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# STEALING SPEED: The Biggest Spy Scandal In Motorsport History



## Synopsis

The remarkable true story of how one of Japan's biggest motorcycle manufacturers stole a Nazi rocket scientist's engine secrets from behind the Iron Curtain to win the motorcycle power race and conquer the world. In 1961, with the Cold War at its height, East and West were battling for supremacy on the racetracks of Europe. Using technology from the Nazis' notorious V-1 flying bomb, East German factory MZ built the world's most powerful race bikes. But when MZ rider Ernst Degner was poised to win the world championship he defected and sold MZ's secrets to Suzuki, while his wife and children were drugged and smuggled through the Berlin Wall. Within months Japan was on its way to ruling the world of motorcycling. Branded a traitor by the Communists, Degner suffered horrific injuries in a fiery racing accident and died in mysterious circumstances. *Stealing Speed* is a breathtaking story of racetrack heroics and Cold War skulduggery.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A excellent book! I cannot believe this story is not more well known and written about. The story about Ernst Degner is amazing and full of twist and turns, this book should be made into a movie. I

enjoyed the story about Walter Kaaden, it makes me appreciate what a great man he really was and receives so little recognition still to this day for his dedication to the advancement of the 2 stroke engine. This book is a fast moving story that I did not want to put down until I was finished. Matt Oxley is a fine writer and gives insight that only a motorcycle racer could, especially when describing the racing action at the Isle of Mann TT.

I grew up during the 50s and 60s. I got my first motorcycle in 1967. I've worked on Suzukis professionally since 1974 and even worked for American Suzuki as a service rep from 1981 through 1996. I now teach in the Suzuki program at Motorcycle Mechanics Institute in Orlando. Yet, even with all that background, most of this story was new to me. I don't find it surprising as the Japanese are masters of copying, refining and improving ideas. Who knew that the 2-strokes we rode and loved in the 70s had their origin in Hitler's "buzz bombs?" This book is a must for any fan/student of early Japanese motorcycles and GP racing in the 60s. It ranks right up there with the story of Kim Newcombe and the Konig. ([...]) Definitely a must read for any serious fan of the era. It's not that thick a book, but packs a lot of history into a few pages.

Any motorcycle racing fan who lived through the fifties to the eighties should be interested in this book. A wonderful look behind the scenes of the mighty battles being raged while we were just enjoying the races. This book was needed to leave witness to the history of a sport that concerned not only stealing speed, but also stealing freedom, betrayal, and living a sport which kept the riders on the edge of death, and indeed took away the lives of many great racers.

I greatly enjoyed this book. It is an easy, entertaining, yet informative read. It is not only a document of classic motorcycle racing events, but it also gives a feel of Cold War history. I think anyone can enjoy reading 'Stealing Speed', although some basic interest in motorcycles or an identification with the presented time period may help. To fully appreciate the content it may be also handy to know the difference between a two stroke and a four stroke. I liked the style of the narrative. It is not a typical journalistic documentary where the author tries overly hard to sell his story by using sensationalist language. What made me feel skeptical, and why I would give it 4.5 stars if I could, is that he misspelled several of the German names and expressions throughout the book. It makes me wonder whether Mr. Oxley's sources were not reliable or if he did his research sloppily. Either way, I hope that doesn't mean the other facts, as presented, aren't also to be taken with a grain of salt.

Matt Oxley has written an enthralling tale about a subject many of us knew only on the periphery, so the unravelling of the story of Nazi engineering, cold war politics and motorcycle development, is very hard to put down. Highly recommended.

This is well written with good pacing and plenty of interesting motorcycle racing facts, but it is a gearhead story. I understand 2-stroke operations, so I liked the technical parts of the story as well as the political history in Europe at that time. I became interested in the characters and what they endured to affect their eventual outcome. I would buy a t-shirt with the cover picture on it if available.

Seems the publisher wouldn't sell this book directly in the USA. Mine was under backorder for almost a year after it went to press, and I was finally forced to cancel from . Instead I ordered it from a bookseller in the UK and it shipped immediately. This book will appeal to motorcyclists, mechanics, engineers, 2 stroke fans, Suzuki fans, MZ fans, historians, race fans. You get the picture. Kaaden and Degner's story is gritty and it's easy to underestimate the change these two had on the evolution of Grand Prix and Japanese motorcycle companies.

Excellent story about an extremely underrated motorcycle company to whom all of us that grew up with Japanese two strokes owe a debt of gratitude to, even though they were on the "wrong" side of the politics. Walter Kaaden performed miracles with hard work and little budget. The kind of guy every motorcycle guy wants to be where he figures stuff out in his garage and changes the course of motorcycling.

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