

Women of the CIA

by Connecticut Walker

LANGLEY, VA.

Most people think of espionage as a man's world. But just as history has its Mata Hari and fiction its Modesty Blaise, so the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has a handful of high-ranking women professionals.

Take Jenonne Walker, a veteran intelligence analyst and executive assistant to Director William E. Colby. Or take Pat Taylor, a member of the agency's Office of Current Intelligence. Or Helene Boatner, a top economist who helps supervise the CIA's secret budget. Or the chief of the Soviet Internal Affairs branch, one of Washington's most respected Kremlinologists—a woman who has come up through the ranks of the CIA.

For the first time, the CIA has permitted all these women to be interviewed. Some, like the Kremlinologist and a number of clandestine operators, asked that their names not be used in

print because of the political sensitivity of their jobs.

Others, however, are not worried about PARADE blowing their "cover." They work in the open—gathering, evaluating, and analyzing information, or administering the CIA's global operations from the agency's sprawling headquarters in Langley, Va.

A spokeswoman's voice

As Helene Boatner puts it, "There are a lot of people in the CIA who cannot speak up, so it behooves those of us who can to inform and educate the American people about what we do."

Not that the agency was at first eager to open its door even a crack to PARADE. In keeping with the time-honored tradition of maintaining low and often invisible profiles, agency officials turned down an initial request for interviews with women. But then Director Colby intervened. He sug-

gested to his colleagues that the agency, with all its mounting controversial publicity, needed to increase its press accessibility and public accountability.

While waiting to interview women at the CIA, PARADE asked two former high-ranking male agency officials what it took for a woman to break into intelligence work—and to get ahead.

To James Angleton, recently retired after 21 years as chief of counterintelligence, the ideal female candidate is one who "has lived abroad, possesses special attributes, especially political awareness, an area of expertise, and a fluency with foreign languages. A serious, ambitious and competitive woman who wishes to reach the top," Angleton avers, "can find fulfillment in a CIA career."

Says Ray Cline, former deputy director of the CIA: "If you look at women in responsible positions at the agency, you notice that they achieved their jobs

through ability, of course, but also through flexibility in accepting challenging assignments. Most of them are single."

No wonder. The agency has not made it easy for married women to join its ranks. Spouses are not allowed to work in the same offices. A wife may not take her husband abroad as a dependent. She must take periodic lie-detector tests to make sure she has not disclosed classified information to friends or relatives—or to her husband if he does not work for the agency. Until this year, the CIA's Career Trainee Program, which is geared toward turning out clandestine operators, admitted no married women at all.

Fits to a T

Angleton's and Cline's descriptions of the ideal woman for the CIA fits Jenonne Walker. After 12 years at a variety of posts in the intelligence division, this 40-year-old native of Oklahoma is now Colby's No. 1 aide. To reach her office a PARADE reporter, tagged with a badge marked "visitor," was ushered up to the seventh floor of CIA headquarters in a private, locked elevator. Miss Walker's office is next door to Colby's and offers a commanding view of the lush green Virginia countryside.

She is an attractive woman with a frank but friendly manner. "The director has a group of special



CIA Director William E. Colby, with three aides. From left: Jenonne Walker, his executive assistant; Pat Taylor of the counterintelligence

staff, and top economist Helene Boatner. The agency wants to recruit more women as well as more blacks and members of other minorities.

assistants — 11 National Intelligence Officers who know what's going on in different areas of the world," she explains. "I act as a clearing house for other agency staff and as an information funnel for Colby. I took this job about two years ago when he became director. He told me I was to 'educate him on the substance.' By that he meant I had the responsibility of introducing him to the intelligence side of the agency." (Before becoming head of CIA, Colby spent most of his career in the "black," or covert, side of the business.)

The Colby administration

"It's my job to know the major foreign intelligence questions that analysts around town are disagreeing about," continues Miss Walker. "I sometimes get the analysts together so Colby can hear all sides of an issue. I also staff-out orders for him. I also check on the progress of things he wants done and I suggest other projects he might begin.

"This is not an organization where orders are really necessary. It's more a matter of monitoring and suggesting activities. It's a very personal operation. Colby's is a small, personal office."

The job of special assistant to the director is a rotating assignment. Miss Walker will be transferred later this summer. "I hanker after my own cabbage patch," she says. "I'll miss the constant access to the director, but I look forward to getting back to writing my own reports."

When Jenonne Walker rejoins the ranks of the analysts, one of her most distinguished colleagues will be the woman who serves as branch chief for Soviet Internal Affairs. She is constantly asked by policymakers to assess the political and physical health of Soviet Communist Party boss Leonid Brezhnev and to guide speculation about who his successor might be. She consented to talk to PARADE on condition that her name not be printed.

Feminine gumshoe

"In the Soviet field, length of experience counts," she says. "There are not many people in this town who have outlasted me. I've focused on the USSR since 1958. My work involves compiling all available information, regardless of its source, then examining the gaps and trying to guess what's in them. It's something like reading a mystery novel: as you turn each page you discover another piece of information, but you never get the whole story."

At 54, this capable knowledgeable lady earns \$32,800 a year—near the top of the civil service scale. But she admits: "There were long dry periods when I thought I wasn't going anywhere. Looking back, however, I would take a job here again without question."

