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## The United States Secret Service (USSS)

### Why I chose the Secret Service?

I chose the United States Secret Service as my project because I found it very interesting. I always have to keep an eye out for counterfeit money while working for a grocery store; I've just been a little civilian involved in the mission. I also was hoping to be an intern for them, but that didn't fall through. I had hoped with researching Secret Service more, it could shed some light on why I wasn't qualified enough. The title also has a very smooth ring to it that makes them very mysterious.

### History

The United States Secret Service was formed out of the need to fight a rampant problem in the newly formed United States. More than a third of America's currency was counterfeit all the way up to President Lincoln's time in office (National Archives and Records Administration). Taking advice from Secretary of Treasury Hugh McCulloch, on July 5, 1865 the United States Secret Service was formed with Chief William P. Wood as Director (National Archives and Records Administration). The Secret Service was placed under Department of Treasury for 138 years, but in 2003 the Secret Service was transferred over to Department of Homeland Security (Reese, 2013). Chief Wood went to quick work in the Secret Service, in "his first year he closed more than 200 counterfeiting plants" (National Archives and Records Administration). In 1967, Congress gave power to investigate anyone who could possibly be counterfeiting in the hands of the Secret Service. Congress then decided in 1977 to make counterfeiting of coins, gold and silver bars illegal (United States Secret Service, 2014). The Secret

Service kept only one mission for a couple of years and that was to investigate counterfeiting, but we all know them as the President protection detail although this didn't start until 1901.

After three assassinations: President Lincoln, President Garfield and President McKinley in 1901, it was decided to officially hand over Presidential protection detail to the Secret Service. It took 36 years and even with light security, before congress decided that the President needed protection.

The Secret Service had their mission split into two: one for protection while the other for investigation into different kinds of counterfeiting (United States Secret Service, 2014). Over a million acres of land was returned to the United States, when the Secret Service in 1906 started to investigate the west expansion (United States Secret Service, 2014). In a couple of years, congress would expand Secret Service protection to the Vice President, President-elect, and all members of the first family, as well as heads of other governments (National Archives and Records Administration). The Secret Service was so admired that President Roosevelt had a few agents moved over to the Department of Justice; these agents become the first to become the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (United States Secret Service, 2014). The Secret Service protection detail is usually referred to as Uniformed Division, which was once Executive Protective Services and before that called White House Police in 1922 (United States Secret Service, 2014). Congress has changed more of the protection detail of Secret Service than the investigation side. The Special Agent Division, which is the investigation side of Secret Service, has grown to incorporate many different priorities (Reese, 2013). They are in charge of “financial crimes, identity theft, counterfeiting, computer fraud, and computer based attacks on the nation’s financial, banking and telecommunications infrastructure” with so much more over the years (Reese, 2013). The Secret Service continues to evolve with our evolving world.

Media

The media seems to show the Secret Service agents as protecting, fighting heroes. Movies that recently came out involving the Secret Service are: White House Down and Olympus Has Fallen. These action packed movies show that these heroes do everything to protect the President and portrays them as honorable people who want to protect their families as well.

Hollywood celebrates the Secret Service as powerful human heroes, while the news media has an odd balance of making them out as great heroes or unprofessional men. Recently though the Secret Service is getting a very negative view from the backlash of Colombia, El Salvador, and Amsterdam. The Secret Service can keep themselves out of the media spot light unlike its fellow departments that land in more hot water. Movies see them as heroes while news currently thinks there can be adjustments to the agency, especially against any form of racism.

Secret Service Movies (Moviefone "IMDb,"):

- White House Down- A Man, who hopes to become a Secret Service agent, gets caught up in a takeover of the White House and has to protect the President and his daughter.
- Olympus Has Fallen-Dishonored ex-Secret Service agent gets swept up in a terrorist attack and has to save the President from kidnappers.
- Brake-An agent is kidnapped and has to live through mental and physical torture without giving any information about the President.
- The Sentinel- A Secret Service agent is wrongly accused of trying to assassinate the President, but has to do everything to prove their innocence and save the President.
- In Her Line of Fire-A female agent assigned to the vice President has to save him from kidnappers thanks to their plane going down in the Pacific.

- The Interpreter-A female Secret Service agent is assigned to investigate an interpreter that overheard an assassination plot.
- Spartan-An agent investigates the kidnapping of a high-ranking government official's daughter.
- Double Identity-A doctor's identity is stolen and a Secret Service agent must help her stay alive.

## Scandals

### Racism-

The Secret Service has its scandals. For a while the Secret Service has been sued by multiple African-American agents for discrimination (Newsweek Staff, 2008). Multiple experienced African-American agents are being passed up on promotions for other white officers with less experience than them. While the culture of Secret Service has a "good ole boy" feel, it doesn't help that racist e-mails have been passed around and even blunt racism, such as by covering up a black agents face with paper in the Secret Service calendar that hangs in agent's cubicles (Newsweek Staff, 2008). The Secret Service is very resilient on giving over any of this evidence to the courts and believe that they are handling the very few in their opinion discrimination cases. Although FBI has dealt with their discrimination with procedures late in the 90's the Secret Service drags its feet to implement anything (Newsweek Staff, 2008).

