

Meeting “GARBO”  
Lecture Presented to the Holland Professional Club  
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For a teenager growing up in Beirut in the early 1960s, the world was a wondrous mix of myth and reality. Just down the block from my fourth floor flat on Ma'mari Street, and around the corner, where Rue Hamra crossed Rue Jeanne D'Arc, there was an outdoor café which we high schoolers knew was “the spy café.” Intense men, young and old, huddled around coffee tables sucking on their hubble-bubble pipes and gesticulating with florid strokes. Some wore the dusty attire of the desert, replete with flowing robes and striking headscarves called “cheffiyas.” Others looked like exotic safari guides in khaki garb. All sported “shades,” plastic-rimmed dark glasses which stated, in no uncertain terms, “We are all about clandestine matters. Don't bother us.”

It was an enchanted world where this teen's imagination could run wild. Sometimes the mythic strode right up to my face. One evening Dad returned to our apartment with a house-guest. I met them in the hallway and Dad introduced his burly, fifty-something, fire-plug of a friend (romance novels would have called him “swarthy”): “This is Monsieur X.” I extended my hand cordially and was met with a swift right fist to my gut that doubled me over. “This is a tough world, young man,” the villain boomed. “You have to be prepared for anything; you need to work on your stomach muscles!” Through tear-filled eyes I looked up at this rogue with fear and amazement – and instant recognition. If he had been wearing the shades, I would have known at which café table he sat! He turned out to have been the former body guard of King Peter II, the last reigning monarch of Yugoslavia who had been thrust into peripatetic exile by Tito and the Communists.

On the morning of January 24, 1963, my high school was abuzz with rumors of a spy's disappearance. Shrouded in mystery, an agent of MI-6 (the British version of the CIA), Kim Philby, had vanished from the Beirut apartment to which he had recently moved with his wife and children. A few days later he reappeared in Moscow in the midst of great hoopla. We all imagined his escape route through the Bekaa Valley, into Syria, and then through the mountains of Armenia into the heart of the USSR.

Imagining Philby's route and the duplicity of a double agent fired my curiosity. I became an amateur sleuth on the workings of British espionage and counter-espionage, especially during World War II. I learned that Philby was one of a cadre of Cambridge University students who had been recruited during the early 1930s to spy for the USSR. Subsequently, they all made their way into various branches of the British service, ending up in MI-6 during World War II. Among other posts, Philby had headed the Iberian branch of clandestine affairs during the war and in the 1950s served as a key liaison with the CIA.

In 1951, the Brits were beginning to suspect a mole in their midst. That May two British agents, Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess, suddenly vanished from their diplomatic posts and showed up in Moscow. While the British government suspected others, there was no clear proof. Philby was one of the targets of their investigation, but by all accounts he had been an outstanding agent. As suggested above, he was even posted to Washington where he served at the heart of connections with the CIA in the midst of the Cold War. A fourth collaborator with the Soviets was revealed in 1979. Sir Anthony Blunt was, at the time, the curator of the Queen's art; he was stripped of his knighthood but otherwise not prosecuted.

These four Soviet agents were friends with others during their days in Cambridge. As can be imagined, their friends came under suspicion and were investigated by MI-5 (the Brit's

FBI), including Ian Fleming (of “007” fame) and Tomas “Tommy” Harris, who was ostensibly cleared of all suspicion – but who died tragically in a car accident in France within a year of Philby’s disappearance. I soaked up these stories with great relish.

Fast forward to the summer of 2007 when I had occasion to hear a series of lectures by a former MI-6 agent and current trainer of CIA recruits. Nigel West, an alias, is a Cambridge University scholar, and in one of his lectures he reintroduced Philby, Blunt, and Harris. I was so taken with the yarn he spun, that I wanted to share it with you today.

In the early days of World War II, Germany tried to infiltrate Britain with clandestine agents. By November 1940, twenty-five were under British control. While some were executed or imprisoned, several agreed to work as double-agents for MI-5. A special committee, called the XX or “double cross” or “Twenty” Committee was established to “run” these double agents. (Harris, p. 5) The British were convinced that they now controlled all of the German agents in the country. This gave them considerable leverage throughout the war. One other instrument gave them great confidence that they had complete control of the German infiltrations; the Brits had been able to break the German radio codes with the aid of the information found on the captured agents. This gave them access through a system called the “Most Secret Source” to German intelligence information throughout the Continent.

