

# **BEYOND PAPERCLIP**

By Philip Marraccini & James Thiele  
(An Espionage-Drama based on classified  
information)

**This book is dedicated to  
GOD, COUNTRY, CHURCH,  
FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

**This is a true story of an ordinary American Citizen, James Thiele who under a unique set of circumstances became a key player assisting in the escape of 13 German-Russian Scientist to the United States in 1956. Follow this man's incredible life from humble beginning and discover what events made him to break his silence after 60 years in "BEYOND PAPERCLIP."**

## PREFACE

I met James Thiele 25 or more years ago through our parallel businesses in the ornamental tropical fish and aquatic plant industry. Through the years, we maintained a cordial business relationship as I would purchase and resell his fine products to my customers. One day, when I wasn't in my usual hurry, we sat and talked about life in general. I revealed that I was a writer and had completed several screenplays, produced a stage production plus shot several movies for my own use as well as film competitions. Jim kept his side of the conversation centered around several pioneers who were key figures in creating and promoting the tropical fish hobby into a multi-million dollar industry.

A few weeks later, I again visited Jim and his charming wife Greta at their farm in south Florida. This visit was quite different as Jim had become upset about an article in The Miami Herald newspaper blaming the tropical fish industry for introducing certain types of exotic tropical fish into Florida waters thus endangering native species. The fish that concerned Jim the most was called the “Pike Minnow” or Livebearer *Belonisox belizanus*, which is not a good aquarium fish and not used in the trade. Jim sought to set the record straight by showing that this particular fish was brought into the U.S. by him under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Naval Research under contract by the University of Miami Department of Microbiology at the South Campus (present site of the Miami Metro Zoo). Jim believes their escape into local waters probably was due to a hurricane.

**This particular fish, Pike Livebearer, was imported into the U.S. when Jim was sent as a collector to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and at that time, British Honduras, which is now Belize. The reason for bringing these fish state side was to obtain the largest/best producers of embryonic livebearing specimens for medical research. The collecting exposition was filmed and Jim sought to obtain a copy of film to show the newspaper its error hoping to correct their original story. Jims' attempts to obtain a copy of the film began an interesting story that is about to unfold.**

## **UNDER THE SHADE OF AN OLD TREE**

**It was a hot, muggy day in the middle of summer as Jim and I sat under a large tree that shaded us from the rays of the sun. James began with an intriguing story about his life as a young man, BG (Before Greta). It was a story that rivaled a James Bond script right out of the pages of Ira Fleming's famous novels. The only thing missing was the multiple encounters 007 had with several leading ladies. Jim's story was so incredible that I almost brushed him off as a "kook" but on my next visit, Jim began showing me several documents that backed his intriguing tale. In fact, he showed me official paperwork from the US Government that contained the numbers 005, part of his official ID number. He was a James Bond figure long before the famous agent ever graced the movie screens.**

Several years passed and James Thiele moved from South Florida. Before he left, we discussed the possibility of writing his story so it could be shared with others but nothing ever materialized. Then in early 2015, I received a call from Greta. It seemed that Jim, now in his early 80's, had tried several times to find someone to write his memoirs but for some reason all attempts failed. Since I knew his background, she asked if I would consider taking on the project. Well, my life had also changed, going from three weeks of retirement, to starting a new business at the spry age of 65. Between that, my writing commitments and my involvement in numerous community activities I had little if any extra time, but I was smitten by the project and vowed to give it a try.

My wife, Patty and I made a trip to the Thiele home for what was to become a wonderful three-day visit. With hours of taped interviews, copies of

multiple document and explanations on missing information, we were able to piece together enough “meat and potatoes” to attempt to write a book. Being aware of destroyed or unreleased government documents I pondered, should Jim’s book be written as a factual novel leaving undocumented gaps in his story or should we embellish and make it fictional. If I picked the second choice we could create a novel solely for entertainment. We could add a few international affairs by introducing several encounters with some beautiful female spies. After all, his first name is also James and his I.D. number stands two digits lower than Mr. Bond’s. I attempted writing in both directions with the help of a friend who aided me as a ghost writer. After several days, I stopped both projects not liking either direction. It was time to regroup, thus the project would be shelved while I did some soul searching.

**After 7 months I knew Jim and Greta were getting frustrated, but at his suggestion I read a related book, “Operation Paperclip” by Annie Jacobsen. On completion I feel like a “Born Again.” Her book is based on released facts by the US Government showing the degree of importance “importing” German Scientists had on our scientific programs, ranging from the rocket development in the space race to germ warfare. Remember, the Cold War with Russia was well on its way before the end of World War II. Those grey areas, such as germ warfare, concentrated on antidotes for lab created diseases. The need for this advanced knowledge allowed some of the most heinous Germans to enter United States not as prisoners of war but as paid scientist working for the US government. Annie’s book actually named many of German scientists who were brought state side as our country provided large homes with huge, tax-free salaries. In many instances, their dark**

**past were covered over with false documentation. Attached to their original dossier was a paperclip, which was a secret code to accept them into \*\*\*\*the USA. Thus the creation of the phrase “Operation Paperclip” was born. Not all German scientists made it to the West. Many were captured by the Russians with the hopes of future escape. The planned escape to America of 13 German-Russian scientists in 1956 is the center of James Thiele’s incredible story, “BEYOND PAPERCLIP.”**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **MY YOUNGER DAYS IN TEXAS**

**My name is James Thiele. I was born in Austin, Texas in 1933. From my humble beginnings, one would never expect that by my early twenties, I would be the key player in a successful scheme to assist in the escape of top German scientists away from the Russian Government during the heart of the Cold War.**

**When I was a small child my father left my mother. Before he drove off, he sat me down and tried to explain that he had a new family and it would be better for all concerned if he didn't see me anymore. My soul was pierced as he walked out of the door and out of my life. Mom divorced him but never remarried, so as a result I never had any brothers or sisters. She and I were very close. We spent as much time together as her demanding**

nursing career allowed. Because she had to work so much, I grew up spending a lot of time at my friend's house or exploring the wonders of nature that God provided for our enjoyment, that is if we only take the time to indulge in their beauty. Of course, there were the influences of my maternal grandparents plus mom's sister and brother, after all they were my only remaining family.

