

The Secret
at
Beckham Manor

A Novel

By

Thomas J. Morrow

A continuation of his previous novel,

“Nebraska Doppelganger.”

Edited By James L. Martin

Old Warriors Publishing Co ---- Oceanside, California

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The Secret at Beckham Manor

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About the author

Thomas J. Morrow lived in Nebraska and Iowa during his youth. His great-grandparents homesteaded on a sand hills farm around the turn-of-the 20th century, living in a “soddie” in Box Butte County north of Scottsbluff.

His mother graduated from Hemingford High School in the small farming community where his grandparents operated a bakery during the early '30s.

His father's family were merchants in Seymour, Iowa some 7 miles north of the Missouri border, 180 miles east of the Missouri River and Nebraska.

During World War II, the Morrow family lived in Lincoln where his father worked as a foreman at the Goodyear Rubber Company's Havelock plant where rubber gas tanks for B-29 super fortress bombers were built.

The author graduated from high school in Seymour, Iowa, and through the years earned three college degrees.

For the past 40 years, he has enjoyed life as a newspaper reporter and editor, with the past 15 years spent as the daily community columnist for the *North County Times* in Oceanside, just north of San Diego, California. He is semi-retired from the newspaper life in 2007.

The author spent a lifetime interviewing and listening to the stories and experiences of veterans of World War II, in particular those who served in the European theater of operations.

Other than the leading German and American historical figures, all characters are fictional.

As an award-winning newspaper reporter and columnist, the author interviewed dozens of Allied and German combat veterans of World War II while doing research for this book.

The Secret at Beckham Manor

A Novel by Thomas J. Morrow

Dedication

I dedicate this novel to someone I have never met – my editor, **James H. Martin** of Rocky Mount, N.C.

For a lay wordsmith, Jim is the best editor I've ever worked with during my 40 years as a writer.

The Internet is a fascinating creation and, for me, a very valuable and beneficial device. In early 2008, Jim e-mailed me a note of praise for my first novel after discovering it on my Web site. His father, Carroll F. Martin, Jr., had been a U.S. Army first lieutenant fighting in Germany during World War II. Jim had written his father's biography and was curious about my novel, "Nebraska Doppelganger."

Over the last year we've formed a close e-mail friendship. I write and he edits. Jim knows what I am trying to convey, removes unwanted comma, corrects my spelling, and moves my errant grammar when necessary. He's a wonderful researcher and probably knows more about Nazi Germany than those who lived through that terrible time.

Jim, I'll never be able to thank you enough for your good work.

Author's Note:

While there are some real historical characters referenced in this novel, all other characters, including the Beckham and Krauss families are fictitious. Any similarities between actual persons living or dead are purely coincidental.

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Foreword

The directive from Germany's famed "Desert Fox," the beleaguered commander of the Atlantic Wall on the Western Front, was a one-word message: "Now."

The missive was delivered by special military courier to German Lieutenant Colonel Dieter Zeis at his bomb-shattered office bunker in Belgium. The message's authorship was unmistakable that of Erwin Rommel. The three-letter communiqué had the Field Marshal's familiar flourished scroll underlining it.

Dieter Zeis knew exactly what Rommel meant. It was the go-ahead signal to move on a last-ditch effort to save the Fatherland from total destruction. Dieter's orders had been detailed to him at a secret meeting before the June landing by the Allied forces: "Make your way to England at all costs and personally contact British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill or Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower."

The proposal was Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's personal plan for surrendering the German Wehrmacht. While other senior German officers concurred, only Rommel had the courage to attempt such a bold and drastic move.

During their last meeting, Rommel left little doubt with Dieter that the old warrior's days were numbered; nevertheless, the young officer continued to hold hope his general's plan would work and the country he loved so dearly could be spared from further destruction. The German High Command in Berlin was at the mercy of a madman—Adolf Hitler. He had to be stopped. The July 20, 1944 assassination attempt on Der Führer had failed. Rommel knew sooner or later his part in the plot, albeit a minor one, would be discovered. Dieter Zeis was one of the few remaining men the Field Marshal could trust.