Accounts of the exploits of MI-5 were widely circulated during the 1960s and 1970s, not the least through the fiction of Fleming and John le Carre. One of these accounts, entitled The Double-Cross System, was written by its mastermind, J.C. Masterman. In it, he alludes to the seminal role played by a double agent code-named “GARBO.” GARBO was a mystery, even a generation after the war. This reference intrigued Nigel West, who made it his project to track down GARBO (rumored to have died in South America sometime in the 1950s).

West's search took him, in 1981, to the disgraced Anthony Blunt, who acknowledged having met GARBO through GARBO's "handler" – the now deceased Tommy Harris. Blunt recalled that GARBO had been a Spaniard from Barcelona, with the generic name of Juan Pujol Garcia. Blunt thought Garcia might be his mother's name, but he wasn't sure. With these bits of information, West was off and running.

Shift scenes to Spain, in the late 1930s. The Spanish Civil War, often seen as a proxy war between the Fascists of Germany (who backed Francisco Franco) and the Communist- and Socialist-supported Republicans, was a bloody fratricide. It ended in early 1939 with Franco and the Fascists firmly in control. A semblance of brutal stability had barely been established when World War II broke out. Spain declared its neutrality in this conflagration, although its sympathies clearly lay with the Nazis. Indeed several hundred agents of the German intelligence network, the Abwehr, worked openly through the German Embassy in Madrid.

Enter our hero, right out of an Alfred Hitchcock thriller.

Juan Pujol Garcia, born in 1912, was from an upper middle class, industrialist family. He had been well educated, but had floated between a number of jobs including hotel management and chicken farming. He was serving his mandatory military service when the Civil War broke out, and found himself defending the socialist government which had virtually destroyed his family's business; he wasn't happy, to say the least. Through various machinations, he avoided combat, went AWOL, and wound up on the Franco side, hoping to escape into France. However, he was arrested by the Fascisti and, following dramatic intervention by family members and his parish priest, he was released. He then spent almost two years hiding in abandoned houses. None of these experiences presaged the heroic odyssey on which he was about to embark.

Pujol came out of the Spanish Civil War with a firm conviction that all totalitarian regimes, whether of the Left or of the Right, were equally evil. Moreover, he felt strongly that individual freedoms, as expressed in democratic societies, held the only hope for the future of humanity. Anticipating a grim life in Spain, he began to make plans for his family (he was, by now, married) to go to South America. And then the Germans invaded Poland, and all hell broke loose. Pujol grew more and more distressed as the Nazis piled up success on success. Following the debacle of Dunkirk, he was convinced that the United Kingdom, alone, held hope for Europe. Accordingly, he resolved to offer his assistance to the British.

Through his wife, Pujol approached the British and offered to be a spy for them. The official MI-5 record of what transpired includes this note:

After making their plans she called in January, 1941, at the British Consulate in Madrid. She obtained an interview and told the story that she knew of a man who was willing to work for the British and was prepared to go either to Germany or Italy to do espionage. The Consular official replied that he was not interested in this sort of proposition. When [Pujol] was told the result of her visit to the Consulate he decided that he would at least show us that the Germans did not feel the same way about [him]. He decided to endeavour to obtain evidence in proof of this belief and so prepared a plan of approach to the Germans. (Harris, p. 43)

Indeed, Pujol then marched off to the German Embassy with an offer to go to England and work on their behalf. While at first they were reluctant to go along, he pressed his case, ultimately traveling to Portugal to obtain a visa for England. While this application was rejected, he was not deterred. While in Lisbon, he arranged for a false, Spanish “diplomatic” passport to be printed, complete with embossing and other insignia of officialdom. He returned to Madrid with these in hand, again making his case to the Germans. He had studied the rhetoric of the Nazis and spoke with great eloquence about the need to destroy those forces which undermined stability and smoothly functioning society. In the end (and it was a three months’ ordeal), the Germans agreed to make Pujol one of their spies to work in England.

They gave him the code name “ARABEL” and provided him with codes and ciphers as well as invisible ink and other paraphernalia of a spy. A brief education in security measures, how to develop “cut outs” (intermediaries who would do his bidding without knowing who he was), and how to use cyphers followed. By the middle of the summer of 1941, he was dispatched to England via Lisbon. At least that was what the Germans intended.

