanism, dealing in pornography and ritualistic animal slaughter.

None of the allegations was ever proved, however. The child abuse charges against the two men in Tallahassee were dropped; all six of the children were eventually returned to their mothers, though in the case of two, conditions were attached by a court. In Washington, D.C., police began backing away from the Finders investigation. The group's practices, the police said, were eccentric—not illegal.

**Questions.** Today, things appear to have changed yet again. The Justice Department has begun a new investigation into the Finders and into the group's activities. It is also reviewing the 1987 investigation into the group to determine whether that probe was closed improperly. Justice officials will not elaborate, except to say the investigation is "ongoing" and that it involves "unresolved matters" in relation to the Finders.

One of the unresolved questions in-

volves allegations that the Finders are somehow linked to the Central Intelligence Agency. Customs Service documents reveal that in 1987, when Customs agents sought to examine the evidence gathered by Washington, D.C., police, they were told that the Finders investigation "had become a CIA internal matter." The police report on the case had

The many unanswered questions about the Finders case now have Democratic Rep. Charlie Rose of North Carolina, chairman of the House Administration Committee, and Florida's Rep. Tom Lewis, a Republican, more than a little exercised. "Could our own government have something to do with this Finders organization and turned their backs on these children? That's what all the evidence points to," says Lewis. "And there's a lot of evidence. I can tell you this: We've got a lot of people scrambling, and that wouldn't be happening if there was nothing here."

Perhaps. But the Finders say there is nothing there—at least nothing illegal. The Finders have never been involved in child abuse, pornography, Satanism, animal slaughter or anything of the kind, says the group's leader, Marion David Pettie. Pettie, too, says the group has never been connected to the CIA.

In an interview with *U.S. News*, Pettie described the Finders as a communal, holistic-living and learning arrangement. The group numbers some 20 members, Pettie says; they do freelance journalism, research and "competitor intelligence" for a variety of mostly foreign clients. The Finders work for no foreign governments, Pettie says. Their duplex, in a residential Northwest Washington neighborhood, is decorated with global maps and bulletin boards. Residents of Culpeper, Va., 90 minutes from Washington, say the Finders have operated an office there, too, from time to time. That office contained computer terminals and clocks reflecting different time zones around the world.

CIA officials say they referred all matters concerning the Finders and the police investigation to the FBI's Foreign Counterintelligence Division. FBI officials will not comment. Law enforcement sources say some of the Finders are listed in the FBI's classified counterintelligence files.

None of this fazes Pettie. He says the CIA's interest in the Finders may stem from the fact that his late wife once worked for the agency and that his son worked for a CIA proprietary firm, Air America. Overall, says Pettie, "we're a zero security threat. When you don't do much of anything, and you don't explain, people start rumors about you." To judge from the latest case, some of the rumors can last an awful long time. ■

BY GORDON WITKIN AND PETER CARY  
WITH ANCEL MARTINEZ

JAMES A. PARCELL—THE WASHINGTON POST



February 1987. D.C. police seize evidence.

been classified secret. Even now, Tallahassee police complain about the handling of the Finders investigation by D.C. police. "They dropped this case," one Tallahassee investigator says, "like a hot rock." D.C. police will not comment on the matter. As for the CIA, ranking officials describe allegations about links between the intelligence agency and the Finders as "hogwash"—perhaps the result of a simple mix-up with D.C. police. The only connection, according to the CIA: A firm that provided computer training to CIA officers also employed several members of the Finders.