

THE PHOENIX PROJECT

The Phoenix Program: America's Use of Terror in Vietnam

A MAJOR TOP-SECRET OPERATION OF THE VIETNAM WAR OPERATED
BY THE CIA AND UNKNOWN TO WASHINGTON (SO THEY SAY)

AKA: ILLEGAL AMERICAN CIA ORGANIZED ASSASSINATION OF VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS- AGAINST ALL ASPECTS OF THE
GENEVA CONVENTION- FOR AMERICANS: "THE REST OF THE STORY"

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On August 25, 1970, an article appeared in The New York Times hinting that the CIA, through The Phoenix Program, was responsible for My Laiand that started it all.....

This Is Almost UnbelievableAnd was unknown for a long time so they say

This article and the videos included may be alarming to some and make all of us ask ourselves - "Does any conflict, big or small, justify this type of killing" and "was it necessary"? Perhaps so- for we all know that this is not an isolated case. It has happened before I'm sure, but this one really hits home especially in a war we knew we could never win. Our hands are not always clean!

As I put this article together I realized that most of the information about the Phoenix Program has been suppressed for so many years and for good reason as you will see. There are many Websites that carry info about this program. (There is no way for me to verify that everything indicated in this article is the actual truth). As you can imagine the reporting of activities such as this is very controversial however there is no doubt that it happened. There are articles/entries in the National Archives and the CIA Library Website to support this.

This was another CIA operation supposedly totally unknown by the powers to be in Washington until the damage was done. For the American people it is another "rest of the story".

At the end of this article there is much information about the author of this book entitled "The Phoenix Project, Douglas Valentine. He did 4 years of research obtaining information for his book and took the CIA to court and won, when they took action to curtail his research. There are many excerpts from the book sharing interviews with the individuals that were involved. It's another in the series of events/ tragedies that happened during war, the Vietnam War, that most of us never heard about until now.

If you weren't aware of the "Phoenix Program and choose the read all of article you are in for not to pleasant surprise. It is a rather long article that provides much information about a terrible event. It's a tragic and graphic story...both in words and pictures. John C.

CAUTION

PORTIONS OF THE VIDEO'S AND SOME OF THE PICTURES ARE VERY GRAPHIC

VIDEOS OF THE PHOENIX PROGRAM OPERATIONS

VIEW THESE VIDEO'S TO GET A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED. SOMETIMES WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH!!!

(TO VIEW: COPY AND PASTE THE BELOW LINKS INTO YOUR BROWSER)

AMERICA CLOSES IT EYES – NOTE THE SMALL NUMBER OF HITS ON THE BELOW WEBSITES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozo4nitLtUM> (10 mins - 137 hits)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTE--9sPgPg> (11 mins – 34,483 hits)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWj0jNI2GdQ&list=PLtSRC41AlovGSJoQ_KBDatySMHOB6PshE (1 min – 31,178 hits)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tMDrnbOSb4&list=PLtSRC41AlovGSJoQ_KBDatySMHOB6PshE&index=3 (2hr 32min- 69,269 hits)

WHAT WAS THE PHOENIX PROGRAM?



The Phoenix Program (Vietnamese: Chiến dịch Phụng Hoàng, a word related to fenghuang ,the Chinese phoenix) was a program designed, coordinated, and executed by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), United States special operations forces, U.S. Army intelligence collection units from the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV—the joint-service command that provided command and control for all U.S. advisory and assistance efforts in Vietnam), special forces operatives from the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), and the Republic of Vietnam's (South Vietnam) security apparatus during the Vietnam War.

The program was designed to identify and destroy the Viet Cong (VC) via infiltration, capture, counter-terrorism, interrogation, and assassination. The CIA described it as "a set of programs that sought to attack and destroy the political infrastructure of the Viet Cong".

Although Phoenix (Phung Hoang) Program was a crucial element of the post Tet 1968 pacification plan, it has subsequently been considered among the most controversial CIA's activities during the Vietnam War.