Every night, after dinner, my mother and auntie played the piano. They never had formal lessons but were blessed with a God given talent and learned to play by ear. After listening to a tune several times either could re-play it without flaw. Mom loved Boogie-Woogie music. Every Sunday morning Mother would play her musical repertoire until one day the pastor from the church across the street stopped by. It seemed that her musical talents were attracting the congregation's attention. It was daunting to try to sing "Onward Christian Soldiers"

**to Boogie-Woogie Blues. Being humble, mom apologized and never again played the piano on Sunday mornings**

**Then there was Bozo our pet German Sheppard. I can still remember him pulling me around on a piece of cardboard through the snow. We also had a neighbor who owned a goat that would tow the neighborhood kids in a cart.**

**When I was about six years old, I was the victim of a horrible accident. Several of us young kids were riding in the back of a trailer that had low side rails. We were excited since our team had won a T-ball game. The man who pulled the trailer used it for hauling cotton. Often he took us kids to functions in the town on “the flat-bed” because there wasn’t any other form of transportation.**

**One day I was riding high on the soft fuzzy cotton. Pretending to be a bird, I started flapping my**

arms, jumping up and down while chirping like a hatchling that had just received its first worm. While I was air bound, the vehicle hit a bump. Flipping out of the trailer, I landed on my head in the middle of the concrete road. I guess everyone started yelling and the driver stopped. He ran back to where I lay. Seeing my motionless body with the massive amount of blood, he thought I was dead.

Unconscious and barely breathing, the driver raced to the nearest house. Using the homeowners telephone, he called for help. I was taken to the local hospital where the driver filled them in on what had happened. Immediately, the attendants at the hospital called my mother. She was told, “your son had a terrible accident, he’s dying.” Rushing to the hospital, mom sat non-stop at my side. Relying on her faith and medical training, she claimed that I was going to live. She was right, after three weeks in a coma I opened my eyes. My mother cried for joy.

**I was unable to sit up. In fact, I couldn't move any of the muscles in my lower body. Trying to stand, I crumpled to the floor like a rag doll. Similar to starting skills of an infant, I would have to learn to walk and talk all over again. This had to be done prior to leaving the hospital if there was any hope of total recovery so I could return to school. With persistence and assistance, I was able to develop into what many would say is a healthy, walking miracle.**

**Perhaps the conk on the head was a blessing for I made good grades in school but never needed to study much. That didn't stop me from reading and researching a variety of outside subjects. Though I was not a big eater, I grew taller and stronger than most of my classmates often leading to the luxury of being chosen first for a game of King of the Hill.**

**At Horace Mann Junior High, I was notified that I would be receiving an award for my**

**accomplishments. I declined and never told my mother. You see the only pair of school pants I owned had several holes in them. I did not want to go in front of everyone and embarrass myself. In spite of my academic achievements, I was still a harmless prankster. My friends and I would sneak into the school after hours and leave messages on the black boards or perhaps rearrange a lab to the consternation of the teachers when they arrived the next day.**

**Getting back to family, my grandfather was the town blacksmith. He had a young quarter horse, the color of a new copper penny therefore he was named Copper...Cop for short. At eight or ten I enjoyed riding as well as grooming him. Grandma and Grandpa also had a large vegetable farm that sold to or bartered with a local produce store in Granger, Texas.**

**As far as work, I officially started at 14 with Harry Flatequel DVM, remaining there 4 years. All my monies were used for necessities such as clothing. Back in those days you could buy a lot for my weekly salary of 5 dollars.**

**As Thanksgiving rolled around I worked at Sears all the way thru the Christmas Season. After my Sears employment and graduation, I was referred to a Jobs Program, tested and was hired by Groos National Bank. This assignment placed me in the Trust Department, a division of the bank that was almost completely separate since it handled Estate and similar Financial Affairs.**

**Since 10th grade there was always time for my devotion to Army ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) at Thomas Jefferson High School. It was my dream to enter the Army and serve our Great Country. Though I was able to meet all physical and**

mental test, the medical records of my passed concussion came back to haunt me. I was classified IV-F (4-F). I was crushed but life would lead me in an unrelated direction that somehow circled around to my civic duty as you will see in a later chapter of my life.

