

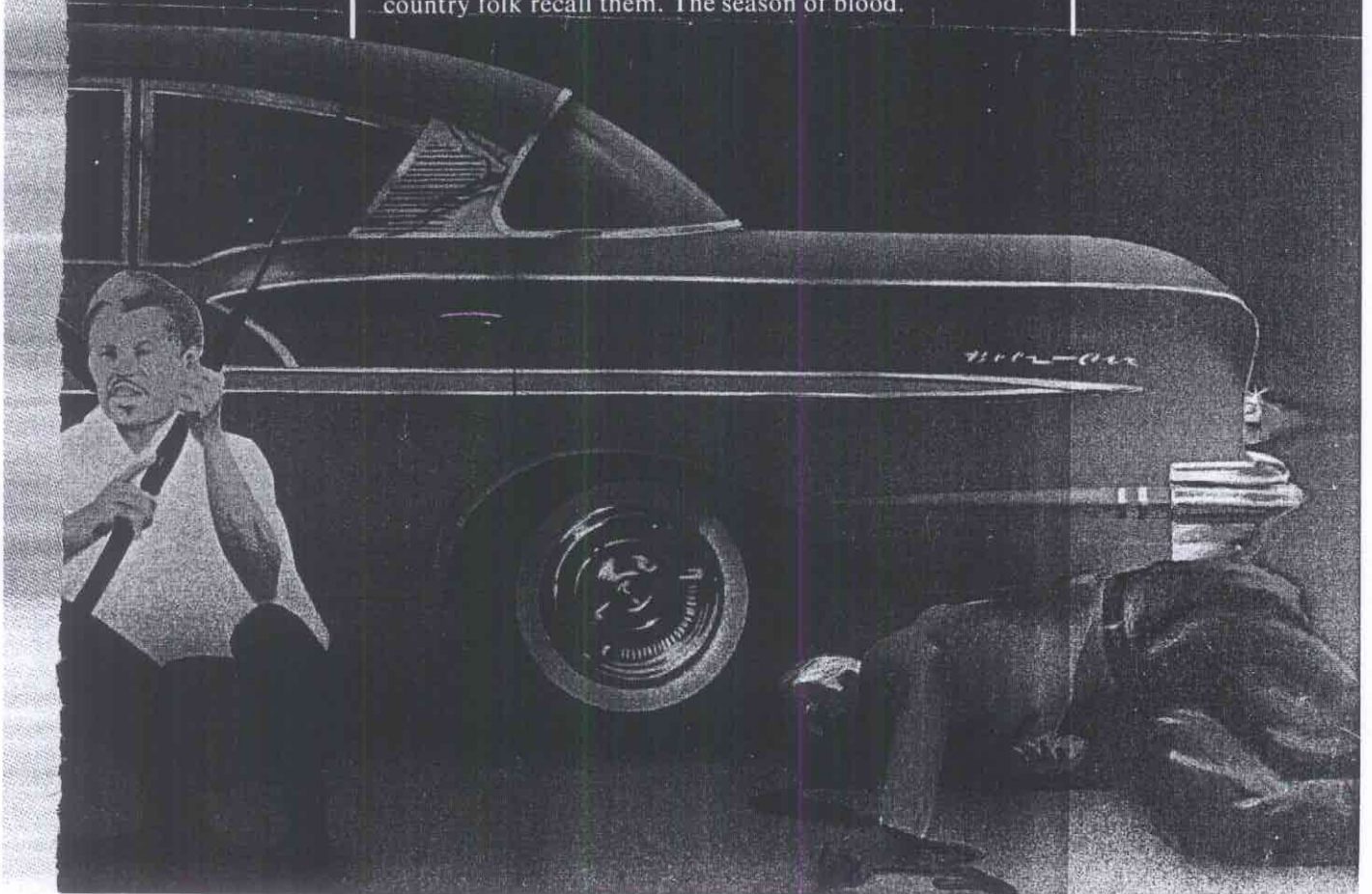
EXCLUSIVE:

HOW THE CIA BLEW AWAY TRUJILLO

*...with some eager help
...a bang and a whimper.*

BY ANDREW ST. GEORGE

"Ah, *los años de la sombra*," says Guido D'Allessandro. His face tightens as he recalls them: 1959-61, the "years of shadow." They were the final, orgiastic triennium of Dominican Dictator Rafael Trujillo, the tyrant "before whom no one stood in full human stature," whose sovereign rule over three-and-a-half million mute citizens of the verdant, seagirt Dominican Republic lasted for an extraordinary thirty two years. Most of those merciless years look mild and benign indeed in comparison with the tigerish ferocity of the last three—"la *sazon de sangre*," as the Carribean country folk recall them. The season of blood.

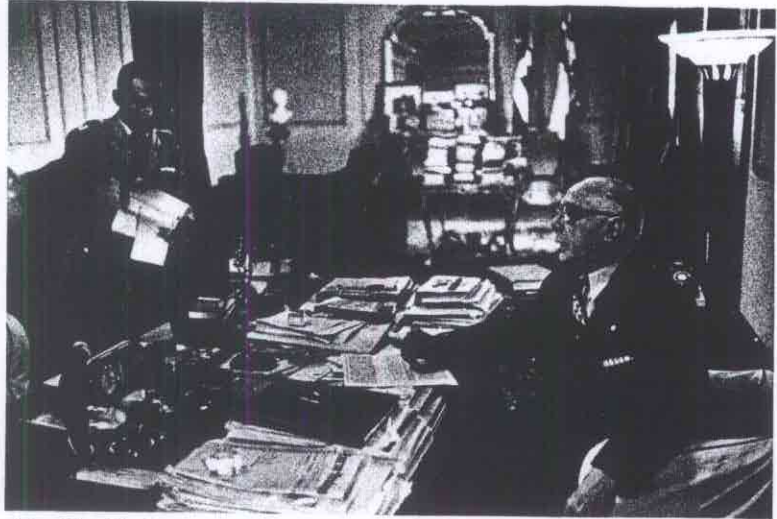


The Dominicans, having lived under Trujillo since 1930, thought they knew how to survive in a dictatorship," says Pedro Leyva, the distinguished Caribbean essayist. "But in the late Fifties Trujillo grew deranged. The regime began to degenerate. There were mass arrests and unspeakable atrocities—the sadism of the police acquired revolting sexual overtones. Those years of terror taught Dominicans to swallow their voices, to shutter their faces, to disown their shadows. The superstitious *campesinos* whispered that before any man could stand up to Trujillo, the Virgin Mother would have to grant him a new shadow."

"Whatever Trujillo wanted was done; whoever opposed him was destroyed; wherever he entered, he dominated," recalls German Ornes, the editor of Santo Domingo's largest daily. The axiom applied equally to public and private affairs. Even serious and reputable biographers such as Robert Crassweller discuss Trujillo's relationship with women in terms of "thousands of conquests." And although the recent uptrend in oil prices is said to have launched some glandular Mideastern magnates on the quest for similar records, only El Benefactor's biographer could add (as the precise Crassweller does) the unmistakable Trujillo touch: "They were almost always virgins."

Groups of young girls were brought to his palatial residence two or three times a week for sexual orgies; the

El Benefactor worked a full day right up to his last one—30 May, 1961.



older The Big One grew, the younger his paramours. To cater to the Generalissimo's spectacularly carnal demands the National Palace maintained a fully-staffed Office of Procurement whose agents scouted the Caribbean and the world in the search for new girls to entertain The Boss.

