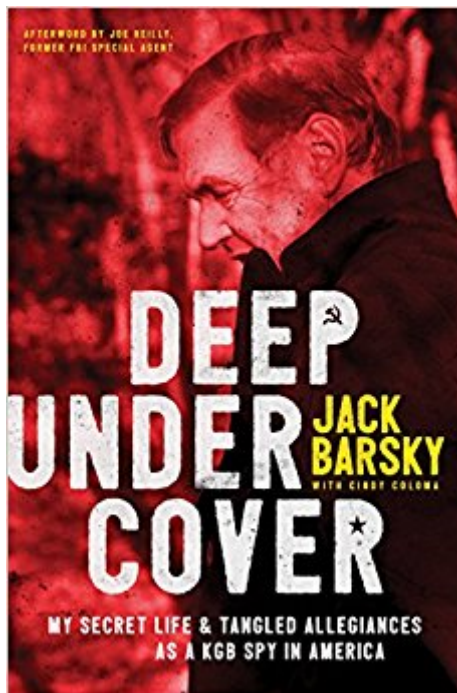




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# Deep Undercover: My Secret Life And Tangled Allegiances As A KGB Spy In America



## Synopsis

One decision can end everything . . . or lead to unlikely redemption. Millions watched the CBS 60 Minutes special on Jack Barsky in 2015. Now, in this fascinating memoir, the Soviet KGB agent tells his story of gut-wrenching choices, appalling betrayals, his turbulent inner world, and the secret life he lived for years without getting caught. On October 8, 1978, a Canadian national by the name of William Dyson stepped off a plane at O'Hare International Airport and proceeded toward Customs and Immigration. Two days later, William Dyson ceased to exist. The identity was a KGB forgery, used to get one of their own—a young, ambitious East German agent—into the United States. The plan succeeded, and the spy's new identity was born: Jack Barsky. He would work undercover for the next decade, carrying out secret operations during the Cold War years . . . until a surprising shift in his allegiance challenged everything he thought he believed. Deep Undercover will reveal the secret life of this man without a country and tell the story no one ever expected him to tell.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The making of "an undercover agent spying on behalf of the Soviet Union." Born Albrecht Dittrich in 1949 in East Germany, Barsky recounts his meticulously prepared career as a KGB spy, his mission as an embedded agent in the United States, and his subsequent coming out of the cold in the late 1980s. All his life, Barsky enjoyed sterling accomplishments, from winning the prestigious Karl Marx Scholarship in 1970 to graduating to an assured career as a professor in

chemistry; later, at age 40, he graduated as the valedictorian from Baruch College in New York. Early on, as a good Young Pioneer and member of the Communist Party, the stoical, determined youth vowed that if he ever got the chance, he would somehow contribute "to the destruction of the evil forces of fascism and capitalism." That opportunity arrived with his recruitment by a KGB agent, and he agreed to give up his chemistry career in order to be trained in Russian espionage under the code name Dieter. Aside from his training in Berlin in the "rules of conspiracy," including mastering shortwave radio and Morse code, cryptography, secret writing, photography, dead-drop operations, and surveillance detection, Barsky had to undergo rigorous instruction in English in Moscow, no less. After two years, he was ready to embed in the West, first to Canada and then to New York, where he worked as a bike messenger while gradually acquiring the necessary documents for permanent residency. As an illegal, he assumed the identity of a certain Jack Barsky, who had died in 1955. Yet Barsky's American life, including a job at an insurance company and a wife and child (another family had to be left in Germany), was too good to be true; when his identity was compromised, he boldly defied KGB orders to return, slipping under the radar thanks largely to the collapse of the Soviet Union. An intriguing inside look at international espionage. (Kirkus Reviews)

Jack's honesty and sincerity were clear from the first time I met him. He was on a journey, and I was privileged to watch something very special unfold. Jack's story is fascinating, and Deep Undercover tells it well. A true story of redemption and what can happen when God's healing love breaks through our mind, heart, and relationships. (Rob Cruver, executive director, Urban Impact) Our fascination with spies runs deep, particularly those who are under deep cover, the so-called sleeper agents. Living and operating under aliases, with elaborate background stories (called legends), they intrigue us for the double lives they live, sometimes with families and even children. (The current popularity of FX Network's award-winning *The Americans* attests to this.) But what is the truth beneath the often glamorized surface? How are they selected, trained, and dispatched to foreign countries? What are their secret assignments? Deep Undercover lifts the veil on one such case, giving us a glimpse of a secret life, showing us the price one man paid for undertaking such an assignment. Reading his intriguing story, you realize how few of us would willingly undertake such a mission or succeed! (Peter Earnest, Executive director, International Spy Museum) Jack Barsky's ultimate act of courage is sharing this intimate story that sheds light on the true personal consequences of a life in espionage. Gripping and emotional, Deep Undercover peers beyond the Iron Curtain for a look into the world of

a KGB officer illegally living abroad. Instead of romanticizing the life of a spy, Barsky tells his story with honesty and heart. (Joel Fields, Writer and executive producer, *The Americans*) An incredible look at the astounding journey of a KGB officer in the midst of the Cold War. Heartbreaking, exciting, intriguing. An honest account of one of the most difficult careers known to man. Equal parts memoir, spycraft guide, and historical document, *Deep Undercover* perfectly describes the crippling insularity of the spy's life. (Joe Weisberg, Creator, showrunner, and executive producer, *The Americans*) As a double agent who worked against Russia, I thought I had heard it all. Then I heard Jack's story. (Naveed Jamali, Former double agent and author of *How to Catch a Russian Spy*)

