

Losing Finders: The Buried Documents that Linked the Infamous Cult to the CIA

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WASHINGTON — Concerning the Finders cult — the elusive Washington, D.C.-based outfit whose antics and ties we began examining in [Part 1 of this series](#) — one set of documents in particular held the most explosive allegations made against the group and against the CIA for allegedly covering the story up. Despite their contents, almost no corporate press ever quoted from these documents or addressed the concerns they raise. This article will attempt to remedy that deficit of coverage by fully exploring what the documents have to say.

I previously [described](#) the 1987 arrest of two well-dressed men in Tallahassee, Florida, on charges of child abuse relating to six children found neglected, dirty, and hungry in their care. After the men were found to be members of the Finders, a multi-state investigation sparked a national media frenzy: for a week, headlines alleged satanic ritual abuse before downshifting radically. The entire scandal was eventually explained as a “miscommunication” regarding a “misunderstood” alternative-lifestyle community. But further questions would arise regarding allegations that the Finders were linked to the CIA and that the agency had spiked the investigation.

In my initial article introducing this series of deep dives into the Finders scandal, I mentioned the allegations made by former Customs Special Agent Ramon Martinez in the [Customs reports](#) he penned in 1987. To understand the overall Finders story, we must look at exactly what evidence Martinez claims to have witnessed and what that evidence suggests. His account is crucial because, if true, it undermines the established narrative that no evidence of criminality on the part of the Finders was ever found.

Although Martinez has refused to speak on the record, he did confirm to me in 2017 that he authored the Customs reports attributed to him and that they are genuine. Martinez has also spoken to other independent journalists, including the [Conscious Resistance's](#) Derrick Broze. Journalists like Broze and Nick Bryant are among the few independent voices to have looked into both the Finders and Martinez's records.

This piece will examine the three publicly available Customs Service documents, summarizing both the narrative and allegations they contain in context. Subsequent articles will evaluate specific aspects of Martinez's allegations in greater depth. It should be noted that the first report in the Customs documents is five days older than the second report in the collection. Nonetheless, we will examine the documents in the order presented in the records available.

First Report

The first record in the Customs [compilation](#) is authored by Customs Special Agent Walter Kreitlow, who was based in Tallahassee, Florida. A redacted version of Kreitlow's report, dated February 12, 1987, can also

be found in the [FBI Vault publications](#) on the Finders. Kreitlow recounts that the Customs Service was contacted by the Tallahassee Police Department (TPD) requesting assistance identifying the two men arrested with six unkempt, hungry children the day prior. Kreitlow then contacts Supervisory Special Agent Bob Harrold of Reston, Virginia, to follow up on leads indicating links to Virginia and Washington, D.C., and reach authorities there who might provide more information. Kreitlow writes:

A short time later this office was contacted by Detective Jim Bradley of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department. Bradley indicated that the case here in Tallahassee appeared to be strongly related to **a case he was currently working on** in the Washington, D.C. area. He stated that the actions of the two men in custody in Tallahassee relative to the children just might give **his case** enough probable cause for search warrants to search the premises occupied by a cult group called the Finders. [Emphasis added]

Here we see reference to the fact that the Finders had come to the attention of the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) before the arrest of Michael Houlihan (aka Michael Holwell) and Douglas Ammerman, in Tallahassee. As indicated in the FBI Vault documents, an MPD file on the Finders group was opened in 1986 after the police department received a tip alleging the Finders were ritualistically and sexually abusing children. However, the same documents indicate that, as the tipster in 1986 had not personally witnessed sexual abuse of a child, no criminal investigation was pursued at the time.

A report from the MPD's Intelligence Division — authored on April 13, 1987, labeled “secret,” and explicitly stressing the “sensitivity” of the material (adding that the information “should not be disseminated outside this unit”) — details the official MPD narrative as to the initial involvement of the MPD in the investigation of the Finders. It states that, in 1986, “[redacted] called the intelligence division and reported that she had information concerning a cult operating in the District of Columbia.” The document states that the woman was subsequently “advised that although this group was unusual, they were committing no criminal offenses and the police department would only be interested if this group was involved in criminal activities.”