Generalissimo Doctor Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, Benefactor of the Fatherland, High Chief Commander of Ground, Sea and Air Forces, Grand Patron of Arts and Letters, Father of the New Nation—how shall one describe him? To say that he ruled the Dominican Republic for thirty-one years as the

absolute master of life and death does not begin to tell it. For this extraordinary strongman proved himself a more durable despot than Hitler, more patiently cunning than Joseph Stalin, more feared than Benito Mussolini—and a great deal richer than all three departed dictators combined.

In terms of raw, naked power over the destinies of his subjects, Trujillo was the most powerful man alive. Instead of the traditional "God willing," Dominicans learned to say "God and Trujillo willing" when giving voice to their hopes and plans. Drinking fountains bore signs reading, "Trujillo Gives

THE PLAYERS

Colonel John Abbes Commandant of dreaded S.I.M., the Dominican Military Intelligence Service.

Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas Guatemalan dictator, C.I.A. puppet, murdered on orders of Rafael Trujillo.

Lorenzo Berry ("Wimpy") U.S. pilot, adventurer, owner of the popular supermarket "Wimpy's" in Santo Domingo.

Romulo Betancourt President of Venezuela; democratic leader who became last assassination target of Rafael Trujillo's murderous secret service.

Richard Bissell Senior C.I.A. official of Clandestine Services who assisted in planning Trujillo's assassination.

"Mr. Brown" C.I.A. liaison.

Plato Cox C.I.A. liaison.

Guido D'Allessandro Top leader (Central Committee member) of Dominican anti-Trujillo resistance; disguised as nun, smuggled out by C.I.A. aboard U.S. destroyer to testify secretly before U.S. Congress on Trujillo atrocities.

Henry Dearborn U.S. diplomat who served as chief American representative in Santo Domingo in 1961.

Dr. Jesus de Galindez Spanish exile scholar and Columbia University lecturer. Active C.I.A. liaison with the Basque separatist movement.

Captain Zacarias de la Cruz Member of Palace military staff. Rafael Trujillo's chauffeur and escort officer on the night of the assassination, May 30, 1961.

Octavio de la Maza Dominican pilot who participated in Galindez kidnapping as Murphy's co-pilot.

Enrique de Marchena Dominican Ambassador at United Nations who initiated negotiations with Soviet Union in 1961.

Allen W. Dulles Director of Central Intelligence Agency.

Ray Everett C.I.A. deep cover agent working as peanut-oil broker in Santa Domingo.

Major General Roman Fernandez Minister of Armed Forces. Husband of Trujillo's favorite niece. Conspirators planned for him to assume power after death of Trujillo.

Desmond Fitzgerald Senior C.I.A. official, eventually Western Hemisphere Division Chief in C.I.A. Clandestine Services Branch.

Edwin Holman C.I.A. liaison.

President John F. Kennedy

SWANK 1015

Col. John Abbas—Trujillo's torture talent-scout.



Us Water." Canecutters marched to work under banners inscribed, "We Thank Trujillo for this Bountiful Harvest." The motto "God and Trujillo" became universal, emblazoned on millions of plaques, walls, motor bumpers, endlessly invoked in terms which make it clear which of the two Supreme Beings possessed the real power.

In 1955, The Big One stood, as Crassweller aptly notes, at the summit of his self-proclaimed Era. Having ascended, by dint of administering the Dominican Republic as a personal estate, to the ranks of the world's four or five wealthiest men, *El Benefactor* owned

more than four hundred suits; three hundred-odd specially designed uniforms; over one thousand neckties, and real properties in farming, cattle ranching, shipping, banking, transportation, manufacturing and wholesale commerce which made him worth well over \$500 million. Some estimates of Trujillo's wealth peg it nearer to a billion.

As Trujillo's power grew so did his paranoid obsession with real or potential opponents. Among the thousands of spies, intelligence officers, secret agents and informers on The Big One's payroll there was a full-time undercover operative based in New York whose assignment it was to make the rounds of American public libraries and to excise, with a surreptitious razor blade, every critical reference to the Generalissimo from the pages of bound U.S. periodicals. And when, in 1956, Trujillo received espionage reports that a lecturer at Columbia University in New York City was researching a doctoral dissertation on the "Era of Trujillo" couched in sharply critical terms, the Dominican secret service was ordered to kidnap the wretched scholar. He was secretly flown to Santo Domingo, tortured to death and buried in an unmarked pit on the grounds of *El Benefactor's* country estate.

This abduction proved to be the turning point of Trujillo's destiny. The vanished academic, Jesus de Galindez, became a martyr whose case was kept

alive by the American press year after year. Moreover, Dr. de Galindez (his doctorate was awarded *in absentia* to the demonstrative applause of thousands of scholars and students) turned out to have had discreet but intimate affiliations with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Trujillo's agents had done something exceedingly unwise; they had challenged the powerful American intelligence establishment on its home turf.

El Benefactor made the usual moves to cover up the atrocity. A powerful publicity agent, Sidney S. Baron, known for his liberal-democratic connections, was retained in New York with a quarter-million dollar down payment. And back in the Dominican Republic, most of the agents, go-betweens and pilots involved in the Galindez kidnaping, were liquidated; they were reported to have died in motor accidents, suicides, or in violent private quarrels. Among the sudden dead there was the pilot of the kidnap plane, a young U.S. airman named Gerald Murphy.

In death, Gerry Murphy proved an albatross around Trujillo's neck. Murphy was a classic victim-figure, an eager, inexperienced youngster who yearned to become an airline pilot despite substandard eyesight. He was offered a flight captaincy with *Compañía Aviación Dominicana* in exchange for a single, fatal transgression: it was the innocent-looking, well-spoken Murphy who piloted the private plane with the

Colonel J.C. King Western Hemisphere Division Chief in C.I.A.'s *Clandestine Services Branch* in late Fifties, early Sixties.

Gerald Murphy U.S. pilot who flew kidnap plane in Galindez abduction case.

Lieutenant Clodoveo Ortiz Dominican Navy lieutenant; one of the most feared torturers of S.I.M.

Dean Rusk Secretary of State under President Kennedy.

Professor Arthur Schlesinger Senior adviser on Latin America to President Kennedy.

Ray Smith C.I.A. liaison.

Joaquin Sotomayer Spanish police official, specialist in interrogation techniques, served as consultant to "modernize" S.I.M.

Luis Amiama Tio One of leaders of assassination conspiracy, served as principal liaison between plotters and C.I.A.; survived. Godfather of General Fernandez' child.

Rafael Trujillo Dictator who ruled Dominican Republic with absolute power from 1930 through May 30, 1961.

Antonio Garcia Vasques Dominican Attorney General who investigated crimes of Trujillo regime after it finally ended in November, 1961.

Mitchell Livingston WerBell III C.I.A. contract specialist for assassination devices—silencers, bombs, sniper rifles.

ASSASSINS

Pedro Levio Cedeño One of assassins who shot Trujillo. Had been publicly pistol-whipped and spat upon by Trujillo's son-in-law.

Antonio de la Maza Army officer who once served with Trujillo's corps of military adjutants. Brother of Octavio, one of the pilots killed in the Galindez purge.