Jack Barsky has written a compelling, intimate memoir about his life as a high achieving East German academic recruited by the KGB and trained to pass undetected into American society. It is a tale of irony, deception, and redemption. The KGB has the vague hope that Barsky will ultimately mix with the higher echelon of U.S. policymakers, yet it invents a background story ("legend") so generic and undistinguished that he labors as a bicycle messenger on the streets of New York. The KGB then asks him to attain the educational credentials that will allow him to gain prominence, which Barsky does with such success (as his college's valedictorian and then as an information systems executive at Fortune 500 companies) that he validates the very economic system he was sworn to subvert. His growing philosophical doubts, coupled with his recognition of the deep toll his deceptions are taking on his relationships, lead him to reject a recall and quit the service in a creative fashion. Ahead lay unmasking and debriefing by the FBI, fulfilling new relationships and mended fences, U.S. citizenship, and a spiritual awakening. Around this framework one will find an evocative portrayal of an East German boyhood, a primer on the elements of KGB training and spycraft in the 70's and 80's, and an engrossing description of the FBI's response. I highly recommend the book.

Wow, what a story!!! Very well-written, this true story of a KGB agent infiltrating into the U.S. is incredible. I wish I had seen the episode of "60 Minutes" in which Jack Barsky appeared. The book is almost unbelievable, reading like a novel; we couldn't put it down. I learned a lot from it, about what life was like in East Germany, something I never knew. This man grew up in the same generation as I, yet our lives were soooooooo different. I was sorry he did not have the options that we have in America, which explains why he made the choices he did. I loved his thorough descriptions of the many countries he visited and especially what it took for him to become a

legalized American -- and why he ultimately turned against his home country. EXCELLENT BOOK.

I picked this up and read it start to finish, well written and very interesting from his childhood to today ... it really gives some insight into these operations .. which turns out to be quite a bit different than movies/TV .. shocking I know. It would make for a good movie

Very detailed and interesting account of the recruitment of a KGB spy. Of particular interest was the training of the recruit. What the KGB did NOT know about life in the U.S. was evident in Barsky's final deployment. As a child of the Cold War, this book was both fascinating and informative. I could not recommend the book more highly to all students of the Cold War era.

I read this book because Cindy Coloma, who collaborated with Jack Barsky in writing it, has been one of my favorite authors for years. Jack was an East German who became a spy for the Soviet Union and operated in the United States for more than 10 years. His story is an uplifting story of personal growth and spiritual awakening. Spending the greater part of a lifetime of trying to do the right thing in every situation--well, most situations--and thinking himself to be generally successful in that pursuit--he gradually discovers that what he believed to be the right course for his life has been misguided and unduly harmed others along the way. Late in life, Jack sets himself upon a higher plane and seeks to mend relationships long neglected and destroyed by his poor choices and former way of life. There are several take-aways from Jack Barsky's story. The poor quality of life in East Germany during the Cold War, although widely recognized and well understood for decades, registered afresh with me, and correspondingly, the necessity for the government to forcibly restrain its people from leaving specifically because there were far better choices had the people been at liberty to make them; the lack of a vibrant, loving family life in his coming-of-age years, which didn't deter him from growing into a person of strong character, capable of true, deep and fervent love; and the innate human capacity for self-examination and change. This isn't a pretty story about a hero who always does the right thing, with good triumphing over evil at every turn. It's the story of a person of exceptionally fine intellect who employs his capability for rational thought to integrate the lessons learned his experiences--good and bad--into his heart and soul and formulate them into a better way of thinking and living. With his horizons thus expanding, Jack continuously re-evaluates his life's work and his choices, at times suffering bitter self-recrimination for harm done to others by the actions he has taken and better choices he has avoided. He reaches a stage

in his development where he discovers a dimension of love that he had not known to exist - and that he was capable of giving and receiving it. He does not quail when the time comes to "make a break" and make a truly hard--potentially deadly--right choice and bring his former way of life to an end. It is his very impressive daughter Chelsea who begins the spade-work to re-construct his broken family connections, long since abandoned, and insofar as possible facilitates bringing disparate pieces of Jack's life and fragmented family together. Perhaps Chelsea's story deserves to be written. Most importantly, by degrees Jack recognizes God's hand upon him, as it had been all along the way, patiently guiding Jack's development and growth even through his mistakes, presenting opportunities and inducing him to make decisions that will steer him toward a God-centered life. Having worked in Washington, DC for part of my career, this story also introduces me to the distinct possibility that I may have been close to agents of hostile governments seeking to harm our country. I might have had a neighbor, co-worker, or even a friend who was just like Jack at his worst, and never knew it. If I did, I hope any influence I had on them was good, and I hope they were like Jack Barsky.

It's a cliché to say a book is a page turner and it was hard to put down. However, this book fit both characteristics for me. It was told in the first person and was easy to follow and understand. The author described the intricacies of learning to become a spy. It requires a great deal of patience and a great memory along with years of learning to study by your handler prior to being sent out into the field. At various times in his life author Jack Barsky was an atheist, an agnostic, and finally a Christian and he explains how the several times in his life it appeared that God was protecting him from harm throughout his years involved in his tangled web. An east-German he had to learn to speak English without the German accent, travel round-about routes to his destination to assure that he wasn't being followed in addition to getting involved in various marriages with children in each one. If you enjoy books on intrigue and spy stories this one is sure to hold your interest. I've had the book in my library for a few months without reading it and finally gave it a try. It certainly proved to be a gem. A well-told story that is easy to read and understand. Give it a try. You'll be glad you did.

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