At 16, I was at Woodlawn Lake planning to spend an afternoon fishing. Looking for bait in a runoff stream that drained into a lake, I spotted some beautiful fish, mostly red in color. Scooping them up, several were put in my bait bucket. Fascinated, I took them home. Asking around, I was told of a local store that sold tropical fish. Taking my finny friends to the shop, the owner identified the varieties as tuxedo platies and said a recent storm had caused flooding of a neighboring fish farm thus allowing the minnows to escape into our local waters. Stirred with interest, I took a part time job at Bradley's Aquarium working under the direction of owner,

**Leona Bradley. I began reading any literature I could get my hands on and studied the habits of each variety of fresh water tropical that were known to exist at that time. As if possessed, I learned everything I could about them. Since they were called tropical fish it seemed logical that they all came from the hot places, such as countries in Central and South America. Mrs. Bradley and I resurrected the local San Antonio Aquarium Society, but changed the name to the Alamo Aquarium Society. At 16, I became the Corresponding Secretary to the Federation of Texas Aquarium Societies. Who would know that the discovery of those 2 little fish would lead me into a life long career in the tropical fish industry with many outside adventures. How could anyone imagine that the study of these tiny creatures would, in 1956, put me at the center of a covert mission working under the US Department of Navy?**

**Let's get back to the pet shop in San Antonio, Texas, and the time I met Albert Greenberg. Though he was much older, we shared similar interest in this growing hobby. One day, Mr. Greenberg of Tampa, Florida came into the fish store where I was working. Immediately we bonded, becoming lifelong friends. Around 1932, he had started an aquatic plant farm in Eureka Springs, Florida. Using the warm waters of a natural spring, he was able to expand to breeding and importing ornamental fish keeping them alive during the winter months with the warm spring water. The owner of the shop asked if I would accompany Mr. Greenberg to another of his customers in a nearby town. As a feather in my cap, my boss told our visitor: "Need information, just ask this kid. He knows everything there is to know about tropical fish." From that day forward, Mr. Greenberg and I would exchange many letters and eventually we would be reunited in Florida. The life**

**of Mr. Greenberg is material for a book of its own. He traveled the world collecting aquatic and terrestrial plants as well as freshwater tropical fishes. Since his travels were low key some say he was able to work as a courier for the US Government. It was rumored that Julia Childs, the famous French Chief, also served in a connecting research project of stark repellent. I believed Albert delivered information abroad, but I never asked nor did we discuss this matter. He asked me years later, “what the heck were you involved in? Someday, I’ll find out!” He had been visited and questioned by Secret Service, FBI, and Naval Military Intelligence. Years later, after his death, Mr. Greenberg was the first inductee into the Florida Tropical Fish Farm Association Hall of Fame. In 2009, Albert Greenberg was honored by being inducted in the State of Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame after being nominated by me. I am**

**proud to have submitted a one hour DVD that I made on Mr. Greenberg cementing his selection and induction.**

## CHAPTER 2

### TEXAS BOY HEADS TO MIAMI

In the summer of 1952, I came to Florida by invitation from my Texas Buddy, William Henry Doyle who had relocated to the Sunshine State. He too was a tropical fish fanatic and had landed a job working at Franjo Fisheries, a pioneer, tropical fish farm in Miami. Seems his boss Herman Blass needed a few dependable workers for summer jobs and I was asked if I was interested. Instantly, I fell in love with Sunny Florida. After 3 months of temporary employment I was offered a full time position however, I informed Mr. Blass that I needed to return to Texas to complete some unfinished obligations. Making several trips back and forth, I finally moved permanently to Florida later that year. My job at Franjo Fisheries was exciting. There were always new varieties of tropical fish being discovered

**all over the world and the farm owners were masters at importing them to our facility. I worked as a fish breeder and aquatic plant grower while living in a two story building on the farm. Who could ask for more, making money at a hobby that I had loved for years. Life was great!**

**From time to time I would tell my boss about Albert Greenberg and his parallel interest in expanding this new hobby. Pioneers like Albert and Herman would turn this new business into a multi-million dollar industry making it the third largest hobby in the United States. At its peak, airline freight of tropical fish would be number one by volume in Florida.**

**To my delight, one day Mr. Greenberg appeared at Franjo Fisheries. After several hours with my boss, Albert and I were left alone to renew our friendship. First came a scolding from Albert, “ Why**

**didn't you call me when you were coming to Florida? I would have given you a job in a heartbeat" he continued. Again we departed after I informed him that my feet were deeply planted in my job at Franjo Fisheries for by now I was receiving a hefty commission for my work.**

**In 1955, Dr. Murray Sanders, Head Microbiologist at the University of Miami and his assistant, Dr. Manuel Soret DVM visited Franjo Fisheries. They were doing research in several studies using tropical fish. During the conversation they informed Mr. Blass of their work using tropical fish to test vaccines on disease control in humans. The fish of interest were ones who had live babies, (livebearers), not the egg-laying kind. Due to my extensive work with livebearers, my boss referred these scientists to "the Texas Boy," my affectionate nickname. To their delight I answered all their questions and they were extremely impressed.**

**After meeting Dr. Sanders and Dr. Soret it was determined that I was the man to assist them in the direction of their new studies. After all I was an expert in working with livebearers, which was the center of their new research. Dr. Sanders convinced Herman to let me work part time at the University. Eventually, this would lead to full time employment at the Microbiology Lab. Of course, this did not settle well with Mr. Blass.**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MICROBIOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

**Dr. Sanders had been a special assistant to the Surgeon General of the Army and later became a consultant to the Secretary of War. He served as personal physician to then Senator Harry Truman and worked with General Douglas MacArthur's staff members thus having both political and military contacts. Due to his fame and expertise, the University of Miami hired Dr. Sanders to beef up their science department since they were in the process of trying to get accreditation to open a medical school. It seemed that some of his research at the University was being funded by the Office of Naval Research. Dr. Manuel Soret had a different background. He had done research in Cuba... pre-Castro.**

Before I arrived at the University of Miami, William Haast had assisted Dr. Sanders with research attempting to find a cure and prevention of polio. He had signed a contract with the University in early 1950. Haast supplied snake venom from the poisonous King Cobra, for research, as the possible solution to this dreaded disease that had reached epidemic proportions during this time period. Though Mr. Haast would continue to provide venom, his relationship with the University of Miami turned sour as he felt he would not receive enough credit or adequate financial reward for his contribution, if this research turned out to be the cure all for polio. Mr. Haast went on to open the successful Miami Serpentarium, but continued providing venom to the University. Though I saw Mr. Haast on several occasions, I was instructed not to have conversation with him by my superiors.