Geographically, Zeis was well positioned on the Western Front facing Rommel's old nemesis—British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, now Commander of the 21st Army Group consisting of the British Second Army, the Canadian First Army, and the American Ninth Army. And, Zeis was prepared for the occasion. His English accent was well groomed for the Royal Army officer's uniform he was about to don. Dieter had learned to speak, read, and write English fluently from an Oxford graduate student he had befriended and roomed with back in 1937 at Heidelberg University. From this point on he would be British Major Derek Eaton-Jones—at least until he could find his way to Whitehall or Grosvenor Square in London. As dramatic, ambitious, and foolhardy as it was, this was Rommel's last command to his most trusted friend and fellow German soldier.

Chapter

1

It was the news from Kearney, Nebraska, Cindy Krauss was dreading but expecting. Her Grandmother Harriet Krauss was dead at the age of 86. The rigors of Alzheimer Disease had taken its toll, erasing the many historical events the family's matriarch had witnessed.

Few people living today knew Grandma Krauss' full story. Her husband, John Krauss had confided in his granddaughter two years earlier as to the true identity of his wife, the mother of his children and grandmother of their offspring. As far as Cindy knew, few people were aware her grandparents were once members of Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht.

Grandma Harriett was born Marlene Harriet Hink in 1921 near Potsdam, Germany. She was from a long line of Prussian Aristocrats. As a teenager, Harriet became a medic in the German Heer (Army) where, in 1938, she met her future husband and fellow medic, John Krauss.

Cindy Krauss was an accomplished journalist, graduating from the University of Missouri. But a strange twist of historical events culminated with her

becoming the national correspondent for the New York Bureau of Beckham World News Service. Ironically, it was Grandpa John Krauss who was the key to her good fortune.

She didn't let any colleagues know it was pure nepotism that landed her such a prestigious job. Besides, that would take a bit of explaining. How do you tell anyone that Sir John Beckham, chairman of the board for one of the world's largest newsgathering organizations, is the bastard son of a simple Nebraska farmer; and that old farmer being her grandfather.

She pondered that particular thought for a moment. Simple Nebraska farmer? Now, that was a laugh. This octogenarian was anything but "simple." If the world only knew what she knew. Grandpa John gave permission to write his story two years earlier;^{*} but Cindy still contemplated telling the old man's odyssey, which began in Nazi Germany in 1936 and continuing on to the end of World War II. There were questions. Before she could begin detailing her Grandfather's story, one glaring piece was missing. However insignificant it seemed at the time, Cindy pondered the whereabouts of Lieutenant Colonel Dieter Zeis, the good and decent German officer who had protected her grandfather during the war. Without Dieter Zeis, John Krauss' story would have been far different. Her reporter's "nose for news" told her there was far more to his disappearance near the end of the war. Dieter Zeis had been the administrative officer and close confidant to Germany's famed Field Marshal Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel during the North African campaign. He had accompanied Rommel back to Germany when the end was nearing for the Deutsches Afrika Korps in 1943. On July 20, 1944, within hours of the attempt on Hitler's life, Dieter vanished into thin air.

More and more questions kept bombarding Cindy as she pondered her grandfather's story. Was this enigmatic officer killed, or did he survive the final days of Germany's collapse? If so, where did he go? Was Dieter Zeis part of the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler and, as a result, caught up among the more than 5,000 military officers and civilians who were rounded up and murdered by the Gestapo? Did Grandpa John really return from the war to take over the family farm in Broken Bow, Nebraska, or did he continue serving his country as an intelligence officer for the OSS—or maybe the CIA?

She discovered periods of time in 1947 through 1955 when Grandpa John was gone from the farm. These were quickly explained away by her father as extended trips John Krauss had taken as a member of the US State Department's agricultural delegation to get Europe back on its feet and restoring farm production. Cindy didn't believe it. However, a little research told her that being part of an "agricultural delegation" during the Cold War often was a cover of choice for CIA agents.

Maybe she was hoping for something more dashing and romantic than increasing the grain output of the Netherlands and Germany so more beer could be brewed.