PHOENIX OPERATIONS

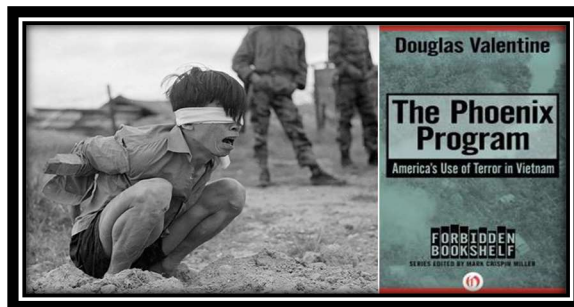
Phoenix Program had the prime objective of gathering information on the VCI, which was then used to target and neutralize VCI members. Phoenix operations involved local militia and police instead of military as the main operational arm.

As Phoenix operations targeted civilians rather than militants, there were special laws called “An Tri” that allowed the capture and prosecution of any suspected Viet Cong members and their sympathizers. In order to avoid personal abuses and protect innocent civilians, the laws required three distinct evidences against an individual so as to target him or her to neutralization. If a suspected VCI was found guilty, they could be kept behind bars for at least two years and a maximum of six years.

TARGETED KILLINGS

Phoenix operations usually aimed to kill VC suspects in one way or the other. Oftentimes when PRU’s (“*Provincial Reconnaissance Units*”) were sent to a specific target located in disputed areas, they mostly gave priority to the “shoot first” policy

Although the program never allowed premeditated murder of civilians in non-combat situations, many were killed. As the program supported capturing as many VC members and suspects as possible so that they could question them, more and more people were added to the “blacklist”. The normal procedure of capturing people on the “blacklist” would involve going into a village, grabbing a bystander and demanding the location of a “target” person. As most people were so afraid that they could not speak, the PRUs would put a sandbag over the “informant’s” head, adding holes for him or her to be able to see. They would then put a “commo” wire over the person’s neck to use as a leash and drag him or her through the village, asking the person to shake his head when the unit passed the target’s house. After this, once night fell, the PRUs would return and knock on the door. Whoever answered the door would be blasted with gunfire. It didn’t matter to the group who it was because in their definition, every person in that house was a communist.



The whole procedure led to the deaths of many innocent civilians who were arbitrarily considered Viet Cong members and sympathizers. MACV Directives 381-41 also suggests that the Phoenix Program intended to target the Viet Cong leaders and activists by using a rifle instead of a shotgun.

TORTURE

The forms of torture used to extract information during interrogation at PICs included rape, gang rape, rape using snakes, eels and other hard objects, rape followed by murder. Other torture techniques included “the airplane”, “the water treatment”. Sometimes the suspects were suspended upside down and then beaten harshly by rubber hoses, nightsticks and whips.

Some reports revealed that the interrogation process also featured the use of electric shocks (“the Bell Telephone Hour”) which was rendered by attaching military field telephone wires to the genitals and other sensitive organs of the body. In some cases, the suspects were subjected to police dog attacks as well as having dowels forced into their ear canals and the tapping through brain until the victim died.

Most of the individuals who went through these tortures died during the interrogation. There are a few who managed to survive, but often were killed later anyway.

These tortures were carried out by South Vietnamese officers while CIA and other special forces supervised the whole act behind the scenes.



With the passage of time, the possibility of being considered an informant for the Viet Cong became very frightening for the general population. No one wanted to be imprisoned where they may face torture and death.



IMPACT

Within four years from 1968 to 1972, the Phoenix program neutralized 81,740 suspects, of whom 26,369 were killed. As a result, the program managed to destroy the VCI in many important areas quite successfully. CIA also claimed that Phoenix enabled them to know about the structure and identity of VCI in every province of South Vietnam.

CAUTION

VERY GRAPHIC PICTURE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NEXT PAGE

By 1970, acknowledging the effectiveness of the Phoenix program, several North Vietnamese officials continuously emphasized on attacking South Vietnamese government's pacification programs and assassinating District, village and Phoenix's officials given an imposed quota as well.



CONTROVERSY

Despite its major contributions and impact on the VCI, Phoenix Program whose operations were described as "assassination campaigns" remains highly controversial.

The major criticism of the program was the use of torture and assassination which were considered undermining the U.S. tactics during the conflict. However, William Colby argued that most of those who died were actually killed in combat, not tortured or executed.