**I was trained about my part in embryo research to study possible cures for not only polio, but Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) Amythrophic Lateral Sclerosis, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis or St. Louis Horse Disease, commonly known as sleeping sickness which can also attack humans. It was believed that solutions could be found by using tropical fish for selective medical research.**

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **JIM THIELE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI**

**At the University it was my job to determine which species of tropical fish were the best suited for these studies. Almost all the selected types were from the poeciliidae family called “livebearers” since they produced live young verses their counterparts “egg-layers.” One exception was a “four eyed” variety called Anableps. Now, I was a full time employee under the direction of Dr. Sanders, Dr. Soret, Professor Benjamin Akins plus a hardware staff specialist Mr. Andre. Mr. Andre, father of 12, could create any item required. He was brilliant in his ingenuity.**

**I tested all types of live bearing tropical fishes that were available in the United States. When asked if there might be largeer species outside the country I mentioned the pike livebearers (*Belonesux belizanus*)**

and the four eyed---Anableps. Both shared the same natural locations from Southern Mexico to Panama, on the Caribbean side. With this information, Dr. Sanders scheduled an expedition. Soon we were on our way to southern Yucatan and British Honduras. It was decided that our safari would be filmed, so a Mr. Fleming of Fleming Photo Shop in South Miami was hired. Our group included Dr. Sanders, Dr. Soret, Mr. Fleming, 2 assistants from the University and myself. It was in early 1956 that we arrived in Havana, Cuba then on to Progreso, Yucatan Airport. From there we motored to Merida, Yucatan. The next day we joined a guide who took us to Belize where we collected *Anableps*, *Mollnesia velifera* *Xiphophorus montezuma* *Platypoecilus maculatus* and *Blonisox*. We were able to capture a dozen large *Anableps*, 4 males and 8 females. We returned to Cuba where one large thirteen-inch *Blonisox* gave birth to over 100 babies. The fish were

packed in plastic bags with oxygen then placed in cardboard boxes for safe travel. This method was developed by Gene Wolfshiemer replacing the antiquated method of shipping in squat, metal cans. Our collection arrived in the old section of the Miami Airport on northwest 36th street. From there the captives were rushed to their new home and placed in concrete vats constructed at the laboratory outside the facility. With that, research began in earnest. In our lab we began cultivating these new varieties. As we worked with existing methods of research, another method was introduced using ova cells of certain fish. This adaptation was also discovered from information gathered in Germans records captured after the war. Those documents were taken from the pages of germ warfare research conducted during WWII

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CHANGE IN DIRECTIONS**

**Things were about to change when Dr. Salk's vaccine was approved in April of 1955 leading to a National Inoculation Program. Dr. Sanders began to focus more on ALS. Another project centered studies using HeLa cells. The kidney cells would be used to cultivate viruses for the study in hopes of developing cures and preventions. All studies and materials were marked by codes.**

**In the meantime, a story began to circulate of 8 men on the island of Guam that had eaten poisonous fish in attempt to kill themselves, since they were suffering from ALS. Instead of instant death, four of them survived and were completely cured. As facts on this rumor intensified, talks of a Far East trip**

**began. Sanders wanted to examine the survivors. Being an expert in the study of fish reproduction and embryos, my name was added to the list of researchers to travel to Guam.**

**First, I was sent to Dutch Harbor, Alaska for education of refined lab techniques. In further preparation, on return, several of us were given a series of 5 shots. This was recorded as the colera complex that left us woozy, weak and in great pain. Death would have been a beautiful thing...a sweet relief.**

**On June 14, 1956, I was issued an ID from the United States of America Department of Defense bearing the identification number N005054. Orders from Dr. Roger Reid of the Office of Naval Research arrived granting permission for me to travel to Guam. I was to travel by MATS, Military Air Transport Service**

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FAR EAST TRAVEL PLANS**

**A two month tour of Guam, Japan and China was planned. Sanders explained that the oriental microbiologists had been studying tropical fish for hundreds of years and he was certain we could find some answers from talking to them. Again, he stressed my importance as part of the research team due to my knowledge of tropical fish.**

**In the meantime orders from Dr. Roger Reid, brother of Dr. Walter Reid, of the Office of Naval Research arrived granting permission for me to travel to Guam. We were given the travel plans on a day by day basis until the final day our ultimate mission would be revealed.**

**At the beginning of my employment at the university of Miami, thirteen men were selected, and given numbers. The numbering started at the top with Dr. Sanders at the top with number 0013. I was the fifth man from the bottom and became 005. Though we never met in a full group there were 13 of us involved in some sort of secret mission that we knew little about. Dr. Sanders group started with him, number 0013, at the top and went down to 0010. The second group was headed by 009 with 006 at the bottom. Being number #5, I was to lead the last group which included 004, 003, 002 and 001, who steps down from his Office as Major of Homestead in January1. These numbers were issued by the US Department of Navy. At this point I had no idea what they meant nor why the Navy was involved so I paid little or no attention to them.**

**When Dr. Sanders delivered an explanation for our trip I never doubted the operation. As far as I was**

**concerned, I was needed to decipher the information because it involved my field of expertise, tropical fish. From Guam we were scheduled to travel to Japan then on to China to an International Scientific Symposium.**