### El Salvador-

Secret Service agents aren't too immune to the temptation of the flesh; the problem is that prostitution isn't anywhere near to being legal (Jackson, 2012). There are investigations going on in the Secret Service about possible allegations of an advanced team of agents that attended a strip club, received sexual favors there, and even took escorts back to the hotel. In a report given describing the agent's conduct with the owner and witnesses, it was reported the officers were drunk and bragging that

they do this kind of stuff all the time (Jackson, 2012). The incident is still being investigated; a solution by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said that the Secret Service should just hire more women (Jackson, 2012).

#### Colombia-

A disagreement on how much money a Secret Service agent should pay a prostitute has landed over 10 agents in boiling water (Schmidt, 2012). Secret Service fears that this might go deeper in the agency. This all stems from an advanced team sent to Colombia to get ready for the arrival of President Obama. A supervisor has been fired, while two agents have resigned and eight are still under investigation (Schmidt, 2012). The Secret Service is doing everything in their power to find out the truth, including lie detectors. United States officials congratulate the Secret Service in such swift action into investigating the allegations (Schmidt, 2012). Prostitution scandals raise fear of possible leaks of information and jeopardizing the country and the President (Schmidt, 2012).

#### Amsterdam-

The Secret Service can't seem to have a break from scandals, even though the Colombia scandal cost multiple officers and even the head of the agency resigned. Sadly, a dark mark came from the Netherlands where an agent was found in the hallway of his hotel passed out from drinking. Three agents were sent back for disciplinary reasons (Acosta, 2014). It seems that alcohol might be a danger for the Secret Service, especially after an agent was "involved in a traffic accident in Florida and alcohol use was suspected" (Acosta, 2014). Right now, the Secret Service has not changed any rules involving alcohol consumption (Acosta, 2014).

#### Success

#### Bullet for a President-

Thanks to incredible reaction training given by the Secret Service, agent Tim McCarthy was able to take a bullet for President Reagan. Only being President for 60 days doesn't make Presidents any safer, on March 30th 1981 a man named John Hinckley Jr. fired six rounds, one landing in the agent and another into the President (Crean, 2004). What was supposed to be a normal speech day in the Hilton Hotel, the President was shot on the way to the armored car. McCarthy gives thanks to his training from the Secret Service; it trained them extensively to protect the President. Unlike police and military that are trained to get themselves to cover, Secret Service agents are trained to protect the President no matter what (Crean, 2004). Lucky for the United States, Reagan survived the assassination attempt on his life. McCarthy was very proud of how quick Reagan moved on from the event and it helped him do the same (Crean, 2004). McCarthy visited the funeral of Reagan and even had an intimate chat with Mrs. Reagan. The country owes McCarthy thanks for his extraordinary heroism (Crean, 2004).

#### Nets 19 Arrests-

The Secret Service has arrested over 19 different individuals around the country in the first big Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization. This group is partaking in identity theft, counterfeit, credit card trafficking, producing and trafficking false identification documents, plus conspiracy ("U.S. Secret Service's," 2012). This arrest has lead Secret Service to over fifty more members of the group. Working together with Las Vegas Electronic Crimes Task Force, Immigration and Customs Enforcement to combine their resources and great communication to catch all these offenders that threat personal and financial information of everyday people. The group even has a website that sells the contraband and stolen information ("U.S. Secret Service's," 2012). Higher employees would even test the products that would be sold on the website. While doing this, offenders tried their best to hide their identities with

false information and false PayPal accounts and more. The Secret Service has proven once again why the Special field agents are so important to the American people; by protecting our valuable financial identities ("U.S. Secret Service's," 2012).

Timeline of Major Events (United States Secret Service, 2014; National Archives and Records Administration; Reese, 2013)

- 1865-Secret Service is created in July 5, 1865 by Treasury Hugh McCulloch appointing Chief William P. Wood to lead it. Chief Wood closes over 200 counterfeiting Plants.
- 1867-Responsibilities of the Secret Service now encompasses investigating groups that plan or involved in frauds.
- 1877-Congress makes an act making duplicates of coins, gold or silver bars not authorized by the government illegal.
- 1883-Officially a department.
- 1902-Takes over full-time protection of the President from the assassination of President McKinley the year before.
- 1906-Congress gives funds to Secret Service to protect the President. While the investigation unit gets the government back millions of acres taken illegally during western expansion.
- 1908-Agents go over to the Department of Justice to soon form the nucleus of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- 1917-Threatening the President is now a felony crime.
- 1922-President Harding makes White House Police Force.
- 1930-Secret Service absorbs White House Police Force.
- 1950-Attempt on President Truman by Advocates for Puerto Rico

