



# Renaissance woman

## Private eye Leslie Silbert turns author with 'The Intelligencer'

### AUTHOR IN TOWN

When she goes to work, private eye Leslie Silbert now uses an alias. Why? Because of an ass-kicking, Renaissance literature-quoting, justice-seeking chick named Kate Morgan.

Morgan is one of Silbert's main characters in her debut novel, "The Intelligencer." Weaving parallel stories of espionage plots in Queen Elizabeth's court in 1593 — and a mystery involving an ancient manuscript in the present time — Silbert uses her own interests and expertise to craft an intellectual spy novel with historical accuracy and intrigue.

"Before the book came out, and I was a non-Google-able non-entity, I could, in circumstances, be exactly who I am. Now, I have to use an alias," Silbert said. "There's one thing I can't do — I can't be me." Silbert has always been fas-

cinated with secrets, and the history of clandestine information.

A graduate of Harvard University, and a former student of Renaissance literature at Oxford in Cambridge, England, Silbert left her studies and pursued her interests as a private investigator.

"When I was a grad student, I was studying ideas about curiosity in English Renaissance culture, and the pursuit of secrets and forbidden knowledge, so I wanted to take academic interests into the real world, and pursue secrets for a living," Silbert said. "Book learning to real world."

But something nagged at her — the goal of writing her own successful thriller novel. A self-professed "major Nancy Drew addict," Silbert was discovered through a magazine piece on female private eyes. A book deal was born, and two years later: Kate Morgan.

The similarities between the character Morgan and the author Silbert are startling: Both were literature students, both are fascinated with sixteenth-

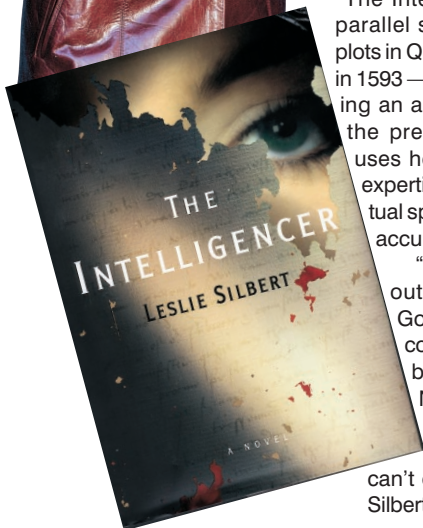
century espionage, both are private investigators (though Morgan's firm is a front for off-the-books CIA operations and Silbert's is not — or so she says), both have addictions to chocolate and both have insatiable curiosity.

Though author and character may be remarkably similar, "The Intelligencer" sets Silbert apart from other spy novel authors through witty, believable dialogue and simultaneous historical and present-day plots that are, for the most part, historically accurate.

"I wanted to have a breathlessly entertaining thriller with some thought-provoking substance to it," Silbert said.

"The Intelligencer" is the first in what Silbert promises will be a Kate Morgan series. A long series. Silbert, if that is her real name, is only 29. Maggie Samways

Silbert will read from "The Intelligencer" Tuesday at Kate's Mystery Bookstore (2211 Mass. Ave.). MBTA: Red Line to Davis. 6 p.m. For more info, call (617) 491-2660.



# Mother love: Showtime movie causes controversy in Russia

Three American political consultants go to Moscow and save Russia from communism, winning a vital follow-up battle to the Cold War.

That's the plot of a new movie, "Spinning Boris," based on the story of the 1996 Russian re-election of President Boris Yeltsin over Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov. The film, directed by Roger Spottiswoode, debuts Sunday on Showtime.

In Russia, former Kremlin advisers have said the film is not much more realistic than "Jurassic Park" in which "Spinning Boris" lead actor Jeff Goldblum fought dinosaurs.

"There are still factions within Russia who are trying to deny it," said Goldblum, who plays real-life political consultant George Gorton. But "in a drama there is always something that is not exactly true."

Gorton said he and fellow advisers Richard Dresner (played by Anthony LaPaglia) and Joe Shumate (Liev Schreiber) did indeed play a vital role in Yeltsin's victory.

"Frankly, I think it was critical. We arrived and [Yeltsin] was in fifth place, and six percent at the polls," Gorton said.

"You can't expect the nationalists in Russia to be sanguine about the fact that Americans were inside the Kremlin advising Boris Yeltsin about his politics," he said. "What if there were Chinese inside the White House advising George W? It's a matter of nationalism."

"It's mostly accurate," adds Shumate. "Things were compressed."

(Reuters)



Goldblum and Spottiswoode

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