Cindy sat at her newsroom desk preparing to book her flight online for the trip back to Nebraska when the e-mail flag popped upon her screen. The e-missive was from Sir Jack, her boss—her uncle—well, sort of.

"I'll be landing at LaGuardia Wednesday at 3 pm. Let's have dinner, and then fly to Kearney on Thursday for your grandmother's funeral."

How could a girl refuse free dinner with the boss plus a flight back home in the company's private jet?

^{*} "Nebraska Doppelganger"

As his e-mail announced, Sir Jack's Boeing 737 touched down at exactly 3 pm. Cindy was picked up by the company's limo at the downtown Manhattan office and whisked to La Guardia International Airport to meet the 68-year old company chairman. As the handsome Englishman bounded from the plane, he was holding a dark leather briefcase and his ever-ubiquitous broly. Cindy didn't have to squint to see a younger version of Grandpa John in the image of Jack Beckham. Tall with more than six feet in height, he was dressed and looked the part of typical English gentry; his head held flowing gray hair with traces of blond.

He wasn't the son of Grandma Harriet; but, out of respect for his biological father, Sir Jack would attend her funeral. Sir Jack had never met Marlene Harriett Hink but knew her story as well as Cindy. His mother, German-born Greta von Carlsen-Beckham, was John Krauss' first love back during the late '30s in Berlin but duty and war prohibited anything more. Sir Jack would be 16-years old before he learned his real father was John Krauss, Nebraska farmer, former German medic—a strange doppelganger, indeed.

That evening at dinner, Cindy sat across from her boss at the Waldorf Astoria, Jack's favorite place to stay when he was in New York. Of course he wanted to know all the latest office gossip and how Cindy was doing with her assignment as the national correspondent "for the colonies," as Jack would tease her. During the dessert, the conversation turned a bit more solemn.

"I have a special assignment for you and it may not be something you will want to do," he began. "I don't think the ol' man has been all that truthful with us about his life since the war."

Cindy looked puzzled.

"You mean my Grandpa John?"

"Yes. I believe he has been a long-time agent for your Central Intelligence Agency," Jack continued. "His gentleman farmer role has been a mere ruse."

Cindy was dumbfounded. She didn't know what to say.

"Why are you saying this? What makes you think Gramps had been a CIA agent?" Cindy had a slight edge to her voice.

"I began suspecting it some time ago after an off-hand remark my mother made," Jack replied. "I didn't think much of it at the time, but it kept gnawing at me so I made some quiet inquiries with a friend at MI-6."

"Your Secret Service told you?"

"No, but it was what my man didn't say that got me even more curious," he said. "I figure if there is anyone who can get him to talk it would be you."

"Well, first of all, if he was an agent after the war, what of it?" Cindy countered. "I mean, it was the 'Cold War' and our two countries were engaged in a lot of intelligence work against the Soviets. I'm sure there was a good reason for secrecy."

Jack took a sip from his snifter of Courvoisier.

"I don't disagree, but now that the Cold War is over, a lot of great stories are being written and, after all, we're in the news business. If there is a story to be told, wouldn't you want to write a sequel to your grandfather's first book?"

The conversation hit Cindy by surprise. She caught herself staring, thinking, and wondering all at once.

"There's one question about your Grandfather's story that hasn't been answered"

“What?” she quipped.

“What happened to Dieter Zeis?”

Jack was right. Grandpa John pretty much glossed over that question leaving the impression that Lieutenant Colonel Zeis had been killed during the final days of the war. Dieter had accompanied Field Marshal Erwin Rommel back to Germany in 1943 before the fall of the Deutsches Afrika Korps in North Africa. He wasn't heard from again after Rommel was forced to commit suicide in October 1944.

“I got the impression that Dieter was caught up in Hitler's purge of the conspirators in the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt on his life,” Cindy replied.

“Yes, that was my understanding as well,” Jack said. “We'll go back to Nebraska for your grandmother's funeral. I'll clear it with your boss in the office so you can spend a few weeks on special assignment. I would think you will need to spend time in Washington with some contacts I have ... and also in London. You might be able to get something from my mother as well. If there is anyone other than your grandfather who knows the story, it would be Greta.”

