



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on July 17, 2026

Congress Opens MKUltra Files, Asks About Jack Ruby

On June 30, the U.S. House Oversight Committee's Task Force on the Declassification of Federal Secrets convened a landmark hearing titled "Mind Control and Accountability: Uncovering the Truth of the CIA's MKULTRA Project," chaired by Florida Republican Anna Paulina Luna. Testimony emerged connecting the Central Intelligence Agency's most [notorious secret program](#) to President John F. Kennedy's assassination — specifically to [Jack Ruby](#), the man who shot Lee Harvey Oswald before he could testify.

MKUltra was a [CIA program](#) running from 1953 to 1973 that studied mind control and the alteration of human behavior, using unwitting subjects who were given high doses of psychoactive drugs and subjected to forms of psychological torture such as electroshock, sensory deprivation, and isolation. The program involved more than 80 institutions, including schools, hospitals, prisons, and pharmaceutical companies. The CIA destroyed all MKUltra operational files in 1973, but the discovery of surviving financial files sparked a round of [Senate hearings](#) in 1977.



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Connection to Jack Ruby

At the hearing last month, the most significant [testimony](#) came from investigative journalist Tom O'Neill, author of *Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties*. He [documented](#) connections between MKUltra and Ruby.

In April 1964, after Ruby was convicted and sentenced to death for killing Oswald, [Dr. Louis Jolyon "Jolly" West](#), a CIA-connected psychiatrist, examined Ruby on behalf of his new defense attorney. West continued to treat Ruby until shortly before Ruby's death in 1967.

In June 1964, Chief Justice Earl Warren and others from the Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy visited Ruby to take his sworn testimony, but Ruby was babbling incoherently. Some [wonder](#) if West's visits influenced or manipulated Ruby so he was unfit to testify. Commission Counsel Arlen Specter recounted in his [memoir](#) that Ruby pulled him and Warren aside to whisper that "they're cutting off the arms and legs of Jewish children in Albuquerque and New Mexico."

O'Neill told Luna's committee he discovered a 1953 letter from West to CIA MKUltra director Dr. Sidney Gottlieb. It described planned experiments on unwitting subjects at Lackland Air Force Base,



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including “basic airmen,” “prisoners in the local stockade,” and psychiatric patients with dissociative disorders. O’Neill described the letter as reading “like a page torn from the research notebook of Josef Mengele,” in reference to the Nazi “Angel of Death,” infamous for his horrific medical experiments on Auschwitz prisoners.

Crucially, O’Neill noted that former CIA Director [Allen Dulles](#), who [authorized](#) MKUltra, sat on the Warren Commission, while Richard Helms, who oversaw MKUltra and later ordered its records destroyed, served as the CIA’s liaison to the same commission. Both men knew Jolly West and his methods, yet neither disclosed West’s relationship with the agency.

Did MKUltra Really End?

Two witnesses warned Congress that MKUltra may not have ended in 1973. Stephen Kinzer, a senior fellow at Brown University, testified: “There have been enormous advances in cyber technology, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence. Covert agencies may have access to tools for mind control that Sidney Gottlieb could not have imagined.” [O’Neill added](#): “Is it happening today? Did it continue? I don’t know. I can’t imagine that it didn’t, though, because the technology that they worked to establish over 20 to 25 years and spent more money on than any operation the CIA conducted was successful.”

Democrats boycotted the hearing, sending only one minority witness — a former National Institutes of Health (NIH) researcher, Dr. Elizabeth Ginexi, who argued that current NIH reforms represented “political control” replacing “scientific judgment.”

Luna stated that additional MKUltra documents are currently in the process of being declassified as part of an ongoing push for transparency, and that she is following up with the CIA to demand the full release of MKUltra records. Afterward, Luna [posted](#) on X: “According to today’s expert witnesses: Jack Ruby and Charles Manson were MKUltra assets.”

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