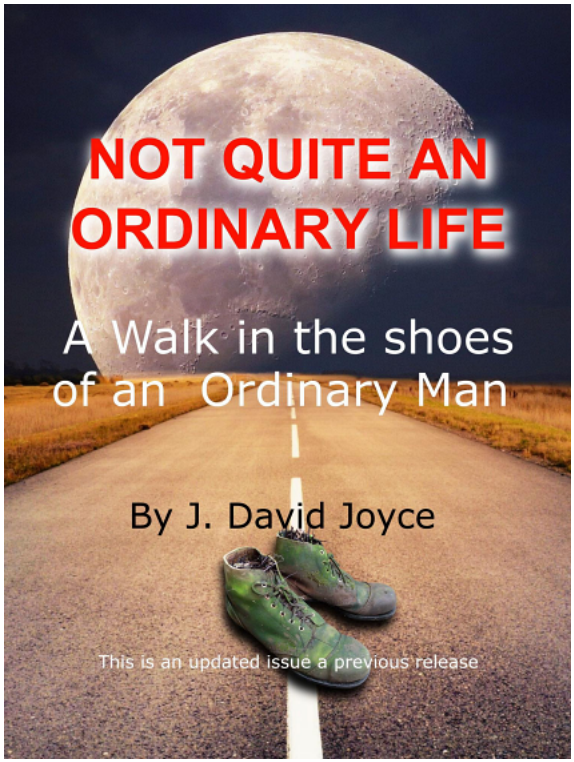

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A Walk in the shoes of an Ordinary Man
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PART I – SURVIVING YOUTH

Chapter 5 – Killing The Dog

When I was six weeks old, my father brought home a white Collie puppy. My mother recalled saying, “Oh, George, we’ve got all these kids, a new baby, and you had to bring home a puppy!” Someone named the puppy Sheppy, and he became part of the family. Sheppy and I grew up together and were inseparable until his death when we were both twelve. My parents took the photograph of Sheppy and me in 1945. In the picture, the condition of his coat and his apparent lack of expected weight suggest that he is in decline.

It must be Sunday - I'm wearing a tie. (Courtesy: Helen Joyce)

My mother never feared letting me roam the neighborhood as a young boy, as that dog was always with me whenever I left the confines of our yard. I never had to call or urge him; he seemed to know his duty was to protect me. However, there came a time when he was too old and lame to keep up with me. He suffered from rheumatism, which made it difficult for him to get up and down, along with something they called “the mange,”

which causes skin problems in dogs. Late in 1945 or early 1946, my mother and father decided it was time to put Sheppy out of his misery.

He had been a wonderful pet for the entire family, so when the time to end his life came, all the family members present attended the procedure. First, someone found an old steamer trunk to serve as a coffin, which my mother lined with a worn comforter. We found a photograph of Sheppy and placed it in an 8x10 picture frame, along with a note explaining whose remains they were and what should be done if they were ever uncovered. We had several Nembutal capsules left from when my father used that drug instead of Morphine to manage his migraine headaches, and decided to euthanize the dog with an overdose of those. My mother inserted each of the twenty capsules into a dollop of margarine and fed them to Sheppy; then, we sat and waited for him to die. Nembutal does not affect dogs, or at least not that dog. He didn't even seem groggy. After waiting an hour, my father sent my brother-in-law, Ray Clark, to the pharmacy to buy some Chloroform.

When Ray returned with the Chloroform, a large kitchen strainer was located and lined with a baby's diaper. My mother poured Chloroform all over the diaper, and the process began. Ray, one of my brothers, and I held Sheppy down as my father forced the strainer over his face. The Chloroform smelled slightly sweet but was very strong and burned my eyes. The Nembutal didn't bother the dog, but Chloroform sure did. He fought us like a demon. Slipping and sliding all over the linoleum-covered floor, the four of us ended up under the kitchen table, which finally came to rest when it collided with the

refrigerator. By this time, Sheppy's struggle was almost contained. What the others didn't know until I passed out was that the Chloroform fumes had a strong effect on me. When I awoke, I found myself across the room with my mother attending me. The three others were still holding down the lifeless body of the dog. They all looked a little groggy, too. Finally, my mother pronounced the dog dead, and they let go of him; he was out of his misery. If this process sounds barbaric, it wasn't; it is just the way things were done in those days. The money the family needed couldn't be paid to a veterinarian to euthanize a pet.