Now, with all of the spy paraphernalia in hand, and with a “commission” from the Germans, Pujol again approached the British in Lisbon, offering to work as a double agent on their behalf. Once again, the Consular staff firmly rejected his offer. Pujol was furious, but wouldn’t give up. Along with his equipment, the Germans had provided him with several thousand dollars for expenses and for setting up shop in London. With these resources in hand, Pujol went to Lisbon’s public library to bone up on England. With a large map of Britain, a Baedeker travel guide, a Bradshaw train timetable, some articles about munitions and shipping, and an unfettered imagination, Pujol began to “spy” for the Germans, ostensibly from London.

His first enterprise involved finding a courier, for there had to be some means of transmitting information to and from London. The solution to this challenge came in the form of an imaginary employee of KLM, the lone civilian airline which regularly flew between London and Lisbon. This agent, who became known in future documents as Agent J(1), was presumed to be a steward or perhaps a pilot; Pujol was rather vague on the specifics. In any case, the courier agreed to carry Pujol’s correspondence from London and post them to an imaginary “lover” once he arrived in Lisbon. This avoided British censors and any chance of the missives being lost. This route survived for two years until J(1) tried to blackmail Pujol. Other routes used during GARBO’s tenure included the regular airmail, with the use of disappearing ink, and wireless. But that’s getting ahead of the story.

Along with J(1), Pujol met early in his fictitious London stay with an equally fictitious Swiss immigrant named William Gerbers. He was a reluctant resident of England. This businessman, designated Agent 2, lived in a little town called Bootle, near Liverpool, and agreed to provide Pujol with information about river traffic along the Mersey River, a main outlet to the Atlantic on the west coast. Agent 2 immediately began to transmit data on ship movements, striking it hot with the news, in late 1941, of a convoy amassing in the Mersey which was bound for Malta. A third agent, aptly named Agent 3, was also enlisted by Pujol. This was a Venezuelan student who had decidedly anti-British and pro-Nazi sympathies, but who had been caught in Scotland – Glasgow, specifically – at the outbreak of hostilities. Presumably, Pujol “met” him through his Spanish-language network. In any case, this agent, dubbed BENEDICT by the Germans, became a significant player in Pujol’s subsequent career – ultimately becoming Pujol’s replacement during the last months of the war. Pujol, himself, “traveled” from London to remote sites, including the Lake region where he reported on the training of troops for establishing beachheads during an invasion.

With these “agents” in place, Pujol set to work providing the Germans with logistical information. Keep in mind: this was all being composed in a seaside villa just outside Lisbon, Portugal, by a young Spaniard who knew not a word of English and who had never traveled further from home than Portugal. While he was fluent in French (and resorted to that language in his communiqués with the Swiss businessman, for instance), he was totally ignorant of English culture and geography. Yet he developed a significant correspondence with his German handlers. Subsequent analysis of these early missives attests to his lack of knowledge of England, and should have raised red flags with the Germans. For instance, he was confounded by the idiosyncratic British system of pounds, shillings, and pence, and sent all of

his bills “untallied” in shillings and pence. In one posting he talked about the “litres” of wine which Scotsmen consumed. Nonetheless, he began to establish himself as a meticulous – if wordy – agent, and his signals began to be forwarded from Madrid to Berlin, a sure indication of their acceptance.

In all, Pujol-ARABEL sent more than three dozen postings from his villa in Lisbon to the Germans by November 1941. However, it was growing clear to him that he had played out the extent of his imagination on England and would soon betray himself. He began to make plans to leave for Brazil with his wife. However, she agreed to make one more try with the British. Yet again, despite her claims of having documents to back up his network of spies and his cache of messages to the Germans, they dismissed her out of hand. Pujol was desperate. Then Pearl Harbor hit.

Knowing of her husband’s despair, Senora Pujol went to the US Embassy in January 1942. Figuring that we were now allies of Britain, she thought the Americans might be more responsive. After some initial reluctance, a young attaché took Pujol’s material and contacted a friend in MI-5. This time the Pujols struck gold. A full year after he first approached the Brits, and six months after beginning to “spy” on them, Pujol was clandestinely brought to London to be vetted and, possibly, put to work.

What had changed? A couple of things: the British embassy in Madrid was very reluctant to engage in any espionage for fear of antagonizing Franco and launching Spain into the war on the Axis side; the initial contacts – in both Madrid and Lisbon – were with MI-6 representatives, neither of whom wanted to have a foreign national do their spy work. In contrast, the American attaché approached an MI-5 representative, which had already been responsible for working double-cross agents WITHIN Britain. They were more receptive to



working another one. Finally, the Brits had made a wire intercept in late 1941 of the report from a Swiss businessman, Agent 2, ostensibly in Liverpool. While he had some of the specifics wrong, there was, indeed, a convoy forming up in the River Mersey in anticipation of relieving the beleaguered garrison in Malta. Fiction crossed fact. MI-6 had learned of this transmission from Pujol and had become extremely concerned that there was a live agent in Liverpool who was unknown to MI-5. When Pujol's wife presented the American with accounts of the agent's fictive messages, this one reverberated around the British intelligence community. After further bureaucratic infighting (now that he was seen as likely to be bona fide, MI-6 wanted to run him from Lisbon, while MI-5 wanted to bring him to London; the latter prevailed), Pujol became an instrument of MI-5.

