

And the Psyche Of Candy Jones

By Judith Anderson

It's one of those stranger-than-fiction stories, how a glamorous model of the '40s and '50s became a courier for the CIA and wound up as a guinea pig for brainwashing experiments.

It is a story full of speculation and unanswered questions. There is a "Three Faces of Eve" quality about it in the emergence of a split personality. The fact that the woman involved remembered nothing of the ordeal she supposedly underwent until she heard tapes of conversations she had made under hypnosis invites skepticism.

Still, it could have happened.

A noted psychiatrist who examined the woman found her highly hypnotizable and subject to "global amnesia," forgetting many events of her past. And the CIA has admitted to experiments in mind control.

The woman is Candy Jones, a familiar face on magazine covers three decades ago and more recently as a beauty consultant on television. A Miss Atlantic City title had led to a modeling career and marriage to Harry Conover, who owned a prominent modeling agency in New York.

The marriage ended in 1959 in bitterness and near bankruptcy. A year later, bearing the burden of putting three sons through private school and paying the modeling agency's debts, Jones was receptive to the proposition that was made to her.

This is the part of the story that Jones, now in her mid-50s, can remember without the aid of hypnosis: An FBI agent came to the modeling agency and asked if she would mind receiving mail addressed to fictitious persons. Not only wouldn't she mind, Jones said this week on a trip to San Francisco, but she also felt "very honored to do it."

A year later her patriotism was tapped again, when a retired Army general she knew asked her to take a letter on a business trip she had scheduled and deliver it to a man in San Francisco.

That man turned out to be a psychiatrist she had met 15 years earlier in the Philippines. Instead of accepting the letter at her hotel, the man, whom she's given the pseudonym of Dr. Gilbert Jensen, insisted she visit his office in Oakland the following day, where he offered her money for acting as a CIA courier.

Jones did not hesitate to accept. She said she had the feeling she was doing something for her country.

"After all, I was involved in World War II (doing canteen shows for servicemen), I had been in the Girl Scouts and a troop leader and the whole thing. I was always sort of corny that way."

Besides, "it was payment for services rendered," she added.

But unbeknownst to her the deal involved more than simple messenger work. The events of the next 12 years were brought out recently by Candy Jones' second husband, New York radio talk show host Long John Nebel, when he began hypnotizing his wife because of her strange shifts in mood and her insomnia.

Under hypnosis, Jones began to reveal tidbits about her past and the apparent existence of a second, more aggressive personality.

This second personality, called Arlene, had been a fantasy friend of Candy's since childhood. "She was a figment of my imagination ... the person I wanted to be as a child," Jones recalled.

Regressions during her husband's hypnosis brought out a strange tale of how Jensen had given her regular injections of drugs, disguised as vitamin B-12 shots to give her more energy, and had proceeded to strengthen the second personality, under hypnosis, to do his bidding.

Over the years, Candy/Arlene purportedly attended a CIA "hate school, where she was programmed to be suspicious of everyone and avoid social contacts, and was taken to CIA headquarters in Virginia to demonstrate the mind-controlling miracles Jensen had worked.

Finally, when Candy threatened to quit the courier business, she was given instructions for committing suicide on a vacation in the Bahamas, an event that was averted when Candy canceled her plane reservations at the last minute.

At least that is the story that emerged from Jones' sessions of hypnosis with her husband and is documented in a new book, "The Control of Candy Jones."

Is the story to be believed?

Donald Bain, a writer of non-fiction books, was skeptical when his old friend John Nebel invited him to listen to some

of the tapes for a possible book.

"I wanted to doubt the story," said Bain, who accompanied Jones on her promotional tour. "But after listening to the tapes, I found an underlying truth to it."

Bain is aware that revelations made under hypnosis may not be factual. He

Programmed to commit suicide in the Bahamas?

also frankly admits that the story "is so full of gaps, it's only an interim report." But he has formulated opinions on what he has heard.

For example, why Candy Jones? Because she traveled regularly as a beauty consultant and fashion show commentator, and "it was a simple thing to carry messages." It is no coincidence, Bain believes, that Dr. Jensen and another psychiatrist who later entered the picture had known Jones 15 years earlier.

But Bain doubts she ever carried a real message. He thinks the envelopes were empty and Jones was chosen to test the CIA's experiments designed to produce "the perfect agent."

