

REVIEWS

Stealing Trinity by Ward Larsen

Library Journal, September 2008 Review by Robert Conroy, MI

Larsen's second thriller (after *The Perfect Assassin*) is a well-written, well-researched, and compelling tale of the chase for nuclear secrets in the final days of World War II. Nazi sniper Alex Braun, a German raised in the States, is smuggled into America to locate a Third Reich spy buried in the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. British intelligence major Michael Thatcher discovers Braun's presence but not his purpose or his whereabouts—he's staying with an old flame, the wealthy Lydia Cole. Braun, who wants to get the spy's secrets and sell them to the Soviets, is a killer, and his trek to both New Mexico and Guam is littered with the bodies of those who've crossed his path. Meanwhile, Thatcher and Lydia have joined the chase. An easy and gripping read, this is recommended for all popular fiction collections.

BOCA RATON NEWS - June 8, 2008 Issue Review by Prudy Taylor Board

As history now tells us, the atomic bomb was first tested on July 16, 1945 in an isolated area of the New Mexico desert. The test was code-named Trinity. Against this backdrop, Ward Larsen of Sarasota has created a page-turner of a political thriller titled *Stealing Trinity*.

The story begins in Berlin in April 1945. WWII is in its final days. The Nazis are losing and they know it. Larsen creates a telling detail when he writes, "Gruber poured stout braces and issued them around. No one bothered to toast anything — for three German officers a certain sign of lost hope — and three heads snapped back."

But Colonel Gruber of Nazi intelligence, has a plan and he convenes a meeting with other high-ranking Nazis to discuss what the world will come to know as the Manhattan Project. The Manhattan Project is the code name for the project that resulted in the development of the first atomic bomb. Recognizing that whoever controls the information, in essence, controls the world, Colonel Gruber proposes that a spy be chosen to retrieve either Die Wespe, the German loyalist scientist working on the Manhattan project, or his data. The spy chosen is Captain Alexander Braun, who is more than a Nazi, he is a trained and ruthless assassin with the extra bonus of having been American born and Harvard educated.

Braun heads for America and Rhode Island where he is reunited with Lydia Cole, his former lover who is now married. Meanwhile, in Britain, Military Intelligence has learned of the plot. Unable to convince the Americans of the seriousness of the threat the plot presents, Major Michael Thatcher, a British MI-19 investigator, is assigned to discover Braun's whereabouts and to foil the plot. He follows Braun to the United States. Braun, realizing he's been discovered is forced to run, and he heads for Los Alamos. The three meet there and, with the balance of world power at stake, do battle.

Larsen's book has an air of authenticity, which is not surprising given his background. A native of South Florida, Larsen is a former U. S. Air Force fighter pilot who flew combat in Operation Desert Storm. He is currently a captain with a major airline and that easily explains the credibility of many of the scenes. The history is impeccably researched, but never gets in the way of the story. The characters are nicely fleshed out, and the plot zings along to a satisfying conclusion. A good read.

CRIME and SUSPENSE Magazine Review by Wil A. Emerson

Once in a while a great book/great story comes along and the reader knows with the first page they've encountered something special, something worthwhile to read. **Stealing Trinity** is just that book. Larsen is a masterful craftsman but more so, the kind of author who can paint a picture of tension, intrigue and suspense that makes you sweat. His pallet breathes with excitement--- characters so real you want to touch them, some so vividly evil, you'd like to strike them down. At its best, **Stealing Trinity** begins as WWII ends but you still see and feel the horror the Nazis left in their path but can't help but worry about all the 'what ifs' had the Americans and Brits not been successful in their quest to dispel Communist terror. Larsen's work is divinely paced; his characters are rich with humanistic flaws and immeasurable appeal. When a Harvard graduate and ruthless killer returns to America to continue the work of the Third Reich, a passionate, driven British patriot discovers there may be a German spy on the loose who could uncover a deadly secret that would reshape the world. This thriller continues with the best of international espionage at the core of its action. Larsen writes with a pace and intensity that rivals no other. A great story---nothing more needs to be said....

ARMCHAIR INTERVIEWS

This is a fantastical spy adventure. Alex Braun is a spy who traverses from Berlin to England, to the tumultuous Atlantic Ocean and then the moneyed leisure of Newport, Rhode Island where his Harvard sweetheart, Lydia Cole, is visiting her parents with her buffoon of a husband. He also travels to the vacant desert of New Mexico and J. Robert Oppenheimer's Manhattan Project, and lastly to the middle of the Pacific. *Stealing Trinity* moves along at a brisk pace, sucking the reader into an exciting WWII tale of espionage, treason, subterfuge and the realization that Germany is no longer fighting a war.

