

MEMORANDUM

Privileged and Confidential

TO : ANTI-VIGILANTE TASK FORCE (GROUP)
FROM : AGENT DALE PETEY
DATE : SEPTEMBER 1, 2019
SUBJECT : VEIDT & RORSCHACH

Let me be plain: I wish to state for the record that it would be mistake to terminate the search for Adrian Veidt and declare him deceased.

The argument in full risks offending our colleague Agent Laurie Blake, as what needs chronicling here covers matters that are personal to her (presuming she even reads our memos; I have sent her many, without receipt or response). But her history is our history. It has engendered the problematic subculture that is our beat. Nonetheless, my apologies.

At the root of my concern is the enduring appeal of Walter Joseph Kovacs, aka Rorschach (Objectivist/Sociopath on the Werthem Spectrum), who shares more than a few things in common with Veidt, himself a former masked vigilante (Ozymandias; Savior/Narcissist). He, too, vanished off the face of the earth, and the lingering mystery of his absence continues to nag at the worrisome lot who revere him. Specifically: the Seventh Cavalry of Tulsa, Oklahoma, white supremacists who have appropriated Kovacs' mask and see their own warped ideology reflected in the mad swirl of his ink blot face. We have reason to fear how the proverbial cult of Rorschach might respond if the Bureau quits the search for Veidt. These fogged, volatile personalities believe that Veidt is responsible for Kovacs' disappearance. They want justice for their martyr-messiah; if we appear disinterested in that, we tempt their wrath. And we know exactly what that looks like.

The basis for their views on both Kovacs and Veidt is "Rorschach's Journal," a document that has become so ridiculously easy to dismiss as bogus and lunatic that we tend to underestimate its insidious power, if anyone here understands it at all. This memo provides a comprehensive education, offers a sobering threat assessment, and proposes an alternative course of action that should mitigate negative ramifications. Please consider forwarding this summary of facts to anyone who needs it.

A TALE OF TWO JOURNALS

Context

On October 21st, 1985, Kovacs was apprehended by the NYPD at the home of a former costumed criminal, Edgar William Jacobi, aka Moloch the Mystic, after an anonymous tip led detectives to an active crime scene where both victim (Jacobi, shot in the head) and apparent perpetrator (Kovacs) were present. It was a monumental event in the late century movement to curb run amuck vigilantism and deconstruct the public's admiration of "costumed adventurers." The only Alpha Class mask to refuse retirement after the Keene Act of 1977 made all forms of vigilantism illegal again, the capture of Rorschach—coming days after Dr. Manhattan (Overman/Passive-Aggressive) abandoned Earth amid (now disputed) allegations that his electromagnetic energies were carcinogenic – augured an end to an era that began in 1938 with Hooded Justice (WS: Incalculable) and, for many, outstayed its welcome by decades.

Rorschach 101

Assessments filed by a court appointed psychiatrist, Dr. Malcolm Long (a victim of the D.I.E.), indicate that Kovacs was a profoundly alienated individual suffering from dissociative identity disorder, shaped by child abuse, multiple psychotic episodes, and abandonment trauma. It has been speculated by those in my field that Kovacs, a classic “lone nut” archetype, desired to see his former Alpha Class associates defy the Keene Act and return to vigilantism for personal reasons, perhaps for the companionship, perhaps for the validation. These are admittedly sentimental conjectures, and Kovacs is undeserving of them. He was a sick and pitiless murderer, a rabid dog with a deadly bite, and for anyone in my profession, Kovacs is Exhibit A in the argument that “costumed adventurers” are a terrible idea.

