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# The Case of Charles Horman Revisited: Complication and Conflict within Declassification

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The Case of Charles Horman Revisited:  
Complication and Conflict within Declassification

Jacob Jose

Honors Thesis

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On September 11, 1973, a military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet seized power in Chile, overthrowing the government of socialist president Salvador Allende. In the days that followed, agents of the Chilean junta rounded up, detained, imprisoned, and in many cases executed those perceived to be sympathetic to the former government. In the first two weeks following the coup, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated that the military government executed nearly 2,000 people.<sup>1</sup> One victim of this repression was a U.S. citizen, Charles Horman.<sup>2</sup> Horman was a journalist and filmmaker who, along with his wife, had settled in Chile in 1972 to witness socialism first-hand. Shortly thereafter, Charles co-founded the left-of-center news service *Fuente de Información Norteamericana* (FIN), which translated and published articles from the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Horman also took an interest in Chilean politics; in his research he investigated the 1970 assassination of Chilean General Rene Schneider, a centrist figure in the Chilean military opposed to an extra-constitutional ouster of President Allende. Schneider, Horman discovered, had been killed in a kidnapping by Chilean right wing forces funded by the CIA.<sup>3</sup>

Members of the Chilean military seized Horman from his home, which was searched and ransacked, on September 17, and executed him sometime shortly after this. In the days and weeks that followed, Horman's wife and later his father pressed U.S. embassy personnel for information about his disappearance. Deeply frustrated by the process, Charles Horman's relatives later claimed that they were misled and misinformed by U.S. officials in the Santiago embassy and consulate. Declassified documents show that U.S. officials did, in fact, investigate Horman's disappearance, but during the process withheld

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2013), 161.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Horman was one of two U.S. Citizens killed in the coup; the other was Frank Teruggi, another employee at *Fuente de Información Norteamericana* who had been picked up by Chilean Military Intelligence ostensibly due to a "curfew violation" and executed sometime later; United States Institute For Peace, *Truth Commission: National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation*, Washington, D.C., 1991, <http://www.usip.org/publications/truth-commission-chile-90> (accessed October 3, 2014), 225.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum, "Horman vs. Kissinger," October 20, 1977, Freedom of Information Act State Department Website, FOIA Website.

information from the Hormans. Furthermore, it appears that the consulate may not have reacted to an early lead regarding Charles' arrest and subsequent execution. The Hormans, for their part, immediately suspected U.S. involvement. To the Hormans and many observers since, including a Department of State investigator, it appeared unlikely that a U.S. citizen could have been killed by a foreign government, during the height of the Cold War, without the act being somehow condoned by the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Mystery continues to surround not only the circumstances of Charles Horman's death, but also the role of the CIA and U.S. embassy in the episode and its long and fraught investigation.

For academics and journalists critical of U.S. support for the military coup of Pinochet and his violently repressive military regime, the death of Charles Horman serves as a deplorable example of the unintended, tragic consequences of U.S. intervention. Furthermore, the specter of U.S. complicity added to perceptions of nefarious U.S. geopolitical machinations at work in Chile and the region as a whole. Reading Thomas Hauser's *The Execution of Charles Horman: An American Sacrifice*, for example, imparts a great deal of injustice, and arouses suspicion. Chilean security forces abducted Charles Horman only days after he had left the company of high-ranking U.S. military personnel. Hauser's account served as a powerful introduction to the Horman episode for U.S. audiences, as it became the basis for the 1982 Oscar-winning film, *Missing*.

The details of Horman's next and final days are murky. Witnesses to his arrest claimed that he was taken from his home to the Estadio Nacional in Santiago. In the days and weeks that followed, Horman's relatives searched for clues to his disappearance. Significantly, acquaintances of Charles claimed that Chilean Military Intelligence had contacted them.<sup>5</sup> In October, after weeks of searching in Santiago and being told repeatedly by U.S. officials that everything possible was being done to find his son, Edmund Horman, the father of Charles, finally received confirmation of his death from someone

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<sup>4</sup> ARA:Fred Smith to ARA:Shlaudeman, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman," December 29, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection, FOIA Website.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

outside the embassy: he was told by a fellow U.S. citizen working in Santiago that Charles had been killed by the Chilean military in the Estadio Nacional. The following day, the U.S. consul confirmed that his body had been found in a Santiago morgue. The Chilean government informed the U.S. embassy that a body picked up on the street weeks earlier had been identified as Charles Horman. The timing of the information raised the suspicions of the Horman family since that morgue had been checked previously by Chilean officials *without* the body turning up; the error, an embassy official explained, was due to a “misclassification.”

It would come to light that the U.S. consul had been told second hand of Charles’ execution nearly two weeks earlier and that U.S. officials, who believed this information to be unverifiable, had failed to share it with the Hormans. To further complicate the picture, in 1976, a former Chilean intelligence officer claimed that he had been privy to the order of Horman’s execution. He stated that not only was he present at the time of the order, but that a U.S. officer, possibly from the Central Intelligence Agency, had been in the room as well. The Chilean military never actually recognized responsibility for the killing. For years afterwards, the military government maintained the claim that they knew nothing of the circumstances of Horman’s disappearance and death.

All of this makes for an intriguing case. To try to untangle and understand the circumstances surrounding the death of Charles Horman, this thesis attempts to synthesize the few scholarly and journalistic investigations of the episode and then to place them in conversation with hundreds of official U.S. documents relating to the case that were declassified in 1999 and 2000 as part of the Chilean Declassification Project. The available documents declassified to date reveal no smoking gun or irrefutable evidence of U.S. complicity in the killing, or even much clarity regarding the circumstances of Horman’s death. They are useful, however, in illuminating nuances of the investigation as it unfolded, and explaining how differing interpretations and disparate narratives – especially about U.S. complicity – may have come about. A close review of the declassified record provides the opportunity to trace the certainties and the remaining ambiguities of the case, and to show how a disappearance and death of a U.S. citizen was quickly politicized when the Hormans and other observers suspected U.S. complicity.

While this review of the case largely examines evidence from the Department of State, it ultimately reveals the lack of declassified files from other U.S. agencies, namely the CIA.

### **Literature Review, Sources, and Methodology**

Historians, journalists, and filmmakers have investigated the history and implications of Charles Horman's death. While they diverge in their approaches, all share a similar portrayal of Horman's death as that of a casualty of U.S. intervention into Chilean politics. Similarly, all confirm, through their investigations, that Horman died at the hands of the U.S.-backed Chilean junta.

Peter Kornbluh's *The Pinochet File* stands as the most comprehensive treatment of the case, one that draws expertly on the declassified record.<sup>6</sup> Kornbluh documents the events leading up to and following Charles Horman's execution using primary documents compiled through the Freedom of Information Act by the National Security Archive, a nongovernmental research institution. Kornbluh's depiction focuses on the political dynamics that were ongoing during the final days of Horman's life. The Chilean coup had just occurred and U.S. officials were committed to providing support for the new regime. The Chilean junta, for its part, was intent on rooting out all opposition and repressing dissent, physical, political, and intellectual. Against this backdrop, Horman's death is framed by Kornbluh as an unfortunate consequence of U.S. imperialism—a sort of collateral damage of U.S. support for military dictatorship. Horman's political views and actions, Kornbluh argues, marked him out as a possible “extremist” and enemy of the new government. For this, the author asserts, he lost his life. Kornbluh also portrays the various responses of U.S. officials at the time as those of foot-dragging bureaucrats, reluctant to draw attention to a case which could damage the prestige of the new Chilean government and, in turn, complicate U.S. foreign relations. He points out that documents at the time situated Horman's death and

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<sup>6</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*.

subsequent investigation into it, in the words of one U.S. official, “in the context of the need to be careful to keep relatively small issues in our relationship from making our cooperation difficult.”<sup>7</sup>

In regards to U.S. involvement that would amount to complicit collaboration, a lack of concrete evidence allows Kornbluh to do little more than speculate. He draws heavily, though, on circumstantial evidence (a prevalent theme in the study of the Horman case) to demonstrate the *possibility* of U.S. involvement. Kornbluh’s contempt for U.S. treatment of the Horman case is clear; one reviewer referred to his tone as a “barely suppressed sense of indignation.”<sup>8</sup> However, he ignores another possibility: that U.S. officials in the embassy may have pursued their investigation as far as diplomatically possible and that, sadly for Horman, they could do little more than accept the denials of the Chilean government. For instance, State Department records show that the consul and other embassy personnel contacted Chilean officials with persistent inquiries as to the whereabouts of Charles Horman in the weeks that followed his abduction.<sup>9</sup> While these very personnel would point to their actions as a demonstration of their commitment, Kornbluh – similar to Horman’s relatives -- judged their handling of and commitment to Charles Horman’s case to be unsatisfactory, and even suspicious.

Kornbluh’s theories would come as no surprise to historians such as Lubna Qureshi and J. Patrice McSherry, who have noted the public outrage at U.S. foreign relations in Chile. Indeed, Kornbluh’s documentation of U.S. involvement in Chilean politics from the 1970s represents evidence to back condemnations in the press and intellectual circles voiced repeatedly since the coup of 1973. For scholars sharing Kornbluh’s view, Charles Horman serves as a victim in the tapestry of U.S. intervention against a perceived Communist threat. The afterword to Lubna Qureshi’s *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende*, for

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 286.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Chrimes, “Reviewed Works: *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* by Peter Kornbluh; *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* by John Dinges, Review,” *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (May 2004): 576-7. Accessed April 13, 2015. JSTOR. 576.

<sup>9</sup> Santiago to Files, memorandum, “Resume of Embassy Actions on Horman Case,” October 5, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.



example, which documents U.S. aggression against the Chilean socialist regime, narrates Horman's final days and presents him as a sort of martyr for progressives, a form of collateral damage to larger aims of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> J. Patrice McSherry's account is somewhat more ambivalent. She relates the circumstances and interactions of Horman with U.S. officials noted previously, but admits that the part that the U.S. government played in his death remains "unknown."<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the implication of U.S. complicity is almost universally shared within the academic consensus.

Margaret Power characterizes Charles Horman within the context of what she refers to as the "Chilean solidarity movement" in U.S. circles. From this perspective, Horman represents a minority of U.S. citizens on the political left who associated with Allende's commitment to democratic socialism and improving the standard of living in Chile. Horman's death provided evidence of the substantial costs of U.S. imperialism and the U.S. government's ongoing support of the military regime in Chile. Power states that the Horman case, coupled with "revelations of U.S. government and corporate efforts to prevent Allende's presidency and, once their attempts failed, to undermine and overthrow his government," inspired many in the U.S. to oppose their country's intervention and publicly condemn such efforts.<sup>12</sup> Again, in the work of Power, the Horman case is not the central topic of analysis, but rather a provocative example used to condemn U.S. policy in Latin America by U.S. critics on the left.

The lengthiest survey of the Horman case is not a work of academia but of journalism. Published in 1978, Thomas Hauser's *An American Sacrifice: The Execution of Charles Horman* compiles a multitude of oral accounts, including those of Horman's relatives and U.S. officials, in an effort to investigate the death of Charles Horman. His work stands as a 250-page primary source document,

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<sup>10</sup> Lubna Z. Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Power, "The U.S. Movement in Solidarity with Chile in the 1970s," *Latin American Perspectives* 36, nos. 6, SOLIDARITY (2009), accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/20684685?ref=no-x-route:3f0172dc25dc744a09028a38c94b5040>.

written at a time when knowledge about the case was fluid (and politically dynamic itself). Hauser relates, from firsthand accounts, Horman's activities prior to and during his time in Chile. Hauser's work also serves as the Horman family's narrative, repeated through testimonies and letters, of their experiences in their own investigations. Their suspicions and the experiences that led them to their conclusions are all detailed by the U.S. journalist. While Hauser was not privy to the multitude of documents that contemporary historians subsequently gained access to, (although he did draw on documents that Edmund Horman had accessed through use of the Freedom of Information Act), he arrived at the same questions that plague historians today: was there a U.S. government cover-up of Charles Horman's death and was there U.S. complicity in his execution?

