

Public Abstract

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Title:The Manhattan-Rochester Coalition, Research on the Health Effects of Radioactive Materials, and Tests on Vulnerable Populations without Consent in St. Louis, 1945-1970.

This piece analyzes a covert Manhattan Project spin-off organization referred to here as the Manhattan-Rochester Coalition, and an obscure aerosol study in St. Louis, Missouri, conducted under contract by the U.S. military from 1953-1954 and 1963-1965. The military-sponsored studies targeted a segregated, high-density urban area, where low-income persons of color predominantly resided. Examination of the Manhattan-Rochester Coalition and the St. Louis aerosol studies, reveal their likely connections to each other, and to a vast military project that emerged from the Manhattan Project, that secretly tested humans, both alive and deceased, in an effort to develop and understand the health and environmental effects of weaponized radiation. Through this case study, the author explores how a large number of participants inside an organization will willingly participate in organizational acts that are harmful to others, and how large numbers of outsiders, who may or may not be victims of organizational activities, are unable to determine illegal or harmful activity by an organization. Such ethical and observational lapses can be engineered by the organization in their effort to disable critical analysis and dissent. Through studying this process of complex organizational deviance, we can develop public policies that protect the public's right to know, and construct checks and methods to minimize the chance of harmful, covert projects that are contrary to societal norms.