Another CIA professional who says she has no regrets is Helene Boatner, the first woman economist in the



A staff member selects a Russian book for study. The head of the Soviet Internal Affairs branch is a woman, who requested *Parade's* reporter not reveal her name.

agency's budget office. She helps prepare the agency's requests for money from Congress and monitors the CIA's immense expenditures. A math major from the University of Texas, she was hired in 1963, then got a master's degree in economics. She has worked in the agency's Office of Economic Research, the now-defunct Office of National Estimates and attended the National War College. Her present job pays close to \$35,000 a year.

Good place to work

"If you're interested in intelligence analysis or foreign affairs," says Miss Boatner, "I feel the agency is a better place to work than the State Department."

Why?

"Because the agency has no policy ax to grind. It's independent of bureaucratic interests. While it's not easy even here to suggest that American policy in any given area is wrong or misguided, it's more possible here than in any other place in the government."

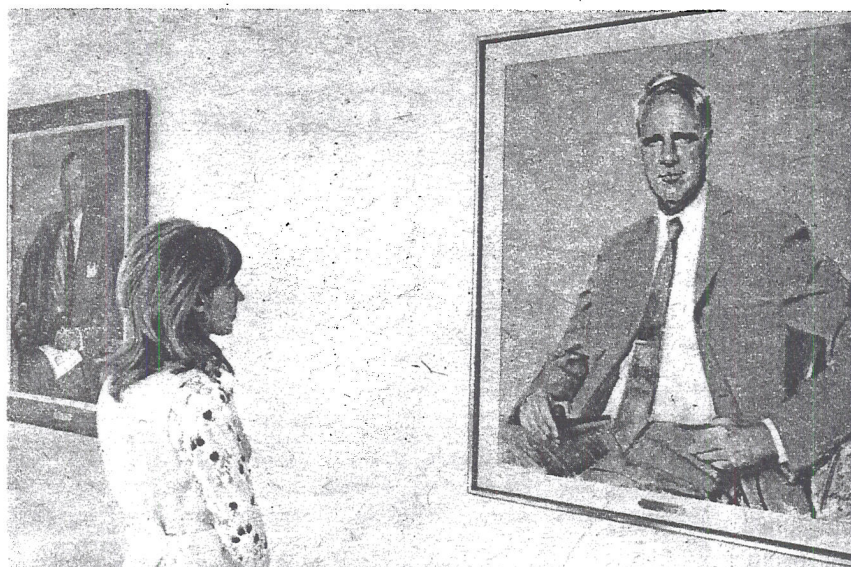
Blonde, 39-year-old Pat Taylor, an analyst for the Office of Current Intel-

ligence, was asked when she meets people away from her job if she is reluctant to admit she works for the CIA.

"No," she responds. "When friends learn I work here, I sometimes encounter curiosity but not hostility. The agency encourages its analysts to publish their writings outside, to attend meetings, and to take graduate courses. Sometimes I'll enter a conference wearing my name tag which clearly identifies me as a CIA employee, and I'll get a couple of blinks—but nothing else."

There is one group of CIA women who never wear name tags. These are the spies and counterspies—the women in the clandestine services.

Traditionally women have been relegated to a minor role on the fringes of spy activity. A woman attached to a foreign "station," or outpost, might have accompanied a male colleague to a restaurant, making it appear as if a husband and wife were dining out. Then she might be left at the table alone while her companion, "a case officer" in charge of "running" an agent, slipped into the men's room to pick up a message left in a "dead drop" by one of



In a gallery devoted to portraits of former CIA directors, an employee looks at James Schlesinger, now Defense Secretary. At left is a portrait of Richard Helms.

his local contacts.

However, a few women have themselves worked as "case officers" abroad. One, with seven years' experience in the field, said, "Year by year there are more women case officers in the business, but they're still outnumbered by men. Covert operators must be inconspicuous. In such areas as the Moslem world, cultural mores prevent women from mingling freely and unobtrusively in public. In Western Europe, however, women now supervise agents and sometimes recruit them. They also provide operational support—counter-surveillance, keeping a lookout during a meeting between a case officer and an agent, renting safe houses (where a rendezvous can take place) and acting as couriers. It's not glamorous work, but it's vitally important."

Clandestine interview

A retired female member of the counterintelligence staff, who agreed to be interviewed by telephone but would not be identified, concurs: "Without women, the counterintelligence office would be a lost branch. Women often served to supply all the digging—the leads, the targets."

But not, the agency insists, their bodies. The CIA claims to be above using its women to seduce or entrap potential foreign agents. A former London station chief once explained to his deputy, "Why, we couldn't ask American women to do things which would involve exploiting their sex!" Instead, say the old pros, if a clandestine operator wants to ensnare a foreign intelligence officer through the use of female charms, he hires prostitutes or relies on willing local agents. According to one former top-level agency official, foreign women have seduced "an astonishing number" of Russian spies on behalf of the CIA.

Help from drug agents

The CIA has also used U.S. narcotics men from time to time to maintain "love dens" in New York City and San Francisco, where prostitutes in the pay of the agency have lured foreign intelligence officers and then later tried to blackmail them into divulging secret information.

Despite the successful careers of some, the women of the CIA still have a long way to go. Four times as many men as women apply to the agency for jobs, and only 5 per cent of the agency's female staff earn \$22,000 or above as compared to 49 per cent of the men.

But high-ranking women are not the rarity they were 10 years ago. The agency has generated a campaign to recruit more women as well as more blacks and members of other minorities.

"I think my being a woman was a factor in my being selected for this job," says Director Colby's executive assistant Jenonne Walker—adding with a smile, "but Colby isn't likely to admit it."