As these authors all suggest, Charles Horman can be considered a victim of U.S. intervention. But this thesis argues that to interpret his death solely in this wider context may lead authors to jump to conclusions about U.S. responsibility, and clouds an understanding of the nuanced and ambiguous evidence – and lack of evidence -- surrounding its circumstances. Beginning in 1999, the Chilean Declassification Project (CDP) inundated scholars with previously unavailable material. Through a concentrated effort by the Clinton Administration, approximately 22,900 U.S. records on the Pinochet government (and before) were released to the public. The goal of the project, as described by the U.S. Department of State spokesperson at their release, was “to put original documents before the public so that it may judge for itself the extent to which U.S. actions undercut the cause of democracy and human rights in Chile.”<sup>13</sup> Within this material, a search for “Charles Horman Case” on the State Department's Freedom of Information Act website provides thousands of results, many of which are unrelated, in fact, to the case. However, several hundred documents do specifically pertain to Charles Horman's death and the investigations that followed. They consist of situation reports, resumes of action, and memoranda from September 1973, copies of letters sent by Edmund Horman in the months and years that followed his trip to Santiago, and affidavits given and investigations done by State Department officials. Some are

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Boucher, "Chile Declassification Project: Final Release", Department of State Archive, <http://www.state.gov/1997-2001>.

little more than a few phrases, while others are hundreds of pages long. There are also a much smaller number of CIA, Defense Department, and White House documents.

Despite challenges posed by declassified documents, we can glean certain valuable pieces of information from them, along with a fuller sense of the unfolding of a case over time. This thesis places the documents pertaining to Charles Horman's death – and the declassification of them – at the center of its investigation. First, I will document the death of Charles Horman as best as possible with available sources, along with the interpretations and reactions of the Hormans and the press. Although a narrative of the death is almost impossible without substantial gaps in the chronology and information, I believe the form of a documented narrative reveals the remaining mystery within the case of Charles Horman. Thus, by separating what is known from questions that remain to be answered, we may realize the need for more declassification and evidence.

As Kornbluh points out, though, while “Documents are essential to the reconstruction of history, they do not always tell the whole story.”<sup>14</sup> There are limits to the information within this and all government memoranda; this examination underscores the partial, unsubstantial, and often subjective information contained in these declassified files. The files themselves often prove to be troublesome sources of information, mistakenly catalogued, containing errors in nomenclature, dating, or both, and often lacking contextual evidence such as to whom they were sent and by whom they were penned. Additionally, they are frequently redacted or incomplete.

More importantly, a lack of evidence, particularly from the CIA, ultimately remains central to this case. After lengthy review of the existing files, I have concluded that as long as the files that pertain to the clandestine activities of the U.S. within Santiago remain classified, the truth about Charles Horman's death will remain a mystery. As Kenneth Maxwell argues, an over reliance on State Department documents alone runs the risk of “underestimating the role of clandestine actions that were often at the

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<sup>14</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, xviii.

center of the ideological and geostrategic struggles of the Cold War.”<sup>15</sup> In the final analysis, this investigation demonstrates the truth of that statement. Rather than clarifying the circumstances of Charles Horman’s execution, particularly in regards to U.S. complicity, this investigation reveals the enduring ambiguity in the case.

### **Allende and the U.S.**

In 1970, Salvador Allende became president of Chile by winning a popular election with the plurality of the vote. The president then went about enacting reforms to change the social and economic landscape of the country. Allende, a popularly elected socialist, was not unprecedented in Latin American history but the extent to which his policies transformed the country came close.

When Salvador Allende assumed the presidency on November 4, 1973, he did so after nearly a decade of active U.S. opposition and influence within Chilean politics. The United States government opposed the self-declared parliamentary socialist not because of any threat he posed to national self-interest but because of the precedent Allende would establish. Allende asserted himself as a reformer. Although he publicly decried any foreign influence, U.S. policy-makers viewed him as an agent of Communism. If he were to assume a more Socialist stance in Chile, via the route of democratic elections, then the rest of Latin America - perhaps even beyond- might take inspiration. However, other than that, the only interests that the U.S. held in preventing Allende from obtaining the presidency stemmed from a concern for self-made financial and economic risks.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Maxwell, “Review: The Other 9/11: The United States and Chile, 1973.” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2003): 147-151. Accessed April 13, 2015. JSTOR, 147.

<sup>16</sup> National Security Study Memorandum 97, issued by Henry Kissinger, called for a detailed investigation of the effects of an Allende victory by CIA, State, and Defense Department analysts. Kornbluh quotes their conclusion as stating, “The U.S. has no vital national interests within Chile. There would, however, be tangible economic losses... An Allende victory would represent... a definite psychological advantage for the Marxist idea”; Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 8.

At the beginning of the previous decade, members of the Kennedy administration began to influence and sway Chilean politics through private and covert investment in certain centrist political groups. The *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* (PDC) received the lion's share of covert support. The idea behind the operation was that in order to prevent a working-class (and socialist) revolution, a middle class revolution must be catalyzed. Eduardo Frei served as the leader of and 1964 presidential candidate for the PDC. Throughout 1962 and the year of the election, the CIA funneled over four million dollars into Chile for political action.<sup>17</sup> Over two and half million dollars went directly to Frei's successful 1964 campaign. However, an unspecified amount also went to influence other center-right parties, in order to create the appearance of greater moderation in Frei's policies. At the same time, other covert political operations were ongoing in the country. The CIA established contacts in student, peasant, and labor organizations, in order to garner as much support for Frei as possible. "Extensive use was made of the press, radio, films, pamphlets, posters, leaflets... It was a 'scare campaign'..."<sup>18</sup> The description referred to in the Church Committee report, *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973*, made up part of the three million dollar anti-Allende public relations operation run by CIA-funded organizations and agents in the months before the election.

This sort of covert action, a dual strategy of promoting an approved candidate and publicly sabotaging Allende, worked in 1964. On September 4, with a slogan of "*Revolución en Libertad*," Frei won a 57 percent majority and with it, the Chilean presidency. For the remainder of the 1960s, Chile became a benefactor of U.S. economic goodwill. Chile received well over a billion dollars of grants and loans, while existing U.S. companies, under the direction of strategists in U.S.-AID, expanded their investments and operations.<sup>19</sup> In addition, from 1962 until 1970, the Chilean military benefited from over

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<sup>17</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> The Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, comp., *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975) 15, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/pdfs94th/94chile.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 5-6.

\$91 million dollars in military aid. For its part, the CIA continued to spend some two million dollars on political action in the latter five years of the decade, in an attempt to enhance the power and image of the PDC, all the while working against Allende's political support.

However, in a sense, the U.S. had tied its own hands. With the Chilean economy stagnating by early 1970 and further reform necessary, the Chilean electorate began to turn away from Frei. Paradoxically, after the U.S. had helped to create such a popular centrist figure, once Frei's popularity began to wane Chileans began to search for a slightly, although not excessively, more radical approach. Allende embodied such a notion.

Allende won the 1970 election with a narrow plurality; he received only 39,000 more votes than his closest opponent. Constitutional precedent meant that with no clear majority supporting any candidate, the Congress would choose the next president. Tradition dictated that Congress would choose the candidate with the most votes, which meant Allende's presidency became imminent. In response, the U.S. began to search for a more disruptive method of intervention into Chilean politics. Specifically, U.S. policy makers began to consider the organization of a preemptive coup attempt to avert Allende's ascendancy to the presidency. On September 4, Allende had obtained his plurality through popular election. On September 15, 1970, President Richard Nixon met with Director of the CIA Richard Helms. The notes on the meeting demonstrated the will at the highest levels of U.S. policymaking to bring down Allende. Nixon made it clear that the CIA must do everything it could to "prevent Allende from coming to power or unseat him." The president also made ten million dollars available as an operating budget. Helms' notes from his meeting illustrate that Nixon made it clear that the president was "not concerned [with the] risks involved." He also emphasized that the embassy in Santiago was not to be involved.<sup>20</sup>

The CIA briefly considered a plan to bribe Chilean Congressmen, and even agreed upon a \$500,000 operating budget, but decided the risk for exposure was too high. Next, members of the 40 Committee, a top secret security group organized by Henry Kissinger in response to the Chilean situation,

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<sup>20</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 1.

began to plot and organize a coup. At the behest of this committee, the CIA, and at this point, the embassy, began to contact the out-going president and longtime recipient of U.S. aid, Eduardo Frei to arrange to Frei-backed military coup. The plan centered around Frei dismissing his cabinet, appointing a new cabinet of military officials, and then removing himself from power, leaving the country in the hands of the military. This plan was known as “Track I.” However, such was Frei’s loyalty to the Chilean constitution that this plan never got off the ground.

Without Frei’s knowledge, the CIA began to identify and contact military officials who would be inclined to go ahead with a coup. This alternative, covert and hostile approach was known as “Track II.” Chief among those contacted was the retired General Roberto Viaux. A year earlier, General Viaux had gone on strike and demanded the resignation of the Defense Minister and the Army Commander-in-Chief. CIA officials perceived Viaux to be the “only military leader of national stature [who] appears committed to denying Allende the presidency by force.”<sup>21</sup> In preparation for the proposed coup of 1970, the CIA also contacted a number of other sympathetic military officers, including Brigadier General Camilo Valenzuela, the commander of the Santiago barracks. However, one key officer stood in the way of any intervention and made the prospect of a coup very difficult. Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Rene Schneider, had voiced his support for the constitution and a legitimate transfer of power.

In order for a CIA-backed military coup to take place, Rene Schneider had to be removed. The CIA, who had been meeting with contacts of Viaux throughout early October of 1970, began to discuss the possibility of a kidnapping. These discussions occurred with various contacts in the Chilean war academy and police, as well as the Viaux group. On October 13, the CIA received word that a move by Viaux against Schneider was imminent. Only two days before, CIA operatives had met with Viaux and pledged him \$250,000 for his needs.<sup>22</sup> Despite some concern, and some historical debate as to whether the

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, from CIA, “Special Military Situation/Analysis Report”, October 7, 1970, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 23.

U.S. intended the Viaux plot to go ahead, a cable on October 17, 1972, reveals that the coup and the kidnapping had the greenlight and that the “Chilean assets” were encouraged to proceed in the near future.<sup>23</sup> The CIA authorized another \$50,000 provision to the coup-plotters shortly after this memorandum.<sup>24</sup>

On October 19th, a kidnapping plot aimed at removing General Schneider failed before it got off the ground. The next day, another attempt came to nothing when the kidnappers reportedly lost the general’s car in rush hour traffic. The next day, a weapons package arrived in Santiago via a disguised diplomatic pouch. Early in the morning, approximately 2:00 AM, on October 22, the weapons were passed by a CIA operative to a Chilean military officer. The next morning, at 8:00 AM, Schneider was ambushed as he drove to military headquarters in Santiago. The general was shot three times before the attackers fled. He died from bullet wounds fired from a pistol.<sup>25</sup> The reaction of the CIA was one of optimism; a final chance to avoid Allende’s presidency had been afforded. A CIA cable reporting on the situation read, “Only Chileans themselves can manage a successful [redacted] but the station has done excellent job of guiding Chileans today to point where a military solution is at least an option for them.”<sup>26</sup>

However, no such coup occurred. On October 24, the Chilean congress ratified Allende’s presidency. In the ensuing days the coup conspirators, including General Viaux, were arrested and convicted. The word within the CIA was “absolute denial” of any involvement to those officials within the government who were not already in the know, even the Ambassador himself.

The Schneider killing would become the target of Charles Horman’s curiosity and then investigation. It is unknown what evidence he produced, but he did pass on to both his wife and parents that he believed there was some U.S. involvement. His research findings, which according to his wife

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<sup>23</sup> CIA, "Cable from Headquarters", October 16, 1970 in Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 64.

<sup>24</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 33.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> CIA, "Cable From Task Force Director," October 23, 1970 in Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 29.



included documents and interviews with people close to the assassination, were taken along with him when his apartment was raided.<sup>27</sup>

On November 5, Allende ascended to the Chilean presidency. For all immediate intents and purposes, the window for an overthrow had passed in the eyes of the CIA and other U.S. officials. Allende's position as a democratically elected president meant that the backlash against any moves against him would simply be too much. However, this did not prevent the U.S. from engaging in more structural, less direct means of sabotage, primarily economic isolation. Over the past decade, such was the extent of U.S. involvement in the Chilean economy that debts to the U.S. government and U.S. corporations totaled over one billion dollars.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, U.S. copper companies Kennecott and Anaconda controlled about 80 percent of Chilean copper, which the country relied on to export. The U.S. eliminated all available credit to the Chilean government with a National Security Council directive which forbade all public and quasi-public U.S. organizations from issuing any new assistance agreements. The economic losses were dramatic.<sup>29</sup> The World Bank's previous provisions in the fiscal year of 1969-70 amounted to \$31 million, but between 1971 and 1973 it approved zero loans. The Agency for International Development, which had provided \$110 million from 1968-70, provided only \$3 million between 1971 and 1973. Finally, the U.S cut all import/export loans from \$300 million to less than \$30 million after Allende's confirmation. By 1973, inflation stood at over 1000 percent and food shortages were frequent.