When he arrived in London, Pujol underwent extensive examination to assure that he was trustworthy. Hearing his saga, his new handlers thought he was lucky to be alive and was surely one of the most proficient actors they could imagine. Hence, he was dubbed "GARBO," and while GARBO became a widely respected double agent, Pujol faded in the background. In fact, only a handful of MI-5 agents knew who he was.

In the ensuing years, GARBO developed an elaborate network of 27 agents. Some had limited duration. For instance, the Swiss businessman was disposed of in 1942 when he "failed" to report on the massive build-up of ships and personnel in the Mersey that eventually formed the heart of Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa. GARBO was saddened to report that, when he traveled to Liverpool to check on Agent 2, he found Gerbers had been in the hospital for the duration of the build up and was now in failing health. Subsequently, Gerbers died, and an obituary – complete with a note "no flowers, please" – appeared in the local newspaper. This announcement was duly clipped out by Agent 2's wife and sent on to

GARBO, who forwarded it to Madrid. In sympathy, the Germans gave her a life pension. Later, Gerber's widow became Agent 2-1 and worked at GARBO's London headquarters in various capacities.

Among the more imaginative agents under GARBO's rubric was Agent 4, a young Gibralterian. On his initial trip to London, GARBO had transited through Gibraltar where he spent almost two weeks. Roaming the colony, he sensed that many citizens were restive under British control. This presented an ideal cover story. In order to vary the appearance of his secret letters to the Germans, GARBO used stationary from many hotels; in London, ex-patriots from Gibraltar – and elsewhere throughout the Commonwealth – served as hotel employees. Thus was “CHAMILLUS” born. He provided GARBO with considerable exotic information from business and political leaders who met and used the hotels in which he worked. Much of this was anecdotal, so of little strategic use. In 1943 the Germans took interest in rumors about underground ammunition depots and transportation routes being developed in the London area. CHAMILLUS was dispatched to work in these fictive mines, reporting on extensive networks underneath the suburbs of London which purported to provide tracks to outlying airports and train stations. These allowed the underground shipment of supplies unobserved by air reconnaissance. So persuasive was Agent 4, that in mid-1944 when the Germans began to launch their secret “V” weapons, they deliberately targeted these imaginary terminals, causing many of their deadly projectiles to land inconsequentially in fields outside London.

GARBO's most effective network came through another fictive invention. Needing an agent in Wales, GARBO found an ex-seaman living in Swansea who was a rabid Welsh nationalist committed to the cause of English defeat. DAGOBERT became Agent 7.

Moreover, it turned out that Agent 7 was a member of a small cell of Welsh nationalists who were keen on ethnic purity. In fact, a dozen of them were also members of a trumped up World Aryan Order – seven of whose number were recruited through Agent 7. This motley crew included a rabidly anti-Semitic Indian ex-patriot and his Welsh mistress. The latter was called up to join the WRENs – the British equivalent of the WACs – and was subsequently posted in Ceylon, from whence she sent documents concocted by the MI-6 agent in place. Since all of her mailings had to come to GARBO in London, and then be sent through Madrid to Berlin to Tokyo (the Japanese being in charge of Indian Ocean activities), they were all very dated – although highly accurate – by the time they arrived in Japan.

Agent 3, the Venezuelan student, turned out to have a brother who came on board as MOONBEAM, or Agent 5 – and he was eventually dispatched to Ottawa, Canada. There, he set up a network which included his cousin (Agent 5-1) who lived in Buffalo and began to share information about US troop movements, presumably in northwest New York. Agent 6 was a short-lived NCO who was dispatched to North Africa to follow the progress of the invasion of Sicily and Italy (at a time when there was considerable concern among the Axis powers that the Allies would jump from North Africa directly to southern France, thereby opening a “Second Front” as Stalin was begging). As in several other cases, there was a British agent who wrote the dispatches from “Agent 6.” Unfortunately, this agent was killed in a downed plane, so Agent 6 met a similar fate in due course. The use of invisible ink meant that agents’ handwriting needed to be consistent and were not easily replicated by forgers.