General Juan Tomas Diaz Brother of a senator, cousin of former Santo Domingo mayor. Grew up with Trujillo and former court favorite. Leader of the assassination plot.

Salvador Estrella Brother of a nun arrested by Trujillo.

Amado Garcia Guerrero Lieutenant assigned to Trujillo's Corps of Adjutants. Fiancee kidnaped and raped during one of Trujillo's orgies.

Antonio Imbert One of assassination team and only one to survive manhunt by hiding in Italian Embassy. Former governor of Puerto Plata Province. Brother served long prison term under Trujillo.

Roberto Pastoriza Engineer with a longstanding grudge against Trujillo.

Huascar Tejeda Civil engineer and architect urged to participate by General Diaz.

drugged, bound Dr. Galindez hidden in the rear cabin from New York to the Dominican Republic.

The pilot's death was intended to contain the spreading Galindez kidnaping scandal—the Dominican police claimed that Murphy had died in a drunken altercation with another Dominican airline pilot, Octavio de la Maza, who subsequently confessed to the killing and then, in a spasm of guilt, hanged himself in his jail cell—but it added fuel to the fire. "The absurd performance satisfied no one," noted an observer. In fact, *El Benefactor's* murderous *coup de théâtre* made things worse. The C.I.A., stung by the brazen kidnap-murder of one of its agents—even the worldwide Communist intelligence services had begun to pull back from such ventures—wheeled around, a huge mastiff bloodied by an insolent alley cat, and took off after Trujillo.

Trujillo's killing was no arbitrary adventure by a "runaway C.I.A." It was, in fact, the culmination of carefully planned White House policy. Paradoxically, even today, when a number of "leaks" and indiscretions by Congressional investigators reviewing the past of the American intelligence establishment have raised questions over the C.I.A.'s complicity in Trujillo's murder, the events, reasons and conclusions which led up to it—what Washington calls the "decision-making process"—appear more obscure than ever.

Scattered clues pointing to U.S. complicity in the liquidation of *El Benefactor* emerged in growing numbers during the spring and early summer of 1975. Properly arranged, they provide a clear rationale for ridding the world of Rafael Trujillo—a 1960 decision in which, despite the current denials, the White House, the National Security Council, the Department of State and the C.I.A. seem to have concurred so unanimously that the original directive, issued during the last year of the Eisenhower Presidency, was reconfirmed by the newly inaugurated Kennedy Administration in January 1961. Trujillo had to go.

In extensive recent interviews with this reporter, three former senior intelligence officials involved in Caribbean operations during the period of Trujillo's death argued that the decision to "terminate" *El Benefactor* was a crisis measure adopted reluctantly but inescapably in the midst of a dramatically grave situation. To document this version, the following chronology was compiled in the course of several separate interviews, drawn largely

"The Season of Blood" was open-season on women, too.



from hitherto secret C.I.A. case histories and Summaries:

1956: Dr. Jesus de Galindez is kidnaped in mid-Manhattan, flown to the Dominican Republic and tortured to death, although Dominican military intelligence are aware of the Columbia University scholar's affiliation with the C.I.A. Recognizing the *faux pas*, Trujillo orders everyone involved liquidated. It is announced a few weeks after the abduction that Col. Salvador Cobian, chief of Dominican military intelligence, and his principal administrative assistant, shot each other to death in an impromptu duel. Similarly preposterous obituary notices proclaim the fate of the other kidnapers. But after the purge, Trujillo turns to counterattack: more than a million dollars in traceable funds alone are spent in Washington annually to propagandize *El Benefactor*, and some of the money goes to right and left-wing critics of the C.I.A. to stimulate a political offensive against the Agency.

1957: On the evening of July 27th, the President of Guatemala, Col. Carlos Castillo Armas, is assassinated with a rifle bullet by one of his palace guards. First blame falls on the Communists: Gen. Castillo Armas is well known as one of the most loyal and deferential collaborators of the C.I.A., in fact as its creature, for his elevation to the Presidency of Guatemala was contrived after the removal of the previous incumbent, Col. Jacobo Arbenz, in a U.S.-sponsored coup. But although the public is told nothing, behind the scenes the C.I.A. accumulates persuasive evidence that the killing of Col. Castillo Armas had been arranged and paid for by Trujillo.

In the early Fifties, before he was

adopted by the C.I.A., Col. Castillo Armas had received assistance, money and military equipment from Trujillo, who considered himself the premier patron of Guatemala's military plotters. But after the moody, ambitious colonel acquired the full support of the C.I.A. he neglected and repudiated his erstwhile *Benefactor*. When word was received from Guatemala City in 1956 that the parvenu President had even refused to award Generalissimo Trujillo the Order of Quetzal, a decoration long promised and keenly expected, there were Olympian wrath and coldly murderous arrangements for retaliation in the Palace at Santo Domingo. *El Benefactor* won the *revanche*, but the C.I.A. lost an important protégé—and the defeat stung.

In a special study begun in late 1956 under the direction of Col. J.C. King, the C.I.A. division chief for Latin America, *El Benefactor* is described as "unpredictable . . . solipsistic . . . tending towards megalomania . . . obsessive indulgence in debauched and orgiastic sexual practices . . . periods of mental disequilibrium suggesting guarded neurological prognosis, possible onset of senile dementia . . . difficult to extrapolate future course in relationship to U.S. policy parameters. . . ." The conclusion: *El Benefactor* is deteriorating neurologically, cerebrally, but in every sense dangerously. The U.S. must be prepared to act. The Department of State and the C.I.A. are directed to "intensify intelligence-gathering operations" in the Dominican Republic.

1958: The year of hidden conflict and spreading, silent spy war. "A sudden intelligence mobilization of the kind the C.I.A. staged in the Dominican Re-

Trujillo's chauffeur—nineteen bullet holes later.



public has its own peculiar dynamics, just as military maneuvers do," says a former C.I.A. case officer. "The Agency sends in a good number of clandestine operatives; to obtain intelligence, they must work either with opponents of the regime or with disaffected officials *within* the regime. Now an interesting situation develops. The conventional diplomatic staff at the U.S. Embassy maintains ever thinner, ever cooler relations with the government, while the intelligence people maintain ever warmer, ever closer relations with the opposition. The anti-government forces realize that they are acquiring, in a roundabout way, a voice in Washington. It peps them up, galvanizes them into action. This prompts the government to turn even nastier, to tighten the screws, to clamp more and more repression on the country. The resistance, in turn, grows, stiffens, becomes more militant . . . a vicious circle, don't you see? And nowhere in the world as vicious as in old Santo Domingo."

In the Dominican Republic, foreign agents are not up against the conventional sort of counterintelligence chief. They're up against Colonel John Abbes, the son of an American shipbuilder's accountant and a Dominican mother, who was born a U.S. national, grew up in Santo Domingo, worked as a sports reporter, clerked on the Palace staff, and served abroad as an intelligence officer. By the age of 35, Abbes had become the commandant of Dominican military intelligence, *El Benefactor's* closest confidant, and the most inventive, productive, pitiless and cunning torturer in Latin America.