Covert political action against Allende's regime also continued. Initially a budget of \$7 million was approved but this was subsequently augmented every year. Millions went to political opposition and

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<sup>27</sup> In Hauser's account of the abduction, Joyce Horman returned home to find the apartment ransacked and thoroughly searched. The State Department investigation of 1976 also noted that Horman's materials and notes had been taken by the Chileans; Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 116; ARA:Fred Smith, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."

<sup>28</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 83.

<sup>29</sup> For a more extensive discussion of U.S. economic sabotage of the Allende regime, which includes the statistics that follow in the text see the section "The Invisible Blockade" in Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 83-87; Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, Allende*, 85-89.

private sector organizations opposed to the Allende government. Labor unions, civic organizations, and paramilitary protesters received funding to create further social and economic chaos. Finally, the CIA funneled an additional \$2 million into propaganda projects. Chiefly among these, *El Mercurio*, the nation's leading newspaper received a million dollars in covert support in order to maintain an anti-Allende news campaign.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, CIA operatives began operations to turn the Chilean military against Allende. In November 1971, the CIA cabled that they "conceive[d] our mission as one in which we work consciously and deliberately in direction of a coup."<sup>31</sup>

Although Allende's party won additional seats in the 1973 congressional elections, activities against his government also increased. In August of that year, massive strikes incited by the Truck Owner's Federation paralyzed the country. That same month, the CIA obtained an additional million dollars from the 40 Committee in order to finance strikes and street protests. In late August, an intense smear campaign aimed at the incumbent military chief-of-staff, General Carlos Prats, forced him to resign. Like his predecessor, Schneider, Gen. Prats was seen as the largest obstruction to a coup. By August 31, sources reported a coup was imminent.<sup>32</sup> On September 11, military forces, led by Augusto Pinochet, attacked La Moneda, the presidential palace. Within twenty-four hours, the reign of Salvador Allende fell to the rule of the military.

The actions of the CIA and the U.S. Government did not remain clandestine for long. In 1972, journalist Jack Anderson reported that the CIA had taken action to prevent Allende from assuming the presidency. These allegations created headlines across the country, which in combination with recent scandals relating to Watergate and Vietnam, helped create an outrage over clandestine operations. Only two days after the news of the CIA's actions hit front pages, Senator William Fulbright authorized Senator Frank Church to begin investigating anti-Allende activities. While the initial report investigated the CIA's

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<sup>30</sup> Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 92-93.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

collaboration with private companies, Church would later head the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. In 1975, the committee published its report *Covert Action in Chile, 1963-73* which detailed the lengths that the U.S. Government had gone to prevent Allende's presidency.<sup>33</sup> The resulting outrage, supplemented by members of the U.S. press created public pressure on U.S. officials within the intelligence community to explain their actions. In the midst of this, the death of Charles Horman added another case of U.S. intervention gone wrong. For many, he exemplified the tragedies caused by U.S. covert activities. In order to understand how he came to represent this sentiment, and why his case needs further investigation, the story of Charles Horman's life and death, as well as its aftermath, is in order.

### **The Life and Death of Charles Horman Revisited**

Charles Horman was born on May 15, 1942, in New York City. For the rest of his childhood and much of his adolescent years, Charles remained in the city. After a stint at a New England boarding school where he was both the head of the school's literary magazine as well as the debate society, Charles attended Harvard University. Even in these early years, the traits that would later serve him in Chile were apparent. Teachers described him as hard-working and, while at Harvard, he became involved in the civil rights movement. All records of Charles' university years show him to be an intellectually curious, enthusiastic student. Upon graduation, he received a Fulbright Scholarship. However, Charles was unable to embark upon his scholarship due to the outbreak of the Vietnam War. In 1964, the same year he graduated from Harvard, Charles enlisted in the Air Force National Guard. Charles served six months of active duty, for which he received the National Defense Service Medal, before continuing onto another six years of reserve duty.

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<sup>33</sup> The Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, comp., *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973*.

After serving his active duty, Charles Horman began a career in news and media. He worked in Oregon for two years at a TV company, where he began producing documentaries. Within his work ran a theme of social and political activism: his first film depicted the “black community” of Portland and the next dealt with napalm manufacturing in northern California. After moving back east he worked for a TV station that broadcast to New York and New Jersey. By the end of 1967, he had moved on again in order to take a job as historian for a federal poverty program.<sup>34</sup> In June of 1968, Charles wed Joyce Hamren, and they moved to the upper west side of New York City.

In 1968, at the same time as he focused his work in journalism, Charles also became more politically active. In April, countless anti-Vietnam protests by students effectively shut down nearby Columbia University. In June, Horman attended ‘Resurrection City,’ also known as the Poor People’s Campaign, in Washington, D.C., which was a demonstration for economic justice organized by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In August, Charles traveled to Chicago to cover the Democratic National Convention for the progressive news magazine *The Nation*. Over a hundred anti-war groups converged on the city and clashed with police throughout the convention. During these clashes, police attacked reporters and protesters alike. Charles was one such reporter and was maced for his presence within the protesters’ ranks.

Between working and writing, Charles’ wife later admitted they had little time together. This served as the catalyst for their trip to Latin America in December of 1971. They traveled south, through Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, and eventually Colombia, Ecuador, and finally Chile. They crossed into Allende’s Chile in July of 1972. In Santiago, they found conditions remarkably better than in the other countries through which they had travelled. Joyce Horman explained their action in simple terms: they “began looking for a home as soon as possible.”<sup>35</sup> For his part, Charles immediately began to

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<sup>34</sup> Hauser describes Horman’s employment during this time simply as “the federal poverty program,” no further details could be found; Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Thomas Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman: An American Sacrifice* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 36.

work in the field that he had become involved with previously: political activism, mainly through journalism. Along with other politically active expatriates, Charles began publishing a small non-profit news magazine. *Fuente Norteamericano de Información* (FIN) translated and then published articles from the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Steven Volk, the Oberlin professor and the cofounder of FIN, described the purpose of the organization: "FIN was designed to keep interested Chileans informed about the activities of the U.S. government and corporations around the world, and to demonstrate solidarity with the Chilean left by calling attention to progressive movements in the United States."<sup>36</sup> The organization covered events in the U.S. such as the civil rights movement, U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and Watergate. However, Horman did not limit his activities solely to the written word. In April 1973, along with 50 others, he demonstrated against the U.S. bombings in Cambodia in front of the U.S. consulate in Santiago.

To supplement the money he and his wife had saved in New York, Charles worked at the Ford Foundation as a translator and script-writer. At the time of his death, Horman was in the process of writing a cartoon for children that contained political themes and allusions to the Allende government. Horman also researched Chilean politics and followed events in the news with rigor. He began to investigate the sources of Chilean political discontent and conflict. One such case in particular was the kidnapping and murder of Chilean General Rene Schneider.<sup>37</sup> By September of 1973, Horman had reportedly already discovered facts and evidence of U.S. involvement in Schneider's death. This he shared with his wife and parents. Charles kept his findings on his investigations and observations in an extensive collection of notes and notebooks. These he planned on compiling into a book depicting the circumstances of Schneider's death.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Steven Volk "Seeking Justice in Chile: A Personal History," (Oberlin Online: Faculty Observations. June 26, 2002) Accessed February 12, 2015. Online.

<sup>37</sup> Memorandum, "Horman vs. Kissinger."

<sup>38</sup> ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."

In September of 1973, Charles returned from a visit to see his parents in New York City, accompanied by a friend named Terry Simon. Before Simon was scheduled to leave, the Hormans suggested that she see Viña Del Mar and the Pacific Ocean. Charles Horman and Terry Simon scheduled their trip to Viña on the evening of Monday, September 10th. They planned on staying the night in order to spend the following day sightseeing, before returning to Santiago on the evening of the eleventh. Simon planned to leave the country on the twelfth. The military overthrow of Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, disrupted their trip, however, and left them stranded in the coastal town. While in Viña Del Mar, the pair made contacts with several U.S. Military personnel. Through these personnel they eventually found passage back to Santiago. The officers reportedly shared information with the Hormans about their various activities in Chile at the time, which, years later would be alleged as one possible reason for Horman's execution. However, the extent to which the Hormans and the military personnel interacted remains contentious. As such, the trip to Viña Del Mar provides an example of the difficulties of understanding the case of Charles Horman.

There are several primary documents that attest to what occurred in Viña Del Mar. One is the statement given by Terry Simon to the State Department in April, 1974, which described her experiences with Charles in the coastal town. Simon's statement was given to the U.S. Department of State the following April of 1974, to follow up the investigation of Horman's death. The other documents are statements by Lt. Col. Patrick James Ryan and Captain Ray Davis, both officers of the U.S. Navy. Davis served as the head of the U.S. Military group in Chile, while Ryan acted as his second-in-command. Ryan also is alleged to have been the U.S. liaison between the Chilean coup plotters and the U.S. military.<sup>39</sup> The statements given by the U.S. officers were filed in the weeks that followed Horman's disappearance as the embassy in Santiago, with the help of U.S. military personnel, investigated the abduction. They consist of reports, given after the events, of Ryan and Davis' contacts with Horman and Simon in Viña Del Mar and

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<sup>39</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 231.

their trip back to Santiago. Thomas Hauser's book *The Execution of Charles Horman* also covers their stay in the town extensively.

Once in Viña Del Mar, the two travelers checked into the Miranmar Hotel, where they spent Monday night. The next morning they walked into town to find an unusual number of Chilean flags flying from homes and businesses. Unbeknownst to them, but as they soon learned from soldiers in the street, a military coup occurred that day. The government of Chile was now in the hands of a military junta led by Augusto Pinochet. As a result, public transportation shut down and roads closed, which effectively stranded Horman and Simon in the port town, seventy five miles west of Santiago, for the foreseeable future. However, the pair soon found they were not alone.

While at their hotel in Viña Del Mar, Charles and Terry encountered a man by the name of Arthur Creter. Creter served as a Naval Tech Rep and explained to Horman and Simon that he was in Chile on naval business. Horman and Simon spoke with him at some length about the coup that had occurred, Simon recounts, and Creter was forthcoming with his knowledge of it. The coup had been efficient, he explained, and had proceeded relatively smoothly. He added, according to Simon, that, "it never goes this smoothly unless its planned in advance."<sup>40</sup> He also informed them of the U.S. consulate in Valparaiso and advised that they check in there. However, when they invited him to accompany them, he seemed to laugh off the suggestion. Creter described the consulate as "the last place he'd go" because the "didn't like to know too much about the activities of the U.S. military." In her statement to the State Department, Simon also recalled that Creter stated that the U.S. Navy had currently stationed a cruiser, two destroyers, and a submarine offshore.

Shortly after meeting Creter, Horman and Simon met another U.S. military officer, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick James Ryan, U.S.MC, Navy Section, Valparaiso. Ryan served as the *de facto* head of the U.S. Naval Section in Valparaiso. He seems to have been equally open with the pair about the Chilean

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<sup>40</sup> Terry Simon to File, memorandum, "Statement of Terry Simon," April 11, 1974. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

coup. On October 5, 1973, Ryan submitted a report to State Department files describing his encounters with the two U.S. citizens. He admitted that he gave them information, but maintained that the intel he did pass along was “appropriate.”<sup>41</sup> Simon asserted that at one point, he explained to them that the real cause of the coup had been the truck drivers. He called them the “real heroes of this thing” and added “they brought the government down.”<sup>42</sup> Ryan was referring to the National Confederation of Truck Owners, who had struck repeatedly throughout the reign of Salvador Allende. In the summer of 1973, with the strikes adding to food and gas shortages, about ten thousand drivers left the Confederation and began driving to keep the country functioning. In response, the striking truckers had scattered steel spikes on roads and engaged in other forms of sabotage. The Confederation was reportedly funded by the CIA and throughout their activities coordinated with the Chilean military. Simon also reported that Ryan made several other notable admissions during their time together. He apparently spoke of taking a Chilean general shopping in the U.S. and purportedly said that the embassy had several attaches “and that their function was to spy.”<sup>43</sup>

For his part, Ryan attempted to help the two travelers as much as he could. He took them to the North American Naval Mission where he offered to send radio messages to their families in the U.S. More significantly, he arranged for them to travel back to Santiago with his superior, Captain Ray Davis, who was the Commander of United States Military Group in Chile. By all declassified accounts, Ryan had no further contact with Simon or Charles Horman. Before detailing Horman’s encounter with Ryan’s superior, Davis, brief discussions of Simon’s and Ryan’s statements are in order.