Kovacs was also an avid reader of *New Frontiersman*, an extreme right-tilt tabloid prone to yellow journalism and Red Scare paranoia, whose editor of the period, Hector Godfrey, was a vociferous supporter of masked vigilantes. It appears Kovacs read the newspaper to the exclusion of any other source of news. A generous appraisal of Kovacs would say that he merely collected the periodical for its glowing coverage of his war on crime. But Godfrey was also a hideous racist. An example can be found in an editorial published prior to Kovacs’ disappearance. Taking exception to a critic of masked vigilantes (until then, a largely white male phenomenon) who compared them to a modern day Ku Klux Klan, Godfrey proceeded to defend the KKK: “[I] might point out that despite what some might view to be their later excesses, the Klan originally came into being because decent people had perfectly reasonable fears for the safety of their persons and belongings when forced into proximity with people from a culture far less morally advanced. No, the Klan were not strictly legal, but they did work voluntarily to preserve American culture in areas where there were very real dangers of that culture being overrun and mongrelized.”

These psychological details, ideological frames, and media habits are incidental to an incisive understanding of Kovacs. But they are essential to any reckoning of Rorschach’s appeal and the writings attributed to him.

The First Journal

Among the effects found on Kovacs was a modest leather journal. According to the arrest report, the pages were “filled with what is either an elaborate cipher or handwriting too cramped and eccentric to be legible.” In 1995, the NYPD ceded custody of the first journal to the Bureau’s Behavioral Sciences Division. It is now in the possession of our task force. Despite my best efforts, I have not succeeded where others have failed; the journal remains unreadable.

“The Final Draft”

On October 31, 1985, a pair of second generation Alpha Class masks put on their old costumes and rescued Kovacs from Sing-Sing (alternately known as New York State Penitentiary) in a deadly raid. His liberators were Dan Dreiberg, aka Nite Owl (Thrillseeker/Nostalgic), and Laurie Blake (then Laurie Juspeczyck), aka Silk Spectre (after her mother, Sally Jupiter) and, later, The Comedienne (after her father, Edward Blake). *[Out of respect for Agent Blake, who has consistently objected to the science of the Werthem Spectrum tool, I shall refrain from diagnosing her.]*

Kovacs disappeared after his escape, but his confirmed actions prior to his vanishing factor into the lore of “Rorschach’s Journal.” Kovacs was last seen in the company of Mr. Dreiberg during the early morning hours of November 1st, 1985. His landlord, Dolores Shairp, encountered Kovacs in his apartment ripping up floorboards and retrieving a spare costume and another diary, which she heard him describe as “final draft of journal [sic].” Kovacs and Dreiberg then visited Happy Harry’s Bar & Grill to interrogate the criminal element known to frequent the establishment. Kovacs was heard trying to acquire information about an

incident that occurred on the day of his arrest, the attempted murder of Veidt by a contract killer, Roy Victor Chess, who committed suicide with a cyanide pill to avoid capture. Through physical torture, Kovacs induced a scattered (and thus potentially unreliable) confession from a man who described himself as an employee of Pyramid Deliveries; he was heard saying that he had delivered some envelopes to Chess at the request of his superior, whose identity also remains unknown.

The activities of Kovacs and Dreiberg on the morning of November 1, 1985 were never thoroughly investigated, and for good reason. The very next day, November 2, 1985, was the day the world changed. Caught at ground zero of the Dimensional IncurSION of Event at the intersection of 40th Street and Seventh Avenue was Steve Fine, the lead detective on the Rorschach case. In the months that followed, finding Kovacs became a low priority for an overwhelmed police department (half their employees died in the cataclysmic psychic shockwave unleashed by the E.D.B.E.). As New York began its glacial return to stability, few cared about a loose end of the past like Kovacs. Their only anxiety was the prospect of another E.B.D.E., a threat kept top of mind by random downpours of fetal cephalopods that no one with a credible physics degree has ever been able to explain. It was into this culture of fear, fogged with superstition and pseudo-science, that “Rorschach’s Journal” materialized.

“THE SCOOP – AND SCANDAL – OF THE CENTURY”

Legitimate or Hoax?