The work wasn't finished yet; we still needed a grave for the coffin. It was winter, and the ground was frozen. Because the chloroform had knocked me out, my mother was upset and sent me to bed. I couldn't sleep for a long time that night. I could hear the pick hitting the frozen earth in our backyard as my brother and brother-in-law dug the grave. As I write this, I can still recall those sounds.

My father tried to replace Sheppy with another white collie, but it didn't work out well. Sandy was a barker and showed a hint of meanness toward children. My family could not tolerate either of those traits in a dog. One day, I came home from school, and Sandy was gone. I never grew attached to that dog, so it didn't bother me. However, we were set to have another dog.

As I returned from the local dairy, where my mother had sent me to purchase a quart of milk, I came across a man in his backyard with four or five puppies. As a child, I had to stop and pet them. One caught my eye, and the man told me I could have

it if I wanted because he had plenty. My place in my family's pecking order was very low. I knew if I asked for a puppy, the answer would be no. I told the man that there was no way my parents would let me have a puppy and continued my walk home. I never mentioned the offer of a free puppy to anyone.

The man, who remains unknown to me, must have known my father. The next day, the same puppy was in our house when I returned from school. I couldn’t believe I had received something I wanted without asking. We named her Fatima after an obscure brand of cigarettes on the market. She was nothing but a mongrel, but she was a wonderful dog.

PART III - MARRIED IN THE MILITARY

Chapter 2 - Assignment Berlin

In early 1962, my name was near the top of the list for an overseas assignment. Typically, this would not have been a problem; I would receive orders for a USAFSS unit, pack our personal belongings, and fly off to my new post with my family, wherever it happened. However, things changed that year. Global tensions between the United States and Communist countries were very high. The President determined that allowing families to accompany military members overseas was no longer safe. This was a terrible blow to us. There was one exception to the President's decree. To demonstrate to the world that we would not be intimidated by the aggressive activities of the Soviet Union in Berlin, he permitted families to accompany military members assigned to that city, which was 110 miles behind the Iron Curtain. However, there was a significant caveat: anyone who volunteered for an assignment to that area was automatically disqualified. A member of the Air Force assigned there had recently defected to East Germany; the government believed that restricting the assignment to volunteers might prevent a second defection. I knew there was an opening for someone of my rank and career field at our unit in Berlin, but I couldn't volunteer because that would exclude me from the assignment; it was a Catch-22.

Fate was set to intervene. When my name rose to the top of the list for an overseas assignment, Sylvia served as the secretary to the colonel in charge of personnel for the entire 10,000-man command. Someone in the office sought her and informed her that I had been assigned to our organization in Hof, Germany. She understood that she could not accompany me to

that base, and her disappointment was evident to her supervisor, Colonel Sarret. When he became aware of the situation, he instructed a subordinate to determine if there was an available assignment where she could join me. The only one available in the whole world was the one in Berlin. My assignment to Hof was changed to Berlin, and our angst was alleviated.

In mid-September, with Clay, who was barely six weeks old, we climbed into our two-door Mercury S-22 Sport Coupe and headed to New York to introduce my new family to my parents. Sylvia was breastfeeding Clay, a somewhat uncommon practice for American women in the early 1960s, which made traveling with an infant much easier than expected. The trip was fun, and the visit with my parents went well. They fell in love with Sylvia and were delighted to have me as a father at the relatively advanced age of twenty-eight. After visiting New York, we drove down the East Coast to Charleston Air Force Base in South Carolina to catch a military aircraft for the flight to Germany. We turned in our car to be shipped by boat to Bremerhaven and boarded a four-engine, propeller-driven Super Constellation aircraft of the Military Air Transport Command. Sylvia, who had never been east of the Mississippi River at twenty-one, travelled with a six-week-old infant to a place halfway around the world from the only home she had ever known. It must have been quite traumatic for her. The weather was terrible over the Atlantic, and when we landed at the Azores for fuel, the layover was extended to repair some of the passenger seats that had broken loose during the rough first leg of the flight. I found it interesting to see how respectful Sylvia's male military members on the aircraft and in the terminal

were of her privacy while she nursed Clay. Eventually, the plane was repaired, and we flew to Frankfurt, Germany. It was good that we were young and strong; lugging hand baggage and carrying a baby through and between terminals was quite a challenge.