The flair for drama, the theatrics Trujillo used to manage his nation now de-

generated into an orgy of pain and humiliation inflicted on thousands of men and women. The relentless campaign of cruelty was as much macabre entertainment for the senior men of the Trujillo family as it was a means of extracting information. Endowed with millions of dollars in new funds to expand Trujillo's vast espionage apparatus, Abbes unified and systematized the competing, overlapping, squabbling security and intelligence divisions into a centralized organization, the *Servicio Inteligencia Militar*.

Its initials—SIM—became the most fearsome syllable in the Caribbean idiom. From all over the world, eminent, expensive specialists were brought to Santo Domingo to "technify" the SIM. From the U.S. came master wiretapper Bernard Spindel, from Germany a card-index wizard known only as "Señor Peters," from Spain a "senior instructor" in interrogation techniques: Joaquín Sotomayor. They were well paid, but Johnny Abbes' personal *modus operandi* owed little to police technology. He saw intelligence and counterintelligence work not as a craft or a technique, but as art.

In 1957 Colonel Abbes visited New York to purchase, among other things, a used electric chair from the Department of Corrections. "It is absolutely dependable and almost instantaneous," he was told. Abbes said no, thank you: what good was an *instant* electric chair? He ultimately acquired one built to his own specifications. Equipped with a rheostat, it enabled the controller at the switch to torment the man or (as frequently as Abbes could arrange it) a woman strapped in the chair with easier or harsher jolts of electricity for hours on end before setting the switch for execution.

The walls of the SIM's interrogation rooms were thickened with soundproofing foam plastic. "No, no," Abbes said, "that's not the way to control suspects." Ultimately, as any perfectionist must, Col. Abbes built his own torture towers. The elaborate interrogation centers situated in compounds surrounded by tall concrete walls were known as "La Cuarenta" (located on Fortieth Street) and "Kilometro Nueve" or "La Nueve"—named after the road marker which indicated, roughly six miles outside Santo Domingo, the perimeter of San Isidro Airbase, commanded by Trujillo's older son, Ramfis. The "variable-pitch" electric chair was installed at La Cuarenta in a bare-walled interrogation room which was not merely void of soundproofing; it had an internal amplifier hook-

up so that the screaming, lungeing, moaning, vomiting and pleading of the tortured could be utilized to keep prisoners awake in the cellblocks below.

In time, Johnny Abbes lost interest in his custom-built chair. His investigative principle was "control." "One must dominate the prisoner's personality completely," he would tell subordinates. Pursuant to this policy, arrested victims were sometimes tortured pitilessly beyond the point of submission and confession: the goal was total abjection. To attain it, Johnny Abbes devised a more efficient instrument than the chair: the "Octopus," the dreaded *El Pulpo*.

"*El Pulpo*" was a specially-built electroshock generator with not two but eight terminals at the end of long, black, rubber-coated tentacles. "When it was applied in earnest," says former Dominican Attorney General Antonio Garcia Vasques, who investigated the crimes of Johnny Abbes after the Trujillo regime's fall, "the top tentacles of *El Pulpo* were not attached to the victim's skin; they were connected to the brain by means of tiny copper electrodes screwed directly into the cranial bone. The other couplings were clipped to the eyes or testicles of the prisoner. It was the most inhuman way to apply electric current to living creatures. It shattered their very nervous systems."

At Kilometer Nine, one of the torture chambers consisted of a water tank stocked with huge, voracious leeches. Another was called "La Clínica." Here Lt. Clodoveo Ortiz—the master torturers were as well known in Santo Domingo as were Burke and Hare or Leather Apron in England—made his "clients" talk with the aid of thin, flexible, electrified copper probes inserted into the genital and/or anal passages, producing electrical discharges not unlike miniature bolts of lightning across the body's most sensitive tissues.

If, during late 1958 and early 1959, the Dominican Republic degenerated into an enormous *abattoir*, the torture centers erected by Col. Abbes were its grinders. First hundreds, then thousands were driven into the inferno by innumerable, scurrying Volkswagens newly purchased for the SIM under Trujillo's multimillion-dollar expansion program. Master of it all, epicene, sexually deviant, assertively sadistic, mysterious, ubiquitous, corrupt, tireless, diabolically cunning, was the second most powerful man in the Dominican Republic—Colonel Abbes.

"It was Johnny Abbes who really

condemned Trujillo to die as he did," a former U.S. intelligence agent with long service in the Caribbean said recently. "Under the terror regime of the SIM, there was no other way to get rid of the old man—no other avenue to change except assassination."

By midsummer of 1958, the number of C.I.A. agents in Santo Domingo had nearly tripled over the previous year. Some arrived to take up "embassy station"—i.e., they joined the U.S. diplomatic staff under the guise of Foreign Service officers—but a larger number worked under cover, as visiting Canadian or German salesmen, as journalists or *yanqui* businessmen. There are reports that a German industrial concern, an American peanut-oil processing firm in Atlanta, Georgia, and a frozen-fruit packager garnered legitimate six-figure sales in Santo Domingo by allowing personable, dynamic U.S. intelligence agents to masquerade as their trade representatives, with, of course, all salary, travel and "representational" expenses paid by the C.I.A.

Maintaining frequent contact with opponents and victims of the regime (the two were sooner or later the same), living daily with the terror which trembled in the fear-dilated eyes of the men, the grief-eroded faces of the women, some C.I.A. and State Department officers in the field came to view the elimination of Trujillo as a *mission civilizatrix*, a command of Christian compassion. This reporter's findings indicate that the current debate as to whether the C.I.A. ever conspired with Dominican resistance leaders to assassinate the Big One is largely academic: there were a number of such joint conspiracies. In fact, the Dominican Republic appears to have represented the only "crisis area" where U.S. intelligence, while maintaining contacts with the usual wide spectrum of oppositionists—students, the Church, the business sector, and so forth—found itself discussing the same proposition with every group, invariably involving the same problem and the same solution: he must die.

On the morning of June 24th, 1960, a group of plotters financed and equipped and flown to Caracas by Trujillo parked a green Oldsmobile along Avenida Los Proceres, where a festive Army Day parade was scheduled to pass. A remote-controlled bomb—a green plastic suitcase containing special explosive compound—had been concealed in the Olds' trunk. Later in the morning, when Venezuelan Presi-

dent Romulo Betancourt's official limousine, traveling at the slow ceremonial pace of the parade, drew abreast of the Oldsmobile, one of Trujillo's men touched the microwave actuator switch. A cathedral-tall sheet of flame leaped up, smashed the presidential Cadillac across the avenue, overturned it and set it on fire. Betancourt, badly burned, escaped with his life, but only as the result of a miracle.

In Washington, the most chilling impact was created, not merely by the lunatically brazen assault on Betancourt, but by intelligence reports of Trujillo's reaction. When it was learned that the Venezuelan president would survive, *El Benefactor* told a number of aides that this merely meant the attempt would have to be repeated. Within weeks, while the machinery of inter-American statecraft, rusty and decrepit from long disuse, finally began to line up against Trujillo, he was busy organizing a second shot at Betancourt with the mindless, compulsive tenacity which bespoke deep alienation from reality.

During the first half of November, 1960, President-elect John Kennedy received, as part of the preliminaries for his inauguration, several lengthy briefings from C.I.A. Director Allen W. Dulles and his senior aides. Under the Eisenhower Administration, the two Dulles brothers ran the overt and covert aspects of U.S. foreign policy with sovereign hand, but the incoming New Frontier represented a challenge for Allen Dulles, a new environment full of uncharted waters, unfamiliar flora and fauna. The Caribbean, where the C.I.A. was most deeply committed, was briefed to Kennedy as the foreign policy area in most urgent crisis.