On March 21, 1986, *New Frontiersman* began printing excerpts from an artifact allegedly written by Kovacs. The editor, Mr. Godfrey, couldn’t account for when or how he came to possess it. An editorial assistant, Seymour David, found the leather-bound log book four months earlier near the top of a stack of submissions known internally as “the crank file.” They assume it arrived by post, but the envelope containing it—with its dated postmark, and, possibly, a return address—had been discarded. The delay in publishing was due to an admirable desire to verify the journal’s authenticity. Fingerprints were found on the covers, but the NYPD—still operating according to “Tricky Dick” guidelines on FOIA—refused Godfrey’s petition to obtain the prints they had on file for a crosscheck. It was while dickering with police over their lack of cooperation that Godfrey learned of the indecipherable “First Journal.” Another FOIA request was filed to compare the two journals; another denial was given. There was nothing in Godfrey’s artifact—filled with neat handwriting on clean paper and containing only 23 months of entries (1/84-11/85)—to explain the existence of multiple, different editions. (It is not known if Kovacs kept journals of previous years. None were found in his apartment.) In short, Godfrey could not prove that Kovacs had written “Rorschach’s Journal,” nor could he disprove that it was a hoax.

This did not deter Godfrey’s ambitions in the slightest. I won’t recap every installment, as even the relevant passages are thick with tangents, bitter rants about moral relativism and urban decay and seething hate for “liberals and intellectuals and smooth-talkers.” The rhetoric was certainly on brand for *New Frontiersman*, and similar enough to Godfrey’s writing style as to be suspicious. But the storytelling does demonstrate the schizoid pathology diagnosed by Dr. Long. The author of “Rorschach’s Journal” was clearly an individual who wholly and completely identified as Rorschach, a man who considered “Walter Kovacs” a mere disguise and his ink blot mask his true face.

A Vast and Insidious Conspiracy

The relevancy of “Rorschach’s Journal” to my current concerns rests in the passages summarizing a meandering investigation into the grisly murder of Edward Blake, aka The Comedian (Super-Soldier/Nihilist) on October 12, 1985. At the time, it was not widely known that Blake was The Comedian; it’s certainly a surprising revelation to the Rorschach of “Rorschach’s Journal.” Indeed, the fact that we now know the

truth about Blake does give “Rorschach’s Journal” one proof of legitimacy. Like Dr. Manhattan, Blake had been in the employ of the U.S. military, which granted him exemption from the Keene Act and permitted him to conduct operations as a costumed adventurer. And with Dr. Manhattan, The Comedian was a polarizing symbol of American authoritarianism and imperialism—of America as Totalitarian Super-Power—and as such, he was simultaneously beloved and loathed. The author of “Rorschach’s Journal” has a high regard and deep grace for Blake, and reading the narrative, it’s difficult to not be affected—or rather, manipulated—by his empathetic bias.

The detective work ascribed to Rorschach “paints a disturbing picture,” to borrow phrasing from the final entry, dated November 1, 1985. The narrative portrays Rorschach as obsessed with the belief in a conspiracy determined to kill or neutralize other Alpha Class masks. His thinking connects a series of truly conspicuous events: the murder of Blake; the cancer scare that drove Dr. Manhattan into exile; the attempted murder of Veidt; and the murder of Jacobi, one of three people said to have gotten cancer from exposure to Dr. Manhattan. These actions were in service of either protecting or fulfilling a mysterious project, one that might have involved a private island staffed with artists, writers, and scientists. According to testimony given to Rorschach by Jacobi, Blake understood the goal of the project, and it disturbed him so much that it drove him to moral outrage and despair, ironic dispositions for a man known for being cold, glib, and nihilistic to his core. (For the record, Blake’s official cause of death is listed as “suspected suicide.”)

The Accusation Against Veidt

The most shocking claim in “Rorschach’s Journal” is in the final entry. It presents as having been written on the fly, so to speak, while en route to Antarctica to confront the alleged mastermind behind the conspiracy, Adrian Veidt. (Dreiberg, now in federal custody, has steadfastly refused to speak to the Bureau about “Rorschach’s Journal,” or anything, for that matter.) Godfrey, in another editor’s note, speculates the attempt on Veidt’s life was staged to deflect suspicion. If true, it worked. “Rorschach’s Journal” contains no evidence to substantiate any of its charges against Veidt. The final entry portrays Rorschach as having been persuaded by Dreiberg of Veidt’s guilt, but none of Dreiberg’s proof, if he had any, is presented.