After spending the night in a hotel in Frankfurt on October 19, 1962, we boarded a special military train to complete our journey to Berlin. We were required to surrender our identification cards, passports, and special travel documents, which were printed in English, French, and Russian, to the train commander for inspection by Russian guards upon arrival at the East German border. Our documents were returned to us early morning when the train reached the American Sector of Berlin. Due to the worldwide coverage of the Berlin Wall's construction, many Americans became aware of the situation in Berlin. Still, I don't think many of them could grasp that we were living in a small island city deep inside a communist country. If the Russians wanted Berlin, they didn't have to attack the U.S. Army units stationed there; all they had to do was change the signs on the fence and wall that surrounded us and inform the world that we were captured.

Due to the nature of my work and my access to classified information, my family and I would never be permitted to fly into or out of Berlin because of the risk of falling into enemy hands if the aircraft were forced to land in East Germany. Whenever we traveled to or from Berlin, we had to secure special travel orders written in French, English, and Russian, and transit through East Germany on a sealed U.S. Army train. If we decided to vacation outside of Berlin, we had to hire someone not involved in

intelligence work to drive our vehicle through East Germany to Helmstedt, West Germany, just over the border, where we could disembark and travel freely. The reverse procedure was required upon our return to Berlin.

Whenever family members accompany an Air Force member on an overseas assignment, a sponsor of equal rank from their new unit is assigned to ease their arrival and familiarize them with the local area. Our sponsor had arranged a hotel room for us near Tempelhof Airfield, the home of my new unit. Our room was on the third floor of a seven-story building. An elevator was out of the question, as the upper four floors remained in the same bombed-out condition they had been in since the end of the war in 1945. This marked the beginning of our culture shock. Things were a bit tricky for us for a few days. The Cuban Missile Crisis started five days before we arrived in Berlin. People in the United States were hoarding food and water in anticipation of war, while those in my new unit were on duty every waking hour. I was left alone to find a place for my family to live. The hotel room, with its communal bathroom facilities down the hall and a landlady who told me Sylvia could not dry diapers on the heating radiator (yeah, right), was becoming tiresome. Note the battle damage on the hotel's façade.

Our first abode in Berlin - October 1962 (Photo by Author)

Fortunately, Peter and Uschi, who had completed their assignments in Iran and Italy, were now assigned to Berlin. On the first Saturday we were in town, I arranged to meet them at Uschi's mother's apartment, which was closer to our living. Frau Wieland was overjoyed to host us and greeted us like old friends. We arrived before Peter and Uschi, making Frau Wieland's greeting even more special for her. Sylvia was nursing Clay when Peter and Uschi arrived, and Uschi immediately fell in love with her. While almost all German women breastfed their children in 1962, they assumed very few American women did. Peter fell in love with Sylvia a few minutes later, and the Zahns' love for her continued. Their son, Dirk, was born six months before Clay, so the two women also shared the experience of new motherhood.

At most overseas military installations, family quarters are available by accompanied personnel. There are never enough quarters to accommodate everyone, so many families live with the local citizens. In military parlance, this is known as “living on the economy.” We needed to live on the economy until my name reached the top of the waiting list. Peter helped us find a place to rent – there would be a nine-month wait before government quarters became available. Our rented apartment was so close to the border between the American Sector of Berlin and East Germany that we routinely heard the guards open fire whenever a rabbit or a person triggered alarms at the border. Our location was precarious enough that Sylvia and Uschi had a plan to meet at a specified point in case hostilities arose. Uschi even insisted that Sylvia buy German-style clothing and use a German-made stroller for Clay so she would blend in with the local population rather than become a target as an American. I never worried as much as the ladies did. Their planning made them feel better, so I encouraged them.