Michael Holwell, left and Doug Ammerman leaving Tallahassee after their release. Credit | Tallahassee Democrat

The above MPD report is cited because it appears to conflict with the fact that Detective Bradley tells both Agent Kreitlow and, as we will see, Agent Martinez, that he is currently working a case on the Finders. It remains to be seen how the MPD could have ascertained that no criminal activity was taking place absent an investigation, and how Detective Bradley could be “currently pursuing a case” regarding the Finders, even informally, if no indication of criminal activity had been found.

Some news reports from the era stated that a complaint had been lodged regarding the group years prior to 1986 but, if accurate, this earlier complaint was not referenced by MPD synopses or reports contained in the FBI Vault publications, and may have taken place in a different jurisdiction or simply not have been recorded.

Kreitlow’s report concludes by stating that he put Detective Bradley in touch with the TPD and that, pending further information, the case “at this time” (meaning on February 12, 1987) would be closed because Customs violations had not been identified.

Second Report

In the next Customs Service report, dated February 7, 1987, Agent Martinez begins by recounting the initiation of his involvement in the Finders case. He reiterates that Kreitlow contacted Bob Harrold regarding

the incident in Tallahassee. Martinez provides background information communicated by Kreitlow to Harrold and writes that he (Martinez) was contacted by Harrold who requested that he conduct computer checks related to the Tallahassee incident on the Customs child pornography database, which were negative. Martinez contacts Kreitlow to inform him that the checks were negative. Later that day, Martinez is contacted again by Harrold, who stated that MPD Detective Jim Bradley would be initiating search warrants at two Finders properties and that Customs was invited to participate, owing to the “continuing possibility of violations of law enforced by the Customs Service.” Martinez then contacted Bradley, who, in corroboration of Kreitlow’s report, informed Martinez that he was investigating the Finders. Martinez recounted:

*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 informant 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 [sic] to be in the custody of the Finders.** [Emphasis added]*

Here we see that, according to Detective Bradley as recorded by Martinez, the informant who lodged accusations against the Finders in 1986 also provided information that was used to accurately identify some of the children in Tallahassee. Separate reports penned by Martinez and Kreitlow recall that MPD Detective Bradley made statements to the effect that he was actively investigating the Finders as of 1986. This appears to conflict with MPD’s account in the FBI Vault, which obscures the fact of Detective Bradley’s investigation of the Finders prior to the 1987 incident in Florida. Although Bradley’s investigation may have been informal, without the Customs Service reports, we would not know of its existence.

P.D. 854 Rev. 7/76		GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE FILE REPORT		ALL FBI INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 02-03-2014 BY ADG [redacted]		
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION		DIVISION	Intelligence		BRANCH	Domestic Security
FILE TITLE		I. D. NO.	The Finders Investigation		ARREST NO.	
		COMPLAINT NO.			CASE NO.	87-225
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLOSED	<input type="checkbox"/> REQUESTED ACTION	OTHER OFFICERS		CROSS FILE	RELATED FILES
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTION REQUESTED FROM:	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETED	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	Intelligence Division		<input type="checkbox"/>	
BY	Detective [redacted]	AUSA	[redacted]		<input type="checkbox"/>	
UNIT	Intelligence	S/A	[redacted] FBI		<input type="checkbox"/>	
DATE	April 13, 1987	S/A	[redacted] US Customs		<input type="checkbox"/>	
REPORT RE: Overview Report						
SYNOPSIS: This report deals with the entire investigation concerning a group of subjects who call themselves <u>The Finders</u> . This document will explain the involvement of the Metropolitan Police Department and various agencies involved and the action taken during the course of this instant investigation. All the following information is still of a sensitive nature and should not be disseminated outside this unit.						

The cover page of the MPD's highly redacted 1987 investigation into The Finders

Martinez goes on to write that both he and Agent Harrold participated in searches of Finders properties on February 5, 1987:

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 [sic] of diapers and clothes in the toddler to preschool range. No children were found on the premises.

As we will see shortly, the same report indicates that Finders messages were found suggesting that additional children still in Finders custody should be moved and law enforcement evaded. In addition, [news reports from the time](#) state that the Finders may have been "tipped off" on the day of the arrests when Tallahassee authorities attempted to contact the Finders by phone. These phone calls are documented in TPD records; however, the TPD indicated that it was MPD who called the Finders and who reported to TPD that they heard "strange" messages on the Finders answering machine.