It is also important to note that in this final entry, Rorschach is convinced that confronting Veidt could end tragically for him. “Veidt. Cannot imagine more dangerous opponent. ... Veidt is faster than Dreiberg, perhaps faster than me. Return from mission seems unlikely.”

Following the tenth and final installment of the series, Godfrey published a sum-up editorial that drew some wild and reckless conclusions. His big theory? The D.I.E. was a false flag operation financed and designed by Veidt; the E.B.D.E. was a sophisticated suicide bomb built from material cloned from the stolen brain of a dead psychic named Robert Deschaines; and that Veidt’s goal was born of his liberal politics, convictions that put him in opposition to almost all of his Alpha Level associates. Here, Godfrey’s infamous words:

“Veidt is Red as the devil. I’m certain if one was to search his thick wallet, one would find his Commie card tucked between a pair of industrial strength condoms he must need for the carnal relations he must surely enjoy with the abomination that is his genetically engineered cat. This, reader, and only this, is why we live in a world robbed of our triune protectors, our big blue god [Manhattan], our greatest super-soldier [The Comedian], and our most spirited watchdog [Rorschach]. Behold the most diabolical plot against America ever designed: to destabilize the governance of righteous conservative rule, Veidt concocted a counterfeit cosmic cataclysm rendered with Hollywood magic and Satanic science for the purpose of turning the Stars and Stripes onto Hammers and Sickles. AND IT WORKED! The events of the past six months are proof! Our commander-in-chief has been frightened into brokering peace with the Kremlin for the sake of creating a “common defense” against a threat that doesn’t actually exist! (How SUSPICIOUSLY CONVENIENT of that pile of psychic seafood to melt into a puddle of harmless water and then evaporate away before science

could study it. Dubious, I say! Dubious!) The Ruskies have gained a foothold on our sacred soil (Burgers-n-Borscht anyone? I HOPE NOT!), and our glorious Manifest Destiny march toward global Democracy, Capitalism, and Christian Supremacy has been stalled. Now we cower as we wait for the next shoe to drop. You know what it is. It's not another beastie from the outer limits of Dimension X, and it's not the nuisance of spoiled shrimp sloshing from the sky. No, this jackbooted jabberwocky is the Anti-Christ masquerading as a bleeding heart cowboy, a bad actor on so many levels who seeks to re-educate us into slaves of Big Brother. IT'S A GODDAM LIBERAL PRESIDENT."

It goes on from there.

LEGACY AND CONCLUSIONS

Immediate Aftermath

"Rorschach's Journal" sold thousands of copies of *New Frontiersman*, but for most people, it wasn't apocalyptic revelation. At best, it was outrageous entertainment from an outrageous outlet that provided brief distraction from D.I.E. anxiety. The mainstream media refused to acknowledge Godfrey's "scoop," given their low view of *New Frontiersman*, which, under Godfrey, was as disreputable as *The Weekly World News*. Common sense prevailed. Even if "Rorschach's Journal" was written by Kovacs—if it was "The Final Draft" fetched from his apartment on the night of his disappearance—his words still couldn't be trusted, because after all, Walter Kovacs was diagnostically insane.

When Veidt himself was asked about "Rorschach's Journal" in an interview with *Nova Express*, he laughed away the conspiracy theory as a failure to engage terrifying truths: "What do you call something like that? 'Blotting out reality,' perhaps?" He added: "I knew Rorschach. I worked with Rorschach. And while we had our differences, he had my sympathy, because he was a damaged human being, and he had my admiration, too, as no one in our fraternity was more dedicated to making our world safer than Walter was. If we are to remember him at all as we move into the future, let us remember him for those qualities, not this fabrication baring his name. It is, quite literally, fake news."

