

## Payne Harrison returns with action-packed techno-thriller

BY BRIT MOTT

**S**INCE THE RELEASE OF *STORMING INTREPID*, *New York Times* bestselling author **Payne Harrison** has been known as one of the Founding Fathers of the techno-thriller genre. A Plano resident, Harrison is now thrilling audiences across the country with his fifth book, *Eurostorm*. A fast-paced read, the book revolves around a Nazi conspiracy under the helm of General Walter (Walther) Friedrich Schellenberg, the number-three man in Hitler's regime.

According to the book's principle character, Gideon Bloom, Captain of Internal Affairs for the Chicago police, Schellenberg died of kidney failure in 1952, so how is it this long-deceased Nazi war criminal's fingerprints are showing up on a crime scene? Is Bloom really dealing with an architect of the Holocaust?

As the Eurostorm bullet train exits the "Chunnel" and hurls toward Paris, Bloom and others learn that the train has been hijacked and is carrying a substance that could alter the world. Fate wavers in the hands of a small team of French commandos who leap from their helicopters to board the moving train in order to save mankind.

**H**arrison splits his time between writing and forensic expert witness consulting. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism from Texas A&M University, and served in the Army during the Cold War before returning to the States to pursue his master's in political science. During that time, he worked as a newspaper reporter at *The Salt Lake Tribune*.

It is hard to measure how much Harrison's newspaper background infuses into his books. He spoke of his journalism professors in high esteem and observed, "It's pretty fundamental, the process of assimilating data and generating a cogent story, whether it's straightforward reporting or has an entertainment spin on it." However, as most newspaper reporters know, in a article, the lead reveals everything; yet, in Harrison's books, his signature style is the tease. Puzzle pieces don't fit together until the climax. The reader peels and peels until finally, the juicy revelation grips you at the core.

Harrison agreed. "I had a journalism professor who told me 'If you have 10 minutes to write a story, spend nine minutes on the lead,' but writing a book encompasses a different dynamic. When my first book came out, I got a call from the librarian of the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas and he said, 'I read your book and at one point, there are nine subplots going on simultaneously.' I didn't know that," admits Harrison. "A story has a natural progression to it, and that progression can be so strong that a lot of times I feel like I'm just along for the ride."

After three years in the newspaper business, the writer came to a crossroads. He enrolled at SMU to receive an MBA in finance and worked in litigation consulting, providing expert witness testimony in commercial disputes. "Everything was going fine until the tax law changed and a lot of what I was doing in my consulting practice was legislated away," he said. "I was sitting at home with not a lot to do, so I started writing *Storming Intrepid*."

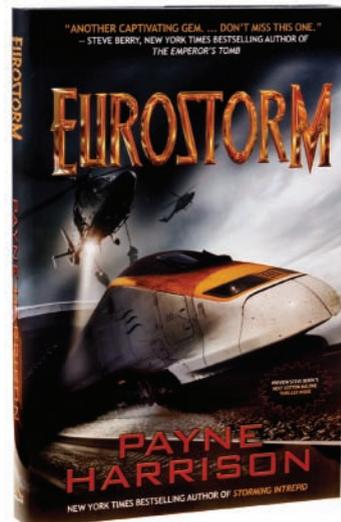
*Storming Intrepid* is a Cold War-era techno-thriller about an in-flight hijacking of a U.S. spacecraft named *Intrepid*.

"In a two-week period, the book was launched, I was on the *Today* show, hit the *New York Times* list, and had a paperback auction," Harrison recalled.

Naturally, the media frenzy propelled the author into a full-time writing career. He published *Thunder of Erebus*, *Black Cipher*, and *Forbidden Summit*. As with *Eurostorm*, themes like racial cleansing, terror, and power run rampant.

While a few technical parts of the book are morsels of the author's imagination and creativity, much of the plot is based on real-life characters. For example, in his research, Harrison happened upon two "intriguing" stories about Schellenberg:

"During WWII, Switzerland was surrounded by the Axis forces. A colonel in the Swiss intelligence named Roger Masson gave Allen Dulles,



Profile photos/Mike Newman

who was running American intelligence operations into Germany, air cover to allow some resistance groups to come into Switzerland. At war's end, Schellenberg convinced Masson that Schellenberg had talked Hitler into not invading Switzerland. After Schellenberg's sentence, Masson turned to Dulles and said, 'I owe Schellenberg; you owe me,' and allowed Schellenberg to serve out his sentence in Switzerland. So, Schellenberg (following his conviction of war crimes) walked into Switzerland scot-free!"

The second story Harrison discovered has to do with fashion icon CoCo Chanel. "Before the war, she was living in the Ritz hotel trafficking the upper echelons. Well, she took a Nazi officer as her lover, and she became friends with Schellenberg. He tried to get her to be a conduit to open up peace negotiations—called Operation Modelhut—and at war's end, Chanel was on a list to be prosecuted as a collaborator and was arrested. However, because Chanel had once been the mistress of the Duke of Westminster, the British Royal Family intervened and the charges were dropped. Chanel spent the next decade in self-imposed exile in Switzerland along with—guess who—Walther Schellenberg!"

Read about both of these stories in more detail at [payneharrison.com](http://payneharrison.com).

And if you're up for the challenge, try landing a commando on a bullet train, by downloading the Eurostorm app on your iPhone or iPad. Kadamedia recently released the app and is calling it "the first tandem release of a game and book through the iPhone-iPad-iTouch platforms."

Harrison is calling it "an entertainment experience like no other!" 

## excerpt

From Eurostorm

It was the last conscious thought he had before the Vauxhall convulsed in a giant fulmination that sent a shock wave across Wellington Square like some invisible sledgehammer—flattening everything in its path and turning the gleaming office towers into a waterfall of glass that fell without mercy upon the dead and the dying.



read more of this excerpt on [planoprofile.com](http://planoprofile.com)

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