Moreover, two-thirds of neutralized VC were captured not killed. In fact, imprisonment and defection were the preferred methods of neutralization as that would enable them to get valuable information about the VCI, he claimed.



Colby likewise denied torture was part of the interrogation at Province Interrogation Centers. It is suggested that torture was only used in order to deal with the die hard and stubborn prisoners to get more accurate information from them. The military command in Vietnam issued the directive in 1971 suggesting that the campaign against VCI remained within the South Vietnamese law. The program respected the laws regarding the warfare in the country. U.S officials were held responsible for reporting the breach of law at any stage.

HORRIFIC PICTURE



SEE THIS VIDEO TO CONFIRM THIS TYPE ACTION

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJv1YRCKPiE>

Other criticism of Phoenix was that low- and middle-level VCI members or villagers were usually captured or killed in order to meet neutralization quotas while most senior and high level official's eluded capture. This, however, was improved by March 1969 when only high-ranking VC and party-level cadre were to be targeted by Phoenix Program. Although only 3% of neutralization in 1970-71 were high level VC, it did prove the *effectiveness of Phoenix where ranking VC were forced to leave the general population for their safety.*



Furthermore, abuses were common during the Phoenix Program. In many cases, rival South Vietnamese reported their enemies as “VC” in order to get the PRUs to kill them. What is more, many Phung Hoang chiefs used the authority to meet their own ends and enrich themselves. Likewise, corrupt District officials took bribes from VC members to release many suspects.

To address this problem, each province was given a monthly quota of VC to neutralize, depending on the size of VCI of that particular province during the first 2 years of Phoenix. However, this led to another problem of false reports and arrests. Many innocent civilians became victims in the process of fulfilling the often unrealistic quota of neutralization imposed by the CIA.

PUBLIC RESPONSE AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The Phoenix Program was not generally known during most of the time it was operational to either the American public or American officials in Washington.¹ One of the first people to criticize Phoenix publicly was Ed Murphy, a native of Staten Island, New York in 1970.

There was eventually a series of U.S. Congressional hearings. In 1971, in the final day of hearing on “U.S. Assistance Programs in Vietnam”, a former serviceman named K. Milton Osborn described the Phoenix Program as a “sterile depersonalized murder program. Consequently, the military command in Vietnam issued a directive that reiterated that it had based the anti-VCI campaign on South Vietnamese law, that the program was in compliance with the laws of land warfare, and that U.S. personnel had the responsibility to report breaches of the law.

Former CIA analyst Samuel A. Adams, in an interview with CBC News, talked about the program as basically an assassination program that also included torture. A former Phoenix Intelligence Officer, Barton Osborn, in an interview broadcast in 1975, talked about the torture practices used by the Americans and detailed a case in which a man was dragged out of the interrogation’s hooch with a dowel protruding from his ear. The dowel had been tapped through in the course of torture to hit the brain. These were activities performed by American Marines. They would also kill people by throwing them out of helicopters to threaten and intimidate those they wanted to interrogate.

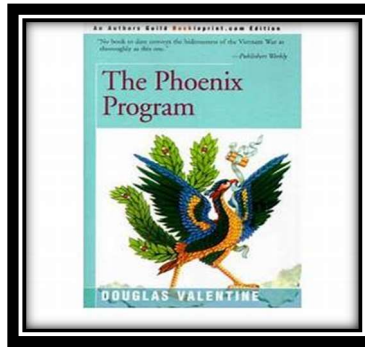
Abuses were common. In many instances, rival Vietnamese would report their enemies as “VC” in order to get U.S. troops to kill them. In many cases, Phung Hoang chiefs were incompetent bureaucrats who used their positions to enrich themselves. Phoenix tried to address this problem by establishing monthly neutralization quotas, but these often led to fabrications or, worse, false arrests. In some cases, district officials accepted bribes from the VC to release certain suspects.

After Phoenix Program abuses began receiving negative publicity, the program was officially shut down, although it continued under the name Plan F-6 with the government of South Vietnam in control.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE OPPOSITION TO HIS BOOK

There’s a good reason national security historian and author John Prados has called Phoenix a “must read.” Heavily researched over a number of years, more than any other book I know of about the period Valentine’s book relied on over 200 interviews with participants, including top CIA and Special Forces personnel. How the author obtained such access and what happened as a result is a story in itself.