Finding safe and comfortable accommodations in the local economy for accompanying personnel was a challenge for Americans. At the end of World War II, Berlin was divided into four sectors: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union, each occupying areas of roughly equal size. The Russians ruled their sector with an iron fist. The French were somewhat more understanding of the Berliners, except for housing their military personnel. They appropriated the best accommodations for themselves and instructed the Berliners to vacate. The Americans and the British treated the Berliners respectfully, refraining from confiscating residences for their personnel and not imposing restrictions on landlords

who chose to rent to them. Americans paid exorbitant rents for places that barely met basic standards. I suppose the governments were trying to win the support of the civilian Germans.

The furnace in the apartment we rented was in the cellar on our side of the building. Although the landlord controlled the thermostat, whenever he wanted to be warm, we would also be warm, or even warmer than he was. When we inspected the apartment, Peter had gleefully pointed out the heating system's location as a selling point. It proved to be good advice; that winter, we went six weeks with temperatures never rising above freezing, and many days, they dropped below zero. That year, we experienced a significant amount of snow, which can lead to feelings of depression once the initial beauty of the snowfall fades. The weeks leading up to our vehicle's arrival from the United States were challenging, as we lived far from other Americans and had to rely on trolleys and buses to commute to work and shopping areas. Sylvia was a real trooper during the nine months we lived in that apartment. She had to handle culture shock, a new baby, gunfire at night, strange furniture, separation from English-speaking neighbors, and a lack of telephone or transportation while I was at work. Our living space included a combined living room and dining room, two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a half-bath. The bathroom, equipped with a commode and sink, was in a poorly heated entryway; however, the bathtub was in the kitchen. That was odd, but it was always warm during bath time. Sylvia had to wash cloth diapers by hand; although disposable diapers were available, they were far too expensive. It felt like a full-time job to get by. We visited the coin-operated laundry facility near the Post

Exchange (PX) and shopped at the U. S. Army commissary. After a few months, we found a portable diaper washer in the PX and spent a significant portion of our spare funds on making the purchase. It was a barrel-shaped container that held about four gallons of water. An electrically powered agitator was suspended from the lid, which was secured with clasps to ensure a watertight seal. It was worth every penny and made things a little easier for Sylvia. While there were occasional unit social functions, we were mostly alone when living on 25 Marien Strasse. Our friendship with the Zahns was particularly beneficial during that time.

Because we had a vehicle and the Zahns did not, we visited them more often than they visited us. We were with them on the evening of November 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated. Dirk and Clay played on the floor, and AFRS, the American Forces Radio Station, played dinner music in the background. I had spilled a coffee on the tablecloth, but Uschi was in the kitchen and didn't notice, so I moved a saltshaker over the stain to hide it from her. Peter laughed and explained that in a German home, everything has its place, and those items must always be in their designated spots. He warned me that Uschi would notice the shaker was out of place. Sure enough, when she returned to the table, she automatically moved the saltshaker and discovered the stain. We were all laughing when Peter opened the bottle of Bordeaux Blanc that we had brought with us, but the music was interrupted by the news that the President had been shot. Since the announcer reported it was a head wound, we concluded that it must have been fatal. Peter's phone began to ring with calls from colleagues, and soon the radio station announced the

president's death. After receiving another call, he asked me to accompany him outside the apartment building. He wanted to show me the burning candles in the apartments' windows in every direction we looked. He wanted me to understand that Berliners highly esteemed America and the President. They all remembered America's efforts during the Berlin blockade in 1948 and 1949, appreciated President Kennedy's 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech during his visit in early 1963, and knew that America was the reason they hadn't been absorbed into East Germany. Berliners still have a close affinity with America.