## CHAPTER 7

### THE TRIP TO THE FAR EAST

On August 24, 1956, Dr. Sanders left for a two-month lecturing and research tour of Guam, Japan and China. He was to be joined by Mrs. Sanders. I, James Thiele, “a university staff member” was to accompany the microbiologist on the trip that was jointly sponsored by the University of Miami and the Office of Naval Research. I arrived in Guam, via military aircraft, MATS (Military Air Transport Service), while Dr. Sanders and his Mrs. always traveled by commercial airlines. It seemed a little strange that the US Navy would transport me, a mere civilian. I’m sure it drew some attention from both Russian and Chinese agents, the Cold War would almost required it. About that time a document from Chinese military intelligence was

intercepted. It described each of us referring to me as JDT stating, “he watches fish...waste no time on him.”

I had read a great deal about Guam before we left the United States and found it very interesting. Guam had once belonged to Portugal, who owned a number of islands in the Pacific. I was told that there were still small numbers of Japanese soldiers who had not surrendered believing WWII was not over.

All of us were all hot and sticky in Guam, but having lived in Miami we were sort of used to it. On occasion, the trade winds blew across the island giving us brief periods of relief. In spite of the breeze, some of the scientists had a little trouble getting used to the climate. The people were very friendly. Guam was the largest island in Micronesia. It was the only island in the Pacific that was owned by the

**United States prior to WW II. During the war, the Japanese had possession of the island for 2 years.**

**We expected to find the four men who had survived ALS however, when we got settled Dr. Sanders reported that the four men had gone to Japan. This allowed me to spend my time site seeing, since there was no official business for us to conduct.**

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **ON TO JAPAN**

**From Guam, we traveled to Japan. Dr. Sanders hoped we would interview the cured men when we continued our travels to Tokyo.**

**It was interesting to me how our former enemy, Japan, had become a friend shortly after the war. In less than 10 years, the US and Japan were allies that cooperated in many scientific studies. Arriving in Japan, Dr. Sanders checked his contacts trying to locate the men from Guam. It was frustrating and a little strange that no trace of them could be found. Were we given false information, if so for what reason? Could this be a cover up? I began to wonder if the story on the survivors was actually true or just another situation for some type of secret mission. For now, our group knew nothing except for Dr. Sanders.**

**Dr. Sanders traveled around Japan giving lectures at numerous institutions. As we moved from city to city, the senior members of our group seemed to disappear. Whatever the program was, it seemed to be unending. I remained at Dr. Sanders side listening and learning. I had no clue what Dr. Sanders had in store for me, so blindly I followed doing what I was told on a daily basis. I was still a babe in the woods.**

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **FLASH BACK TO GERMANY**

**The march towards Moscow had begun with the Russian Commanders, Josef Stalin, Georgy Zhukof and Aleksandr Vasilersky prepared for battle with their army of 1,250,000 men while the German Command of Adolf Hitler, Fedor von Bock, Heinz Gunderian and Albert Kesselring readied their 1,000,000 troops for attack. The details of the following battles are clearly recorded (i.e. Wikipedia). The Axis army, (Germany and their allied nations), appeared to be superior in armament with better trained personnel. The German Commander's plan was to set up a siege of Moscow until the arrival of the Russian spring thaw. Expecting by that time the Communist/Bolshevik**

armies would be sufficiently weakened to allow a victorious entry. However, the Russian had a secret plan using an old WWI tactic to employ a form of germ warfare. German Prisoners of War were allowed to escape with false information. They had been inoculated with a new type of fatal humanoid anthrax pathogen. The escapees gave the Germans misleading details stating the Russian Army had already fired laden shells on or near most of the German Army at the front. This took the German High Command by such a surprise, that it was decided not to build up with additional reinforcements. This act turned out to be the crippling action to the Axis Forces. Back in Berlin, Hitler ordered that a new research group be formed, the Germ Warfare Defense Unit.

Hitler's scientists, under Heinrich Himmler, had developed a series of lethal chemicals (sarins) that could wipe out opposing forces. Hitler chose not

to employ them, perhaps because he had been gassed during WWI. Instead, he sought a psychochemical weapon that would not kill but disorient opposing military units however, he was running out of time.

About this time the negative turn of events concerning the war were noted by Chief German scientist of the Rocket Science Group, Dr. Werner von Braun. Realizing Germany might lose, Dr. von Braun initiated a withdrawal of all major scientific units from eastern Germany towards Berlin. He gave secret instructions to the scientists, if captured by the Russians, pretend to be communist to insure a safe position in Russia. This would enable them to retain their status with hopes of someday escaping to the West to “be reunited in Christendom.” Could “Christendom” be America?