Dulles reported that under authority received from President Eisenhower, both Cuban and Dominican exiles were secretly being trained at C.I.A. bases. The Cubans were to be formed into the amphibious strike force which ultimately became known as the Bay of Pigs brigade. The Dominican exiles were receiving commando training in smaller groups at secret sites in Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida and Venezuela. Major operations were not feasible against the iron-fisted old dictator; the trained Dominican militants would infiltrate Santo Domingo in small commando units, three-four men each, "targeted" against a single objective: Trujillo. In plain words, the C.I.A. was training assassination teams.

It would have been a tragic dilemma

under any circumstances, but this was a specially charged situation. President Kennedy and his senior advisers saw President Betancourt—in Professor Arthur Schlesinger's words—as "by far the most impressive of the Latin American leaders." When Betancourt visited Washington, President Kennedy praised him as "all that we admire in a political leader."

Now that the Caribbean was aflame with revolution, subversion and guerilla violence, Washington's wish for Betancourt's leadership was stronger than ever. President Kennedy received daily intelligence memoranda on Trujillo's renewed preparations against the Venezuelan leader's life. Johnny Abbes had been sent to Europe to recruit skilled assassins; he was known to have attempted to hire the legendary World War II SS commando, Otto Skorzeny, for the job. Then, suddenly, it was reported that the sinister Dominican spy-master had shifted his itinerary and flown off to Czechoslovakia.

Trujillo was now confronted with hemispheric repudiation. A special session of the Organization of the American States voted unprecedented collective sanctions for the attempted murder of Betancourt. Its member states—every republic of North, Central and South America—broke diplomatic relations with the Dominican regime. With his back to the wall, the indomitable Trujillo made a characteristic decision: if Castro could survive on alliances with the Communist bloc, so could he. The orders went out from the National Palace to seek a *rap-prochement* with the East and to crank up the propaganda machine against the United States. It was a knock-down, drag-out gut fighter's decision, and it proved to be Trujillo's last.

The C.I.A. reported that Enrique de Marchena, the Dominican Ambassador at the U.N., had been quietly negotiating with the Russians since August. Abbes' secret side trip to Czechoslovakia in November, it appeared, was designed to firm up an agreement for diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet bloc. It was all too much. When Washington received reports in early December of new C.I.A. contacts with an "action-oriented" anti-Trujillo conspiracy, high officials in the White House, the National Security Council and the State Department began to issue the "go-code"—the subterranean flow of secret authorizations, directives, commitments and advice that spelled out the decision: "Get on with it."

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were careful to avoid such words in the President's presence—the C.I.A. was training assassination teams.

Was there no alternative? According to knowledgeable former intelligence officials, the briefings by DCI Dulles and other senior C.I.A. officials, Desmond FitzGerald, Richard Bissell and others, defined the essential problem in stark terms. Quite apart from other policy imperatives—and there were several—requiring the elimination of Trujillo, the continued presence of the liberal reformer Betancourt on the hemispheric stage now necessitated the disappearance of the Generalissimo. Behind the stately orchestration of official verbiage, the *leitmotiv* sounded cold and clear: a life against a life.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were briefed to place amphibious and airborne forces on standby alert in case the murder of Trujillo brought on uncontrolled outbreaks of mob violence, or—the contingency most deeply and imminently feared in Washington—another attempt by the armed followers of Fidel Castro to invade Santo Domingo, as they had done in the abortive guerrilla raids of June, 1959. The principal U.S. representative in Santo Domingo, Henry Dearborn, listed as "Consul General" because diplomatic relations had been ended by the August, 1960 O.A.S. resolution, was directed to cooperate with the C.I.A. in maintaining contact with the conspirators. Dearborn did his job conscientiously, and for his pains received one of the first phone calls made by the assassins after the killing.

Since both the personal attitudes of Clandestine Service agents and the effect of their very presence, the dynamics of their operations, tended to precipitate this "solution," special effort was made to review the role of higher Washington authorities in Trujillo's assassination. It was not impossible, after all, that the C.I.A., perhaps in conjunction with some similarly committed younger State Department officers, acted on its own when it took a hand in the liquidation of *El Benefactor*. During June of 1975, some former members of the Kennedy Administration (notably Adam Walinsky, Dean Rusk, and Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.), journalists close to the New Frontier inner circles (Ted Szulc) and others have suggested that this was what happened. But the answer un-

earthed by this inquiry has been that the White House and at least one of the Kennedy brothers must have learned early of the preparations for Trujillo's death, and decided that they were deserving of support.

There is detailed evidence supporting this conclusion. Quite beyond the C.I.A., other agencies and service branches of the U.S. Government were advised of the expected showdown in the Dominican Republic and directed to prepare for it. Chief among them was the Navy, whose senior officers were briefed on the approaching climax and directed to assemble, well in advance, an amphibious task force capable of landing tactical troop units in Santo Domingo if the situation required. In this reporter's conversations with former C.I.A. agents, the hitherto unknown role of the Navy was mentioned more than once with special emphasis to prove that the C.I.A. did not act on its own. One intelligence official with Caribbean experience noted that a naval task force comprising forty-one warships, among them two assault carriers, stood off Santo Domingo harbor *within forty-eight hours* of Trujillo's murder, and added, "There are press photographs of this!" He was proven right by a review of this reporter's own photo files. They contain a roll of color film shot from a hotel balcony on June 2nd, 1961, depicting a strong U.S. naval force within sight of the Dominican capital.

Although the Trujillo *funébres* transpired without troop landings, the U.S. Navy did make its presence felt within days of the assassination. A few hours after the killing, some of the conspirators were under arrest and interrogation. From the files of this original investigation of Trujillo's murder, which this reporter has been able to examine for the first time, it is clear that the confessions obtained shortly after the assassination implicated a U.S. citizen living in Santo Domingo, Mr. Lorenzo Berry, known far and wide as "Wimpy" after the name of the popular supermarket he owned. The conspirators, interrogated separately, identified "Wimpy" as a covert C.I.A. agent who had, among other things, smuggled in some of the guns used to shoot down *El Benefactor*.

A small army of slaving SIM agents arrested Wimpy, a chunky, phlegmatic, soft-spoken man. He was taken to the *La Cuarenta* torture compound. Instantly, as if waiting for such an incident—as indeed it was—U.S. official-

dom sprang into action. Henry Dearborn, the ranking U.S. diplomat in Santo Domingo, called General Ramfis Trujillo, the dictator's older son, who had taken charge of avenging his father's murder. Dearborn warned that unless Wimpy were released "immediately," the Marines would arrive to free him forcibly.

This was one of those exceptional occasions when Washington bureaucracy wasted no time. A moment after Dearborn hung up the phone, Gen. Trujillo was summoned to the radio room (as commander-in-chief of the Dominican Air Force, he ran the country from San Isidro Airbase), where he could hear Dearborn's voice again, coming from the monitor set tuned to the wavelength of the U.S. Embassy's communications channel. Talking on the Embassy's single-sideband wireless set the American diplomat was advising the assault carriers off-shore to stand by to land troops. And with a pair of binoculars, Ramfis Trujillo could verify the situation: on the helicopter deck of the *Boxer* and the *Shangri-La*, platoons of Marines in combat gear were assembling to board their choppers. Lorenzo Berry was yanked back from the jaws of hell and released forthwith, together with a local physician who, having been arrested with the American agent, was set free with him *sans* explanation.