Douglas Valentine

Valentine described the story in an email exchange

“I began work on The Phoenix Program in the summer of 1984,” Valentine wrote. “I approached the subject from two angles. First, I made a direct approach to William Colby, the former Director of the CIA and the individual most closely associated with Phoenix, based on his defense of the program before several Congressional committees. Colby agreed to help and referred me to several CIA officers who played prominent roles in Phoenix. These former, and in some cases current, agents spoke openly to me, simply because I carried Colby’s imprimatur.

“Colby generated access lasted into 1987, when I started to notice doors closing and people avoiding me. I’d always known it would happen sooner than later, and I’d pretty much made the rounds, so it didn’t bother me too much. I’d hustled the CIA, I’d gotten inside its walls and rummaged around, and now the CIA was going to exact its revenge. That’s just how it works. If you fuck with the bull, you get the horns. Everyone knows that.

“I also got asked by CIA officer Bob Wall to join the CIA before the door slammed shut altogether.

“But I wasn’t ready to quit, and I wanted to back the CIA off a bit, so I filed a Privacy Act request, and in 1992 I got some results, thanks to the ACLU and a sympathetic judge in the federal district in Springfield, Massachusetts.”

“It may cause damage”

More of the story is documented in John Prados’ book, The Family Jewels:

“Elements at Langley became uncooperative after one retiree asked CIA lawyers, in the summer of 1986, what things were safe to talk about. When a Publications Review Board lawyer checked to see whether Phoenix was off-limits (the Board had previously cleared Phoenix material in works by Colby himself and agency officer Ralph McGehee), he was advised to caution interviewees not to talk to Valentine.

“By April 1988 the Publications Review Board was advising clandestine service officers of a concern that Valentine’s ‘forthcoming book will contain so much detailed information about Agency operations and officers that... it may cause damage,’ and asking that senior management of the Directorate of Operations should have the entire matter brought to their attention.

Spooks, including some in the ostensibly impartial Inspector General's office, were ranging the halls telling each other that the author was bad news and hoping they might escape his attention. Valentine eventually discovered this stonewalling due to the reticence of CIA veterans—and the materials quoted here emerged in the course of legal discovery in the lawsuit Douglas Valentine brought against the Central Intelligence Agency.”

Valentine has posted online some of the legal documents from his lawsuit against the CIA. His papers collected in the writing of the book are held by the National Security Archives, and available to researchers. Many of his taped interviews, including interviews with William Colby and other senior Phoenix personnel, can be heard online (thanks Cryptocomb.org).

WHAT PHOENIX WROUGHT

While a good knowledge of the Phoenix Program is necessary to understand how U.S. counterinsurgency acts in reality in countries around the globe, in a new introduction for the Open Roads edition of the book, Valentine writes about the corrupting influence of Phoenix upon democratic processes domestically.

Valentine speaks of the “insidious” spread of Phoenix methods in the United States for the purpose of “the political control of its citizens through terrorism, on behalf of the rich military-industrial-political elite who rule our society.”

“Indeed, America’s security forces were always aware of the domestic applications of the Phoenix,” Valentine writes, “and the program has not only come to define modern American warfare, it is the model for our internal ‘homeland security’ apparatus as well. It is with the Phoenix program that we find the genesis of the paramilitarization of American police forces in their role as adjuncts to military and political security forces engaged in population control and suppression of dissent.”

For Valentine, who makes a compelling case, the building of Guantanamo, the use of black sites and torture, the provision — even as late as 2013 — for the indefinite detention of Americans and other “war on terror” prisoners, “was easy to predict,” if you knew about Phoenix.

I am grateful to Doug Valentine and Mark Crispin Miller for giving The Phoenix Program a new publishing life, to help educate a new generation, which faces a fight against forces of state repression every bit as difficult and important as any faced in this country’s history.

EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

(Some information may overlap what was stated above)

The following excerpt from The Phoenix Program, by Douglas Valentine, is from Chapter 24, “Transgressions.” It deals with the My Lai massacre and the infamous “Tiger Cages.”

