

The Cover-up General

While working at a helpdesk of cable operator Casema (Delft, The Netherlands), I could not imagine getting entangled in an espionage scandal. Military Intelligence fighting an internal power struggle at a private company? Such was furthest from my mind. But that was exactly what happened. Only later I realised what was behind it all. I wrote down my experiences in non-fiction thriller The Cover-up General.

From 8 June 1998, I am working through a job agency at Casema, servicing internet clients. My ambition, however, is to serve my country. When I apply for a job as marine officer, military psychologists compliment me on my broad work and life experience but reject me as my character is assessed as 'too strong to be broken.'

In early July, two temporary employees from a rival job agency enter the department at Casema. Both are linked to the Dutch Armed Forces:

Barbara Overduyn (34) reveals to everyone that besides her temporary job, she works for Dutch military secret service MID. Complaining openly about the MID, she is especially critical of the suppression of a notorious photographic film, which captures the failure of our army's peacekeeping forces in the Bosnian town Srebrenica, in 1995. Barbara urges me to follow this scandal. According to her, some people in the military are determined to prevent the photos from being published. Yet, she and her boss – a brave Marine colonel – are opposing this cover-up, an admirable stance.

Ina (middle-aged) is more aloof. After a slip of the tongue about her husband, it terrifies her when I inquire after his name and military job. Ina keeps quiet. Yet chatting one day with Barbara about the love of her life, she calls him 'My Ad.' Also, I overhear Ina answer the phone once, saying 'Van Baal' instead of her maiden name – she then apologises profusely.

On 8 July, my supervisor tells me her staff card is missing. She finds it hard to believe but suspects the card was stolen by Ina.

A few days later, when Barbara is not around, her unusual job is brought up. In jest, I remark: 'She is a spy!' Although solely intended as a joke, about Barbara, Ina freezes as if she is the one being unmasked. Distrusting Ina, I decide to sneak up on her one moment, while she is at her desk. Peering over

her shoulder, I see Ina writing notes about Barbara's remarks on the Srebrenica photo roll. I am totally perplexed.

Discussing our careers at our first joint break on 14 July, Barbara offers me a job at the MID as an analyst. I would be tasked with writing reports for deploying our Armed Forces. Barbara is certain I would be quite skilled at describing various conflicts.

The next day, Barbara and I are startled by camera flashes. Ina just left for the toilet when an intruder takes photos of us sitting at our desks. The spy then flees in a car driven by a henchman. Everyone is shocked – the police are called in. The intruder must have used a staff card as he entered our building without activating the alarm. But why? No company secrets are kept on our floor. And why is the number plate of the escape car not registered anywhere?

I finish my temporary job – Barbara and Ina's job agency is cheaper – and start dating Jasper (21), a former colleague. He informs me that, while at Casema, Barbara cries over the dismissal of her intelligence superior by the Head of the MID and that she will leave the military as well.

Concerned about the intrigues, I write to the National Ombudsman who in turn asks the Minister of Defence for clarification on what happened. Subsequently, an MID report is released in which Barbara confirms instructing me to join the MID, but she also claims I am 'completely insane' and that I was fired at Casema for 'misbehaviour.' One wonders *who* is insane here. Fact is both my job agency and Casema send me recommendations regarding my tenure.

Meanwhile, through a mutual friend, a high-ranking official within the Dutch domestic secret service BVD explains the intrigues:

While applying for a job at the Marines, my background was checked, and my past as a male escort surfaced. The psychologists had to reject me because of this and find a legal way out. Hence the surreal excuse for rejecting me. Nevertheless, my work and life experience was regarded as useful by intelligence circles. Following the BVD, which had asked me in 1992 to please diplomats nocturnally, now the MID found it expedient to approach me.

Next, Barbara was deployed at Casema to recruit me. This was, however, primarily a ruse to entrap her, as it would have been easier to just call me. Ina was hired to infiltrate as well to observe Barbara, as grave doubts had arisen concerning the latter's performance as an undercover agent.

As for Ina, she had no experience as a spy at all. Still, she was assigned to this job by her high-ranking army husband in charge of the set-up. Ina quickly compromised herself by stealing the access card for the break-in and writing notes about Barbara's violations of state secrets. Regardless, the family operation succeeded, Ina's notes and the intruder's photos proving Barbara's controversial infiltration were used to pressure Barbara and her superior to

leave the MID. The internal opposition against the Srebrenica cover-up was neutralised, with Barbara guessing I betrayed her.