"Wimpy" went to the Embassy. A helicopter whirled him to the safety of an offshore carrier. But the Dominican doctor drove home, went straight to the bathroom, unsheathed a straight razor and slashed his throat. What he had seen at La Cuarenta made him think of death as the only freedom.

Expatriating on the case of Wimpy, intelligence sources say that the support extended by U.S. agents to their co-conspirators in assassination plots fell into several categories, most of them requiring—as did the freeing of Lorenzo Berry—cooperation among several U.S. government branches. The primary requirement was invariably for "hardware"—guns, special weapons such as "accurized sniper rifles," silencers, C-4 plastic explosive, shaped charges, and other devices of destruction. But more important than hardware was the "travel aid" which enabled resistance people suspected or sought by the police to move around—to leave Santo Domingo or, for the most gallant, to return to it under elaborate false identities created by the C.I.A. Technical Services Division, the so-called "trick shop" at Langley.

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Without the cooperation of the U.S. Justice Department (which controls Immigration and the F.B.I.), the Department of State and, occasionally, U.S. Customs, very little covert assistance would have been possible.

But the decisive contribution made by the C.I.A. to Trujillo's end was an intangible offering: the promise of recognition. To appreciate its true significance one must have lived in one of the smaller nations of Latin America or Africa which are "integrated" clients of Washington. When C.I.A. officers operating under cover but speaking with authority assured the Dominican resistance leaders that the U.S. Government repudiated Trujillo, considered him a dangerous liability and desired his elimination, the fate of *El Benefactor* was sealed.

The C.I.A. men were candid: killing Trujillo was considered hazardous in the extreme—not a job for *yanqui* hit men, but for the most gallant of Dominican patriots. Those who accomplished it, opposition activists were assured, would not go unrewarded. The dead would be honored as fallen liberators; the survivors as heroes entitled to participate in governing a nation freed by their bravery. It was this commitment which turned assassination plans from suicide pacts into ventures which could be lost—or won.

The plan to kill *El Benefactor*, as laid out by the conspirators, was simple and direct. An "action" group of eight gunmen deployed in three highpowered sedans was responsible for shooting the dictator. Once Trujillo was dead, General Fernandez, the military minister and ranking army general, was to assume power in Santo Domingo. The Trujillo family would be called to the Ozama Fortress for an emergency meeting; as they arrived, they were to be arrested, led to a waiting aircraft provided by the C.I.A. and flown to Miami. The loyal henchmen of Trujillo—Johnny Abbes, some diehard generals, other "unredeemables"—were also to be summoned for "emergency conferences" at army headquarters—and shot to death on the spot. General Fernandez and other leaders of the plot would then announce the formation of a provisional junta, whose recognition and support by the U.S. had been negotiated and assured in advance by C.I.A. agents.

Assassination blueprints have, of course, one thing in common, known to all who ever planned or investigated one: they never work. Trujillo finally died in the ambush of May 30th, but

for three reasons which had little to do with planning. First, *El Benefactor* had grown so murderously irritable, an ancient rogue elephant harassed by spiders, trampling friend and foe indifferently when he moved, that although the conspirators were indiscreet on more than one occasion, no one in Santo Domingo dared to whisper a word to the brooding old man. Johnny Abbes, the eyes and ears of the regime, had grown so universally and feverishly hated that the intelligence rooted up by his army of spies was opaque and contradictory. People seldom opened their mouths any more, and when they did they spoke in codes and signs, in private tongues, in words that meant nothing and everything. Third—and most importantly—the elemental force with drove assassins and victim to the climactic appointment was not merely the urge to stage a *coup* or the hope to profit from it. It was the primal need of the tyrant-killers to regain their manhood. Trujillo had castrated three generations of males. He had cut them down, planted his boot in their faces, taken their land and their women, and had made them say: "We thank *El Benefactor*."

General Juan Tomas Diaz, a corpulent, commanding warlord, grew up with Trujillo in San Cristobal and led the life of a court favorite until one day, over an annoyance, Trujillo slashed the general across the face with his riding crop and sent him into rural retirement. Diaz was the conspiracy's leader, if indeed the loose-jointed assassination alliance had one. In retrospect, it seems that together with his influential brother, Senator Modesto Diaz, and his first cousin Miguel Angel Baez Diaz, a former mayor of Santo Domingo, the bulky general represented the epicenter of the May 30th conspiracy.

The other conspirators burned with the desire to kill or die, and all accepted their chances of doing both. Antonio de la Maza, a tall, swaggering army officer from a large country family who had once served with Trujillo's corps of military adjutants, saw the Big One from a special perspective of intimate hatred. His brother Octavio had been one of the pilots killed in the cover-up purge which followed the Galindez kidnaping in 1956. Antonio Imbert, the son and grandson of famous generals, chunky and scarfaced and built like a bull, had been the governor of Puerto Plata Province in better years; now his brother was serving a long prison term in one of Trujillo's

hellish *oubliettes*. Amado Garcia Guerrero, a slim, mustached lieutenant, who was on Trujillo's personal military staff and thus an important link in the conspiracy, had seen his fiancée swept up by the palace procurers and brutally deflowered in one of the savage orgies staged for the Big One. Salvador Estrella's sister was a nun, arrested in one of the anti-clerical *razzias* launched by Trujillo after 1959. Pedro Lidio Cedeño had been pistol-whipped and spat upon by Trujillo's son-in-law before his family and dozens of spectators in an open-air restaurant. To be sure, hundreds of thousands of Dominicans had grievances against *El Benefactor*. What differentiated this group of malcontents from innumerable similar ones was their direct contact with the C.I.A.

Five Clandestine Services officers from the C.I.A.'s Western Hemisphere Division maintained close liaison with the plotters: Ray Smith, Plato Cox, Lear Speer, Edwin Holman and a tall, unsmiling man known only as "Mr. Brown." They were assisted by two State Department officers with consular cover assignments, Henry Dearborn and Jack Bennett; by at least two (and almost certainly more) resident C.I.A. agents working under deep cover, Lorenzo "Wimpy" Berry and Ray Everett, disguised as a peanut-oil broker; and by a team of four or five Cuban-born C.I.A. operatives from "JMWAVE", the covert Miami station, some of whom carried press credentials from the C.I.A.-owned news agency headquartered in Miami.

In late 1960 Mitchell Livingston WerBell III arrived in Santo Domingo and rented a townhouse which overlooked Jorge Washington Avenue, the staging area of the assassination. WerBell made the rounds of Santo Domingo insouciantly, just another hard-drinking *yanqui* businessman interested in frozen-juice processing. In reality, he was the master armorer of the C.I.A.'s silent-kill operations, the chief engineer of silencers, assassination rifles, exotic bombs, and other accoutrements of "executive action."