The book is available @

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0595007384?ie=UTF8&tag=incrwarimag-20&linkCode=xm2&camp=1789&creativeASIN=0595007384#reader_0595007384

A. On August 25, 1970, an article appeared in The New York Times hinting that the CIA, through Phoenix, was responsible for My Lai. The story line was advanced on October 14, when defense attorneys for David Mitchell — a sergeant accused and later cleared of machine-gunning scores of Vietnamese in a drainage ditch in My Lai — citing Phoenix as the CIA’s “systematic program of assassination,” named Evan Parker as the CIA officer who “signed documents, certain blacklists,” of Vietnamese to be assassinated in My Lai.

B. Even less well remembered is one mission in the CIA's Phoenix Program in Vietnam in July of 1968. A team of CIA psychologists set up shop at Bien Hoa Prison outside Saigon, where NLF suspects were being held after Phoenix Program round-ups. The psychologists performed a variety of experiments on the prisoners. In one, three prisoners were anaesthetized; their skulls were opened and electrodes implanted by CIA doctors into different parts of their brains.

The prisoners were revived, placed in a room with knives and the electrodes in the brains activated by the psychiatrists, who were covertly observing them. The hope was that they could be prompted in this manner to attack each other. The experiments failed. The electrodes were removed, the patients were shot and their bodies burned

C. The most decorated American soldier of the war, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Herbert, later recalled in his book, Soldier, "They wanted me to take charge of execution teams that wiped out entire families and tried to make it look as though the VC themselves had done the killing."

D. The CIA and Special Branch (Vietnamese officials not operating as intelligence agents but as detectives) were engaged in recruiting informants throughout South Vietnam. The CIA informants paid only if the accused confessed that he was part of the Vietcong infrastructure (IVC).

E. The CIA abducted political leaders, students, trade unionists and journalists close to the communist ideologies and recruit PIC centers that were built torture chambers in all provinces of South Vietnam by the architectural firm specializing in the construction of bunkers and prisons "Pacific Architects & Engineers".

F. The IVC attacked putting pressure on family members or on their people. Once arrested a member of VC, was tortured until he gave the name of his people and their families. Once done, the members of the Special Division conducted a raid, the captured (most were usually women) and were raped in front of the detainee This program was directed personally by Nelson Brickham who was the senior CIA officer in charge of Foreign Intelligence.

G. With the goal of transferring control to the South Vietnamese PHOENIX because of the growing "Vietnamization" of the conflict, members of the CIA were gradually replaced by elements of the U.S. military, mostly from the Special Forces. The handover took place in August 1971, taking the reins of the regular army, Special Forces and the South Vietnamese police. The program then became known by its Vietnamese name, "Hoang Pjung".



H. The Phoenix program was widely criticized by groups opposed to the war, considering it was a program of murders with indiscriminate brutality and constant violation of international law. It is believed that the program was active until December 1972, although in some respects it was alive until the day of the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975.

I. Below is a conversation between the author, Douglas Valentine and a former Navy Seal, Elton Manzione, explaining part of a mission he performed while with the Phoenix Project.

And so we crawl up to the gate. There's no booby traps. I go in. Swetz has a satchel charge for the fifty-one-caliber gun and has split off to where it is, maybe sixty yards away. Laboon is sitting at the gate. The village is very quiet. There are some dogs. They're sleeping. They stir, but they don't even growl. I go into the hooch, and I spot my person. Well, somebody stirs in the next bed. I'm carrying my commando knife, and one of the things we learned is how to kill somebody instantly with it. So I put my hand over her mouth and come up under the second rib, go through the heart, give it a flick; it snaps the spinal cord. Not thinking! Because I think 'Hey!' Then I hear the explosion go off and I know the gun is out. Somebody else in the corner starts to stir, so I pull out the sidearm and put it against her head and shoot her. She's dead. Of course, by this time the whole village is awake. I go out, waiting for Swetz to come, because the gun's been blown. People are kind of wandering around, and I'm pretty dazed. And I look back into the hooch, and there were two young girls. I'd killed the wrong people."