In addition to calls by authorities giving early warning on the day of the arrests, it appeared that the Finders were in rapid communication about the incident via their computer network. TPD records indicate that a part-time TPD employee, who was also a student at Florida State University, found a computer in a phone booth on the evening of February 5, the day after the arrests. The computer was found to contain information regarding TPD investigators, and TPD ascertained that the computer's owner was a member of the Finders. This becomes relevant to allegations made by Martinez that the Finders were not only aware of the incident but had sent out messages to "move" additional children and avoid police detection. In arguably the most damning allegations of criminality lodged against the Finders, Martinez writes:

*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, [that] advised participants to move "the children" and keep them moving through different jurisdictions, and instructions on how to avoid police attention.** [Emphasis added]*

In other words, Martinez alleges that he witnessed evidence of Finders' intent to "produce," kidnap, purchase, trade, and internationally traffic children for "unspecified purposes." He states that the group had

sophisticated communications capabilities that resembled an early version of the internet, linking computer terminals across the country and internationally; and we have independent verification of their technological competence via both TPD records and MPD reports.

Martinez describes a telex specifically ordering the purchase of children via the Chinese Embassy in Hong Kong, suggesting the Finders were participating in organized child trafficking and doing so at times via contacts in foreign governments. Martinez recounts evidence of Finders' interest in "terrorism, explosives, and the evasion of law enforcement." And he recounts that he witnessed Finders instructions telling members to "move 'the children,'" with instructions on how to avoid police attention.

This last statement suggests that the group knew that their activities were illegal, that they had an unknown number of additional children in their care, and intended to move them to avoid detection by authorities due to that awareness. If Martinez's report is accurate, we will never know how many other children were in the Finders' custody or what ultimately happened to them. Given just this segment of Martinez's account, one can conclude that the activities of the Finders warranted criminal investigation. At a minimum, if legitimate, the report tears apart the official narrative of the Finders case, which argues that no evidence of any criminal activity on the part of the Finders was ever found.

Missing evidence

It would be simple to evaluate, verify or debunk Martinez's claims if records of what had been found at this location had been kept. However, the FBI Vault documents indicate that the evidence collected during these searches is unavailable (with conflicting accounts of what happened to it). Additionally, the Vault documents suggest that, aside from bare-bones search warrants, key records — including photographs and descriptions of the evidence found at the premises — are missing and the names of personnel on the scene that day were not recorded. This will be discussed in greater depth further along in the series but, in sum, the absence of evidence and even descriptions of such evidence gives us nothing to go on in weighing the word of the MPD and other authorities against that of Agent Martinez regarding exactly what was found on February 5 and 6 on the Finders' properties — deepening the case's aura of impermeable silence.

Martinez continued, describing his participation in the search of the other D.C. property owned by the Finders on the following day:

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 members of the Finders. There were numerous photos of children, some nude, at least one of which was a photo "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 other officers presented me with a photo album for my review. The album contained a series of photos with 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 the male goat, the discovery of a female goat’s “womb” and the “baby goats” inside the womb, and the presentation of a goat’s head to one of the children.

This aspect of the case was seized upon by national media and authorities at the time. Alongside allegations of ritual abuse made by an informant, this facet of the story was focused on to the detriment of the other questions the story raised. Then — once doubt was cast on whether these images were, in fact, depicting a “satanic” ritual — the entire story slid one step closer to being summarily dismissed.

While the *interpretation* of the scene described above may be debatable, the fact that these images were found and that they depicted children involved in the slaughter and disembowelment of goats is also indicated in FBI Vault documents and in news reports from the time. The only aspect of the photographs that is debated is the intention behind the children’s participation. In other words, Martinez is not *fabricating* what he describes having witnessed. Unredacted TPD records, provided to me by investigative journalist and author Nick Bryant, indicated that nude pictures of children were also found in the blue van in which the six children and their two male “caretakers” were found living in Tallahassee. The question of whether child abuse occurred in reference to the six children recovered in Florida will be discussed in greater depth later in this series.

used children in rituals. Police, who searched a Washington house linked to the group, removed plastic bags filled with color slides, graphs and photographic contact sheets.

Some photographs visible through a bag, as it was carried from the house, were of children. Some were wallet-sized, similar to school photos, and some were of naked children.

Police sources said some of the items seized included pictures of children engaged in what appeared to be “cult rituals”. Officials of the Customs Service, added in to aid in the investigation, said that the ritual includes photographs showing children involved in bloodletting and photos of animals in chains. Customs officials said they were going into whether a pornography operation was being conducted.