The maitre d' suddenly appeared at their table as Sir Jack began to light a large Cuban Cohiba cigar.

“I'm sorry sir ... but we no longer allow smoking in the restaurant,” he said in a polite, but firm manner.

“Ah, you Americans. You've started something that has caught on over on my side of the pond,” Jack chuckled. “And, I went to great lengths to smuggle this Cuban beauty through your customs.”

Jack replaced it into his jacket humidior.

“It's one of the few little pleasures I still allow myself that isn't fattening or immoral,” he joked.

“Yeah, but just think ... you might get an extra five years of good living instead,” Cindy replied.

Cindy said goodnight to Sir Jack in the hotel's lobby and promised to be back for the trip to the airport the following morning for their trip to Kearney.

She had a lot to think about and doubted whether she would get much sleep. Grandpa John a CIA agent? It sounded too incredible. Cindy knew him as a kindly old farmer who always seemed to wear bib overalls. Grandpa John sleuthing as an undercover CIA agent wasn't a picture she could quite get into focus. If he did serve the CIA, it would have to have been 50 or maybe even 60 years ago. Today, he was 89-years old. She had no idea what the retirement age was for the Central Intelligence Agency but was pretty certain they didn't have many field agents in their 60s or 70s.

If John Krauss was a secret agent, what of it? Why would Jack be so interested in this story now after all those years?

At 8 am sharp the following morning, Sir Jack emerged from the Waldorf Astoria's lobby elevator where Cindy was waiting. Not much was said between them on the way to the airport. The British press tycoon made a passing comment about the change in the New York skyline with the missing twin World Trade Center towers.

“How will I ever ask Gramps about him being an agent for the CIA?” Cindy asked, breaking the quiet ride to the airport.

Jack continued gazing out the limo's window.

“Ask him about Reinhart Gehlen,” he said.

That name sent shivers through Cindy. When Grandpa John revealed he had been a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, she did some research and found that after the war the intelligence-gathering agency morphed into the CIA. German SS Major General Reinhart Gehlen became a key source for the CIA in building its body of information against the Soviet Union during the early days of the Cold War.

“If you don’t know that name, try ‘Googling’ it on the Internet,” Jack offered. “You’ll find dozens of pages of information. He was one very treacherous man.”

“I know,” Cindy acknowledged. “I’ve read a little about him but ... what would he have to do with Gramps?”

“That’s what I want you to find out,” Jack said as he opened a copy of the Financial Times.

Cindy had the distinct feeling Jack Beckham knew more about this question than he was telling her, but what?

The flight to Kearney took just over three hours in the Beckham World News Service’s executive aircraft. The Kearney airport’s long runway had no problem in welcoming the 737 executive jet. The facility had been created back in 1942 to handle heavy Boeing B-17 bombers during World War II when it was a US Army Air Corps base.

As expected, John Krauss, the family’s patriarch, was standing outside the airport’s terminal building waiting for his son and granddaughter.

“I’m so glad to see you both” the old sage said, giving his granddaughter a big hug and kiss. “Thanks Jack for being here.”

On the short ride west into town along US Highway 30, Grandpa John told how many family members had gathered for his wife’s funeral. John was in an unusually good mood for someone who had just lost his wife. Still, Cindy understood her grandfather’s state of mind. Grandma Harriet hadn’t been herself for a couple of years after suffering from Alzheimer Disease. She had left a long time ago. The burden of caring for her had rested upon Grandpa John; and he was no doubt relieved her days of living in a memory-less void had finally ended.

The next day, Harriet Krauss’ funeral was held in typical Midwestern American fashion—an open-casket viewing with an overflowing crowd at the Lutheran Church and later at the gravesite in the cemetery. Of course, there were a few questions about Sir Jack. The old man hadn’t really told anyone exactly who this younger version of himself was. Cindy thought it was funny. She could just imagine the curiosity in everyone’s mind.

Back at her grandparents’ home, family and friends gathered for the ever omnipresent after-funeral feed. Cindy hated these gatherings. People seemed more interested in eating and talking than the reason for which they were there. John saw her sitting by herself on the patio.