Elton Manzione and his comrades returned to their base at Cam Lo. Strung out from Dexedrine and remorse, Elton went into the ammo dump and sat on top of a stack of ammunition crates with a grenade, its pin pulled, between his legs and an M-16 cradled in his arms. He sat there refusing to budge until he was given a ticket home.

The story of Phoenix is not easily told. Many of the participants, having signed nondisclosure statements, are legally prohibited from telling what they know. Others are silenced by their own consciences. Still others are professional soldiers whose careers would suffer if they were to reveal the secrets of their employers.

Falsification of records makes the story even harder to prove. For example, there is no record of Elton Manzione's ever having been in Vietnam. Yet, for reasons which are explained in my first book, *The Hotel Tacloban*, I was predisposed to believe Manzione.

I had confirmed that my father's military records were deliberately altered to show that he had not been imprisoned for two years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in World War II.

The effects of the cover-up were devastating and ultimately caused my father to have a heart attack at the age of forty-five. Thus, long before I met Elton Manzione, I knew the government was capable of concealing its misdeeds under a cloak of secrecy, threats, and fraud. And I knew how terrible the consequences could be.

J. Then I began to wonder if cover-ups like the one concerning my father had also occurred in the Vietnam War, and that led me in the fall of 1983 to visit David Houle, director of veteran services in New Hampshire. I asked Dave Houle if there was a part of the Vietnam War that had been concealed, and without hesitation he replied, "Phoenix." After explaining a little about it, he mentioned that one of his clients had been in the program, then added that his client's service records -- like those of Elton Manzione's and my father's -- had been altered. They showed that he had been a cook in Vietnam.

I asked to meet Houle's client, but the fellow refused. Formerly with Special Forces in Vietnam, he was disabled and afraid the Veterans Administration would cut off his benefits if he talked to me.

K. Phoenix was, among other things, an instrument of counterterror -- the psychological warfare tactic in which VCI members were brutally murdered along with their families or neighbors as a means of terrorizing the neighboring population into a state of submission. Such horrendous acts were, for propaganda purposes, often made to look as if they had been committed by the enemy.

L. This book questions how Americans, who consider themselves a nation ruled by laws and an ethic of fair play, could create a program like Phoenix. By scrutinizing the program and the people who participated in it and by employing the program as a symbol of the dark side of the human psyche, the author hopes to articulate the subtle ways in which the Vietnam War changed how Americans think about themselves. This book is about terror and its role in political warfare. *It will show how, as successive American governments sink deeper and deeper into the vortex of covert operations -- ostensibly to combat terrorism and Communist insurgencies -- the American people gradually lose touch with the democratic ideals that once defined their national self-concept.*

This book asks the question...what happens when "PHOENIX" hits home

REVIEW/SUMMARY

Douglas Valentine's book 'The Phoenix Program' gets the evolutionary information regarding this program correct. While there have been many books written about the 'Phoenix Program', Valentine's book is much more thoroughly researched than the other books. He has done his homework.

The program was, at the time and still is controversial. Back in the early days of the Vietnam War, Americans did not assassinate people for political reasons, or so we thought. Since those days, much has been admitted by the various intelligence agencies and our Government, about this practice. Today, information about 'black-ops' squads and their missions is readily accepted as being a necessary evil in War time.

When the Phoenix Program was in effect in Vietnam, MACV-SOG reported greatly reduced VC & NVA activities in the targeted AO. In other words, the program was successful. Was it a popular program? Obviously no, it was not. For very real political reasons, these missions were kept out of the main stream media, and in fact much of the program will never be known because, in the last few days of the South Vietnam Government, most of the Program's records were shredded, and are not recoverable.

All in all this book is the one book you should read if you want to get the information available today regarding the Phoenix Program, warts and all.



What does it say about the state of the nation that many on both the left and right are banking their hopes for the future of American democracy on the patriotism and competence of cloak-and-dagger spooks?

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PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN THOUGH THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM WEBSITES & OTHER SOURCES THAT APPEAR TO BE AUTHENTIC, I CAN NOT ENSURE THAT ALL THE DATA IN THIS ARTICLE IS ACCURATE AND CORRECT.