Karl Heinrich, a misguided German Fascist on the Manhattan Project, is ready and willing to impart the secrets of the quiet tribe of university department chairs and Nobel Laureates on Oppenheimer's project in order for the Third Reich to see fruition. Heinrich meets up with Braun (also known as Alex Brown, to his American friends), for their rendezvous, all the while Braun is making plans to sell the secrets to the Russians--and not alerting the fat little Fascist that he's two-timing him.

Simultaneously, Major Michael Thatcher, of the Queen's Military in Great Britain, and Mr. Jones of the FBI, are hot on Braun's trail. But Thatcher has a secret weapon to help him get to Braun quicker--the help of blithe young Lydia Cole, the woman who once loved Alex Brown, but who has now suffered a great loss at his hands.

You won't be able to put *Stealing Trinity* down. Regardless of how much truth is in this novel, it's a great peek into the history of the A-bomb.

Fore Word Magazine, Sept./Oct. Issue 2008 Review by Joe Taylor

The sinking of the USS Indianapolis in the waning days of World War II, just after the ship delivered the components for the bomb that would later be dropped on Hiroshima, resulted in the loss of almost 900 sailors. The event has raised questions and speculation ever since. Some have suggested a connection between the sinking and Little Boy, the codename for the atomic cargo that had been dropped off just four days earlier. Many argue that it had to be more than luck that a Japanese submarine could find the Indy in its sights that fateful night, that it must have been tipped off.

With this, his second novel, Ward Larsen deftly fills in the historical blanks. An airline pilot who flew combat missions for the Air Force in Operation Desert Storm, Larsen combines history with spy-fi in a compelling World War II thriller that supposes the Nazis infiltrated the Manhattan Project. As the novel opens, they send an American-born agent, Alex Braun, from Berlin to New Mexico to rendezvous with Die Wespe (the Wasp), a German scientist who has accumulated a suitcase-full of information on the new weapon. Alex is an intriguing character, as resourceful and capable as a Navy Seal and as ruthless and soulless as his SS comrades in the concentration camps at Treblinka or Auschwitz. Five years earlier, Alex's German-born father had pulled the young architecture student from his last year at Harvard to join the Nazi cause. Now that the Reich is crumbling, Alex knows that the bomb will be worth millions to vying postwar superpowers.

But *Stealing Trinity* is not only Alex's story. As he reaches the Eastern seaboard, soon to leapfrog west toward Santa Fe, a workaholic British interrogator, Major Michael Thatcher, enters the narrative. Thatcher gets a tip from a captured German clerk that leads him to America to track down Alex. Thatcher, a slightly built widower with an artificial leg, is later joined by Lydia, Alex's ex-sweetheart, whose new husband has become yet another victim of Alex's mission. The two pursuers, widow and widower, eventually come to understand the importance of the Manhattan Project and the enormity of the threat posed by Alex. Larsen takes the pursuers and the pursued all the way to Guam, where the USS Indianapolis stopped after delivering Little Boy. The Indy would be torpedoed two days later, but *Stealing Trinity* gives that tragic event a plausible and honorable context.

I LOVE A MYSTERY Review by Marion E Cason

British Major Michael Thatcher is destroying papers before leaving Berlin at the end of World War II when he comes across a file labeled "Manhattan Project." Curious, he asks his commander about the Manhattan Project. His commander tells him to back off, that the British informed the Americans and it is out of their hands. Curious, Thatcher discretely asks around and discovers what the Manhattan Project is about; a powerful bomb.

Thatcher learns the Nazis recruited Alexander Braun, their ruthless killer spy, to meet with a German physicist to retrieve the bomb plans for the Nazis, who plan to rebuild a Nazi nation. Thatcher gets permission to pursue Braun unofficially. He uncovers a plot that takes Braun from Long Island Sound to Los Alamos, New Mexico. Taking a leave of absence, Thatcher follows Braun.

The German submarine that transports Braun to Long Island Sound thinks he is a rotten American and dumps him three miles off the coast without any supplies or money. Braun makes it to shore and then remembers an old girlfriend, Lydia Cole, whose family lives in a mansion on the Island in the summers. He walks in on them and they welcome him warmly. He stays for a few weeks. Lydia has not seen Alex for five years. She has grown up and married, although there is still a little flame flickering for Alex. Braun ends up running from Long Island Sound to meet with a physicist in New Mexico.

