

Barack Obama, his Mother, and the CIA

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In his autobiography, *Dreams From My Fathers*, Barack Obama writes of taking a job at some point after graduating from Columbia University in 1983. He describes his employer as “a consulting house to multinational corporations” in New York City, and his functions as a “research assistant” and “financial writer”.

Oddly, Obama doesn’t mention the name of his employer. However, a *New York Times* story of October 30, 2007 identifies the company as Business International Corporation. Equally odd is that the *Times* did not remind its readers that the newspaper itself had disclosed in 1977 that Business International had provided cover for four CIA employees in various countries between 1955 and 1960.¹

The British journal, *Lobster* — which, despite its incongruous name, is a venerable international publication on intelligence matters — has reported that Business International was active in the 1980s promoting the candidacy of Washington-favored candidates in Australia and Fiji.² In 1987, the CIA overthrew the Fiji government after but one month in office because of its policy of maintaining the island as a nuclear-free zone, meaning that American nuclear-powered or nuclear-weapons-carrying ships could not make port calls.³ After the Fiji coup, the candidate supported by Business International, who was much more amenable to Washington’s nuclear desires, was reinstated to power — R.S.K. Mara was Prime Minister or President of Fiji from 1970 to 2000, except for the one-month break in 1987.

In his book, not only doesn’t Obama mention his employer’s name; he fails to say exactly when he worked there, or why he left the job. There may well be no significance to these omissions, but inasmuch as Business International has a long association with the world of intelligence, covert actions, and attempts to penetrate the radical left — including Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) — it’s reasonable to wonder if the inscrutable Mr. Obama is concealing something about his own association with this world.⁴

Adding to the wonder is the fact that his mother, Ann Dunham, had been associated during the 1970s and 80s — as employee, consultant, grantee, or student — with at least five organizations with intimate CIA connections during the Cold War: The Ford Foundation, Agency for International Development (AID), the Asia Foundation, Development Alternatives, Inc., and the East-West Center of Hawaii.⁵ Much of this time she worked as an anthropologist in Indonesia and Hawaii, being in good position to gather intelligence about local communities.

As one example of the CIA connections of these organizations, consider the disclosure by John Gilligan, Director of AID during the Carter administration (1977-81). “At one time, many

AID field offices were infiltrated from top to bottom with CIA people. The idea was to plant operatives in every kind of activity we had overseas, government, volunteer, religious, every kind.”⁶ And Development Alternatives, Inc. is the organization for whom Alan Gross was working when arrested in Cuba and charged with being part of the ongoing American operation to destabilize the Cuban government.

1. *New York Times*, December 27, 1977, p.40 [↵](#)
2. *Lobster* magazine, Hull, UK, #14, November 1987 [↵](#)
3. *Rogue State*, op. cit., pp.199-200 [↵](#)
4. Carl Oglesby, *Ravens in the Storm: A Personal History of the 1960s Antiwar Movement* (2008), passim [↵](#)
5. [Wikipedia entry for Ann Dunham](#) [↵](#)
6. George Cotter, “Spies, strings and missionaries”, *The Christian Century* (Chicago), March 25, 1981, p.321 [↵](#)

William Blum is the author of:

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