Coping With a New Job:

My new organization, the 6912th RSM, allowed me time to settle my family, which I greatly appreciated. However, my enthusiasm for the unit was soon dampened. The squadron was overwhelmingly dominated by linguists, commonly called 203s (Air Force Specialty Code 203XX). Many Russian and German language intercept positions operated twenty-four hours a day. There was one Morse interception position, and only one intelligence analyst was assigned to each flight. I was the fifth analyst assigned to the operations branch, which worked an eight-to-five weekday shift. The analysts on the Flights administratively reported to their Mission Supervisors, but technically, they worked for me. It was an awkward situation - I had responsibility but little authority. Initially, the 6912th was a detachment of the 6910th RSM in Darmstadt but had grown into a separate organization. As it developed, the preponderance of linguists in the unit analysis of the intercepted information, and the intelligence reporting functions were typically assigned to Intelligence Analysts. This situation prevented the young analysts assigned to the Flights from developing their skills. For

me, having held important positions at all levels resulted in the usurpation of functions generally performed by Intelligence Analysts. The single analyst on the flight was relegated to simply plotting the aircraft's location from behind a Plexiglas wall, based on Morse code intercepts by the one Radio Operator on the Flight. Linguists performed both the initial positions in my previous operational units in Trabzon and Bremerhaven; this was a bitter pill to swallow.

The situation was exacerbated by the notorious superior attitude commonly observed among linguists. While not all linguists exhibit this personality trait, older and more mature personnel often recognize their relative positions within the Intelligence Community. Unfortunately, many never matured. The problem began when young men were selected from basic training to attend language school in anticipation of assignments to the USAFSS. They were consistently told they possessed unique talents and sent to nine-month assignments at civilian colleges for classes in foreign languages. Once assigned to operational units, their superior attitude did not resonate well with other operational personnel. In addition to adopting a false mantle of superiority, our linguists also had to defend themselves against another criticism.

Although there was no basis for the opinion, service members skilled in other disciplines perceived those linguists had a higher-than-average number of gay personnel, a situation that, upon discovery, required immediate suspension of security clearance. In the macho world of the military, homosexuality was carefully hidden. While Morse Operators and Intelligence Analysts were occasionally found to be gay, there seemed to be

more pointed criticism when a gay linguist was identified. This issue made non-linguists regard those in the 203 career field with disdain. In those days, holding a security clearance was a precarious situation. I remember one young man who lost his clearance because he chose to participate in skydiving. Officials in the USAFSS believed that anyone who would jump out of a sound airplane lacked the good judgment to protect secrets. In another instance, when a member of my organization suffered a serious head injury in a motorcycle accident, his clearance was revoked because, when asked if he planned to continue riding a motorcycle during his recovery, he answered in the affirmative. The strangest clearance revocation case I recall occurred during the miniskirt era of the sixties at Headquarters in San Antonio. A beautiful young woman pushed the miniskirt craze to the limit. Men flocked to the coffee shop if they thought she might be present, but higher-level officers considered her a significant distraction. She was asked to wear less revealing clothing but opted not to comply. Because of her refusal, her clearance was revoked; her employment was terminated since a clearance was required for her job.

My duty in the 6912th was an uncomfortable assignment, to say the least. I taught the 202s assigned to the Flights how to enhance their value to the mission, but I was restricted from using my analysis and intelligence reporting skills. I was tasked with every odd project that arose. I prepared intelligence briefings, conducted field analysis of the Morse intercept material, and oversaw the installation and operator training for a ground-to-air warning system, the URC-53. The URC-53 was a precursor to our current digital communications systems. It was the size of a large desk, and through a complex system of

electronic components, allowed us to warn reconnaissance aircraft that they were straying too close to a border or that enemy aircraft posed a threat. A printout of a short message was sent to the reconnaissance supervisor in the rear of the plane, and a three-light warning bar was illuminated in front of the pilot to alert him to a potentially hazardous situation. There were many bugs in the new system, and the implementation was frustrating at best. Eventually, the system proved successful and was installed in units worldwide.

