



as seen in  
**STAMFORD**  
magazine

above: North Stamford resident Harris L. Kligman, a retired U.S. Army Intelligence Officer, calls on his more than thirty-five years of experience with military and business entities to write his thrillers. Here, with his wife, Nancy, and son, Rob.

# A REAL PAGE TURNER

THE EXCITING BACKSTORY OF STAMFORD WRITER **HARRIS L. KLIGMAN** BY **DIANE SEMBROT**

**H**arris L. Kligman, the author of four published spy-thrillers, spent ten years writing in his North Stamford home. He chose the basement. “He coined it ‘the downstairs dungeon,’ ” says his son, Rob. “It included a bare floor, a computer desk that was too small for the average person, a chair with no back and a computer that had a Windows operating system that would no longer accept updates.”

Despite the humble nature of the location, it served its purpose well. It helped a man get out the words and stories that would be told. “Dad would begin writing early in the morning and write until he was either tired—there were numerous times when he would nod off at the computer—or just felt it was ‘enough’ for the day,” says Rob.

His pages are fueled by people he met and experiences he had throughout his fascinating career. “He had accumulated a wealth of experiences from his constant international travel, his residence of four and a half years in South Korea and his twenty years as a Reserve Military Intelligence officer with the United States Army,” says Rob. For over thirty-five years, Harris Kligman associated with military, governmental and business entities with influence in the Far East, Africa and South America. A linguist who practices martial arts (he holds a black belt in hapkido,

which he earned while living in South Korea), and who has served as an intelligence officer cross-trained as an infantry officer, he is ideal for writing spy thrillers. One might even say his books almost wrote themselves. “Contrary to many writing experts, he never prepared a story outline—plot—or characters when he sat down to write his first novel or subsequent novels,” says Rob. “He just thought of a title and began writing, developing both the plot and the characters along the way. The storyline and characters were created out of situations and interactions with people spanning a thirty-five-year period of



above: The writer at Airborne School, Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1959.

international travel across three continents.” One doesn’t have to imagine what he experienced; his books give plenty of hints. Consider the titles: *The Profession* (2020), *The Shaolin Covenant* (2021), *Her Father’s Daughter* (2021), and *The Dark* (2021).

The truth is, the forty-eight-year Stamford resident worked at it. “He would stop at the end of a chapter, re-read that chapter the next morning and start again from there with no idea of what he wanted to say or how the plot would continue. It literally just developed as he wrote,” explains Rob.

Of course, writing a book is one thing. Getting it published is another challenge on the obstacle course to a finished book. Kligman found a contemporary solution: four novels were published on Amazon.com and are now available through Walmart.com. He also turned to his circle of support. “After completing a novel, he would have the manuscript bound at a local office-supply store and then have it read by friends and family,” says Rob. Over the past ten years, Harris wrote eleven novels, five children’s stories and several short stories, which were stored until the pandemic. “Throughout 2021 and ’22 we will continue to publish the back catalogue.”

We carefully approached the well-trained military man to ask about his writing. Here’s what Harris L. Kligman shared with us. »

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUNNY NORTON; OTHER, CONTRIBUTED

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS WITH...

## HARRIS L. KLIGMAN

The intelligence and infantry officer turned writer

### How did you start writing a novel?

“The original idea was to encapsulate the events of my life covering both my military career of twenty years as a United States Army Intelligence Officer and my civilian career, which spanned over thirty-five years across three continents: South America, Africa, and the Far East. This idea was to leave my two sons with a more concise picture of who I was. Since both my military and civilian careers required me to be away from home over 60 percent of my time and for extended periods, I felt I owed it to them to answer in clarity, the question of ‘Why I was away so much of the time.’ The few pages I envisioned originally developed into a novel, and the rest, as they say, ‘is history.’”

### What is the hardest part of writing?

“Writing was never difficult for me whether at the university level or in the military/business world. I easily completed my MBA thesis, graduated from a number of military schools, including the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. While I had no formal training or advice regarding writing, I did possess a wealth of experience from both the military and in my civilian careers. I interacted with numerous military, religious and business entities across three continents. These multicultural individuals became the characters for my novels; many of the experiences we shared, good and bad, became the storyline.”

### Did you try a writing group?

“No group support or any formal training. I just sat down at the computer and started writing. When I finished writing for the day, I would review the last couple of pages, and

then start off from that point the next day.”

### What have you learned about publishing?

“If you are a TV personality or other recognizable figure that has exposure, publishing houses will accept your writings more readily. Name recognition and the ability to advertise the book without the publishing house’s help goes a long way—they, the publishing houses, don’t want to spend advertising money if at all possible. The alternative is self-publishing, that is, Amazon, which allows you to control the content, format, cover design, and so forth.”

### Would you go back and change anything in the storyline?

“No! The stories have been related as I experienced with certain modifications to fit the storyline in a more readable way. My characters, whether male or female, are duplications, in part or total, of those people I have interacted with over the course of thirty-five plus years.”

### Do you have a favorite character?

“I like them all, but if I had to pick one male, it would be Raul ‘Luca’ Mendroza, the principal character in my novel *The Shaolin Covenant*. Luca is a practitioner of the martial arts. I also hold a black belt in a martial arts discipline called hapkido, which I earned during a four-and-a-half-year residence in South Korea.

As an intelligence officer who completed the basic and advanced intelligence course from Fort Holabird, Maryland, I have an extensive knowledge of all-source intelligence. I am also cross-trained as an infantry officer. I use my infantry background in developing another favorite male character, Craig Benson, who appears in my latest novel, *The Dark*, which has just

been released on Amazon.com and Walmart.com.

Regarding *The Shaolin Covenant*, I intertwined both the martial arts and the trade craft aspects into what the main character, Luca, becomes and what is expected of him in all assignments that he is mandated to complete.

From the female aspect, I like Kathy Longrin from the novel *Her Father’s Daughter*. She represents a dedicated woman who confronts a complexity of situations, and through inner strength, fortitude and determination, perseveres. Kathy is my kind of woman, and I married just this type.”

### What’s next?

“So far through my son Rob’s efforts we have managed to get four of my novels published (*The Profession*, *The Shaolin Covenant*, *Her Father’s Daughter*, *The Dark*) on Amazon and available online at Walmart.com. There are additional novels I’ve written that I intend to publish. The next one that we are targeting is entitled *Life Impossible*. This story follows Mukhtaar Saeed, who is raised as a Muslim, and Zhid Giladi, an Israeli Mossad agent; they find their lives intertwined as each fights for survival against circumstances neither one could have imagined. From his birth in a remote mountain village in Russia, his childhood years growing up in Gaza, and on the battlefields of Afghanistan, Mukhtaar Saeed finds himself in a struggle with his personal demons, the demands of his religion and discovers a fact that makes living intolerable. That discovery results in a decision that alters his life and the lives of several Mossad agents, as each seeks to dominate the other.

After my back catalog of novels and children’s stories are published, I’ll start writing the next novel.”

## THE COLLECTION

4 Books to Add to Your Summer Reading List



APRIL 7, 2021



FEBRUARY 18, 2021



JANUARY 15, 2021



NOVEMBER 6, 2020

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