The chapters are crisp and short, moving the action along quickly. The plot thickens and gets complicated with a surprise ending. *STEALING TRINITY* is the second thriller by Ward Larsen following the acclaimed *THE PERFECT ASSASSIN*. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

FRESH FICTION Reviewed by Anne Barringer, Posted October 5, 2008

April, 1945 -- a time in history when the Nazis' reign of terror is all but over. However, Colonel Hans Gruber of Nazi intelligence has a daring plan, which, if it succeeds, will give the Reich a toehold on world supremacy. His plan is to regain contact with "Die Wespe," a very special spy whom he describes as "a fat little German scientist who works for the Americans." The Wasp has access to all of the data and plans compiled on a certain promising venture -- The Manhattan Project. However, with the Reich's only contact dead, there is no way to get to The Wasp and his lucrative research -- until now. Colonel Gruber has a secret ace in one Captain Alexander Braun, the American-born, Harvard-educated Reich assassin. Having been recalled by his father to fight with the Germans in the war, Alex hasn't seen his homeland for over five years. Now, his new mission leads him back to his native land, as well as into the arms of his ex-lover, Lydia Cole.

Lydia Cole Murray has lived her life as a meek songbird in her rich father's gilded cage. After Alex left to join his father overseas, she allowed her father to marry her off when all communication stopped. Now five years later, she opens the doors to her home and her heart when Alex returns. But he's not the man she thought she fell in love with -- he's a soulless spy killing everything in his way. When Alex escapes, Lydia finds an inner strength she never knew she had and sets out to stop him any way she can.

Lydia travels with Major Michael Thatcher, a military investigator with British MI-19, who's been brought in by the British Military Intelligence after uncovering Nazi plans to steal the American weapon research. When the Americans fail to put any credence into the information uncovered, Thatcher heads for Harvard and a trail of stale breadcrumbs long gone cold. Soon the deadly race

is on between Alex, Lydia and Michael. A race that leads them from Rhode Island to New Mexico and even further to Guam. If Alex wins, it could be the end of the world.

Ward Larsen has created a riveting, suspenseful thriller filled with the soul of humanity. His experience as a former US Air Force fighter pilot lends itself like a brush of colorful reality to a black and white sketch without being blatant. His characters are comprised of a delightful richness, full of hidden strengths and not so hidden faults and circumstances. Meanwhile, the plot zings along at Mach 3, never slowing down until the book is finished. It is a highly recommended tribute to action-lovers and history buffs alike; a fitting tribute to the fine men who lost their lives when the USS Indianapolis sank beneath the waves of war.

BOOKVIEWS, October 2008 Review by Alan Caruba

Apparently actual history is not dramatic enough because novelists frequently embellish it with stories of their own. **Stealing Trinity** by Ward Larsen (\$24.95, Oceanview Publishing) is a suspenseful, well told tale of a Nazi spy who has infiltrated the Manhattan Project that built the first atomic bomb. Unable to convince the American counterparts about the spy, the British dispatch their top investigator to track down the spy, an American born, Harvard educated, ruthless killer. Larsen knows how to spin a story that feels authentic. With a tip of the hat toward real history, it was the Soviets that had penetrated the Project and who stole enough data to build their own some years later.

Consuming Books One Page at a Time

Stealing Trinity by Ward Larsen is set at the end of World War II, before the first atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima. Maj. Michael Thatcher, a tenacious British officer whose job it is to hunt down Nazi spies, is intrigued when the words "Manhattan Project" come up in one of his interrogations. Meanwhile, in Germany, Col. Hans Gruber knows that a sleeper spy, Die Wespe, who's been working on the atomic bomb project in Los Alamos, must be smuggled out of the U.S. with his stolen plans so that those Nazis who survive the war can rearm and continue their goal of world domination. Charged with this mission is Capt. Alexander Braun, an American fighting in the German army. Braun is clever and ruthless, but once Thatcher catches his scent, he won't rest until Braun is captured or killed.

Larsen has done a good job with the research for this novel. He describes the German bunkers in Berlin and the English country-side well enough for the reader to visualize the settings. He brings to life, not only the good guys, embodied by Major Thatcher of the English Army, but also the bad guy, Braun. This is a fast-paced story with action set in Europe, the United States, and the island of Guam.