Dr. Warner von Braun was primarily concerned with the rocket science section. He

**instructed all, if surrender became necessary, surrender to the US, UK, or France. When it became time to flee Berlin, von Braun and many of his top assistants moved to a Swiss Alps resort. Dr. von Braun knew the value he and his scientist possessed making contact with the Allied forces in an attempt to gain safe passage to America. His proposal was initially rejected. At a military meeting, General George Patton interjected pointing out the consequences if Russia acquired all the knowledge possessed by the German scientists. Patton made it known that the Russians had been allowed to enter Berlin first and captured 2,000 scientist. Another 1,600 would be available to the West, if the United States would accept them. Loss of additional German scientist, whether Nazi's or not would allow them to fall into the hands of our advisories thus giving the Russians control of the scientific world.**

**Back in Washington, the CIA and Joint Chiefs of Staff sided with General Patton. A plan with the code name “Operation Overcast” was created. This would lead to “Operation Paperclip.” Negotiations would lead to surrender to the US Forces on May 2, 1945.**

**Upon hearing of this defection, many prominent citizens of the USA opposed bringing the German scientist to America. After all, many should have been prosecuted as war criminals being hardened Nazis. Among the objectors were Rabbi Wise, Albert Einstein and Elenor Roosevelt. They insisted no scientific discoveries should be credited to Nazi scientists. In fact, this was demonstrated when Einstein was first credited for the development of the atom bomb, which was actually a discovery of Enrico Fermi, a naturalized American from Italy. Like Einstein, who escaped Hitler’s wrath, Fermi fled Italy when Benito Mussolini was coming into power.**

**Both were due credit for their great contributions to American science. In light of the horrors of the Holocaust, the idea to reassign credit for inventions by the Germans and Italians was understandable. Von Braun and a team of German scientists would be allowed to enter the United States going to work on the American Rocket Program. However, thirteen of his top scientists were taken prisoners by the Russians. They were placed in Siberia where they followed Russian dictates to work on weapons for that country. For almost twelve years they lived under preferred conditions, but maintained their desires to escape to the West. In the meantime, I believe, von Braun and his team worked at the White Sands Testing and Proving Grounds in New Mexico/Texas, while the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama was being modified for the rocketry program.**

**General Patton also foretold what he considered the beginning of the Cold War. Patton thought we should be prepared to continue the war to march against Russia. General Eisenhower was displeased with Patton's vocal hostility and ordered General Walter Bedell Smith to moderate. An automobile "accident" left General Patton paralyzed from the neck down and shortened his life. General Eisenhower would become President of the USA as the Cold War with Russia would heat up.**

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **WORLD POLITICS OF THE ERA**

#### **RUSSIA UNDER STALIN**

**Josef Stalin had been born into a religious setting. He had attended Orthodox Church Schools with the hopes of his mother for her son to become a priest however, he became devoted to Karl Marx Manifesto. When the Bolsheviks (Communist) took control of the government, they considered religion an opiate of the people, outlawed by death. When WWII began, Stalin had trouble after assassinating the Royal Family and the Mensheviks (majority party). Stalin had also destroyed all the churches. Leaders of the Russian people did not want to fight a war over religion, so Stalin rebuilt the churches and called on the people to save and support Mother Russia. This was done solely as a propaganda tool. Stalin ruled Russia from 1929-1953. He would align**

**with Britain and the United States during WWII (1939-1945). The Cold War would begin in 1946.**

### **THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN CHINA**

**General Chain Kai Chek, who headed the Nationalists from 1928 till 1949. He and his wife were Methodists that conducted daily Bible studies. When his government was overthrown, in 1949, he fled to Taiwan where he would live in exile until his death.**

**For some unknown reason the United States government seemed to side with the communist as our military, under the direction of General Stillwell, distributed the newest equipment to the communists leaving the old, obsolescent items for the Nationalists. Thus entered Mao Zedong and the formation of the People's Republic of China. Mao Zedong would remain in power until his death in 1976.**

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **THE ISLE OF MACAU**

**In 1513, Portugal landed on the Isle of Macau. In 1557, it was leased to Portugal as a trading post while it remained under Chinese sovereignty. By 1887, the Portuguese finally managed to secure an agreement from China declaring that the island was a territory of Portugal. Finally, in 1999, Macau was officially handed over to China being the last European territory on the Asian continent.**

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **THE GREAT ESCAPE**

**In 1956, the Russian Government had granted permission for their 13 captive German scientist to attend a Microbiological Conference on the island of Macau. Would this be their chance to escape?**

**I was instructed to travel to the isle of Macau where I expected to link up with Dr. Sanders. We were going to attend a conference of microbiologists on the island. When I arrived a few days before the conference, Dr. Sanders was nowhere to be found. Though the United States was not invited, we were to attend as guests of Australia and New Zealand. In spite of the fact that the material to be discussed was beyond my scientific expertise, Dr. Sanders still had assigned me there.**

**For several days I stayed in and around my hotel. Little by little I was given bits of information on what was to be expected. Protocol was to be followed. In case of capture and given truth serum nothing could be revealed due to lack of knowledge. If necessary, at that point we would probably be killed by Sodium Nembutal, which would at that time cause an untraceable death. All of my instructions were given by word of mouth...nothing was ever in writing. This was done by my direct superior 006. I was told “due to suspicion” the upper numbers, including Dr. Sanders, were no longer involved in the “ultimate mission.” At 22 years of age, I would be in charge since I was known solely as a biologist. To that point, I knew nothing about the thirteen German scientists and had no idea I would be personally involved in rescuing them.**

**Finally, the night before, I was given sketchy instructions about the scientists and the plan to assist**

in an escape to the West I questioned, “What would they do if I canceled our part in the escape?” The answer came back, “They will try to make a run on their own.” Knowing that would be tragic, I was willing to do whatever necessary to give them a chance for what amounted to an escape. The word defection was never used. In my mind I think they had already defected, because I was told that materials and instructions they had left behind in Siberia were designed to confuse the Russians on their position on Germ Warfare. I spent the night before the convention tossing and turning unable to sleep with the details circulating through my mind. That morning I arose pumped on adrenaline despite the lack of sleep. I was ready to do my best not knowing if I would survive to see another day.