While I was stationed in Berlin, we lost only two aircraft to enemy fire. One strayed out of an air corridor, and the other crossed the East-West German border. Three twenty-mile-wide air corridors linked Western Europe with Berlin: the Southern, the Central, and the Northern routes. The sole purpose of the Morse intercept position in our unit was to intercept Soviet Air Defense (PVO Strany) communications, which constantly reported the location of aircraft in the corridors. When an aircraft crossed a corridor boundary, it was reported as an intruder, and Russian fighters were scrambled. These boundary violations were reported to others in the Intelligence Community through a message called the Border/Corridor Violation Report (BOCOVIR). These reports were issued because PVO Strany reacted to the slightest intrusion. Usually, the violating aircraft returned to the proper flight path, and the fighters returned to base.

During the day shift on January 28, 1964, an aircraft deviated from the Central Corridor and failed to return to its proper path. It was not one of our reconnaissance aircraft, so we could not issue a URC-53 warning. A BOCOVIR was issued,

and our German and Russian linguists were advised to search for tactical air operations.

From the Morse intercept, we could tell that the East Germans had scrambled fighters, and the target had been attacked. At the same time, a Russian Linguist recorded the activity between the ground station and the lead fighter pilot. The communications were what would be expected in a shootdown. The pilot reported the acquisition of the target, and the controller gave the order to attack. What struck me as being cold was the conversation before the actual firing on the aircraft.

The straying aircraft was a United States Air Force T-39 Sabreliner with three Air Force officers on board. The T-39 silhouette resembles the Caravelle, a 60-passenger aircraft manufactured in France. The lead fighter pilot reported to the ground controller that it was a Caravelle. From his position above the T-39, it could easily appear to be a Caravelle, as he could not compare its size to that of the target. When the controller issued the order to shoot, the fighter pilot hesitated and reiterated that it was a Caravelle, seemingly questioning the advisability of destroying a passenger aircraft. Again, the controller instructed him to shoot, and the Russian fighter pilot destroyed the Sabreliner. Three Air Force officers died in the incident. It troubled me that the ground controller believed he was giving an order that could kill as many as sixty people in a civilian aircraft that had strayed off course. It was a cold order during a cold war.

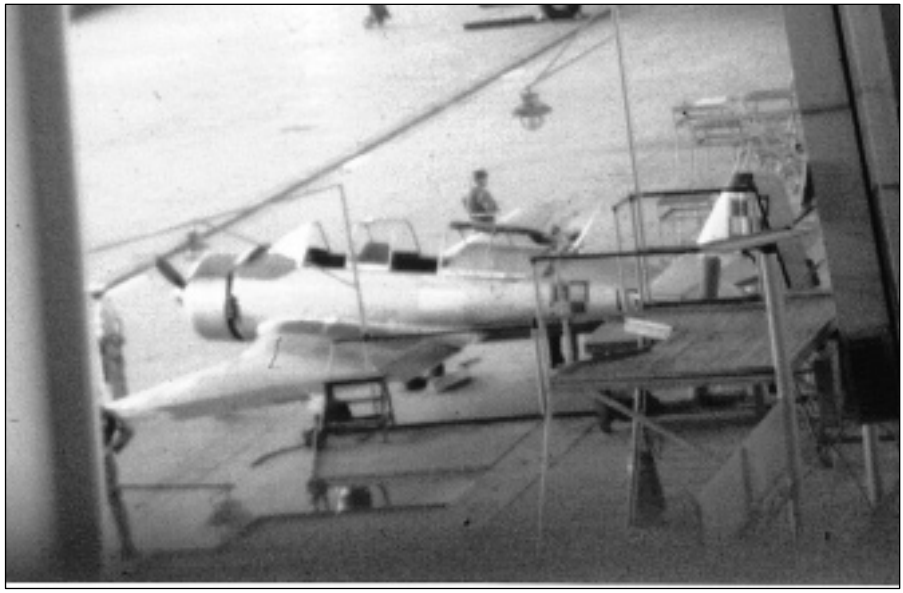
Since the Flight on duty completely controlled the activity, I was not closely involved in the reporting but was near enough

to learn some disturbing bits of information. As explained, the excitement of the moment led to a grave error. The tape of the intercepted conversation between the ground controller and the East German pilot was accidentally erased. That was a disastrous mistake. A mistake of that magnitude could profoundly impact the military careers of many individuals. I honestly cannot say whether the unit covered the incident, but I have always been suspicious of what happened after the error. There was a clampdown on discussions about the shootdown, even within the secure area. As hard as it is for me to believe, it's possible that the tape's existence was denied, and all the reporting was based on the intercepted Morse communications. If a cover-up did occur, it would have been a dangerous decision. We now know that discovering a cover-up is usually much more serious than the original error. I want to think I am completely wrong in my recollection of this situation, but the facts, as I understand them, continue to bother me.