- 1951-Secret Service is permanently authorized to protect President, their immediate family, elected for presidency and vice President.
- 1963-Assassination of President Kennedy, the only President to die in Secret Service protection. His death sparked the creation of the “Beast,” the President’s armored enclosed car (National Geographic, 2004).
- 1968-Protection extended to major candidates for Presidency.
- 1970-Protection extended to diplomats.
- 1975-Ford, only President to have two different attempts, one by a “Manson Family” follower and another to cause a revolution.
- 1977-White House Police Force becomes Executive Protective Server then to become the official Uniformed Division, still currently used to this day.
- 1981-President Reagan, six shots fired close range by mentally unstable man. Only one bullet made it and another was taken by an agent. The President and the agent recovered.
- 1984-Special Division extends to investigating credit card fraud, and computer fraud.
- 1986-Secret Service engulfs Treasury Police Force.
- 1994-Congress gives authority to Secret Service to go outside of the United States for any American currency fraud abroad. President Clinton had an attempt on his life, but the motive was unknown.
- 1997-Protection of President and his family is now restricted to only 10 years, instead of lifetime protection.
- 1998-Identity Theft is recognized and stated illegal.



- 2000-National Special Security Event is made where the Secret Service has complete control over national events.
- 2001-Increased investigation power involving frauds involving the computer.
- 2003- Secret Service is officially transferred from Treasury to Department of Homeland Security.
- 2004-Barbara Riggs first female Deputy Director.
- 2005-There was an attempt on President Bush, motives unknown.
- 2006-Secret Service Electronic Crimes Task Force expands.
- 2007-First earliest protection detail for a candidate: Barack Obama.
- 2009-Three New Electronic Crimes Task Forces and first European Electronic Crimes Task Force (Rome, Italy) ("U.S. Secret Service," 2009).
- 2012-Colombia Scandal (Schmidt, 2012)
- 2013-El Salvador Scandal investigations (Jackson, 2012)
- 2013-Obama revitalizes lifetime protection after presidency for him, Bush and future Presidents (Compton, 2013).

### Investigation & Protection

#### ***“MISSION***

*The mission of the United States Secret Service is to safeguard the nation's financial infrastructure and payment systems to preserve the integrity of the economy, and to protect national leaders, visiting heads of state and government, designated sites and National Special Security Events.*

## *VISION*

*The vision of the United States Secret Service is to uphold the tradition of excellence in its investigative and protective mission through a dedicated, highly-trained, diverse, partner-oriented workforce that employs progressive technology and promotes professionalism”*  
(United States Secret Service, 2002).

The purpose of the Investigation branch of Secret Service is to investigate counterfeiting, forging and changing currency, and securities, but it has expanded past that throughout the years. The investigation division has even had espionage under their during the Spanish-American War and World War 1, that authority diminished once the wars were over (Reese, 2013). Agents were given power to detect, arrest, and deliver anyone violating currency laws. They were also handed down investigation into anything against the “federal deposit Insurance Corporation, federal land banks, joint-stock land banks, and national farm loan associations” (Reese, 2013). Once computers came along it also handed down credit card and computer fraud. With new acts, the Secret Service could go after anyone making American currency outside the United States. Identity Theft and telemarketing scams were recognized and investigated. After 9/11, the Secret Service was given permission to “establish nationwide electronic crime task forces to assist law enforcement, private sector, and academic entities in detecting and suppressing computer-based crimes” (Reese, 2013). Sadly, investigation only takes 37% of Secret Services funding (Reese, 2013). Even with less funding the investigation part of the Secret Service is still amazing and very valuable part of the United States.

The protection branch of the Secret Service wasn’t made official for many years after Secret Service began as a department. After three assassinations, it was decided the President needed

protection. It took congress a little bit to get funds to fund the protection of the President (Reese, 2013). Protection of the people around the President grew over the years. Protections now included “executive mansion and grounds, building with Presidential offices, President and immediate family, foreign diplomatic missions located in the metropolitan DC area, foreign diplomatic missions located in the United States, its territories, and its possessions” (Reese, 2013). The Protection detail has swallowed up Executive Protective Service (protected the white house grounds) and Treasury Police Force. This fusion is referred to as the Secret Service Uniformed Division. Protection even expanded more to protect certain property, federal officials including their families, and Vice President’s spouse (Reese, 2013). The agency was even given protection and planning responsibilities of national events, the National Special Security Events (NSSEs). National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) was also made to train agencies for “threat assessment training, consulting on complex threat assessment cases, researching threat assessment and targeted violence, promoting standardization of federal, state, and local threat assessments and investigations and other threat assessment activities as determined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)” (Reese, 2013). Protection division of the Secret Service has more revisions and has had more add-ons than the investigation division. It also receives 63% of funding and also has three times the man power (Reese, 2013). Thanks to the protection being so large and more in the media with protecting important figures, they are the more remembered division.

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