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<sup>41</sup> Memorandum, "Naval Mission Contacts With Charles Horman and Teri Staron During the Period 11 September -- 15 September 1973," October 5, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>42</sup> Terry Simon, memorandum, “Statement of Terry Simon.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



The accounts of Terry Simon and Lt. Col. Ryan, both of which were sent to the files by the State Department at the time they were given, contradict each other. Simon claims she met Ryan for the first time on September 13. However, Ryan states in his report on their contacts that Horman and Simon first approached him on September 11. Perhaps the discrepancy is minor, and a fault of memory. However, more significant is the very fact that Ryan fiercely contested the nature of their interaction. Other declassified memoranda illustrate the conflict. In response to Simon's statements, Ryan claimed later in October of 1974 that, "Some other quotes Miss Simon attributes to me and various Navy Mission members contain some truth, half truths, or no truth at all."<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, with apparent exasperation in regards to Simon's claims that he spoke of embassy spies and shopping trips with Chilean generals, Ryan wrote to the U.S. consul, "Those are Miss Simon's words, not mine, and like her recollection of where we met, they are embellished to suit her purposes!" Ryan's admonishment of Simon raises some skepticism. The content of conversations between Simon, Horman, and Ryan may be impossible to ascertain. For example, Ryan grants that he may have spoken of truck drivers and their role in opposing Allende, however, he maintains, "I am absolutely positive, that at no time did I discuss, or did I overhear any member of the Navy Mission discuss in a more than passing manner the military/political situation with the couple."<sup>45</sup> Ryan's objection to Simon's statement is important considering the sensitive nature of information he may have passed on to Horman and Simon. Unfortunately, the events are a case of he-said she-said which the declassified files do little to reconcile.

By all accounts, Cpt. Davis drove Horman and Simon back to Santiago in the afternoon of September 15th. Davis' initial opinion of Horman was straightforward. He described him as "mild

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<sup>44</sup> P Ryan, P. Ryan to Fred Purdy, memorandum, "Copy of Letter From Congressman Donald Fraser to Secretary of State Kissinger Attached," October 8, 1974. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>45</sup> Deputy Chief Navy Section Lieutenant Colonel PJ Ryan, U.S.MC to Chief Navy/Section Commander U.S. Military Group, Chile, "Supplementary Statement concerning my conversation with Mr. Charles Horman and his Female Companion in Viña del Mar during the period 11-15 September 1973."

mannered well cultured” and claimed in a filed memorandum that he did not speak to him very much throughout their drive back to Santiago.<sup>46</sup> In his report of the contact with Horman and Simon, Davis did express “a little more than normal concern for the couple in that the young man appeared somewhat naive and spoke poor Spanish considering he had 9 months in country.”<sup>47</sup> Davis states that the next time he spoke with Ms. Simon, on Wednesday, September 19, she informed him that Horman had been abducted by the Chilean military

Horman returned to Santiago at approximately five o'clock on the evening of Saturday, September 15th. Either because they could not get home before a 6 p.m. curfew or because he did not want Davis to know where they lived, Horman directed him to the Hotel Carrera.<sup>48</sup> The next day, Charles returned to his home with Simon. Reunited with Joyce, the three of them decided to leave the country as soon as possible. On Monday, September 17, the Hormans and Simon decided to leave Chile. While Joyce checked on friends and stocked up on food, Charles and Terry began to search for a way out of the country.

Horman and Simon made their way first to the Hotel Riviera, and then to Braniff Airlines. At the hotel, they checked Terry into a room in case they needed to stay downtown because of the curfew. At Braniff, they inquired about leaving the country. With the explanation given that all nonmilitary air travel was shut down, they were directed to the U.S. embassy and told to request a Mrs. Tipton. She, a ticket agent informed them, was compiling a list of passengers to be flown out as soon as possible. With this knowledge in mind, Simon and Horman made their way to the embassy. However, at the embassy, a switchboard operator told them that he knew of no one in the embassy by the name of Mrs. Tipton. In Thomas Hauser's account of it, the operator then rudely refused to find out for them whether or not the

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<sup>46</sup> Santiago to File, memorandum, "14 Sept Friday I Was Asked by Lt. Ryan U.S.MC, Navy Section, Valpo If I Could Provide Transportation from Valpo to Santiago for Two Stranded Amcits."

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum, "Naval Mission Contacts With Charles Horman and Teri Staron During the Period 11 September -- 15 September 1973."

<sup>48</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 88.

consulate was open, and informed them tersely, “Look lady [Ms. Simon], if you want to know whether or not the Consulate is open, you’ll have to go to the Consulate. It’s lunch time, so nobody would be there now anyway.”<sup>49</sup> Horman and Simon did exactly that. By the time, they reached the consulate it was around four in the afternoon. With curfew two hours away, Horman decided to head for home. They agreed to meet on Wednesday, in case they could not contact each other via phone, and then they said goodbye.

Simon’s farewell to him outside the U.S. consulate would prove to be the last she saw of him. According to a number of sources, that evening around five o’clock, a truck carrying a group of approximately a dozen military personnel parked outside 4126 Vicuna Mackenna, the apartment of the Hormans. The soldiers found Charles and presumably his research into Chilean politics, notebooks and annotated newspapers, and took what they found. Exactly what happened after Charles’ abduction remains a mystery. The soldiers apparently took Horman to the National Stadium; sometime after this Charles Horman was shot and killed. The Chilean Truth Commission, which compiled information on victims of the military regime in 1991, included this information in its summary of his death:

The military prosecutor's office had sent his body to the Medical Legal Institute with an indication that the place of death was not known. His death certificate registers the time of death as September 18, 1973, at 9:45 a.m., and the cause as "multiple bullet wounds." The Commission has come to the conviction that Charles Horman was executed without any due process of law by government agents, and that his human rights were thereby violated.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>50</sup> United States Institute For Peace, *Truth Commission: National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation*, 224.

The report also surmised that it was likely that Charles was taken outside of the stadium before he was executed. Furthermore, although it would not be known until sometime later, his wounds suggested that a firing squad killed him due to similarities between his and other cases.<sup>51</sup> The Chilean authorities gave no acknowledgment of his death, nor is there any evidence to suggest they had notified the U.S. government of his detention. Chilean officials, in fact, denied that they had any knowledge of Charles' death. Not only did they claim that Horman died "out of military control," but they suggested to the embassy that he may have been killed by Leftist forces.<sup>52</sup> After Davis pressed his contacts in the Chilean government for more information, a memorandum filed in response to a briefing by an aide to Pinochet summarized the results. On September 29, 1973, the memorandum for the record stated that "official information indicated" that "The Chilean armed forces or Carabineros did not conduct any search operation at 4126 Vicuna Mackenna on 17 Sep 73."<sup>53</sup>

### **The Investigations of the Hormans, the State Department and Further Revelations**

In the aftermath of Charles Horman's disappearance, first his wife and then his father attempted to ascertain what had become of him. At the same time, embassy officials conducted an investigation using their contacts within the Chilean government. The process proved frustrating for all parties. Horman's body could not be located for several weeks and only then under suspicious circumstances. Lack of an autopsy added to the uncertainty surrounding his disappearance. The Hormans began to perceive the lack of results from the embassy's investigation as a reluctance to discover the truth – and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 195; ARA/PAF Marshall, memorandum, "Horman and the New York Post," October 24, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>53</sup> Carlos E. Urrutia to Files, memorandum, "Status of U.S. Citizen," September 29, 1973, Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection, FOIA Website.

tantamount to conspiracy. Embassy officials, including the U.S. consul, maintained that they had done everything they could. Without any forthcoming information from the Chileans, they appeared as clueless as the Hormans.

On the day after Charles' abduction, Joyce Horman feared the worst. After getting food the previous day, she had checked on a family friend. With curfew nearing, buses had stopped picking up passengers. Stranded in downtown Santiago, Joyce spent the night of September 17<sup>th</sup> on the doorstep of an apartment building.<sup>54</sup> Now, with Charles missing, she reported his disappearance to U.S. officials. Over the next few days, she met with various functionaries at the consulate and embassy. They quizzed her on the political views, associates, and activities of her husband. In her opinion, they offered very little help.

From September 19 to 27, Joyce met with the Vice-Consul John Hall, then Ray Davis, Consul Fred Purdy, Vice-Consul Dale Shaffer, and finally the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Nathaniel Davis. None of them offered any information. However, behind the scenes, department records show that steps were taken to ascertain some knowledge of the whereabouts and welfare of Charles.<sup>55</sup> Davis, who would come to lead the investigation into Horman's disappearance, made personal calls to his contacts in the Chilean military. Admiral Huidobro, the Acting Chief of Staff for the Junta, denied any knowledge on the matter. Davis also contacted the U.S. Defense Attaché at the embassy, William Hon, also a Central Intelligence Agency operative, who reportedly had information on Charles Horman. After Davis contacted him, Hon followed up by contacting Army General Nicanor Diaz and other members of the National Defense Staff. Later, Hon received word from one of his contacts that Horman was not in military custody and that he had no information on his detainment. A resume of embassy actions also states that Consul Purdy

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<sup>54</sup> Santiago to File, memorandum, "Joyce Horman's Suit On Behalf of Charles Horman," January 6, 1977. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website, 13.

<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed timeline of the embassy's actions and investigation see Santiago to File, memorandum, "Welfare and Whereabouts in Chile of Charles Edmund Horman," November 30, 1973, Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection, FOIA Website; Santiago, memorandum, "Resume of Embassy Actions on Horman Case."

checked with authorities at the National Stadium and reviewed the lists of detainees there on September 21st and 25th. That same resume states that the embassy gained intelligence from a source on the 25th stating again that Horman was not detained in the Stadium. Of course, later investigations would find that Horman had been killed at least a day before Purdy ever went to check at the stadium. More difficult for the Hormans to fathom is the manner in which U.S. officials seemed to accept the denials and lack of information that their Chilean contacts gave them.

More tellingly, another mission report entitled "Detained Americans," dated September 21, 1973, reads as follows:

OF REMAINING FIVE, TWO WERE SEEN BY EMPLOYERS OR NEIGHBORS WHEN DETAINED. OTHER THREE REPORTED MISSING BY RELATIVES OR FRIENDS AND PRESUMED DETAINED. CHILEAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES DENY THEY ARE HELD AT NATIONAL STADIUM AND HAVE NO FURTHER INFO. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO CHECK OTHER SOURCES INCLUDING HOSPITALS TO LOCATE THEM [emphasis in original].<sup>56</sup>

This document details the presumed detainment of Charles Horman, yet it also illustrates the embassy's refusal to assume anything further. Without any credible evidence otherwise, U.S. officials appeared powerless in the face of Chilean denials. This lack of evidence may also have contributed to the inaction of the U.S. government. In other cases of confirmed detainment, consular officials enjoyed success obtaining the release of individuals as various officials have since asserted.<sup>57</sup> While inquiries were made by both Consul Purdy and Cpt. Ray Davis, no confirmation of his detention could or would be

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<sup>56</sup> Memorandum, "Detained Americans," September 21, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>57</sup> Jack Kubisch to Sen. Jacob K. Javitz, "Charles Horman Case," December 7, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website

made because the fact of the matter was that Horman was already dead at the time of these inquiries. However, in response to a concerted effort on behalf of Davis, another report from the Chilean government, issued by Colonel Enrique Morel Donoso, an aide to Gen. Pinochet, stated that Charles Horman's name "does not appear in the lists of detained persons."<sup>58</sup> That report was given on September 29, 1973 – at least ten days after Horman had been killed.

Following Horman's abduction on the 17th, personnel representing presumably Chilean Military Intelligence made phone calls to Warwick Armstrong and Mario Carvajal, acquaintances of Charles Horman.<sup>59</sup> Armstrong did not receive a call but rather a renter of his house did. The man on the phone told the renter to go to the nearest police stations to answer questions about his "friend who makes films." That friend was undoubtedly Charles Horman. While the recipient of the call, who Warwick Armstrong never identified further, did not go to the Police Station, he did immediately contact the embassy to inform them of what he had heard. Upon inquiry, the embassy then found that the original phone callers never identified themselves as Chilean Military Intelligence and never followed up any further. The other recipient, Mario Carvajal knew Horman well. The Hormans had used Carvajal's phone when they lived in the neighborhood. Mario's wife received a call, she believed on or around September 14th, from "a person identifying himself as a Chilean Military Intelligence officer." The caller asked Mrs. Carvajal whether or not she knew Charles was an "extremist." When the embassy inquired to Chilean intelligence, they denied any knowledge of these calls. This report of the Carvajals is taken from the State Department's own version of the information they received and investigations they made. However, this contradicts the timeline and content of information that Joyce Horman gave to Thomas Hauser in his book

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<sup>58</sup> Donoso served as Pinochet's military aid. In this same report, he suggested following up again with the Military Intelligence Service in order to obtain "possible lead" as to the whereabouts of Horman. He also suggested that the men who abducted Horman could have been loyalists to the Allende regime masquerading as soldiers. This seems to have been accepted, or at least considered, by U.S. officials; Urrutia, "Status of U.S. Citizen."