“Everything all right, Sissy?” he asked.

“Sure, Gramps ... just hate these things ... don’t you?”

“Yeah ... but the family more or less expects to endure this ritual,” the old man reckoned. “It won’t be that long before you’ll be reconvening here for me.”

“Grandpa ... don’t say that,” she snapped. “You’re gonna be with us for a long time to come.”

“Well ... we both know that once you reach my age, you don’t buy any green bananas,” John said slightly chuckling.

Changing the subject, John asked how long she would be staying.

“I’ve got to get back to New York,” she replied. “I’ll be leaving tomorrow with Jack, but why don’t you come with us and take a rest away from all of this? I’ve got a few days off from work.”

John looked out at his backyard.

“Well ... I could use a break, there’s no doubt about that.”

“Good, then it’s settled. You’re going home with me and we’ll have some fun, maybe go to the theater,” Cindy said.

Cindy enjoyed the luxury of executive travel—the seamless ease of bounding from a limo into a private jet, avoiding the hassle of long security lines. While she knew this privilege would be fleeting, Cindy was savoring the opportunity while it lasted. Her grandfather didn’t seem all that impressed. It was as if he had been on private jets many times before.

Could there be any truth to Jack’s concerns about Grandpa John? The problem, as Cindy saw it, was approaching her grandfather. How do you broach the subject?

She pondered: “*Oh, by the way Gramps ... are you or have you ever been a CIA spy?*” The thought seemed ludicrous. Still...

The flight back to New York was smooth. Jack had some of those famous Midwestern rib-eye steaks from Grampa John’s freezer thawed and put in the plane’s galley for the steward to prepare for their in-flight meal. Jack was immersed in a thick Clive Cussler novel at the front of the cabin. Cindy sat with her grandfather, who was lightly dozing with a headset of soothing elevator music covering his ears.

Little discussion took place among the three passengers until after dinner. It was getting darker as the plane knifed through the stratosphere into the eastern United States toward New York. Jack had returned to his book while Cindy began small talk with Grandpa John.

“Gramps ... I’m making pretty good progress on your biography, but from what you’ve told me so far, the book falls short after the war,” Cindy began. “I mean ... we haven’t discussed what your life has been like since 1947.”

The old man sat across from her studying Cindy’s face with a slight smile.

“What else do you want to know?” he replied. “Being a farmer isn’t very exciting.”

Cindy paused, and then took a deep breath.

“When you were on those various agricultural missions for the government, were you working for another branch of the government, say ... the CIA?”

The slight smile turned into a chuckle, and then all expression disappeared. John looked out through the plane’s portal at the quickly darkening clouds. Then he looked back.

“What would cause you to ask me such a thing?”

“Gramps, as a former OSS officer, not to mention your knowledge of Europe, you would have been a natural for the CIA. Besides, wouldn’t the OSS or CIA hang on to someone like you for as long as they could?”

More silence. The old man shuffled his feet; then he looked back out the plane’s portal again. It was nearly pitch black now.

Cindy took another deep breath.

“Does the name ‘Reinhard Gehlen’ mean anything to you?”

Now she had the old man’s full attention.

“Who have you been talking to?” Grandpa John asked, looking straight into Cindy’s eyes.

“Remember Gramps, I’m an investigative reporter. I’m doing a piece on the early days of the CIA and your name came up,” she lied.

“I doubt that very much, young lady,” he replied smiling and looking back at the blackness of night.

“Seriously Gramps ... you know more than you’re telling me,” she continued with her quest. “You couldn’t have been just talking about corn and wheat on all of those trips with the State Department.”

“I’d like to know if you ever found Dieter Zeis. Did he survive the war?”

More silence. Then Grandpa John looked back at Cindy who was waiting for her answer.

“Well ... if he did survive it’d be interesting to talk with him,” Grandpa John mused with that sly smile returning.

Cindy didn’t say anything to the obvious comment. John was looking straight at her again.

“Is this what my stay with you is going to be like?” he asked.

“Probably. Inquiring minds want to know.”