WerBell's appearance meant that judgment day was at hand in Santo Domingo. Some of Trujillo's most knowledgeable and influential American friends now made a last effort to tell him so. There were private planes at Santo Domingo Airport, special visitors at the Palace (William Pawley, Igor Cassini, and others) who pointed a finger at the handwriting on the wall: "Take money and depart." But Trujillo

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lo's eyes had turned inward with age. *El Benefactor* went on working at the palace, occasionally attending a performance at one of the torture compounds much as a Hapsburg prince might attend the opera, laying plans to blast President Betancourt from the face of the earth, and engaging in other pursuits which gave him a false sense of security, of almost deathless omnipotence.

Luis Amiama Tio was a slim, cool man who wore impeccable white linen suits. "Very Spanish and all steel," Luis Amiama was the conspirators' chief liaison. He was *dos voces compadres* with Armed Forces Minister Roman Fernandez. Each man was godfather to the other's children, a meaningful bond among Latin men. In General Fernandez the conspirators acquired the one essential element lacking in previous plots against *El Benefactor*: a high-ranking government official with direct authority over the military, a man who could engineer the transfer of power from the Era of Trujillo to a new, governing junta.

General Fernandez threw in with the Diaz group in early 1961. As a plotter he was like the others: a powerful figure who had received from Trujillo, along with rank, status, money and other preferments, too much contemptuous abuse. It was only in character that Gen. Fernandez was different. But that was not to be revealed to the hopeful assassins until it was too late.

Sometime in late April the conspirators received a shipment of weapons from the C.I.A. The provenance of this hardware has been disputed ever since; the statements recorded by Prosecutor Tejada clearly indicate that they arrived concealed among shipments of lard and groceries via Wimpy's supermarket. From among the firearms and ammunition supplied by Wimpy, two specially "accurred" rapid-fire automatic rifles and one .45 caliber Thompson submachine gun were used in the ambush.

After the last week of April there was nothing left to do but wait for the right moment. It came on Wednesday, May 30th. A little after 7:30 p.m. Lt. Amado Garcia Guerrero, a member of the Generalissimo's corps of adjutants, called Trujillo's house and inquired of the duty officer, a personal friend, whether "the boss" was going to the country. On receiving an affirmative answer—the olive uniform which Trujillo wore on these occasions was already laid out for him in the dressing

room—the lieutenant alerted the other members of the action group.

At seventy, Generalissimo Trujillo still did a full day's work and a long day's work, an example to all, no matter what his spiteful detractors said. But over the years he had become a creature of habit. Every evening, just at dusk, it was his custom to take a stroll from his mother's house—his intense love for the old lady was expressed in lifelong daily visits—down Maximo Gomez to Avenida Jorge Washington, the broad boulevard by the seawall, where he held *al fresco* court for his sycophants and spear-carriers. Once a week, on Wednesday or Thursday, he appeared in the khaki uniform of a generalissimo; on that day the promenade was followed by a 20-mile drive to his princely estate at San Cristobal, where some erotic entertainment usually awaited the Big One.

On the evening of May 30th, 1961, the Generalissimo's evening schedule suffered a slight interruption. After the stroll, Trujillo called for the Minister of Armed Forces, Major General Jose Rene Roman Fernandez, and drove out to San Isidro Airbase to review and punish an annoying dereliction: that same morning, when the Generalissimo visited San Isidro, the corporal of the guard had failed to bellow "Attention!" as standing orders required.

Trujillo was irate. He growled menacing dissatisfaction at San Isidro—there were babbled apologies and frenetic scurrying by senior officers—and on the drive back to town he lashed the minister. "Miserable layabouts! Garbage! And you, idiot, you say you know nothing about these abuses of discipline? That you know nothing, that is right! You are a shameless eater of excrement. A useless sucker. As a general you are not worth anything. . . ."

General Roman Fernandez made no answer. The old man was getting irascible with age. When annoyed, he would slap the face of a cabinet minister or whack a bemedalled general across the eyes with his riding crop. The minister knew it was pointless to argue with the old man whose days were numbered now, a group of assassins ready and waiting to end them. Although Fernandez was not certain of the day chosen for the kill, he knew that it was coming, for he, himself, the senior general in Trujillo's army, minister for military affairs, devoted husband of *El Benefactor's* favorite niece, was one of the key

figures in the plot. What *neither* man knew was that as they parted in Santo Domingo, the Era of Trujillo had less than a hundred minutes left.

After dropping off the silent General Fernandez, Trujillo drove home, changed cars and set out on the usual mid-week drive to the country. He stopped at the house of his younger daughter Angelita—a brief hello, about ten minutes—and then headed for *Estancia Fundación*.

This was a familiar, agreeable drive. It ran along the broad seaside boulevard which curved past the city into a four-lane highway. A breeze rose with nightfall, rattling the palm fronds, rocking the surf which crashed against coral in the darkness just beyond the road's left shoulder. Trujillo sped along at a steady sixty miles per hour in his blue 1958 Chevrolet sedan with the familiar double horn on the hood. At the wheel sat Captain Zacarias de la Cruz, a hard-jawed, rawboned officer as large and devoted as a mastiff, *El Benefactor's* only escort for the drive. There were three loaded submachineguns in the car. Captain de la Cruz, a member of the Palace military staff, wore a service automatic, and Trujillo himself carried, as he always did, the two instruments in which he placed his entire faith: a .38 revolver in a belt holster under his tunic, and in a small briefcase, \$300,000 in cash. The old man was relaxing, his anger subsided; this was a pleasant moment in his busy week. As usual, he had dispensed with body guards and staff for the night. He didn't need them; the country was tranquil, the opposition broken, his authority secure. The old man no longer bothered to keep an eye on his car's three large rearview mirrors. He noticed nothing when, about four miles beyond the city limits, a dark shape slipped from among the shadows of a deserted fairgrounds by the roadside. A midnight-black Oldsmobile limousine swung into the Grand Patron's lane and raced along the highway behind the Chevrolet. In the sinister auto, one man to a window, sat de la Maza, Tony Imbert, Lieutenant Guerrero and Pedro Livio Cedeño.

Another heavy American sedan, a four-door Mercury, lay in wait a thousand yards ahead, parked at a junction with Salvador Estrella at the wheel. It was Estrella's task to initiate the action. As Trujillo approached, the Mercury was to move out, roll across the highway and block it, forcing the dictator's driver to halt. To warn Estrella of his cue, there was the Oldsmobile driven

by Tony Imbert, coming up fast behind Trujillo's car, closing the distance, flicking its parking lights on and off furiously in the prearranged signal to Estrella to move.

But now, as Salvador Estrella, his hand on the wheel, the big engine throbbing, spotted the blinking lights of the Olds racing toward him on the dark highway, something unexpected happened: he froze. Two, four, ten seconds—the lights were almost on him—and Salvador Estrella, devout Catholic, found himself praying, transfixed, his limbs limp, his heart drumming desperately as the two dark vehicles roared past on the highway. He could not move an inch.

But in the front seat of the pursuing Olds the two men named Antonio were beyond stopping or retreating. "Get up to him, Tony," shouted de la Maza. "Go around him!" Imbert rammed his foot on the accelerator; the huge power-plant howled its fury as the Olds spurted ahead. Less than five yards from the unsuspecting Chevy, de la Maza leaned out of his window, aimed a 12-gauge shotgun with a sawed-off barrel, and let go the first blast of double-0 buckshot at the rear window of Trujillo's car.