<sup>59</sup> Jack Kubisch, memorandum, "Charles Horman Case"; Edmund Horman, Memorandum, "Statement Concerning Phone Calls," October 5, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

*The Execution of Charles Horman*.<sup>60</sup> In Hauser's book, Joyce recounts that the Carvajals informed her not just of the call they received but also that Charles was in custody. This exchange took place on September 18th. Charles did not return to Santiago until the 15th. Therefore, if Joyce Horman's version of accounts is to be believed, not only is the embassy's given date for the phone call wrong, but the fact that Carvajal knew Horman had been abducted was also left out of their report. Despite the apparently contradictory nature of the declassified evidence, these phone calls are significant because they are one of the few pieces of evidence that directly linked Charles' disappearance to the Chilean government.<sup>61</sup>

These phone calls were not the only sources of information. The consulate as well as Joyce Horman received reports that a neighbor had followed the men who had abducted Charles and seen him taken to the National Stadium.<sup>62</sup> This neighbor apparently saw the abduction taking place and asked a taxi to follow the truck Horman had been dragged into. The truck drove to and into the National Stadium. The embassy noted, in a hand-written summary, that they received this report on September 25th. There is no evidence that it was ever further investigated as the State Department investigation of the case stated that the person who reported the truck remained "unidentified."<sup>63</sup>

As will be further observed, there is a pattern that remains throughout the Horman episode. Primarily, this pattern is one of U.S. officials raising questions pertaining to the disappearance of Charles Horman and suspicions that he was killed by the Chilean military, which the Chileans then deny. Specifically, Consul Purdy, Col. Hon and Cpt. Davis all were told the Chilean government had no

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<sup>60</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 116.

<sup>61</sup> For embassy officials, a follow-up inquiry with Chilean officials resulted in denials of any such calls being made. Once again, the embassy was left with little credible evidence to support any link. A later investigation, performed by the Department of State in 1976, confirmed that the caller to Horman's former neighbor had identified himself as a member of Chilean military intelligence. This same investigation found that the caller identified Horman as an "extremist." See ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman"; Jack Kubisch, "Charles Horman Case."

<sup>62</sup> Santiago to Files, memorandum, "Charles Horman Case," September 18, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>63</sup> ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."



knowledge of Charles Horman. Stonewalled by their contacts within the Chilean government, U.S. officials began to consider other possibilities.

At one point in her meetings with U.S. officials, Joyce Horman was asked whether or not Charles might be hiding, not from the Chilean military, but from her. According to Joyce Horman, when she met with the vice-consul on September 24th he suggested to her the possibility that Horman may have been avoiding her. This notion is also hinted at in other official reports. From Ryan's reports about his contact with Horman and Simon in Viña Del Mar, it is clear he assumed that Simon and Horman were a couple. He repeatedly referred to them as such. Later, in a summary of events that he prepared in December of 1973, he stated that "there was not at this time, or any other time, any mention of the fact that Horman also had a wife in Santiago."<sup>64</sup> This line of thinking persuaded some officials in the U.S. embassy to consider the theory that Horman may have been hiding of his own accord.

With investigations in Santiago proving fruitless, Charles Horman's father left for Santiago in an effort to locate his son by his own hand. However, Edmund Horman's experiences in Chile would eventually lead him to suspect U.S. complicity – or negligence at the very least – in his son's death. Once again, this perception created contention with the U.S. officials with whom he interacted. Mr. Horman arrived in Santiago on October 4th.<sup>65</sup> Consul Purdy met him at the airport. In the next two weeks, Ed met with many of the same functionaries whom his daughter-in-law had contacted previously. In meetings, U.S. officials including Ambassador Nathaniel Davis repeatedly stated to Mr. Horman they knew nothing about his son's disappearance but were doing everything they could do to determine his whereabouts. Moreover, they held fast to official Chilean denials as to the whereabouts of Charles. They pointed out to Mr. Horman that they had followed up all the leads received, inquired wherever and whenever they could,

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<sup>64</sup> Memorandum, "Substances Prepared in December 1973," December 1, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>65</sup> State to U.S. UN New York, memorandum, "Father Arrives," October 5, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website; Thomas Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman: An American Sacrifice*, 143.

and yet their investigations had revealed nothing. They stressed that they could not openly question the Chilean government but had no reason to believe they were deceiving them. On October 7th, Horman spoke to the press about his search.<sup>66</sup> Horman found the process frustrating and continued to press the U.S. government for further inquiries. On October 10th, Consul Purdy contacted him to inform him that a fingerprint check of all unidentified bodies had returned negative.<sup>67</sup> Apart from a list of these activities, there is little evidence to discern the details of the embassy's investigations.<sup>68</sup> Whether they were pursued with energy or apathy would become a point of debate.

Ed Horman himself did instigate further investigations of the case. Officials checked other detention centers, other foreign embassies, and completed a fingerprint check of morgues in Santiago. Horman even gained access to the National Stadium, with the help of the embassy, and attempted to reach out to his son he hoped was still alive. A *New York Times* obituary recalled the moment on the morning of October 13th:

“Charles Horman, I hope you are out there,” Mr. Horman called out through a bullhorn at the stadium. “This is your father speaking. If you hear me, please come forward. You have nothing to fear.” There was no response. Charles had been dead three weeks, Mr. Horman learned later.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 154.

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Horman to Sen. William Fulbright, memorandum, "Father of Charles Horman Give Details Of What He Observed In Santiago and Washington," October 25, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>68</sup> The documents list the contacts made by embassy officials, however, except in rare cases such as the report filed on behalf of Ray Davis by Carlos Urrutia, very few details are included. Santiago to Files, "Resume of Embassy Actions on Horman Case."

<sup>69</sup> Bruce Lambert, "Edmund C. Horman, 87, Is Dead; Inspiration for the Film 'Missing,'" *New York Times* (New York, NY), August 18, 1993. Accessed April 6, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/18/obituaries/edmund-c-horman-87-is-dead-inspiration-for-the-film-missing.html>.

In Santiago, Ed Horman's search continued. On October 15, Joyce and he met with Major Luis Contreras Prieto of the Chilean army, who informed him that he had no information on his son.<sup>70</sup> However, Prieto did arrange for Horman to meet with other Chilean investigators. The morning of the next day, they met with two officials from Chilean Military Intelligence. Apparently, they provided little information, as Hauser recounts the interaction simply, "Ed and Joyce spent the next ninety minutes answering questions about Charles' disappearance."<sup>71</sup>

The afternoon of the same day, at the suggestion of Ambassador Davis, Ed Horman met with Vice-Consul James Anderson and the British journalist Timothy Ross.<sup>72</sup> A State Department report to the files states that Anderson had received information from Ross who was known to have contacts in leftist circles: Ross claimed to have contacts within a "leftist" network informing him that Charles remained alive and had attempted to leave the country via their channels.<sup>73</sup> In light of what is now known, the journalist seems to have provided Ed Horman with misinformation. Although the Department doubted the veracity of the claims at the time, they did attempt to pursue the lead.<sup>74</sup> Ross relayed his information to Horman, who requested that he obtain proof of his son's whereabouts. Ross informed Mr. Horman that any further pressure and investigation would be counter-productive to his son's ultimate fate.

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<sup>70</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, pg. 165.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>72</sup> James Anderson to Files, memorandum, "Charles E Horman," October 17, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>73</sup> James Anderson to Files, memorandum, "Charles E Horman," October 15, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website; James Anderson, "Charles E Horman," October 17, 1973.

<sup>74</sup> James Anderson, memorandum, "Charles E Horman," October 15, 1973.

The next day, October 17th, this information proved false. Horman visited the Ford Foundation in Santiago where his son had worked for some time as a translator.<sup>75</sup> There in the halls of the largest U.S. organization in Chile apart from the U.S. government, Mr. Horman received word that his son had been killed. The information came from Lovell Jarvis, an Economic Program Advisor at the Ford Foundation.<sup>76</sup> Jarvis claimed that the information was told to him by someone with indirect contacts in the Chilean military. Horman promptly passed the information on to U.S. Consul Fred Purdy. The next day, during a meeting with a Chilean official from *Investigations* or domestic intelligence, Horman received a call from the consul. A positive fingerprint check identified his son's body as one found several weeks earlier and interred thereafter. The only explanation for the delay seemed to be a misclassification at the morgue, the details of which are unknown to this day.<sup>77</sup> On October 19<sup>th</sup>, Horman met with two Chilean military investigators who repeated this information to him.<sup>78</sup>

The original source for Lovell Jarvis' information appeared to be Enrique Sandoval, who had passed along the details of the killing to Judd Kessler, an employee at U.S.AID. Sandoval was a former Education Minister in the Allende government whose brother served in the Chilean Military. Notably, Kessler had told Consul Purdy in early October (he later could not recall the date but thought it was around the fifth of October) that Sandoval had told him Horman had been taken to the National Stadium and executed. Reportedly, Purdy's offhand response was simply, "I'll bet that's right."<sup>79</sup> However, this

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<sup>75</sup> Edmund Horman to Donald Fraser, memorandum, "I Should Like To Tell You About My Son, Charles Horman, Who Was Executed In Chile," June 6, 1974. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>76</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 169.

<sup>77</sup> Santiago to Files, memorandum, "Charles Horman Identified by Fingerprints," October 19, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>78</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 173.

<sup>79</sup> This information, and Purdy's decision to withhold it, will be discussed further; Judd Kessler to Rudy Fimbres, memorandum, "Diuguid Article on Horman Case," July 19, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website. and Diuguid, Lewis H, "A Student's Disputed Death," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 1976

knowledge he refrained to ever mention to Ed or Joyce Horman purportedly because of its “unverifiable” origins.<sup>80</sup> Although Ed Horman was unaware of Purdy’s prior knowledge, the rapid confirmation of his son’s death after his discovery of the information was suspicious to him. This sense only heightened when Jarvis’ information was quickly disputed by State Department officials who noted that this explanation was still only one possibility for circumstances of Charles Horman’s death.

Two days after learning of his son’s fate, Ed Horman left Chile. However, his disillusionment compounded upon his arrival in the U.S. when statements made by a State Department spokesperson appeared in the October 24th edition of the *New York Post*. In response to inquiries by *Post* writer Josh Friedman, State Department representative Kate Marshall filed a memorandum on October 24 that stated, “Friedman seemed to be concluding or have concluded that the Chilean military had arrested Horman and killed him. I repeated that we did not know...” She then repeated the aforementioned suggestions of the junta that Charles Horman may have been killed by roaming leftists, rightists, or criminals.<sup>81</sup> In Horman’s mind, there was no doubt over the circumstances of his son’s death.<sup>82</sup> However, the details that he received from Lowell Jarvis remained unconfirmed. Neither Chile nor the U.S. acknowledged Charles Horman’s death at the hands of Chilean soldiers. Rather, in line with the denials and suggestions of the Chilean government, they continued to claim to have no information on his fate.

On the day that Ed Horman learned of his son’s death, the defense attaché at the U.S. embassy, Colonel William Hon, filed the following memo regarding General Lutz, head of Chilean Military Intelligence: “On 18 October General Lutz told the undersigned that he was preparing a memorandum regarding the disappearance and death of Teruggi and Horman.”<sup>83</sup> The memorandum that Hon received

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<sup>80</sup> Memorandum, "Horman vs. Kissinger, Affidavit," December 14, 1978. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>81</sup> ARA/PAF, Marshall, memorandum, "Horman and the New York Post."

<sup>82</sup> Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman*, 185.

<sup>83</sup> Hon to File, memorandum, “Frank Teruggi and Charles Horman”, November 2, 1973 Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

stated that Horman had been “accurately investigated by Military Intelligence.” While they concluded he was an “extremist” who supported “leftist organizations,” Lutz stated they had not killed him and still had no record of his disappearance. Therefore he concluded that Horman died “while out of military control.”<sup>84</sup> No further statements were made and it remains the only admission that Charles Horman had been investigated by the Chilean government.