According to court documents, computer software were seized from the house, from an apartment building from a van that was recovered in Tallahassee with the children. Today’s disclosures about the mysteri-

Tallahassee police, who arrested and charged men identified as Douglas Ammerman and Michael Houlihan with child abuse, contacted Washington police on Thursday in an attempt to establish the

safety.

A police spokesman described the children as “hungry and . . . pretty pathetic”.

The children, identified in a court document only by the first names of

Bee, John, Frank, BeeBee, Max and were described as unkempt, hungry, disturbed and agitated. They had been living in the rear of the van some time.

On Friday a spokesman said of the children, a six-year-old girl, “showed signs of sexual abuse” but an examination by a doctor showed no signs. The children as be-

Five of the children were uncommunicative according to police. None seemed to be common objects such as typewriter staplers.

However, the police was able to give investigators some information. She said that the two “were their teachers”.

The girl told the police that while they were in Washington, the children received instruction from “a man called a Game Caller or a Game Leader”.

A court document says a Tallahassee



Mary Houlihan.



Max Livingston.



Honeybee Evans.



John Paul Houlihan.



Ben Franklin.



BeeBee.

identities of the children. They learned that DC police had heard of the Finders group.

According to US District Court records in Washington, a confidential police

may be discovered about the incident. source had previously told authorities police investigator identified this n

An undated newspaper clipping shows the photos of the children recovered from the blue van

Martinez continued in the second report:

Further inspection of the premises disclosed numerous files relating to the 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 [sic] to be operating 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.

While this section does not directly indicate criminal activity, it gives a glimpse into the global network the Finders were operating. It also raises questions about why an alternative-living "hippie" commune would be operating out of so many corners of the world. Why would they have a file titled "Pentagon Break-In"? If Martinez's report is accurate, then the overall picture developing of the group is far more reminiscent of a spy ring than of a commune.

Martinez continues:

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.

This last aspect was not witnessed directly by Martinez and made it less reliable than what he saw firsthand. Still, it makes sense in light of the previously discussed evidence indicating that the Finders actively attempted to "obtain" children. This particular allegation was partially corroborated in documents from the FBI's Vault, where an MPD Intelligence Division report dated February 20, 1987 records an interaction with an unnamed woman, who was called because she nearly used a Finders member as a babysitter, and her information and that of her children were found in Finders' files:

On February 19, 1987, Detective [Redacted] contacted [Redacted] ... concerning a listing of her name and additional information contained in the "Finders" records. [Redacted] seemed very upset that they [sic] police were contacting her and Detective [Redacted] assured her that our only interest was that her name and information about her children were in the files. [Redacted] stated that she needed a babysitter and contacted Georgetown University for a referral. [Redacted] stated that she was given the name of [Redacted] and interviewed her telephonically. [Redacted] stated that she would have hired [Redacted] but she never showed up for a interview [sic]... [Redacted] asked what would have happened if the "Finders" got into her residence and Detective [Redacted] told her that he was unsure of any motives and that anything would be speculative.

Here we see corroboration of Martinez's allegation that the Finders had obtained information regarding

parents and their children and were attempting to gain employment as babysitters. Returning to Martinez's account, we see that he describes the second Finders location in D.C. as follows:

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.

[\(Mega Group, Maxwells and Mossad: The Spy Story at the Heart of the Jeffrey Epstein Scandal](#)

This description sounds bizarre, yet multiple aspects of it match nearly word-for-word with other descriptions of the site, including references to satellite dish antennas, indications of "mind control," and roped-off areas that were described in other documents as "sets." A Tallahassee police report contained in the FBI Vault, dated 2/08/87, states:

Detective MPD [redacted] contacted this investigator. He advised that he had been on the search warrant at the warehouse. He stated that they found a large amount of computer goods, a hot tub, sauna, large t.v. room, a library of books (some concerning mind control), a satellite disc [sic] on the roof, and various stage-like settings of rooms that were roped off.

Though the subject of mind-control also sounds bizarre, this is far from the only place it is referenced in official documentation of the investigation and it will be discussed later in association with evaluating allegations of child abuse against the Finders.

Martinez concludes his report by describing MPD's procedure for sorting and documenting evidence, and states that he was assured the evidence would be fully available to the Customs Service. Interestingly, Bradley tells Martinez that he is only interested in pursuing the issue of child abuse:

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... It should take three to five days for all the information to be sorted, reviewed, logged by MPD. I will maintain contact with Detective Bradley until the evidence is again accessible.

