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## CONTROLLING HEARTS AND MINDS

John Marks is riding a wave that may carry him to his second best-seller. The first, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, written with former Agency official Victor Marchetti, was the first book published with blank spaces because of prior censorship by the CIA. "They gave us a best-seller by doing it," Marks told the *Phoenix*.

His latest book, *The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate,"* is an account of the CIA's mind-control projects. The story told in the book became the subject of a recent ABC-TV documentary for which Marks worked as a consultant and appeared on camera.

"*Manchurian Candidate*" is based on 16,000 pages of CIA documents unearthed by Marks through numerous Freedom of Information Act requests (FOIA). "Without these documents," Marks wrote, "the best investigative reporting would not have produced a book and the secrets of CIA mind-control work would have remained buried forever, as the men who knew them had always intended."

Marks, who grew up in the suburbs of New York and New Jersey, is 35 years old. He graduated from Cornell in 1965, "before the colleges started to be different than they had been for the 20 years before," and joined the Foreign Service six months later "kind of in the tail end of the Kennedy enthusiasm — he was dead, but still it seemed like a nobler thing than selling insurance, which was what my father wanted me to do, and it was almost an act of rebellion.

"I was in for four-and-a-half years. My first assignment was supposed to have been London, but my draft board was about to draft me and the State Department switched my assignment to Vietnam. I'm one of the few people you ever met who went to Vietnam to avoid the draft," he said, laughing.

The State Department lent Marks to the Agency for International Development (AID), where he worked with the "pacification" program. "I was 22 and I was the assistant AID man in a Viet-

namese province trying to 'win hearts and minds.' I had a warehouse full of cement and roofing and food, and I fed the hungry, I built schools for those who needed them and it was very heady stuff. It never really accomplished anything but, on the other hand, it was heady stuff."

Was Marks aware of the CIA in those days? "Yeah, well, in the provincial capital of the province in which I lived there was the embassy compound, which was the CIA compound. Those were the spooks and I used to play poker with them every Monday night . . . I used to win a lot of money from them in poker." Were they lousy bluffers? "Yeah, well, they were contract people (i.e., not regular CIA officers), which was told to me later on."

After a year and a half in Vietnam, Marks returned to the US, his doubts about the war made worse by the 1968 Tet offensive. "I watched the war from the roof of my apartment house . . . which was kind of disillusioning. I mean, if the war was going as well as they said, why were they having this battle in my neighborhood?"

He returned in time for the McCarthy campaign, the abdication of LBJ and the profound social upheavals in the US. He worked for State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, but found himself going off in "different directions." "I had access to some interesting information and I was seeing for the first time how American intelligence functioned . . . My glimpse of the government at the highest levels did not encourage me. All the more, LBJ used to say, 'If you only saw the information I saw, you'd know why we're fighting this war' — and I saw it, and it seemed even dumber from that level."

After the invasion of Cambodia, Marks resigned from the Foreign Service to become foreign-policy adviser to a Republican dove, Sen. Clifford Case of New Jersey. He drafted several pieces of anti-war legislation, including the Case-Church amendment, which stopped the bombing.

While working for Case in 1971, Marks read articles about Victor Marchetti, a former CIA official who had written a novel, *The Rope Dancer*, about the intelligence nether world. Marks, who'd written only one article at that point, contacted Marchetti, and their meetings led to the collaboration that produced a best-selling previously censored book.

"It took about nine months to do the book, and then I decreed myself a freelance writer. It beats working," he said. After four or five months of free-lancing, he took a job at the Washington-based Center for National Security Studies, where he directed a CIA project that aimed to eliminate the intelligence agencies' abuses. He wrote a great deal and "switched hats when it suited me from journalist to activist."

During that time, he became interested in the CIA's history of mind-control experiments and began filing FOIA requests. "There were other people who were interested, but I was the only one I know of who was pursuing it from about 1975 on. I had picked up on a couple of lines in the Rockefeller Commission Report (*Report to the President by the Commission on CIA Activities*, June, 1975), which the rest of the press had ignored.

"I got myself some fancy lawyers from Sargent Shriver's Washington law firm — *pro bono* — and we kind of worked out a pattern that the government would send me documents whenever a deadline was coming up in return for not having to meet the deadline. That went on into the summer of 1977, when the government notified my lawyers that they had found thousands of new pages and they would be setting up a schedule to release it to me." Marks's "back-burner" project became a book idea.

He employed several researchers to help him get through the boxes of documents released by the CIA and to do some of the initial interviews for the book, which was published by Times Books.