After the Lutz memo, another report from the Chilean foreign ministry sent to the U.S. embassy on December 13th claimed they had concluded their investigation of the Horman case. The note began as follows, “This Ministry has delayed its reply to the embassy in order to pursue by all possible means at its disposal the investigation and clarification of the circumstances surrounding the death.”<sup>85</sup> The report continued to state that the circumstances of Horman’s death were complicated:

During that period there was a relatively widespread use of military uniforms by extremist groups, who even operated vehicles bearing military insignia. The actions of these groups were aimed at creating confusion and lack of confidence with respect to the activities of the Armed Forces and National Police... the competent authorities of the Ministry of National Defense consider it highly probable that the deaths were due to the action of 'snipers or extremists using military uniforms.<sup>86</sup>

Back in the U.S., reading these statements in the U.S. press, Ed Horman was shocked.<sup>87</sup> The evidence he had received, beginning with the witnesses of the abduction, the proceeding phone calls allegedly from

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Santiago to Files, memorandum, "Text of Foreign Ministry Note Number 18557 of December 13, 1973," December 13, 1973, Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection, FOIA Website.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> "Victim's Father is Bitter at U.S. Handling of Case," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Nov 19, 1973. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/119761745?accountid=15053>.

Chilean Military Intelligence, and the information he received from Jarvis led him to hold the Chileans responsible for the killing of his son. For him, the State Department's lack of information for nearly his entire stay in Santiago, coupled with their acceptance of Chilean denials, called their commitment to finding the truth into question. Ed Horman, his wife, and his daughter-in-law began to perceive U.S. officials as willfully ignorant, perhaps even complicit, in maintaining the mystery of Charles' abduction.

### **The Accusations of the Hormans and the State Department's Denials**

With the public unaware of the details of events in Santiago, the Hormans and the State Department began to issue conflicting reports of the handling of Charles Horman's death and disappearance, with the discrepancies reflected in media reporting. The Hormans condemned the U.S. government's handling of the case and placed blame for the killing on the Chilean government, while U.S. officials claimed they had no knowledge of who was responsible for the killing yet maintained that the U.S. personnel in Santiago had done all they could to determine what had occurred. On November 17, 1973, an article appeared in the *Washington Post* by the journalist James Anderson with the subtitle "Callous Consulate —American Families Have Complained To The Senate That U.S. Diplomats In Chile Timidly Stood By While Their Loved Ones Were Murdered By The Military Dictatorship."<sup>88</sup> Two days later, the *New York Times* published an article on November 19, 1973 entitled "Victim's Father is Bitter at U.S. Handling of Case." In the article, Ed Horman claimed he had been told by Consul Purdy that his

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<sup>88</sup> James Anderson, "Shultz, Love Clash Over Oil Policy," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), November 17, 1973, E39, accessed April 13, 2015, <http://search.proquest.com/hnpwashingtonpost/docview/148341684/abstract/BB8AA06057FC4F45PQ/1?accountid=15053>.

son's fingerprints matched those of a man who had been killed in the National Stadium and that a Chilean investigator, one of several that Ed Horman had met with, had confirmed this as the location of his son's shooting.<sup>89</sup> The article appeared opposite another entitled, "2 Americans Slain in Chile," which characterized both Horman and Teruggi as passive and peaceful victims of the violence perpetrated by militants during the coup.<sup>90</sup> Immediately that morning a State Department memorandum from Washington to the Santiago embassy noted the characterization of these reports in the U.S. press.<sup>91</sup> For each of these articles, Charles Hormans' relatives provided the main source of information. Opposing these claims, embassy officials maintained they had done all they could in the search for Horman and refuted accusations that they had ignored evidence of Horman's disappearance and then death at the hands of the Chilean government..

Soon after their return to the States, Ed Horman, his wife, and daughter-in-law began a letter-writing campaign to build awareness of and determine the specific circumstances of Charles Horman's fate. They lobbied Congress to press the State Department and the government of Chile for details about the welfare of Charles. They also fiercely criticized the manner in which U.S. officials in Santiago had handled their search for Charles and accused them of negligence and complicity. The coup in Chile attracted a great deal of attention in the United States, as did the involvement of the U.S. government. The actions of the Hormans, and the questions raised by them and the press, only added fuel to the fire. On November 7, Joyce Horman wrote to Senator William Fulbright and outlined both her understanding of the events and her complaints with U.S. officials in Santiago. She began by stating that she "hoped the

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<sup>89</sup> "Victim's Father is Bitter at U.S. Handling of Case."

<sup>90</sup> Marvin Howe, "2 americans slain in chile: The unanswered questions," *New York Times* (New York) November 19, 1973, accessed April 13, 2015 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/119753660?accountid=15053>.

<sup>91</sup> State to Santiago, memorandum, "New York Times Article Two American Slained in Chile," November 19, 1973, Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection, FOIA Website.



treatment to which I was subjected both by the Chilean military and by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate will never be experienced by any person ever again.” Mrs. Horman emphasized three points:

1- the slow, inadequate steps taken by the Embassy/Consulate personnel during the first crucial days after Charles was taken.

2- the general lack of concern for and irritation with the U.S. citizens who sought aid and protection of the Embassy/Consulate at this time.

3- the use of rumors and intimidation on the part of this same personnel and by the U.S. State Department to cover and excuse their non action.<sup>92</sup>

Joyce Horman stated that her experiences demonstrated U.S. negligence in response to her husband’s disappearance. For one, she narrated her frustration with the embassy’s refusal to question Chilean denials. Mrs. Horman continued: “The attitude which I encountered in the Embassy/Consulate was one of irritation and annoyance with U.S. citizens seeking the consul’s aid during this time of Emergency.” In this same meeting, when Mrs. Horman pressed the consul to follow up again with greater intensity, she claims he replied, “I haven’t had a good lunch with my friends for the past 11 days... and I missed my baby’s birthday on the 18th and I’ve worked late two nights.” While she stated that she understood the denials of the Chilean government concerning her husband’s disappearance, she concluded that “the facts stand that Charles was taken from our home by the Chilean Military, and killed in the National Stadium the day after he was seized. There were no charges against him.” For Mrs. Horman, the unwillingness of the U.S. to acknowledge Chilean culpability was tantamount to complicity in a cover-up of the facts.

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<sup>92</sup> Joyce Horman to William J. Fulbright, "Death of Charles Horman," November 7, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

Ed Horman argued similarly in his letter of October 25, 1973. In this letter Horman put forth his own version of events and understanding of his son's death. It is clear that he shared his daughter-in-law's frustrations; his letter referred to specific occurrences that he believed demonstrated a notable difficulty in dealing with embassy officials. He referred to his Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with the ambassador and consul. In the meeting, he raised the issue of the telephone calls reportedly from Chilean intelligence.<sup>93</sup> Purdy replied to him that an official inquiry would be made with Chilean Military Intelligence. The next day, Purdy informed Mr. Horman that the Chilean Military had rejected the reports that they made any calls. Furthermore, Purdy reported, "the Chilean Military denied all knowledge of Charles." Ed Horman pointed out in his letter that "Repetitions of this statement were the only information given to me by the Embassy... until October 18<sup>th</sup>."

On October 9, Ed Horman received word from Purdy that fingerprint checks found no record of Charles Horman in any morgue in Santiago. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, two Chilean Intelligence investigators again requested fingerprints; Horman dually provided them. That next day – the same day that the Ford Foundation's Jarvis informed Ed Horman of his son's execution in the National Stadium – Purdy notified Ed Horman that the Chileans had located a body with a fingerprint match.<sup>94</sup> Horman recalled that "Purdy... said that they had matched Charles' fingerprints to those of a body of a man who had been shot in the National Stadium on September 18<sup>th</sup> and had been interred in the wall of the National Cemetery on October 3<sup>rd</sup>." Ed Horman believed that reports from witnesses immediately following Charles Horman's abduction should have led the embassy to this conclusion much earlier. As Horman himself wrote, "from September 18<sup>th</sup> to October 5<sup>th</sup>, the date of my arrival in Santiago, the American Embassy did nothing to

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<sup>93</sup> Edmund Horman, memorandum, "Father of Charles Horman Give Details Of What He Observed In Santiago and Washington."

<sup>94</sup> Santiago, memorandum, "Charles Horman Identified by Fingerprints."

verify the evidence which had been placed in their hands on September 18 and which proved to be the key to the truth. [sic]"<sup>95</sup>

Mr. Horman addressed his concerns to Senator Fulbright, with carbon copies to Senator Jacob Javits, Congressmen Dante Fascell, Donald Fraser, and Edward Koch as well as a number of other U.S. legislators. With the prompting of Mr. Horman, the legislators inquired into the death of Charles Horman. The State Department responded by disputing the claims of the Hormans and providing an alternative perspective on the events that had unfolded in Santiago. These responses have now been declassified. They offer an official portrayal of events that directly counters that of the Hormans.

A response penned by Consul Purdy to inquiries made by Congressman Fraser the following summer, in July of 1974, characterized events in Santiago by justifying the embassy's actions.<sup>96</sup> After detailing the efforts of the embassy, including the visits to the National Stadium and back channel inquiries, Purdy concluded there was no reason for the embassy and consulate to conclude that further efforts would locate or determine the fate of Charles Horman. The consul also wrote that the lack of results in the initial two fingerprint checks was due to clerical errors at the Chilean morgue and out of his control. Purdy concluded, "I believe you can see from the above that the Embassy, and specifically its Consular Section, did everything within its power to protect American citizens in general and to locate Charles Horman." He also stressed that the Congressman could "be assured that every practical means would have been employed to protect him and to insure his rights as an American citizen."

Privately, Purdy had issued a much stronger-worded argument against the Hormans' accusations in late October of 1973.<sup>97</sup> In regards to the calls, he outlined the consulate's immediate response:

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<sup>95</sup> Edmund Horman, memorandum, "Father of Charles Horman Give Details Of What He Observed In Santiago and Washington."

<sup>96</sup> In addition to Purdy's defense, other U.S. officials also justified the embassy's actions, see State to Santiago, memorandum, "W/W Senator Javits Interest in Horman Case," November 18, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website; Jack Kubisch, "Charles Horman Case"; Chile to Fraser, memorandum, "Death of Charles Horman."

<sup>97</sup> Santiago to File, memorandum, "Horman Case," October 17, 1973. Freedom of Information Act State Department Archive.

On the basis of these calls, and without waiting for confirmation from Horman's wife the next day, the Consulate tried to find the missing man through the Carabineros and Investigaciones. The next day we also checked with military intelligence and, as with previous inquiries, received only denials of any knowledge of his detention or whereabouts.

He also excused the embassy's handling of the fingerprint identification in a brief statement: "We still do not know whether no match was made because of an error in taking or reading the prints because Charles body had already been removed for interment or for some other reason." In addition, he contests Mr. Horman's version of the revelations of October 18th. In Purdy's words, Mr Horman "claims I told him that the Chileans matched fingerprints to those of the body of a man who had been shot in the National Stadium on Sept. 18 and interred in the wall of the National Stadium [on] Oct, 3." On the contrary, Purdy claims, "actually my conversation with Mr. Horman was very brief, saying that a possible identification had been made, that 'it didn't look good,' and that I wanted to speak to Mr. Horman about it." He also stated that he contacted the Chilean investigators who had been in contact with Ed Horman, and they had stated that they never related any information beyond these facts to Mr. Horman.

The consul's memorandum concluded by stating the following:

It is rather distressing to be criticized at a later date by a man who, when here, was full of praise for one's efforts... Mr. Horman talks about the truth having been made plain. What is plain to Mr. Horman is his version of the truth. I am not sure that we know the truth, either from the Chilean side or from the Horman side... We have a body, which has been identified as Charles Horman, but we still do not know (and I am not sure that either the Hormans or the Chileans know either) why, how, where and by whom he was killed. It may be plain to Mr. Horman that Charles was

picked up by Military Intelligence and killed at the National Stadium, but it is certainly not plain to me or to many other reasonable people who know something about the case.<sup>98</sup>

The versions of events offered by the Hormans and the State Department, and Purdy specifically, stand in stark contrast to one another. Neither is fully supported by evidence within the declassified files thus far released. Despite the strong defense by State Department officials, the Hormans continued to investigate their son's and husband's death. The investigations coincided with a greater public knowledge of U.S. involvement in Chile. Overall, U.S. clandestine activities came under intense public scrutiny with the investigations of the Church Committee and the press. In the context of this, and with the revelations that surfaced regarding the case specifically, U.S. positions on the death of Charles Horman appeared increasingly dubious.

