

The spy who didn't love me

A wartime romance has led to the son of two spies seeking the truth of their liaison from the British intelligence services. **Jane Hanks** takes up the story...

IT SOUNDS like the script of a James Bond movie but the wartime spy drama of a dashing French pilot and his English *femme fatale* is true.

That is, according to a retired French professor who is trying to persuade the British security services to open up their files to prove it.

François Grosjean, 74, claims he was denied a happy childhood because his parents separated soon after his birth and were only ever together to gather information and help the war effort.

He has called on MI5 to release papers which he is convinced will show his father, a French wartime spy, fell for the British woman who was sent to seduce and spy on him.

Prof Grosjean, a retired professor of psycholinguistics, has spent 17 years researching and writing a book telling the remarkable story.

Roger Grosjean was a Free French



François Grosjean with his book

Air Forces pilot who wanted to continue to fight under de Gaulle. In 1943, he persuaded the Germans to send him to England, where he said he would send them information and steal a British plane to fly back.

He was to write letters to a supposed lover in Barcelona with hidden messages written in secret ink.

When he got to London, he was interviewed by MI5 and signed up as a double agent with code name Fido.

He was one of about 40 double agents working under British intel-



Prof Grosjean is sure that both his mother, Jill Pratt, above, and father, Roger Grosjean, were British spies

ligence director Guy Liddell. Their main task was to send false information to the Germans about the Allied landings planned for June 1944 and convince them they would take place near Dunkirk, rather than Normandy.

They needed to be certain he was truly acting for the British and wanted someone to keep an eye on him.

Jill Pratt was an English actress who also worked in the Free French Air Forces bar, and it is likely the couple met there. She soon moved in with

him and changed her name to Sallie Henriette Grosjean.

When he was posted out of London to an air force base in Lincolnshire, she went with him. She fell pregnant, with François' sister, but there is evidence Roger was never sure that Sallie was sincere.

In his wartime diary, he wrote: "Does she really love me? As much as I love her? Why would she? I don't think she's after something. If I do start to love her as I feel I could, I will

either be very unhappy or very happy."

When the British realised the Germans knew of his double life, he was sent to north Africa to train pilots.

He was awarded the Croix de Guerre, the Legion of Honour and the Commemorative Medal of Voluntary Service for the Free French.

Sallie eventually joined him in Paris and became pregnant again, this time with François. After the birth, relations between the pair became acrimonious and they split, with Sallie gaining custody of the children.

However, she appeared not to want them and found a rich partner who paid for their private education, first in Switzerland, then England, and the children hardly saw their parents.

Roger became an archaeologist in Corsica and Sallie was a model in Paris before moving to Rome, where she ran racing stables, funded by rich lovers.

Prof Grosjean wants to know why MI5 has never released the file.

He believes the agency does not want to admit to the practice of using a woman to spy on her lover.

He told *Connexion* he was sure his mother was a spy: "I am convinced. There is so much converging evidence. Why would she change her name and move in with someone she hardly knew? We'll only know with certainty when my father's file is released by MI5. But will it ever be?"

A Home Office spokeswoman told *Connexion* that it does not comment on individual cases such as this.

Prof Grosjean's book, *A la recherche de Roger et Sallie*, has been published in France. He is seeking a UK publisher.

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