The second shootdown during my tour of duty in Berlin involved an Air Force RB-66 reconnaissance aircraft that accidentally crossed the border between East and West Germany on March 10, 1964, near the East German city of Magdeburg. Soviet fighters scrambled, and the aircraft was attacked. It crashed near the town of Gardelegen. All three Air Force officers on board were injured but survived. They were turned over to American authorities several days later. As I was not on duty the day of the shootdown, I cannot recall any more details.

On the lighter side of aircraft activity, I witnessed a successful defection from the opposing side while stationed in

Berlin. On a sunny afternoon in July 1963, a pilot assigned to the Polish National Air Force escaped from behind the Iron Curtain and into free Berlin with his wife and two young children. I don't know how he managed to evade security at the airfield in Poland, but he did. He placed his wife and one child in the student seat of a Polish-made TS-8 Bies training aircraft and put the second child in the instructor section with him. Once airborne, he easily avoided radar detection by flying at treetop level until they reached Berlin. Several men from our unit were playing softball at a field adjacent to our portion of Tempelhof Airport when they realized what was happening as the aircraft flew overhead, displaying Polish markings. The players abandoned the game and ran to the landing strip to watch the action. As he had no radio contact with the Tempelhof tower, the Polish pilot used an ingenious method to land his aircraft. He waited until he saw a civilian airliner enter a landing pattern and nestled his aircraft just behind its tail to follow it to the runway. The procedure worked well, and after landing, he taxied his plane over to the hangar area, climbed out with his family, ascended the steps into the Air Force snack bar, and requested political asylum. I snapped a photograph of the TS-8 Bies soon after it was rolled into the hangar and placed under guard. The pilot and his family were granted asylum, and within a few days, the aircraft was returned to the Polish National Air Force.



The Polish TS-8 Bies training aircraft at Templehof Airport, Berlin, in July 1963. (Photo by Author)

The Family Grows:

The three years in Berlin were enjoyable mainly due to our growing friendship with the Zahns, trips to West Germany and Italy, and the birth of our daughter, Kelly Maurine. Sylvia became pregnant in May 1963, and Kelly was born on February 17, 1964. By the time Kelly was born, we had moved into U.S. government-owned and managed housing. The third-floor walk-up apartment was very comfortable for us, and the proximity to English-speaking neighbors made things much easier for Sylvia. My job at the 6912th was still a bit of a drag, but we found ways to make life enjoyable. Clay was a delightful toddler and brought us great joy. Once we discovered that Sylvia was pregnant, I told her I wanted to ensure that Clay was entirely out of diapers by our second child's birth. I had never changed a

diaper and didn't want to learn how. I believe managing cloth diapers on Sylvia's and Clay's parts contributed to her success. By the time he was eighteen months old, he was out of diapers, and Kelly was on the way.

At about ten o'clock in the evening on February 16, 1964, Sylvia told me it was time to go to the hospital. I asked the woman across the hall to sit with Clay while I went to the hospital. Once at the hospital, I handed Sylvia over to the first person I saw in white and mentioned that I had another little one at home. She assured me she could handle the situation and would call me when the baby was born. I returned to our apartment, relieved the neighbor from babysitting duty, and went to bed. Early the next day, before Clay awoke, the telephone rang. The nurse informed me that I had a beautiful daughter and that both mother and baby were fine. When I exclaimed, "I can't believe it! You have to be kidding," she replied that she had been up all night working the late shift and had no reason to call me and joke. I tried to explain that we had wished for a little girl so much that the reality was hard to believe. I suspect she had heard all of that before.