In the U.S. press and in Congress, others began to share the Hormans' suspicions. A 1975 Congressional investigation found that the CIA and members of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus had been active in fomenting anti-Allende activities in Chile. The report, entitled *Covert Action In Chile, 1963-1973*, published by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, unearthed activities from "economic pressure" to "coup-plotting" which "put the United States Government in contact with those Chileans who sought a military alternative to the Allende presidency."<sup>99</sup> The report also linked the CIA to the death of Rene Schneider, confirming the investigations of Charles Horman two years earlier. In all, the report served to bring to light the clandestine operations of the CIA within Chile and the destructive role the organization had played.

The repeated denials of the consul and his colleagues, along with their repeated inquiries, support the theory that they were as equally uninformed as the Hormans. In addition, their status as diplomats left them with their hands tied to pursue an investigation into a foreign government. However, there were

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> The Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Covert Action in Chile*, 39.

other U.S. officials operating in Chile. While the Department of State demonstrated a reaction to Charles Horman, the declassified files are bereft of any reference to CIA activities, a fact which might be insignificant had the agency not been so active in bringing about the Allende regime's downfall. In regards to the disappearance of Charles Horman, the agency declassified only six files. Not one was dated prior to July 1977, and not one dealt with the events in Santiago. Considering the level of involvement the agency had in the country, their role certainly could have been significant. This role was directly called into question in June 1976, when a former Chilean Intelligence officer claimed the agency oversaw the Horman killing.

### **The Revelations of Judd Kessler and Rafael Gonzalez**

In the summer of 1976, several revelations altered interpretations of Horman's death. First, Consul Purdy's knowledge of the Jarvis information was revealed. Second, Rafael Gonzalez Verdugo, a former Chilean intelligence officer seeking refuge from the military regime, informed journalists that he had been privy to Horman's execution order. Following these revelations, the Department of State began another investigation of the Horman case, overseen by a functionary in Washington, D.C., Fred Smith. The new revelations convinced the Hormans, along with many in the press and the U.S. public, that the U.S. had verifiably been complicit in Charles' death. However, as will be shown, evidence to support this conclusion is still lacking. Only further declassification may provide indisputable proof of U.S. responsibility.

Rafael Gonzalez sought refuge in the Italian embassy from the Chilean regime beginning in January of 1976, apparently because he disagreed with the violent methods the military regime had employed. He claimed to have firsthand knowledge of the context in which Charles Horman was executed. Gonzalez stated that he was called to the headquarters of General Augusto Lutz, director of the Chilean Military Intelligence, sometime following the coup of September 11th. The reason why, he

speculated, was to act as a translator. Gonzalez served in New York for several years prior to 1972 and had permanent alien status in the United States; he also spoke English, (although at the time of his interviews with the press his interviewers noted he had some difficulty communicating in it). He claimed that in the “other room,” next to the office of Gen. Lutz, Horman was held during his meeting. Gonzalez described how he became aware of Horman:

Well, I saw him in. ..I was a sp. ..I was in the ninth floor because I didn't used to work in that floor, I work in another floor in the service in which I was. [sic] And when I was. ..come up there I saw General Lutz, Colonel Barria and an American man there. And I asked the guy who was there who was and they told me the guy is an American whose name is Charles Horman.<sup>100</sup>

According to Gonzalez, during this meeting General Lutz ordered that Horman must be killed because “he knew too much.”<sup>101</sup> When pressed as to why Horman would know too much, Gonzalez stated that this had to do with the fact that Horman was brought to Santiago by a CIA officer (presumably Ray Davis). This claim recalls the conflicting accounts stated by Lt. Col. Ryan and Terry Simon in regards to the extent which Ryan made Simon and Charles Horman aware of U.S. clandestine activities in Chile. If the U.S. officer had passed extensive information on the coup, or U.S. support for it, he could have endangered the young journalist, a possibility only enhanced by the fact that Horman had lived his life as a career political activist and writer. Gonzalez also provided further evidence for the involvement of the CIA. Along with Gen. Lutz, another Chilean official, and himself, Gonzalez claimed that an “American” was in the room when the order for Horman’s execution was given. However, when repeatedly questioned, Gonzalez was less sure. The transcript of the interview reads as follows:

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<sup>100</sup> Colonel Barria served as the Assistant Director of the Army Intelligence Administration; Rafael Gonzalez to Frank Manitzas, memorandum, "Second Interview with Gonzalez," June 8, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

[Interviewer]: You're not sure if he was an American or if he was a CIA agent or anything like that?

Gonzalez: Well, I suppose it could be a CIA agent, but I couldn't say exactly because I don't know.<sup>102</sup>

He stated that while the Chileans had pulled the trigger, the CIA "was behind that."<sup>103</sup> Not only did Gonzalez raise the question of further U.S. complicity, his mention of the CIA elevated the suspicions of U.S. involvement from reluctance in the embassy to direct responsibility for the execution of Charles Horman. Regardless of the identity of the man in the room, Gonzalez appeared convinced that the CIA had played a role. Apart from Terry Simon's claim that Ryan informed her of several "spies" in the embassy, Gonzalez remains the only primary source of evidence that the CIA might have been directly involved with the killing of Charles Horman.

Gonzalez's claims are problematic, although not entirely discreditable. The reason he gave for identifying the American in the room as such were the man's clothes and demeanor, yet as he admitted, he was unsure. In addition, he also could not be sure of the date when Lutz gave the order.<sup>104</sup> Gonzalez explained this last issue by stating that following the coup he had not slept for nearly a week and could not be sure of his memory. In addition to this uncertainty, Gonzalez made a number of incredible claims. He stated that he was in La Moneda when the military had entered it and he himself had seen the body of Allende. He also stated that during his time in New York he had been closely followed by the CIA. At one point, they tried to abduct his wife and hypnotize her. When pressed by U.S. consular officials, Gonzalez

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.; Santiago to State, memorandum, "Interview Rafael with Gonzalez," February 1, 1977. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>104</sup> Santiago to State, memorandum, "Statement of Rafael Gonzalez on Death of Amcit Charles Horman," June 11, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Website. FOIA Website.



reiterated his knowledge about Horman's execution orders and continued that the American was present in order to approve the execution of a U.S. citizen.

Throughout this process, U.S. officials wavered in their reception of Gonzalez' information. On several occasions, they questioned his mental state and his motives for wanting to leave Chile. These questions were perpetuated by the Chilean government throughout 1976 as they repeatedly claimed to U.S. officials that Gonzalez was unreliable. State Department investigator Fred Smith noted that the Chilean Foreign Minister informed the U.S. Ambassador that his "aberrant tendencies" were such that "he could be expected to invent stories such as that about General Lutz' order."<sup>105</sup> Despite this, it was ultimately decided that Gonzalez was in a sound state of mind. U.S. officials cited their own interactions with him. Although his interviews were rambling, and despite the somewhat outlandish claims of hypnosis, his interviewers believed him to be mentally capable and coherent. That said, Gonzalez could not provide proof of his claims, although he remained adamant over the course of his interviews that the U.S., specifically the CIA, played a role in the death of Charles Horman.

On June 10, a *Washington Post* article presented the claims of Gonzalez to the U.S. public and the Hormans. The news sparked newfound pressure on the U.S. government in the press.<sup>106</sup> The article entitled "Chilean Charges General Ordered American's Death" summarized the Horman case as well as the accusations of Gonzalez. It noted, for instance, that Gonzalez "is convinced the CIA was also involved in Horman's death, but he offered no evidence to support this view." The same day that the *Washington Post* released its report on Gonzalez, a memorandum from Congressman Dante Fascell to Henry Kissinger noted the allegations: "If all of the allegations are confirmed we would expect the United States

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<sup>105</sup> ARA: Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."

<sup>106</sup> Joanne Omang, "Chilean Charges General Ordered American's Death," *Washington Post* (Washington, DC), June 10, 1976, A21. Accessed January 28, 2015. <https://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/146663870?accountid=15053>; Diuguid, Lewis H. "A Student's Disputed Death," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 1976.

government to take all appropriate steps to see that those responsible are brought to justice.”<sup>107</sup> The memorandum also requested that a “complete investigation” be made. Suspicions, impossible to confirm, grew in the press and in Congress that the United States had been complicit in the death of Charles Horman.

A June 20, 1976, *Washington Post* article written by Lewis Diuguid revealed that, contrary to earlier statements, Judd Kessler, a USAID employee within the embassy, had notified Consul Purdy that a source had informed him on September 30th that Charles Horman had been killed by the Chilean Military in the National Stadium on or before September 20th.<sup>108</sup> More strikingly, it came to light that Purdy replied to this information by saying, “I’ll bet that’s right.” The article surmised that in all likelihood, the consul knew or presumed Charles was dead before Mr. Horman arrived in Santiago.<sup>109</sup>

The Hormans, in response to these revelations, not only testified before Congress but launched a civil suit against U.S. officials, *Charles Horman v. Henry Kissinger*. Their testimonies and allegations in both venues were similar: the Hormans accused the State Department of complicity in the detention and execution of Charles. In July of 1977, Ed Horman explained why he believed that U.S. officials were involved in the death of his son in front of Congress. He began by referencing the investigation Charles had started into the death of General Schneider. He insinuated that the research his son had done, and therefore the materials found in his apartment in Santiago, endangered Charles. In regards to his own experience, he told the Subcommittee on International Operations of the Committee on International

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<sup>107</sup> Dante Fascell to Henry Kissinger, memorandum, "Washington Post Carries a News Report That a Former Chilean Intelligence Officer Alleged that Chilean Officers Ordered the Death of Charles Horman," June 10, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>108</sup> Judd Kessler to Rudy Fimbres, memorandum, "Diuguid Article on Horman Case"; Lewis Diuguid, "The Man Who 'Knew Too Much'" *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), June 20, 1976, 33. Accessed April 7, 2015.

<sup>109</sup> Robert McCloskey to Edward M. Kennedy, memorandum, "Deaths of Charles Horman and Frank Teruggi," August 2, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

Relations that at the time of his investigation in Santiago, “State Department officials have now admitted that... as I spoke, Consul Purdy had known for at least two weeks that Charles Horman had been shot in the stadium on September 20.” More than that, he claimed,

The best evidence is that Charles was not shot until September 20, well after the consulate decided not to investigate those who had been telephoned. The Embassy probably could have saved his life. It is not difficult to understand why the Department of State and the Chileans have reiterated over and over that Charles was dead on September 18 and then that the death occurred early on September 18. There is no support for their statements.<sup>110</sup>

Horman asked the assembled Congressmen, “What can justify not only criminal negligence but deliberate deceit?” He summarized his allegations as, “At best, it adds up to gross negligence and documented efforts to deceive us and Members of Congress. At worst, it is American complicity in the execution of an American citizen by the same Chilean junta that gained power with the help of agencies of the American government.”<sup>111</sup> Soon after this testimony, Congress ordered the State Department to investigate further the case of Charles Horman.

In October 1977, Joyce Horman filed the civil suit which became known as *Horman v. Kissinger*, against key U.S. officials in Santiago and Washington on counts of negligence and wrongful death (although separated by bureaucratic levels, Kissinger was cited due to his position as Secretary of State). Had the defendants, including Ambassador Davis, Consul Purdy, and Vice-Consuls Anderson and Shaffer been found guilty, it would have amounted to complicity in the abduction and execution of Charles

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<sup>110</sup> United States. Cong. Committee on International Relations. Protection of Americans Abroad: Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Operations of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Ninety-fifth Congress, First Session, July 12 and 14, 1977. Cong. Bill. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977), ProQuest Congressional.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Horman. Unfortunately, the case never came to trial and was dismissed without prejudice. Based on the circumstantial evidence, the court ruled the Hormans had no grounds for their claims.

In the proceedings of *Horman v. Kissinger*, Fred Purdy and Judd Kessler did address the accusation that the former consul knew of Charles' death before Horman arrived in Santiago. In preliminary hearings, Kessler testified first and confirmed these allegations to an extent: he had received word, he said, from Enrique Sandoval, whose brother held a high position within the Chilean army and worked in the National Stadium at the time of the coup, that Horman had indeed been executed. He stated on record that although he was unsure of the exact date, he believed it to be in late September of 1973. He stated that, "around September 30, 1973, I spoke with Sandoval again at which time he told me that someone he knew in the Chilean military had said that Horman had been in the National Stadium and either that he had been killed there or was dead." Sandoval refused to name his source so Kessler never realized that it might be from a sibling within the Chilean military. For him, it simply amounted to "a second-hand story from an unidentified source." However, he then passed this information on to Fred Purdy a few days later. To this, the then-consul replied, "I'll bet that's right."<sup>112</sup> Purdy confirmed as much in his own testimony. However, Purdy explained his response by saying, "The odds clearly were that Charles Horman was dead because he had been missing so long."<sup>113</sup> However, despite those odds, he also maintained that,

I already had on several occasions personally searched the prisoner lists at the National Stadium to check out the possibility that Charles Horman was being held, or had been held, at the National Stadium. I certainly did not have enough firm information then -- nor do I now -- to express a definite opinion as to Horman's fate.

