

THE SEARCH FOR THE
"MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE"
THE CIA AND MIND CONTROL

John Marks

NYT
Times
BOOKS

1979

in covert operations, and Morse Allen was sufficiently impressed to report back to his bosses the hypnotist's claim that "he spent approximately five nights a week away from home engaging in sexual intercourse."

Apart from the bragging, the stage hypnotist did give Morse Allen a short education in how to capture a subject's attention and induce a trance. Allen returned to Washington more convinced than ever of the benefits of working hypnosis into the ARTICHOKE repertory and of the need to build a defense against it. With permission from above, he decided to take his hypnosis studies further, right in his own office. He asked young CIA secretaries to stay after work and ran them through the hypnotic paces—proving to his own satisfaction that he could make them do whatever he wanted. He had secretaries steal SECRET files and pass them on to total strangers, thus violating the most basic CIA security rules. He got them to steal from each other and to start fires. He made one of them report to the bedroom of a strange man and then go into a deep sleep. "This activity clearly indicates that individuals under hypnosis might be compromised and blackmailed," Allen wrote.

On February 19, 1954, Morse Allen simulated the ultimate experiment in hypnosis: the creation of a "Manchurian Candidate," or programmed assassin. Allen's "victim" was a secretary whom he put into a deep trance and told to keep sleeping until he ordered otherwise. He then hypnotized a second secretary and told her that if she could not wake up her friend, "her rage would be so great that she would not hesitate to 'kill.'" Allen left a pistol nearby, which the secretary had no way of knowing was unloaded. Even though she had earlier expressed a fear of firearms of any kind, she picked up the gun and "shot" her sleeping friend. After Allen brought the "killer" out of her trance, she had apparent amnesia for the event, denying she would ever shoot anyone.

With this experiment, Morse Allen took the testing as far as he could on a make-believe basis, but he was neither satisfied nor convinced that hypnosis would produce such spectacular results in an operational setting. All he felt he had proved was that an impressionable young volunteer would accept a command from a legitimate authority figure to take an action she may have sensed would not end in tragedy. She presumably trusted the CIA enough as an institution and Morse Allen as an individual to believe he would not let her do anything wrong.

aptured popular imagination. Men have long used hypnotic powers to seduce women. When CIA officials instituted Mind War Days, they tried to use hypnosis to force their favors

as well as popular novelists. Major breakthroughs have been achieved in the opposite. The use of hypnosis by the academics anyway, looking for applications to the mind. In hypnosis, the answers were being found. Within 10 years after the war, the search for practical

er, Morse Allen of AR-15 fame read everything he could get his hands on about hypnosis. He went to New York for a session with a hypnotist. This hypnotist had a heart, and he bombarded Allen with hypnosis to seduce his wife. The chief that he had convinced her husband and that hypnosis has a place