

# Veidt Declared Dead

*FBI officially closes investigation into missing industrialist after seven-year global search*

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Adrian Veidt, the billionaire industrialist, political kingmaker, and controversial futurist who first gained fame as a costumed adventurer, was officially declared “presumed deceased” by authorities on three continents yesterday.

The announcement, which had been expected, was made in Washington, D.C. by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conjunction with local law enforcement officials in New York and Vietnam, the two states where Mr. Veidt kept residences, and Antarctica, the site of his private refuge, Karnak. Trieu Industries, the international conglomerate that has managed Mr. Veidt’s estate since acquiring Veidt Enterprises in 2017, issued a statement expressing acceptance of the decision.

White House press secretary Ezra Klein told reporters that the president offered private condolences to Mr. Veidt’s associates and might release a public statement in the coming days. Mr. Veidt, an avid supporter of progressive social causes, was the biggest contributor to the Democratic Party during the late eighties and early nineties, leading the way in financing the “blue wave”

that ended 24 consecutive years of conservative rule in 1992. But Mr. Veidt was subsequently forced to curtail his efforts to influence government policy with the passage of the Campaign Finance Reform and Donor Disclosure Act of 1993. For years, the president and Mr. Veidt denied the existence of a rift between them despite rumors to the contrary.

FBI officials declined to take a public position on Mr. Veidt’s cause of death. A spokesperson for Trieu Industries said company lawyers will apply for death certificates that attribute Mr. Veidt’s passing to “unknown causes.” Time will tell if these declarations will provide satisfactory closure to those who remain interested in a mystery that has spawned a cottage industry of sleuthing and speculation. At the peak of the “Where’s Veidt?” phenomenon, nine of the top 100 books on *The San Francisco Times* Best Sellers’ List were devoted to investigations into Mr. Veidt’s disappearance, from tomes of journalistic reportage to cheap bookazines proposing conspiracy theories like assassination by domestic terrorists and abduction by

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extradimensional beings. Mr. Veidt, who would have turned 80 two months ago, was declared missing in 2012 after the Trieu Industries purchase of Veidt's companies. When members of Veidt Enterprises' board of directors visited Antarctica to seek Mr. Veidt's blessing on the sale, they found Karnak to be unoccupied. Investigators reported no sign of foul play at any of Mr. Veidt's homes or properties. His last public appearance occurred in 2007 when

Kenya awarded him its highest civilian honor, the Chief of the Order of the Golden Heart, on the 40th anniversary of one of Mr. Veidt's signature accomplishments as a masked vigilante. In 1967, Mr. Veidt, then known by his fanciful alias, Ozymandias,

exposed a plot by rogue right wing extremists in the U.S. military to test biological weapons on the citizens of Nairobi and surrounding areas.

Prior to his disappearance, Mr. Veidt had become reclusive. While some attributed his withdrawal to an eccentricity similar to Howard Hughes, others saw a calculated decision prompted by a series of setbacks stemming from Dr. Manhattan's abandonment of Earth on October 19, 1985, and the Dimensional Incursion Event two weeks later. One source of Veidt's personal wealth, a patent

for spark hydrants, became worthless after the auto industry ceased production of electric cars powered by M-class lithium amid concerns that all things Manhattan might be carcinogenic. (Leading Manhattanologists now believe that there is no merit to those concerns.) More damaging was the fiasco of "Millennium by Veidt," a broad set of marketing and philanthropic endeavors in which Mr. Veidt positioned himself as a guru in

the human potential movement, trying to evolve society toward a technology-based utopia led by transcendent supermen. For a public beset and traumatized by catastrophes, and suddenly so wary of technology that it led to luddite behaviors in the nineties that crippled and destroyed entire

industries, "Millennium by Veidt" was the wrong idea at the wrong time and severely tarnished Mr. Veidt's reputation as a canny forecaster of consumer trends. Subsequently, his businesses began to pivot away from strategies that relied on Mr. Veidt's celebrity and brand ubiquity. In 1999, Veidt Enterprises, already a major player in genetically engineered foods, regained all of its lost value when Mr. Veidt began licensing proprietary technology to other fields, most notably, pet cloning, through a subsidiary named after his famed lynx, Bubastis.