Clearly, Martinez is under the impression that MPD is not only carefully and legitimately logging and reviewing evidence but that it will be made available to review further within a week of the searches.

Third Report

The subsequent and final publicly available Customs document penned by Martinez is dated April 13, 1987 — more than two months after his previously discussed report. In it, he summarizes salient points from his earlier report:

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.

Martinez goes on to describe what followed after the searches were completed, stating:

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

And with that, the Customs reports conclude.

Cover-up of a cover-up?

Clear references to Agent Martinez and the allegations made in his Customs reports can be found in the FBI Vault Finders documents. A heavily redacted FBI Washington Metro Field Office (WMFO) synopsis — dated April 29, 1994, and classified “Secret” — includes a section that, though redacted, obviously describes Martinez’s claims, specifying his being unable to review evidence collected by the MPD. The synopsis indicates that the “third party” unnamed in Martinez’s final memorandum, who told Martinez that the Finders case had been deemed a CIA internal matter, was, in fact, MPD’s Sgt. John H. Stitcher Jr., whose name was not redacted because he died prior to the 1993 inquiry.

According to an obituary published by [The Washington Post](#), Sgt. Stitcher died on May 28, 1993, at the age of 48 as a result of “septic shock.” We also learn from Stitcher’s obituary that he had retired by the time of his death and had been working as a security guard for the Australian Embassy in D.C. As will be discussed

later, Sgt. Stitcher was also one of the few individuals involved with the investigation who corroborated CIA “interference” in the case outside of the Customs reports. Not only are we missing records of critical evidence, but we also can’t hear directly from the law enforcement officer who allegedly communicated a CIA cover-up to Martinez and would likely have verified this part of the Customs report based on his statements documented elsewhere.

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

b6 per FBI
b7C

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] advised that he believed that "...the FINDERS Group had some connection with the CIA...that the FINDERS could

[REDACTED]

(S)

[REDACTED] Detective [REDACTED] advised that MPD Sergeant John Stitcher (deceased) had contacted the CIA concerning the FINDERS and had obtained this information. [REDACTED] advised that the CIA had nothing to do with the children or his investigation into the alleged child abuse. [REDACTED] stated that he was never instructed by anyone from the CIA, the FBI, the State Department, or any other organization to end the FINDERS investigation, and that his investigation ran its normal course without interference.

b1
b3
b6 per FBI
b7C

[REDACTED]

A heavily redacted document from the FBI Vault mentioning Stitcher and the CIA dated April 29, 1994

The only media report to directly quote significant portions of the Customs documents has been duly scrubbed from the internet, though it is documented in the FBI Vault collection: the piece was penned by Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist Paul M. Rodriguez for *The Washington Times* in 1993. Rodriguez would also break the D.C. “call-boy scandal” in June 1989. The article states:

A Metropolitan Police document dated Feb. 19, 1987, quotes a CIA agent as confirming that his agency was sending its personnel to “a Finders Corp., Future Enterprises, for training in computer operations.” And a later Customs Service report says that the CIA “admitted to owning the Finders organization as a front for a domestic computer training operation but that it had ’gone bad.’” A senior Customs Service official confirmed the content of the memos and said the agency “only had a small role in the case.”

This is a critical allegation, which was later cited by the [Associated Press](#) and categorically denied by the CIA. What’s interesting is that we see Rodriguez citing not only Martinez’s reports but also a Customs document that does not appear to have been made public to date, as the admission that the Finders was a “front” for the CIA does not appear in the currently-public Customs documents.

Although FBI Vault documents refute the claim that the MPD case file on the Finders was labeled secret,

Martinez never alleged that every document had been classified; he stated that he was told “the MPD *report* has been classified secret and was not available for review.” It is in fact true, as seen in the MPD reports included in the FBI Vault publication, that MPD synopses and critical reports of the case are indeed labeled “Secret.” Again, this corroborates Martinez and undercuts the established narrative of the Finders story, adding weight to the scale in favor of Martinez’s honest recording of what he witnessed. To the obvious point: why label such reports secret, then lie about it, if no evidence of criminal activity or an intelligence-led cover-up existed?

The remainder of this series will be focused on evaluating the evidence located in the Customs documents, specifically that pertaining to intelligence agency involvement with the Finders.

Feature photo | Graphic by Antonio Cabrera

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