An instant later, the two cars were side by side. De la Maza fired the second barrel at the left rear window of the Chevrolet. The car wobbled like a wounded beast and veered off toward the right as the Olds thundered past, more than one gun roaring now. The two men in the rear started to shoot.

Captain Zacarias de la Cruz, Trujillo's driver, took it all in and reacted swiftly. "Let's turn back, *Jefe*," he shouted hoarsely at the image of the Boss in his center rearview mirror. "There's too many of them here." But Trujillo was hurt. De la Maza's first broadside blast had ripped his left shoulder. "Stop, stop," he ordered. The left arm hung limply; black gouts of blood swelled under his armpit. "I'm wounded! Stop! We must fight now."

These were Trujillo's words as recalled by Captain Cruz. Tony Imbert, in retrospect, has said that the orders to halt meant The Big One was trying to make a run for it. As the Chevrolet braked, Trujillo's feet were already out the door. The old man dropped from the car, took a few steps, then staggered and sat down heavily in the road. His back leaned against the left rear fender. There was no more distance left in him.

The killers' car screeched into a swinging U-turn, raced back and

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stopped across the road from the Chevrolet halted on the fight shoulder of the highway. The two pairs of headlights confronted each other in a white blaze.

A firefight erupted between the two cars. The ambushers spread out left and right. Through his smashed windshield, Captain Cruz tried to hold them off with a Dominican military carbine and his service automatic, firing dozens of rounds and taking nineteen bullet wounds in his body from the assassins' guns. Cruz fought to the end, a blood-flecked boar trapped by gun dogs, and miraculously survived it all, although no doctor can explain how. There were no odds on the Chevy; even as the demented duelers shattered each others' headlights, reinforcements arrived for the attackers, blinding Captain Cruz and his sagging Generalissimo with their light beams. Salvador Estrella, his prayers and panic over, roared up in the Mercury. From up ahead the *third* ambush car, a small French sedan, brought Roberto Pastoriza and Huascar Tejeda, the reserves who had been stationed further along the highway.

Rafael Trujillo drew his heavy .38 Colt revolver and fired it twice, but the glare and the darkness had made him sightless, he had an old man's night vision—practically none. The two Antonios leapfrogged across the road in a crouch, closing in on Trujillo. Tony Imbert carried one of the special rifles supplied by the C.I.A. in his left hand, and in his right a .38 Colt similar to Trujillo's own. Spotting the old man trying to find cover behind the Chevrolet, Imbert scuttled sideways like a crab, circled, raised the .38. Trujillo screamed, a highpitched, trembling scream, like a shaky hand warding off a blow, "Ay, ay, ay!"—and Tony Imbert fired. The lead-tipped hollowpoint bullet smashed Trujillo in the jaw, just in the center of the chin. Blood, bone chips and viscous matter splattered the car fender behind the dying dictator.

De la Maza crouched close behind Tony Imbert. Rising to full height, he raked Trujillo with double bursts from his .45 caliber submachinegun. The Generalissimo's tunic and trousers split away, as did the white stomach. The old man bounced against the car body as the copper slugs tore into him, then slumped forward over his burst bowels. Rafael Trujillo was dead.

Pastoriza ran up, fired a coup de grace into the dead dictator's head, then jumped on it in frenetic excitement, stomping the hated visage into

raw flesh. Other plotters emptied their barrels into Trujillo's body. Someone spat on it. De La Maza kicked it contemptuously: "You, son of a bitch, you won't kill anyone any more." He grabbed the corpse by one rubbery arm, dragged it across the roadway and dumped it into the trunk of the Oldsmobile. "You are finished, you son of a whore. . . ." A choking groan came from the dark roadside, where Pedro Livio Cedeño, a tall, lean, olive-skinned man with close-cropped white hair, crawled in agony after a hit in the abdomen from one of the many rounds fired by Trujillo's driver. Cedeño was in incontinent pain. He shrieked and groaned so desperately that de la Maza muttered something about putting him out of his misery. But it was not possible. The killing juices of the plotters were gone.

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo came from a modest, barely literate rural family, the third among eight brothers and sisters. His life would have been spent, like those of his peers, in small-time livestock trading, working as a foreman in the sugar fields at harvest time, and perhaps as an estate guard the rest of the year, brawling in *bodegas* and bedding barefoot in *bodegas* country girls, had he not penned, on December 18, 1918, a carefully calligraphed letter which began:

"The undersigned requests, through your worthy organization, a position as an official of the honorable institution of the Dominican National Guard."

The "worthy organization" to which Trujillo applied was the United States Marine Corps. It occupied and governed the bankrupt, wobbly Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924 and in the process, it gave Trujillo the crucial start to power. Col. C.F. Williams, the recipient of that historic application, granted Trujillo a commission as second lieutenant. It took the obscure back-country youth less than 10 years to make Brigadier General (the Dominican Republic's *only* general) and Commander-in-Chief of the National Army.

Along the way, his Marine superiors gave Trujillo top efficiency commendations. He reciprocated with lifelong affection for the chesty old Corps. The Dominican dictator was, in reality, a product of U.S. foreign policy in its era of imperial grandeur; leathernecks, special privileges, gunboat diplomacy, Teddy Roosevelt dangling his big stick, a whiff of grapeshot for ungrateful natives—the "sand pebbles."

But Rafael Trujillo was not a pebble: he was a rock. When U.S. policies changed drastically after World War II and again with the simultaneous arrival of the Sixties and the Kennedy New Frontier, the old man could no longer bend with the prevailing wind—he had become a grand imperial presence himself. His liquidation became the first experiment of the U.S. Government in employing planned assassination as an instrument of national policy.

But it was not a success. Less than 20 hours after their father's murder, Ramfis and Rhadames Trujillo, machine pistols dangling from their hands, were back in Santo Domingo. For the assassins, it became a bloody debacle, a failure which landed them among the bloody torments of Dante's *Inferno*. Only Tony Imbert found a safe refuge in a large closet of the Italian Embassy. The others—the plot contained no provisions for going underground *after* the murder—were hunted down and ripped apart by SIM agents like softshell crabs chased into the shore grass by scavenging ratpacks.

The three lucky ones—General Juan Tomas Diaz, Lt. Amado Garcia and the raging Antonio de la Maza—had gun in hand when the khaki SIM Volkswagen closed in, and died in an exchange of gunfire with the hunters. Those who were taken alive—Pedro Livio Cedeño, Huascar Tejeda, Roberto Pastoriza, along with dozens of their confederates—were made to suffer, all that burning summer of 1961, every torture fevered tropical fantasies could invent.

The conspirator most bestially, diabolically and relentlessly tortured was Gen. Roman Fernandez whose calvary began when a Dominican army surgeon stitched his eyelids back so that he could never, for an instant, shut out the agony. The ruined general was passed from hand to hand by every "special interrogator" of Trujillo's torture compounds; he came to know *El Pulpo* and *El Colar*, the sting of soldier ants and huge, starved leeches, the lash of every whip known to the *verdugos*. On November 16th, the captured conspirators—who were carefully kept alive throughout their gauntlet of unspeakable agonies—were finally trucked out to Ramfis Trujillo's estate at Boca Chica. Trussed up like slaughterhouse animals, the survivors of El Benefactor's murder were thrown into the swimming pool and shot to death by Ramfis as they thrashed for air.