"Rorschach's Journal" As Counter Culture Classic

"Rorschach's Journal" might have faded into obscurity if not for two events, the "Blue Wave" of 1992 and the arrest of Dreiberg and Laurie Blake in 1995 for violating the Keene Act. Their capture re-ignited cultural fascination with masked vigilantes, and to capitalize on that curiosity, *New Frontiersman* published "Rorschach's Journal" in its entirety. The bookazine became a best-seller that appealed to a wide variety of curiosities, including right wing extremists. Some take it as a history book, others, devotional literature. For them, "Rorschach's Journal"—and Godfrey's interpretation of it—challenges the new, heretical orthodoxy that makes them feel marginalized and obsolete, written by a revolutionary they revere as a saint. It rationalizes their conviction that our current president is an illegitimate president, brought to power because of the E.B.D.E., which, again, per the convoluted logic of Godfrey's conspiracy theory, was essentially an insidious coup concocted the embittered liberal elite, as the ramifications of the D.I.E. paved the way for the Blue Wave of '92. This belief is the justification for any number of anti-social behaviors, from the formation of drop-out communities known as "Nixonvilles," to domestic terrorists like the aforementioned Seventh Cavalry, who protest the president by committing violence against symbols of the executive branch, which is to say, law enforcement.

But the legacy of "Rorschach's Journal" is evident in every garden variety "anti-hero" vigilante we see in our line of work, the wannabe local hero who puts on an idiosyncratic costume to live out their solipsism and inflict their yawp on society. Most of them proceed from the ingrained belief that government—especially an interventionist government, with its emphasis on controlled growth through increased regulation—is woefully

inefficient or unworthy of trust. Their cynicism is further nurtured by the administration's controversial efforts to manage our popular culture with warning labels on entertainment and prohibitions on depictions of the D.I.E. that might trigger those with 11/2 PTSD or stoke paranoid thinking about it. (They're already prone to think that cultural institutions are rigged to demonize them. See: the first season of *American Hero Story*, which turned Rorschach, now a conservative/libertarian icon, into a withering deconstruction of pathology that implicitly shamed anyone who ever found Rorschach or his kind admirable or noble.)

Recommendations

This brings me to my concern about the decision to close the case on Veidt's disappearance. After seven consecutive terms, the president has announced he won't be running for an eighth and as you're all well aware, tensions are running high. To finally declare Veidt dead eight years after his vanishing will evoke a singular question from every conspiracy theorist in America: "Why NOW?"

In short, quitting the search for Veidt and declaring him deceased risks antagonizing and activating Rorschach-inspired extremists who express their distrust of government with maverick vigilantism or brazen attacks on law enforcement or both; it will play to them like a cover-up. (Again, see: the Seventh Cavalry, whose members believe Veidt was behind their hero's disappearance.) But if Veidt's own disappearance remains the subject of inquiry -- or at least designated "unresolved"—perhaps their suspicions can be checked, and over time, they, like the rest of popular culture, will eventually lose interest in him.

We also run the risk of Veidt miraculously reappearing, which would put egg on the face of the Bureau. It's been two decades since the Presley debacle, but the public has a way of remembering when someone who is supposed to be dead suddenly wanders into a nightclub in Hanoi on VVN Night and performs every one of his songs with "Blue" in the title (there are fifteen).

Given his vast resource and even vaster ego, isn't it more likely than not that "The Smartest Man in The World" is planning a show-stopping comeback of his own?

As such, I recommend instead of doing something, we do absolutely nothing. Veidt had disappeared from the public consciousness even before he disappeared from Karnak. Why answer a question that no one's asking, especially if it will only activate the twisted imagination of every kook still fixated on events that transpired three decades ago?

Of course, publicly, the Bureau still needs to present the appearance of action, which is why the ideal move would be for the Anti-Vigilante Task Force to take custody of the case (we'd make the argument "Ozymandias" was technically still a vigilante at the time of his disappearance) and announce that the investigation remains ongoing. The mere appearance of due diligence could mitigate the negative ramifications of giving up on Veidt, and I would be happy to take on the responsibility of continuing to write lengthy memos no one will ever read to demonstrate said diligence.

I assure you, I have the time for it.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale Petey". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "Dale" and last name "Petey" clearly legible.

Special Agent Dale Petey

Anti-Vigilante Task Force/Research Unit
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