For most of his existence, GARBO fed the Germans useless or outdated information on troop movements and insinuated build-ups (such as when large quantities of food would be spotted moving towards an unexpected destination). From time to time, the service branches

provided “good” information which did not have military consequence. However, it was in the build-up to D-Day that the GARBO network came into its own. Now the whole effort was bent towards *disinformation*. The task became persuading the Germans of several matters:

- 1) That the Allies were going to rely on air attacks as their principal means of bringing the Axis to heel; only the failure of a lengthy air bombardment would lead to an invasion.
- 2) That the Allies – especially the Americans – were very delayed in their preparations for the eventual invasion of Europe and probably wouldn’t be ready until the fall of 1944.
- 3) That the assault, when it came, would take the form of a series of feints and stages, with the initial thrusts only coming as decoys.
- 4) That the invasion would have two primary prongs, one toward Norway; the other would take the most direct Channel route, from Dover to Pas de Calais. This route had much to commend it besides its short distance: the invasion would need major port facilities, and Calais had extensive dockworks in place; the V-1 and V-2 rockets were beginning to land on London, and they were all launched from the countryside just east of Calais; destroying them would be a high priority for the Allies; finally, the distance from the Channel to Berlin was the shortest beginning at Calais.

These objectives necessitated a massive deceptive effort by British Intelligence, and GARBO became a mainstay in the process. Fortunately, by this time GARBO was widely respected by the Germans, with many of his dispatches being sent, verbatim, on wireless from Madrid directly to Berlin. All of this was carefully monitored by MI-6 and the “Most Secret Source” network.

A wide variety of ruses were entertained by GARBO, perhaps most important of which was to create a large number of “notional” armies, brigades, and divisions. If the Germans were to believe that the Normandy landing was only an initial thrust, they had to be persuaded that a whole range of other forces remained in England, poised to launch the main and decisive invasion. The most elaborate of these ruses was FUSAG, First US Army Group stationed in

east England and commanded by General Patton, considered by the Germans to be the premier fighting general in the Allies stable. The story is widely known now about the massive build-up of imaginary troop transports, tanks, aircraft, and troops which swirled around East Anglia. At this point in his career, Patton was very much in Eisenhower's dog house; he had been brought back to England from Sicily where he had offended Montgomery by beating him to Messina – and had brought down the wrath of the press by slapping a shell-shocked private. As punishment, Patton was shelved for a few months in 1944, strutting around his imaginary First Army, giving speeches and having his picture taken. GARBO played up this assignment as one of great import; Patton, GARBO claimed, would be the one to lead the real invasion from Dover late in 1944. The Nazis couldn't imagine that the Allies would not employ their best general in the ultimate battle.

So successful was GARBO's network in persuading the Germans of the Calais landing that, on the morning of D-Day, after major Panzer divisions had initially been diverted by the commanders on the field from Calais to Normandy, those orders were countermanded by Berlin. What might have been a fatal blow to the troops on the beaches was totally reversed because German military command believed the Normandy Invasion was a feint.

Instructive in the way disinformation worked were the events of D-Day. Late on June 5, as GARBO signed off his wireless transmissions for the night, he requested that Madrid remain in radio contact in order to test a new channel of communication. At 3:30, barely three hours before H-Hour, GARBO sent an urgent message that there had been massive troop and naval movements suggesting a thrust against the Continent. Since the movements were from the south of England, he suspected Normandy. However, for some reason the Madrid operator had retired for the night and would not go back on line until about 8:00; by that time GARBO

was sending frantic messages about the invasion now underway. These communiqués had been carefully constructed to be too late for actionable response, but they served as reassurance to the Germans that GARBO was reliable.

Throughout D-Day and subsequent days, GARBO sent a blizzard of messages attesting to the lack of movement by FUSAG and the arrival in east England from Scotland and America of fictional divisions which replaced real divisions now in France. On D-Day +2 he brought together all of his operatives (the first such conclave), and used this gathering to assess the full scope of the Invasion. Their conclusion: this was merely a feint, the full thrust would come later in the summer at Calais. The report of this summit was transmitted, in its entirety, from Madrid to Berlin within 24 hours (which allowed for de-encrypting and then re-encrypting the message). All of these transmissions were carefully recorded by the British.