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<sup>112</sup> Memorandum, "Horman vs. Kissinger, Affidavit," November 30, 1978. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>113</sup> Memorandum, "Horman vs. Kissinger, Affidavit."

Purdy's response typified the statements of the U.S. officials. While he considered the possibility of Horman's death, he justified his actions on the basis that the information Kessler provided him ultimately was "unverifiable." Once again, in the face of the Chilean government's denials, the consul could do nothing, even with the knowledge Kessler provided him in hand.

Thus, while Purdy admits that Charles' death in the Estadio Nacional was a possibility, he maintains that this did not outweigh other possibilities. Considering Chilean denials, he believed that presuming Horman dead *or* alive was simply speculation. He would justify the embassy's willingness to have Mr. Horman meet with sources such as journalist Timothy Ross, who was ultimately shown to mislead Charles' father. Yet considering his belief in the validity of Mr. Ross' information, demonstrated by his arrangement of the meeting between the journalist and Ed Horman, this does not explain his hesitancy to arrange such a meeting between Judd Kessler and Ed Horman. Furthermore, the very fact of his admission that Charles' death was a possibility, raises the question of why the consul never made mention of the information to Ed Horman. Although declassified files can beg the question of such a discrepancy, the partial explanations contained in the memorandum and statements of men such as Consul Purdy fail to fully account for their behavior. Apparently, perhaps due to the risk of appearing to accuse a foreign government of murder on unsubstantiated claims, the consul adjudged that the possible information of Horman's death was not to be passed onto his father. While that is understandable considering the consequences of implicating another government, particularly as Purdy was an active diplomat at the time, it does not explain why he never made a note of the information in the files.<sup>114</sup>

*Horman v. Kissinger* would eventually be dismissed from the court on a legal technicality before any conclusive verdict could be reached. However, it was not the only investigation of the case that occurred. Following the Gonzalez story, during the summer before Hormans' testimony to Congress, the State Department began its investigation and a comprehensive review of all documents relating to the

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<sup>114</sup> Santiago to File, memorandum, "Welfare and Whereabouts in Chile."

case of Charles Horman. The reasons for this went beyond the urging of Congress. As an August 25, 1976 memorandum stated, "This case remains bothersome. The connotations for the Executive are not good. In the Hill, academic community, the press, and the Horman family the intimations are of negligence on our part, or worse, complicity in Horman's death."<sup>115</sup> The allegations and revelations in the press led to a great deal of internal uncertainty. Further investigation was deemed necessary due to the fact that "at the moment we do not have a coherent account of what happened." The initial memorandum requesting the investigation also stated that Department officials were "persuaded that: The GOC sought Horman and felt threatened enough to order his immediate execution. The GOC might have believed this American could have been killed without negative fall-out from the U.S.G." In addition to this belief, the report added that there was

Circumstantial evidence to suggest: U.S. intelligence may have played an unfortunate part in Horman's death. At best, it was limited to providing or confirming information that helped motivate his murder by the GOC. At worst, U.S. intelligence was aware the GOC saw Horman in a rather serious light and U.S. officials did nothing to discourage the logical outcome of GOC paranoia.<sup>116</sup>

The investigation, which lasted until December of that year, was undertaken separately from the officials involved in the case, by a functionary named Frederick Smith. Smith's conclusions are well-documented and explained at length. Such is the extent of Smith's report that it is worthy of extended examination, for

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<sup>115</sup>ARA/BC: RV Fimbres to ARA: Shlaudeman, memorandum, "Charles Horman Case," August 25, 1976. Freedom of Information Act State Department Collection. FOIA Website.

<sup>116</sup> The source of this reasoning, beyond which has already been stated in this thesis, are uncertain. However, in his investigation, Smith referenced numerous conversations between State Department and CIA officials which could have provided evidence. Alternatively, further declassification may provide answers to this; ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."

it is perhaps the most clear and informative document on the case of Charles Horman. The investigator outlined the purpose of his efforts:

I make a thorough examination of the Department's files regarding the death... of American citizen Charles Horman... and make recommendations as to what further steps, if any, should be taken in view of the unresolved questions surrounding Horman's death, and particularly, the recent statements of Rafael Augustin Gonzalez, former Chilean intelligence officer... implying that the U.S.G (i.e., CIA) played a role in Horman's death (at the hands of the GOC).<sup>117</sup>

Smith states that it is his opinion, as the official investigator, that the Chilean military killed Charles Horman. Before examining his conclusions and his investigation of Rafael Gonzalez, his other pertinent points must be noted. He begins by offering an overview of the circumstances of Charles' death before reviewing the Chilean autopsy that was performed. Horman's autopsy, obtained by Smith, found he had been killed by six bullet wounds from an automatic weapon. Yet this autopsy had been conducted after the body had lain unpreserved in a morgue for a week. Later, a Chilean investigation had found that the bullet wounds were received from long range fire. Yet this investigation had been conducted only after the body had been interred for eleven weeks. Therefore, Smith noted, the reliability of these conclusions was difficult to say.

Smith then reviewed the unsigned memo first noted on October 18th from Gen. Lutz's office, the head of the Chilean Military Intelligence, directed to Defense Attaché, William Hon, which stated that Horman was involved in Communist organizations, which attempted to defame the junta and the embassy's involvement with the junta.<sup>118</sup> However, Smith notes that apart from this statement, the

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<sup>117</sup> Smith, memorandum, "Death in Chile of Charles Horman."

<sup>118</sup> Hon, memorandum, "Frank Teruggi and Charles Horman."

Chilean government repeatedly denied knowledge of Horman and his death such as in their December 13 note, which referenced their investigation into Horman's activities. Their admission of investigating Horman, along with the emptiness of Chilean rejections, led Smith to believe it was the Chilean government that executed the U.S. citizen. Smith noted that while he could not determine the exact circumstances of Horman's death, "those questions are pertinent to the credibility of the GOC's denials and the question of any U.S. involvement."<sup>119</sup>

Smith then reviewed the Gonzalez situation. He noted that Gonzalez had begun seeking asylum in January 1975 and had repeatedly been refused safe passage, offered by the Italian embassy, by the Chilean government. He also noted an internal embassy cable following the Gonzalez interviews that stated Gonzalez had cited Vice-Consul James Anderson as working in a "dual role" and having frequent contacts with the Chileans who caused the "economic collapse of Chile." Following Gonzalez's statements to the press and U.S. officials, the Chilean government "stated flatly that Gonzalez would not be permitted to leave Chile" and that the former intelligence officer was being investigated.

That stated, Smith found Gonzalez difficult to accept at face value. He characterized the transcripts he had been privy to by stating, "Gonzalez frequently rambles far afield in his responses... sometimes bordering on the incoherent." Nonetheless, he concluded that Gonzalez' claims could not be ignored and that further investigation was necessary. Later in his report, Smith returned to the topic of Chilean denials. In this instance, he was less reserved in his judgment of the Chilean government, stating "its disclaimer of responsibility for Horman's death is, in many respects, difficult to credit." Due to the lack of credibility over Horman's death and the circumstantial evidence to refute their denials, Smith wrote "the dubious validity of the GOC's version of Horman's death... raises serious questions about the credibility of their refutations of Gonzalez' allegations."<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Smith, memorandum, "Death in Chile of Charles Horman."

<sup>120</sup> ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."



The State Department investigator still could find no primary evidence within “the files - or otherwise found by this investigation - of CIA involvement.”<sup>121</sup> Yet he made a distinction between evidence in the file and an actual role in Horman’s death. After all, Smith noted that “the files are replete with fragmentary, second or third-hand, often contradictory, reports and statements, as well as gaps in information.”<sup>122</sup> In fact, if an answer was to be found, Smith wrote “it does not appear in the files and must be sought elsewhere.” Ultimately, Smith recommended a “high-level approach to the U.S. intelligence community, particularly the CIA, to try and determine whether any U.S. intelligence activities may have contributed to Horman’s death.” He added later that he saw “no other alternative... if we want to satisfy ourselves – and others – that we have done all we can to determine the truth of the matter.” In an admission of the difficulty of the situation, Smith predicted “general denials by the Agency.” However, he reasoned, “it is difficult to believe that the GOC would have felt sufficiently secure in taking such drastic action... without some reason, however unjustifiably inferred or inadvertently given, to believe that it could do so without substantial adverse consequences vis-a-vis the U.S.G.”<sup>123</sup>

This proposition remains the crux of the Horman case. There is scarce evidence, apart from second-hand allegations and conflicting interpretations in the wake of Horman's death, of a U.S. cover up, yet there is even less evidence that relates to U.S. acquiescence to or tacit consent to his killing. From the Department of State’s declassified files, it appears that officials attempted to conduct a productive investigation of Horman’s death. Stonewalled by Chilean denials, they had little power to discern the activities of the Chilean government. Therefore, it is unsurprising that their record of U.S. activities in Santiago contains little evidence of Chilean responsibility for Horman’s death or, for that matter, anything that would suggest U.S. complicity. The Department of State was not involved with the military junta to the extent that they were privy to the information, or, if they were, not in an official capacity. Yet there

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<sup>121</sup> Smith, memorandum, "Death in Chile of Charles Horman."

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> ARA:Fred Smith, memorandum, "Further Steps in the Case of Charles Horman."

remain allegations, and even the suggestion by Smith's Department of State investigation, that the CIA was involved. The question remains: why did the Chilean junta believe they could kill Horman or, rather, why they were able to do so without repercussions from the U.S. government? The activities of the U.S. intelligence community, primarily the CIA, remain a mystery.

## **Conclusion**

In a report to the files, Consul Purdy stated that, upon reflection, "I realize that, my account is often diametrically opposed to that of Mr. Horman. I also realize that there are many unanswered questions."<sup>124</sup> The fragmentary evidence related to Charles Horman's whereabouts after September 17th, 1973, does not lend itself easily to a cogent narrative of his disappearance nor the investigations that followed. Of the information that is compiled in this thesis, as Purdy noted, there are conflicting interpretations and only partial understandings. There is evidence to suggest that U.S. embassy officials conducted as thorough an investigation as they could in an effort to determine the fate of Charles Horman in both 1973 and 1976. Unfortunately, these investigations and the academic works that have been produced on the Horman case since, could do little more than speculate on his fate. Historians and members of the press have pointed to the memorandum of August 25, 1976, as evidence that the CIA

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<sup>124</sup> Santiago to File, memorandum, "Horman Case."

“fingering” Horman. However, these same sources make much less of the report submitted to the files in December of the same year that stated that beyond circumstantial possibilities, no evidence of any CIA involvement could be found. Rather than reveal what is known, which is basic, the declassified documents illuminate the questions that still remain. The specifics of U.S. actions and knowledge remain hidden even after the release of declassified materials.

In light of the need for still classified evidence, I repeat the stated purpose of the Chilean Declassification project, as stated by a State Department spokesperson: “to put original documents before the public so that it may judge for itself the extent to which U.S. actions undercut the cause of democracy and human rights in Chile.” While the State Department’s release of thousands of files is commendable, there remains a need for other branches of government to do the same. There are only six documents that the CIA has declassified on the Charles Horman case. While the majority pertain to legal preparations and logistics during *Horman v. Kissinger*, only one contains information that appears significant to this study here. In 1977, a memorandum between two redacted CIA employees stated that Rep. Fascell had requested a briefing on the information the CIA had in regards to Gonzalez’ statement that “an American was present at the time the death [of Horman] was planned.”<sup>125</sup> The memorandum states that it would be necessary to “pull together the information.” The memo is hardly substantial but it does imply that further documents exist that pertain to the CIA’s involvement. For the purported objective of the Chilean Declassification Project to be achieved, it is necessary to release *all* the information pertaining to U.S. involvement in Chile. Without this, an understanding of the death of Charles Horman may prove impossible, and the evidence of U.S. complicity – or lack thereof – will be forever circumstantial.

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<sup>125</sup> Memorandum, "Meeting with Representative Dante B Fascell Regarding H.R. 6689 and Chilean Colonel Rafael Gonzalez," July 15, 1977, National Security Archive, Electronic Briefing Book No. 33, accessed April 23, 2015, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB33/docs/doc04.pdf>.



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