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Adrian Alexander Veidt was born on July 2, 1939 in New York City to Friedrich Werner Veidt and Ingrid Renata Veidt, who had come to the United States from Germany three months earlier. His rise to power and prominence has long been framed by Veidt's notoriously enthusiastic public relations operation as the ultimate immigrant success story. Mr. Veidt lost both his parents before he reached adulthood. Following his mother's death, he chose to give the whole of his large inheritance to charity and make a fortune through his own effort. During a trek around the world, he developed an interest in ancient civilizations, in particular, Egypt, and found inspiration for heroic achievement in the life of Alexander the Great.

Manhattan and The Comedian, and an assortment of street vigilantes known for their troubling viciousness and ideological orientations, most notably, Walter Kovacs, a.k.a. Rorschach. (Mr. Kovacs, who also disappeared in 1985, is linked to one of Mr. Veidt's smaller and stranger embarrassments. In 1986, *New Frontiersman* published excerpts from a journal allegedly written by Mr. Kovacs filled with outrageous claims against Mr. Veidt, including accusations of murder and an intimation that he was responsible for both the D.I.E. and Dr. Manhattan's exile from Earth. The journal was dismissed as either a hoax or the expression of mental illness, though it remains an object of fascination for fringe artists and anti-government extremists.)

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In 1958, Mr. Veidt adopted the guise of Ozymandias and gained renown by taking down a network of crime syndicates led by Edgar Jacobi, the masked gangster known as Moloch the Mystic. By bringing to justice the last of the notorious rogues from the original era of self-styled "costumed adventurers" which began in the late thirties, Mr. Veidt inaugurated a new age of more ambitious and more problematic masks that included a pair commissioned military operatives, Dr.

Mr. Veidt gave up being a vigilante in 1975 and revealed his identity to the public. His voluntary retirement engendered considerable goodwill just as public sentiment was turning against others of his kind, a backlash that would ultimately lead to the Keene Act of 1977 which once again made civilian vigilantism illegal. He made his first millions with his patent for spark hydrants, and made many more by playing the stock market with great savvy. Guided

by his prescience and ingenuity, Veidt Enterprises manufactured a wide variety of products—fashion, perfume, consumer electronics, toys, entertainment—that never failed to be on top of the moment or just ahead of the next. His iconic ad campaigns for the “Nostalgia by Veidt” lifestyle line in the eighties captured the spirit of the conservative era so memorably, they have their own display at the National Museum of American History. He was a noted philanthropist, donating millions to hospitals dedicated to treating post-D.I.E. PTSD and private laboratories devoted to researching experimental technologies and alternative energies. He once explained his passion for “Futorology” in a 1975 interview with *Nova Express*: “[Y]ou get to be a superhero by believing in the hero within you and summoning him or her forth by an act of will...I would say without hesitation that a new world is within our grasp, filled with unimaginable experiences and possibilities, if only we want it badly enough.”

Mr. Veidt’s disappearance has produced its own dubious legacy. In 2017, Ronnie Ngo Dinh, then the governor of Vietnam, caused an international incident by claiming that the Vietnamese Liberation Front had assassinated Mr. Veidt as an act of terror against the United States. He used the assertion to justify an escalation of actions against VLF militants. The ensuing police actions resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and condemnation from nations who’ve expressed support for the

“Free Vietnam” movement, including the United Kingdom and China.

More recently, in 2018, Roger Ailes, president of Newspaper Corporation of America (NCA), parent of *New Frontiersman*, filed a lawsuit against Veidt Enterprises and Trieu Industries claiming a “systematic campaign of harassment, intimidation, and sabotage” against him and his employees for publishing reports that the Central Intelligence Agency had killed Mr. Veidt for secrets he possessed regarding the Dimensional Incursion Event. The lawsuit was dismissed and the federal government subsequently ordered NCA to either publish an apology to Mr. Veidt or pay a \$100,000 for violating the Content Code Act. They chose to pay the fine.

Mr. Veidt never married, nor did he have children. He is survived by no one.

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— ADRIAN VEIDT

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