“Yes, but whose inquiring minds? I have the feeling the sudden interest in this isn’t something you came up with yourself.”

“Gramps, I don’t reveal my sources.”

“Yeah well ... I don’t like talking to the press,” he countered with a smile. “Besides, if I were a spy, would I go around blabbing my mouth?”

“I’m your granddaughter, dang it! You’re supposed to tell me stories of your life. That’s what grandparents do.”

The conversation had evolved into a sparring match of words and neither was getting the upper hand.

“Let’s just relax and enjoy the rest of the flight,” the old man suggested.

Chapter

2

When Cindy awoke the next morning at her apartment, she found a note from her grandfather on the breakfast counter. *“Gone for my morning walk. I’ll fix breakfast when I get back.”*

As much as she loved her Gramps, the conversations with Jack about the old man possibly being a CIA agent was disconcerting. She especially was distressed at the thought that her kindly grandfather would have had anything to do with the former Nazi spy Reinhart Gehlen.

Cindy had only to “Google” Gehlen’s name on the Internet whereupon page upon page of information immediately popped up on the screen of her laptop.

The United States Freedom of Information Act allowed thousands of dark secrets from the CIA and National Security Council to be exposed to the public light of day.

The National Security Archive posted the CIA’s secret history of the government’s relationship with General Reinhard Gehlen. The former Nazi was the German Army’s intelligence chief for the Eastern Front against the Soviet Union during World War II. It was because of his intimate knowledge about the Soviets that made him such an attraction to the OSS-CIA. Gehlen quickly seized upon the paranoia the Americans had toward the Soviets and established a close relationship which allowed him to successfully maintain his intelligence network that ultimately became that of the West German Government during the Cold War. It wasn’t just Gehlen, but those who worked for him. The ranks of the Gehlen Organization were filled with numerous Nazi comrades, many of whom were known war criminals.

The US Congress established the Interagency Working Group on January 11, 1999, giving it a commission life until March 2005 to oversee the declassification of about eight million pages of documents from multiple government agencies.

The documents uncovered revealed extensive relationships between former Nazi war criminals and various American intelligence organizations—including the CIA. Records show at least five associates of the late Nazi SS Colonel Adolf Eichmann had worked for the CIA; more than 23 other Nazis were approached by the CIA for recruitment, and no less than 100 officers within the Gehlen Organization were former Gestapo agents.

As she browsed the many Internet pages on the Nazi spy, Cindy was mystified as to how American intelligence officers had been so easily duped by Gehlen.

Gehlen was the son of a Catholic bookseller. He joined the Reichswehr’s 100,000-man Army (to which Germany was restricted by the Treaty of Versailles after World War I) in 1920 and entered the German Staff College in the 1930s. He was promoted to captain and was attached to the Army General Staff. In 1940, after being promoted to major, he became the liaison officer to Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch. He was then transferred to the Army Chief of Staff under General Franz Halder. In July 1941, Gehlen was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He worked extensively on the Eastern Front and, because of his superior talents and expertise, was promoted to senior intelligence officer with the German General Staff on the Russian Front.

In 1942, Gehlen was approached by three high ranking German Army officers to participate in a minor role in an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. When the bomb plot failed on July 20, 1944, Gehlen’s role was covered up, allowing him to escape Hitler’s brutal retaliation.

“Trying to kill that maniac is the first good thing I’ve read or heard about the man,” Cindy thought to herself as she poured over the volumes of files on Gehlen.

In December 1944, Gehlen was promoted to major general and, as head of Fremde Heere-Ost (Foreign Forces-East) was assigned to gather concentrated intelligence on the political and battlefield tactics of the Soviet Union.

Knowing the end was near, Gehlen made plans to be captured by the approaching American forces. He concealed his voluminous files of the Soviet Army and political leaders in a steel drum and then buried it in the Bavarian Alps.

On May 22, 1945, Gehlen surrendered to the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps. The first American recognition of the importance of Gehlen as a prisoner of war was made by US Army Intelligence Corps’ Brigadier General Edwin Sibert of the US 12th Army Group.