With this post D-Day disinformation exercise, a new phase of GARBO's activities came into play. The Allies were hoping that the Germans would tie up the forces in support of Calais for two weeks, allowing the Allies to establish a full beachhead in Normandy. Amazingly, fully 60 days after D-Day GARBO was sending messages reassuring the Germans that the main thrust was still to come from Calais. As there were fewer and fewer armies left in England, and all the remaining ones were fictive, there was fear that air reconnaissance would reveal the deception. Moreover, Patton was brought across the Channel to head up the Third Army shortly after the Invasion. If he was to command the main thrust into Calais, what was he doing in Cherbourg? GARBO developed an elaborate – and fully swallowed – story about Patton being demoted to head the Third Army and being replaced by a newly arrived General McNair from the USA. When McNair was killed in Normandy, another hastily promoted general had to take his place.

By early July 1944, London was being pounded by V-1 and V-2 rockets. However, they were very unpredictable in their trajectories, and not knowing where they landed caused the Germans untold problems. So they called on GARBO to bring his network to bear. He was asked to take careful notes on rockets, complete with their times of impact and their precise targets; the Germans intended to use these figures to refine the rocket trajectories. Needless to say, GARBO was very reluctant to comply. But MI-5 was equally reluctant to lose their most credible agent. After much deliberation, it was decided that GARBO should be arrested. Accordingly, Agent 3, GARBO's Venezuelan assistant, wired Madrid that GARBO had been taken into custody and not heard from. The Germans instructed that the entire network be shut down until further notice. This gave the Allies ten days during which the Normandy offensive could continue to be pushed without fear of redirected divisions from Calais – and a respite during which the rockets continued to fall ineffectively.

At the end of this period of imprisonment, GARBO came back on the air and announced to Madrid that he had been picked up because he was seen taking notes at the site of a V-1 crater. He had been interrogated, his background had been checked, his wife had been interviewed, and he had been released with a stern warning to stay away from rocket craters. Fearing that they would lose their premier spy, Germany instructed GARBO to keep his network away from these targets. In this way, the V-1 and V-2 rockets continued to have a less than deadly effect.

During the late summer and fall of 1944, GARBO reported to the Germans that the Allies seemed to be changing their tactics. Divisions were being diverted away from the east coast and were being sent into Europe through Normandy. Moreover, the imaginary groups he had concocted were being “absorbed” into extant or newly formed, real units and were being

sent to Normandy. By December, the Calais feint was no more. However, the Germans continued to marvel at the accuracy of GARBO's work and the heroic fight he fought from within the belly of the enemy. Accordingly, in the winter of 1944 he was awarded, in absentia, the German Iron Cross! In the meantime, on behalf of the King of England and its grateful citizens, the head of MI-5 presented Juan Pujol with the Order of the British Empire.

During 1945, GARBO's messages from London fluctuated from despair to hope. As the end came near, he sought authorization to disband his network so that its members could return to civilian life. GARBO offered to move to South America and join any effort by former Nazis to restore the Reich.

When war concluded, he and his wife were given a handsome handshake by the British government, and he returned to Madrid where he looked up his German handlers. Both were broken men, and it was clear that neither had any connection with or intention of joining a new Nazi movement. Both continued to believe that he was the most effective spy in the history of the Third Reich. In the mid-1950s, Pujol had a visit from his former British handler, Tommy Harris. He told Harris that he had no interest in further attention, and asked that it be put about that he was dead. So effective was Harris that GARBO faded into history.

When Nigel West learned from Anthony Blunt that GARBO had been a Barcelonan named Juan maybe-Pujol Garcia, West resolved to find him. Shortly thereafter, a retired MI-5 agent contacted West and confirmed that GARBO's full name was Juan Pujol Garcia, and that he was a Catalan from Barcelona. Through an intermediary, West contacted all the Juan Pujol's in Barcelona – upwards of 80 – and asked them if a) they were over 70 years and b) had been in England during the War. This seemed to lead nowhere. However, one young respondent had been persistent in questioning the purpose of the inquiry. Upon further



assurances in a follow-up call, he admitted to having an uncle who fit the description, but he lived in Venezuela! This turned out, indeed, to be GARBO. He was contacted just days before the fortieth memorial celebration of D-Day in 1984, and was flown to France where he was formally received by President Reagan, Prime Minister Thatcher, and others. Prince Philip formally awarded him the OBE. As they stood among the gravestones of Normandy, it was pointed out to GARBO that there would have been many more markers but for his heroics. Indeed, there are those who suggest that he might rightly be called “The Spy Who Saved D-Day.”

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