Upon arrival at the convention site, there was a heavy presence of Chinese Nationalists. Later, they would be helpful with many details in aiding us on

our mission. For now, I made a mental note of the facility. The building resembled a large, ornate barn with a mezzanine. Once inside, to the left was a large cloakroom. Across the hall from the cloakroom was the restrooms. My official location was just to the right of the entrance at the first of 10 small round tables. Each small table sat 5 people except my table where I sat with 2 others gentlemen. I believe they were agent 002 and 004 but as stated earlier we never met face to face before nor knew each others names. Each of us would have a folder with 5 sets of 3 page documents. Since 006 and those above him were no longer in contact, I had become the senior agent at 005. Still totally uninformed of the entire plan I awaited for an unknown, inside contact, but whom and when would it come? To my knowledge we were to escape with the scientists by bus but there had to be more to the plan.

**To be successful, foul weather would be a key factor. To our blessing, thunder, lightning and rough, cold rain pounced down the day of the conference and continued into the evening. Because of foul weather, the large cloakroom was heavily used for hanging wet coats plus storage for hats, boots and galoshes. As things were developing, I thought of a plan to be integrated with the information that had been given to me. One key point I noted was that all attendees were wearing floppy hats and long coats because of the rain. Everyone entering the building passed through a small hallway by my table. As foul weather gear was removed the identity of the wearers country of origin was diminished. This was the key we needed to execute our plan.**

**Just before 8 PM the Australians and New Zealanders were moving to the cloakroom due to a break in the conference. Assisted by an unexpected explosion in the kitchen, attention to our area**

lessened as numerous police rushed to the commotion. That left the cloakroom unguarded. It was time to act, “Operation Go” had started. The New Zealand quickly dressed in the German/Russian scientist’s gear, while the escaping scientists put on gear from Australia and New Zealand. The decoys headed towards several buses that sped off towards the airport. The deception had worked, as the buses were chased by the Macau-Red Chinese police. Now it was time for our group to exit.

As we walked out the smaller front door, I was instructed by a New Zealander, who was Chief Pilot of the boat group, to follow him. He took my shoulder and directed us away from the bus area around the right side of the building following a small wooden plank walkway. There was no relief from the weather under the building overhang as we could barely see a yard in front of us.

**In wait, on the back side of the structure were 3 high powered longboats. The scientists were loaded on the first 2 boats, each having an operator and an armed guard. I occupied the third boat with several armed guards and my fellow agents who assisted in the escape. Since our boat was last, its job was to weave to and fro forming a moving shield in case of an assault. Thus began a four-hour journey in rough seas on a moonless night, both, which aided our escape to Hong Kong. The trip was so miserable that my mind has blocked most of the details from my memory.**

**Upon arrival the mission seemed completed. The scientists departed for a destination unknown to me. Later I learned they were flown to the United States.**

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **THE COVER UP**

**That night, I boarded a plane bound for Honolulu. Midway through the trip the pilot reported that there was a gas leak and he wasn't sure if there was enough fuel to reach our destination. As he doubled back for return to the airport, a briefcase was attached to a "Sam Brown" type belt then handcuffed to my wrist. When a dye marker was attached to my back I began to wonder was the plane sabotaged? What was in the briefcase I will never know. Preparing for the crash I pressed my body against the door of the plane. As we crashed in the water I must have hit my head on the metal door. When I awakened the brief case and Sam Brown belt was gone. I was wearing a warm, dry set of cloths. All I was told was that we were lucky to have crashed**

**only a short distance from land. Yes, we had escaped a near tragedy, whether it was accidental or planned I'll never know.**

**Some time later, at a debriefing I was told that a Russian Colonel claimed the United States attempted to kidnap some of their scientists. He explained that the unwilling scientists overpowered the Americans while in flight over the China sea. Not being qualified to fly this type of plane all were lost in at sea. This false claim was fabricated to save face for the Russians on the defection of their German scientist.**

**At a later date, perhaps to protect us from Russian retaliation for our part in executing the escape, it was reported that 5 American microbiologist, including myself, were killed in a plane crash on a trip to South America. Was the combination of these two false**

**reports a cooperative plan between Russia and the United States governments?**

**Efforts to locate documentation on either of these incidents have been fruitless to date. Perhaps they are buried in unreleased archives. In spite of those missing reports, today I am healthy and happy.**

## CHAPTER 14

### TRIP TO WASHINGTON

I did not know the destination of the rescued scientist's until I arrived in Washington, DC several days later. As I made my exit from my return flight my instructions were to stop at a bend in the exit ramp. I was to raise my right hand and wave 3 times. On a distant ramp, one at a time, each of the 13 scientists saluted me. I cannot describe the emotions that ran through my body, as tears filled my eyes for now I knew the results of my efforts. I could only imagine the effects their future contributions would have on their soon to be adopted Country. I stood at attention till the last of the scientist was escorted towards another waiting plane. When I asked "Where are we going?" I was told, "You will return to Miami. The scientist were headed to Redstone Arsenial in Huntsville, Alabama. Could this be the

**fulfillment of what Werner Von Braun meant when he said, “Reunited in Christendom? Could Christendom mean America?”**

**In any case that emotional experience has remained vividly in my mind all these years.**

**After spending the night in Washington I attended a meeting with members of Congress and the Military. Several members from other countries were also in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a UN proposal to outlaw any scientific works regarding germ warfare. Though not part of the high brass, I made the comment that it was necessary to continue research to develop antigens. An Admiral from New Zealand repeated my exact words. A vote was taken and the majority saw the need to continue research in the field.**

**As the meeting ended the Admiral approached me in private and handed me a manila envelope with**

**some of the documents that should have been destroyed from my previous mission. His words were “keep these...you are always in the program.”**