Gehlen impressed General Sibert with his knowledge of Soviet military and political affairs. To further impress his American captors, Gehlen revealed a number of OSS officers as being secret members of the US Communist Party.

Using his newfound influence with the Americans, Gehlen offered to hand over Soviet resources in exchange for his freedom as well as that of his fellow colleagues imprisoned in American POW camps in Germany.

General Sibert contacted his superior officer, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower’s Chief of Staff, who then worked with OSS chief, General William Donovan and his OSS Station Chief in Bern, Switzerland, Allen Dulles. Arrangements were completed on September 20, 1945, for Gehlen and three close Nazi associates to be flown to the United States where they began working for the US Government in a quasi house arrest status.

“Dulles? Wasn’t he a brother of a Secretary of State?” Cindy pondered.

In July 1946, Gehlen was officially released from American captivity and flown back into Germany where he began his intelligence work setting up an organization of former German intelligence officers, which became known as the “Gehlen Organization.” He set up a dummy organization in Munich called the “South German Industrial Development Organization” to mask his undercover operation and spy ring.

Initially, Gehlen personally selected 350 former German intelligence agents; but that number grew to 4,000 undercover agents. These secret German agents were known as “V-Men.” For many years during the Cold War, the V-Men were the only eyes and ears of the CIA inside the various Soviet Bloc Nations. The spy group, which became the intelligence arm of the West German Government, was called the “Gehlen Org.”

Cindy heard Grandpa John pattering in the kitchen making omelets as she finished browsing the various pages on the Internet regarding Gehlen. There were too many to read at one sitting.

“Do you want bacon or sausage?” said Grandpa John’s voice from the kitchen.

“Bacon of course,” she replied. *“Sausage is fattening.”*

Cindy heard a big laugh echoing from the kitchen.

“Potatoes?”

“Naw ... just an omelet and some bacon will be ‘nuff. Thanks, Gramps.”

Cindy sat down at the kitchen table as her grandfather served breakfast. He had brought home some nice fresh croissants from the corner bakery.

She couldn't contain herself. After reading all those various pages on Gehlen, Cindy continued her probe.

"Did you *ever* meet Gehlen?"

The old man didn't look up from buttering his croissant.

"C'mon Gramps ... I gotta know?"

"Why? But let's just say for argument's sake that anything I might or might not have done after the war was supposed to be a secret. If I had anything to tell you, it wouldn't be a secret anymore ... now would it?"

He still didn't look up while buttering his croissant.

"The fact that I told you about me being an OSS Agent might have been a mistake because no matter what I say ... you'll just want more."

Cindy couldn't argue with that. But, something told her to just sit there and be quiet.

"I did make a number of overseas trips for the State Department and they were classified. Unless I'm told differently, which I haven't, they still are."

He was testing his coffee. Cindy didn't look up from her omelet, but that didn't mean she wasn't listening very closely.

"If I were an enterprising young writer wanting to know what really happened over there, I'd go to a better source than me."

The old man was unfolding the New York Times.

"*Who could Gramps be talking about besides himself?*" Cindy started to ask, but continued her silence.

"Okay ... forget about the CIA for now. What about Dieter?"

"Same advice," he countered.

"*Who would know such things?*" she thought.

"GRETA?" she exclaimed with her mouth full.

"Don't talk while you're eating," Grandpa John said as he lightly scolded her in a mockingly manner.

"That's it ... isn't it? Greta. She knows ... doesn't she?"

John Krauss was tearing off a piece of croissant, putting some strawberry jam on with a knife. He didn't look up, but Cindy detected a very slight smile on his normally stoic face.

"I'm not saying that you're correct ... but, maybe that could be a way to have a lot of questions answered."

Of course, Greta. She and Dieter were tight in-laws by marriage. Dieter knew of her espionage activities in the '30s when she was in Berlin. If Dieter did survive the war, Greta would be the one he would return to if he needed help. What was it that Jack told her: maybe his mother had answers? She had to get to London. Maybe Jack would let her fly back with him. Why hadn't he asked this question of his mother himself?

There's definitely more going on than anyone is saying.