The rest of my day was a bit tricky. The Army hospital hadn't changed its procedures in a hundred years. They insisted that the mother and child had to remain hospitalized for seven days whenever a child was born, as outlined in the Regulations. I had to explain to Clay that his mother would be away for a while. At breakfast, he looked at me and asked where his mother was. He was an early talker, and we had no trouble communicating. As I listened to his question, it struck me that he would be pestering me about his mother for a week if I didn't

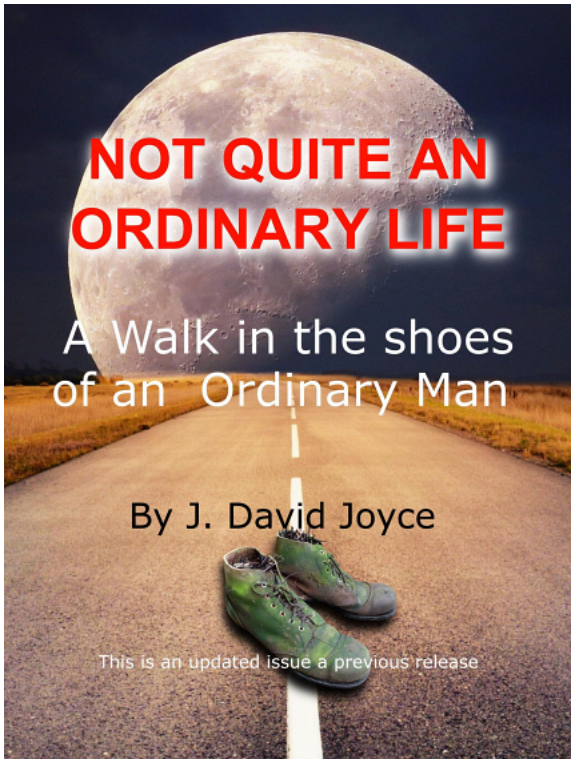
handle this correctly. I told him that his mother was gone and that from now on it would be just the two of us. He looked me in the eyes and asked, “All gone?” I confirmed he was correct, and I didn’t want him asking about her constantly. When Sylvia came home a week later, he was happy, and I avoided a week of pestering, so I think I did the right thing. Clay and I ended up with a healthy and happy father-son relationship, although when I told him this story as an adult, he gave me a hard time for being so hard-hearted.

I telegraphed Sylvia’s parents with the news and called Peter and Uschi. They were excited and arranged to meet me at the hospital to see the new arrival. When Uschi saw Kelly, with her dark hair like Uschi’s and almond-shaped dark eyes, she loudly exclaimed in German, “Oh my God! She could be my daughter.” As I write this, Kelly, now the mother of three children of her own, is forty-four years old, and the Zahns still think of her as a daughter. I survived the week caring for Clay on my own, and when Sylvia came home, we started yet another new life, one with a toddler and an infant.

Kelly, like Clay, was a happy child. She was bright and was a quick learner from the beginning. Sylvia could not produce enough milk to breastfeed Kelly, likely due to caring for a toddler and attending to an infant. Child psychologists tell us that breastfed children often tend to be more sensitive than bottle-fed ones. I can’t speak to that, but Clay mimicked his mother’s tolerant nature as an adult, while Kelly mirrored my impatient and demanding personality. Some say Kelly is too intense because she had training by the time she was sixteen months old. I comforted myself with the belief that they were just

naturally different people, but generally, Clay was his mother's son, and Kelly was her father's daughter.

Kelly is unique in another way. Because she was born in an area legally designated as 'American-occupied Berlin,' the local German government provided her with a German birth certificate. It offered her dual German and American citizenship. We were informed that, although she is legally classified as a naturalized American citizen, she could never become President of the United States because she is foreign-born. However, I now understand that this advice was incorrect. Senator John McCain, a current contender for the presidency, was born to a military member in the Panama Canal Zone, and his right to serve in that capacity has not been challenged.



A relatable story of an ordinary man's journey through life. It takes the reader through a life that borders on fantasy. He survived family drug addiction, serious accidents, duty in Vietnam, and his son's death. Easily readable.

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