

# THE INTERVIEW

## *One on One with Guy Butler*

### ***When did you decide you would expand from one book into a trilogy?***

In the off chance that the Spider generated enough interest for a second book, I left a couple of unanswered questions on the table in the first book. Specifically, “How did he get out from Russian-occupied Silesia to appear at the McClain wedding?” The Spider character established a strong fan base from Book One, which I believe will grow from *A Gordian Web*. I went straight into Book Three as a natural extension to bring closure to the adventure. Book Three will be called *The Final Fandango* and is almost halfway to completion.

### ***Tell us about your main character in *A Gordian Web*, Chez Orłowski.***

Stemming from the ancient Greek legend, a Gordian knot is a metaphor for a problem that looks unsolvable until a clear mind thinks outside the box. There is a story about a bread truck that cannot deliver to a Scottish village because the railway bridge is a couple of inches too low for it to pass beneath. The men of the village are resigned to unloading the bread and carting it home when a five-year-old boy suggests they let the air out of the tires. Voila, problem solved.

Chez Orłowski is blessed with such a mind. Because of circumstance, his schooling was extremely limited but his intelligence is loaded with street smarts from his days in the German labor camps. There are frequent incidents in *A Gordian Web* where Chez is able to create opportunity out of apparent disaster.

The culmination of the plot pits his innate survival skills against an incredible moral fortitude.

### ***What in his background prepared him to emerge as *The Spider*?***

The hardships suffered by this young man defy any reader being able to relate. Born out of wedlock, his mother branded a whore, and his refusal to join the Hitler Youth having convinced his contemporaries he was Jewish in 1932 Germany did not make for any childhood, let alone an easy life. The only friend he could share his adolescent problems with was a spider called Sebastian.

From Weimar, his family escaped to Poland where his stepmother exchanged his birth certificate to keep her own son out of the labor camps, substituting Chez in his place. So when he reached maturity and the genes from both his natural parents kicked in to give him freakish athletic abilities, he remembered his friend, Sebastian, and fought the Third Reich on his own terms.

***One memorable character in the story is larger-than-life Major Paddy McBride. Is he based on a real person?***

Anyone from Northern Ireland will have no problem figuring out this puzzle. One of the bravest men ever to fight in the British Army was Lieutenant Colonel “Paddy” Blair Maine from Newtownards. He led the SAS with a fearless ferocity and could easily have been awarded an unprecedented four Victoria Crosses. Politics reduced the awards to Distinguished Service Orders, one of only seven servicemen to receive the award four times. He was also awarded the Legion d’honneur and the Croix de Guerre.

***The first two books in the trilogy focus on some World War II history that is not as well known as some. Where did you come across the information in your research?***

I was born in Blackpool, England, just after the War and grew up with rationing in a fervently proud family that fought the Nazis. The history I relate is the history I grew up with before emigrating to the United States.

***A Gordian Web presents a twist on the doppelganger theory that Hitler and his commanders had real life doubles to act as decoys. Did you find evidence that this was a real possibility?***

I have left numerous references at the end of *A Gordian Web* for readers to follow to their own conclusions. It is important to remember that the Allies were war weary and everyone wanted to get back to the business of peace and raising babies. Hitler’s death in the bunker was simply too easy for everyone to accept and when the bodies of Hitler and Eva Braun were finally released for independent DNA testing in the 1970s, both skulls were found to be female.

***What are your plans for the third book in The Spider Trilogy? When can fans look forward to seeing it?***

*The Final Fandango* is flowing along quite nicely. The story returns to Belfast with the Fourth Reich seeking revenge on the Spider for past deeds. But our hero, in classic fashion, takes the fight into the lion’s den – Argentina.

***You’re a member of American Mensa. What are the requirements to become a member? Do you participate in any of their activities?***

I joined British Mensa when I was twenty and the membership rolled into American Mensa where I am now a life member. The requirements for British Mensa involve taking six supervised independent IQ exams; the average score has to exceed a certain number of points.

Now I cannot even remember where my car keys are half the time so it’s a good thing I joined when I did.

I used to be a very active member in the Central Florida Chapter but it has been a while since I attended a meeting. All in all, I found the membership to be enlightened with a strong focus on non-materialistic issues.

The Mensa Bulletin wrote a nice review of *Balls of Leather and Steel* last year.