Jones cannot accept the possibility that she was "used" strictly for the brainwashing experiments, although close scrutiny of the envelopes held up to a light bulb never produced a shadow of a message. "I wondered if they used lemon juice," she said in a rare moment of humor.

The CIA has admitted it once experimented with behavior-influencing drugs and other means of controlling human behavior, sometimes with unsuspecting subjects. But since all such experiments were said to have halted in 1967, and Jensen supposedly continued his manipulation of Jones until late 1971, Bain suspects the psychiatrist went beyond his CIA instructions.

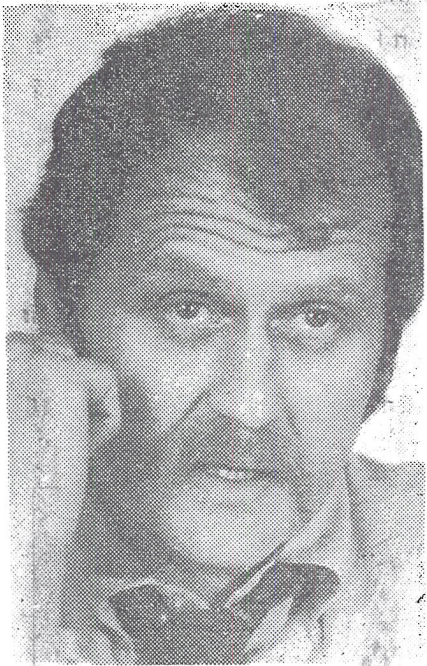
"Maybe he was with some kind of extremist organization" that had its own plans for people like Jones.

It's still "very painful" for Jones to talk about the ordeal and to listen to the tapes of her alter ego, Arlene. She was tense throughout this week's interview and given to long digressions from the subject. But going public, she said, has been "pretty much of a catharsis."

Arlene emerges less and less frequently these days. Psychiatrists who have examined Jones have found no signs of mental illness and "no brain damage."

Jones hopes her story will serve as "a warning" of the dangers of

mind-control. hypnosis. He expects there will be more to the story. He plans to request Jones' file from the CIA and sue the CIA and Jensen, who has moved away from the Bay Area but still practices psychiatry

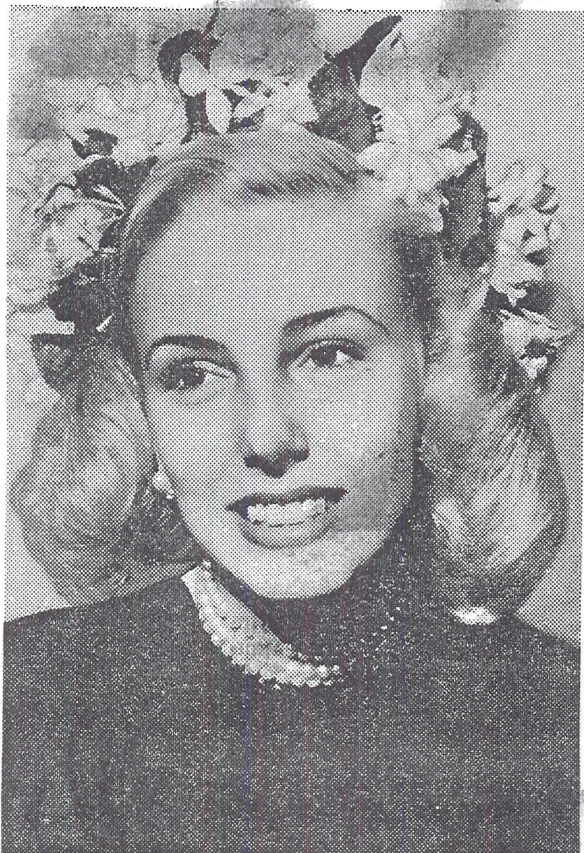


Author Donald Bain didn't want to believe her story

in this country.

"We're sure there is no file," said Bain, and the lawsuit will have to be argued strictly on "circumstantial and tangential evidence."

"Can you imagine being on a jury and listening to this story?" Bain asked incredulously. "The evidence is all based on hypnotic regression," which, until very recently, was not admissible in court. "It's her word against his."



Candy Jones claims she was the unwitting victim of a CIA brainwashing experiment, at left, as she looked during her days as a top model