In June 1999, I report to the Chief Public Prosecutor the false MID report, as issued by the Minister of Defence. The Head of the MID and his deputy are dismissed by the Minister just two weeks later. Nonetheless, the National Ombudsman publishes the ministerial libel in his online assessment of the case, without ever having checked it. He ignores the evidence I provided, making it appear no intrigues took place.

Other disruption measures are also executed to silence me: earlier, Barbara had ordered Jasper to stop seeing me – he wrote testimonies to that effect, embarrassing the MID. An example of a more alarming ploy concerns an invitation to visit Paris. The BVD official warns me that in order to put me behind bars, French military secret service DGSE is plotting against me, at the behest of the MID. The plan is to frame me for drug trafficking on the international train. None of this is looked into properly, not even after an intervention from Her Majesty Queen Beatrix at my request. The national interest prevails over yours, explains my BVD contact.

As army top brass continues to deceive him, the Minister of Defence decides to leave office in April 2002. Next, the entire Dutch government resigns over the Srebrenica genocide. The Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army, General Ad van Baal, also steps down. Nicknamed ‘The Cover-up

The Srebrenica genocide and the notorious film roll

During the Bosnian War (1992–95) the United Nations declared the town of Srebrenica a safe area for Bosniaks (Muslims). To a Dutch army battalion fell the role of safe-keeping the enclave. Nevertheless, the town was captured by Serbian troops. The Dutch offered hardly any resistance.

After the fall of Srebrenica, the Serbs deported all Bosniaks from the enclave and murdered more than eight thousand Muslim men and boys. The Dutch commanders-in-chief responsible for their protection were Generals Hans Couzy and Ad Van Baal. The notorious Srebrenica film depicts Serbian war crimes as well as Dutch soldiers helping with the deportation of the Bosniaks. These photos were later obscured by the Dutch military.



*Battle of Srebrenica

General,' he is depicted on the front page of a national daily. At his side is his loving wife; I recognise her frightened face – it is Ina.

Van Baal is quietly rehabilitated a year later, becoming the Armed Forces' Inspector General. Pondering what character makes a general, I challenge Van Baal in his new-found job. I request he solve this affair, which started with orders to steal my supervisor's staff card. And ended with silencing critics of the cover-up of photos, taken by his troops, which prove the impending Srebrenica genocide. In reply, Van Baal evades his responsibility – like he did in Srebrenica. He refers me to the Minister of Defence, to whom I send an advance copy of *The Cover-up General* in March 2014.

My conclusion: obscuring evidence of war crimes harms the international legal order and the rule of law of our country. The Armed Forces approached me to write intelligence reports and describe the conflicting parties involved. In the national interest, I hereby comply with this request – at your service!

In July 2015, the Mothers of Srebrenica put forward the book as one of many supporting testimonies in their billion-euro lawsuit against the Dutch State, to help back the notion that our army shares liability in the genocide of their husbands and sons, and obscured photos proving this.

A month later, Van Baal claims *The Cover-up General* is partly based on fantasy, without producing any evidence to substantiate his accusation. No proof whatsoever is brought forward either when Barbara sues me for libel. Still, a judge – while admitting not having read it entirely – bans the book. And issues a gag order as well. I am prohibited to speak any longer on this state scandal and consequently, part of my own life, risking a fine of up to 100,000 euro.

Undeterred, I appeal the censorship verdict. With dozens of supporting documents, I win the case on all counts. The Court of Appeal of The Hague rules the accuracy of the book is not in doubt and affirms its importance for the public debate on Srebrenica. As extensive publicity is often a safeguard for whistle-blowers, it is also significant that this victory for press freedom is being reported worldwide.

September 2016, *The Cover-up General* is published again – this time with new chapters on my quest for truth and justice. A third updated edition is issued in April 2022 and an English translation in April 2024.

Note: Following legal proceedings, editions from 2016 onward used the pseudonym 'Monica' for military intelligence officer Barbara Overduyn. Following her death in 2024 (learned of in 2025), her identity is no longer anonymized. The pseudonym 'Jasper' remains in use to protect the author's former partner.

See for more information about the book: thecoverupgeneral.com. The complete book is available for free at: dedoofpotgeneraal.nl/book.pdf.