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **BACK IN MIAMI**

**I returned to Miami and worked under Dr. Sanders for a short period of time. Nothing was ever mentioned about the successful mission except one day Professor Benjamin Akins casually said something about looking pretty good for someone supposed to be killed in a plane crash.**

**For a short while I was transferred to work under Dr. Veronica Armagahan, Director of Department of Toxicology. Unhappy with this new appointment, I was given a choice to go to Washington, DC to work in the Department of Toxicology or leave the program. It was my desire to return to the tropical fish industry.**

**I began working at Eastern Gardens Aquarium on US 1 and 144th street in Miami, a**

short distance from the Bill Haast's Serpentarium. For living quarters, I rented a studio apartment from Clifford Danials. He was the voice of Amos from the original radio show, Amos N Andy. Eastern Gardens was closing soon, so I returned to the farm that started this adventure. When Herman Blass sold Franjo Fisheries, I purchased 5 acres and began my solo career in the tropical fish business opening my own tropical fish and aquatic plant farm near the now Homestead General Airport. Together with my wife Greta we operated Naranja Tropical Fish Farms until our retirement.

Over the years I have heard from people I knew as a teenager and early 20's. They would ask, "What on earth were you involved with? The Office of Naval Research asked me some strange questions about you, mostly about your character and loyalty to America." In return, I never gave them a straight answer.

## **CHAPTER 16**

### **BREAKING THE SILENCE**

**In 2006, some 50 years after my work at the University, an article appeared in the Miami Herald blaming the local tropical fish farmers for the propagation of several varieties of foreign fish in the local waters. Among the species mentioned were several types that I captured on my trip to Central America in 1956. I knew for a fact that some of our breeding stock had escaped during heavy rains that year. In order to set the record straight, I went to the University of Miami in hopes of get a copy of the film shot by Mr. Fleming or perhaps copies of some paperwork on my research. I was shocked when they said no record of my employment existed and my name was on the list of dead participants.**

**On a later occasion, I returned with copies of my payment stubs from 1956. A lady did some quick**

**research and returned taking my telephone number. Like she promised, she called later that evening and a meeting was set for the following week at the University. When I arrived to keep the appointment, I was informed that she was no longer working there. Several others seemed eager to help, but attempts to contact them again were in vain. In frustration, I decided to come forward and tell my story for you to make a decision of its creditability.**

**For decades I have kept silent about my secret mission serving under Dr. Murray Sanders and the US Navy. After a series of strange occurrences and the denial of requested information, I decided to share my story with you in “BEYOND PAPERCLIP.”**

## **JAMES THIELE**

### **THE MAN TODAY**

**Most books start at the beginning or at the end of the lead characters life. This story began with a deep evaluation of James Thiele, who now in his mid 80's. It is a picture of a true American living a pure but simple life. Yes, I have known the man for many years but only on a superficial basis. It was after a half-day travel that my wife, Patty and I approached Jim and Greta's front door. We were about to enter the heart and soul of this close-knit couple. After a cordial greeting and a tour of their home we found ourselves outside taking a walk amongst the many plants that landscaped their manicured yard. The varieties ranged from roses to shrubs, herbs and spices, each displaying individual qualities. The tour was coupled with information on the origin of each plant plus any medicinal value they might possess.**

**Being a lover of plants, Jim is a member of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and a Master Gardener Volunteer growing a variety of plants, in a commercial size greenhouse, for their May Annual Plant Sale. Every Wednesday mornings starting at 5 AM, you can find him at church cooking breakfast for the Men's Group before bible study. For years, on the third Friday of each month, he was in charge of the fish fry. Now, he is endorsing a movie night devoted to in depth Christian studies on Bible related subjects...not bad for an 85 years old. But wait, that's not all. He directs the aluminum can drive for the church and invented his own can crusher. In the works are Monarch Butterfly station sites to assist in their migration plus work on a UF/State of Florida, "Lake Watch Project." The list goes on...**

**As you can deduce by now, any event Jim is involved in, he is a master, a mover and a motivator.**

**Anyone joining in on a project with him could probably write a book on his motivational skills that would likely wind up a New York Times top 10 seller. I have seen his skills demonstrated in a book titled Aquarium Plants-The practical Guide by Pablo Tepot and dedicated to James Thiele.**

**After reviewing many of his varied accomplishments, I had to put down my foot and insist we start on the subject of our visit, after all we only had 3 days! With suitcases and recorders in hand, we re-entered their home for a visit that included interviews, casual conversation and lots of excellently prepared meals by Greta. Through this association, I would learn much about the man James Thiele that would shed light on his fabulous story.**

**Jimmy is a soft-spoken person who is an avid reader. Since he sleeps only 4 to 5 hours a night, it is**

**not unusual to find him in his reading room buried in a variety of topics ranging from politics to religion. In fact, he showed me at least a dozen different versions of the Bible. On the political scene, Jim was the first to tell me about Ben Carson and even mentioned Donald Trump months before either entered the political race. In fact, Jim can carry on an intelligent conversation on almost any topic you can throw at him.**

**Through our interesting lives and 48 years of marriage, we have been blessed by the light of our lives-our two children, their spouses and five grandchildren.**

**For over 60 years James has wondered if the 13 scientist shared their rescue with their families and descendants? Did they live the All American Dream while contributing to their adopted Country. Please contact us through \_\_\_\_\_ For If others**

**survivors of their family members have anything to  
contribute please contact \_\_\_\_\_**

## **DOCUMENTATION**

### **FORMS AND PHOTOS**









