

Ex-CIA agent's version of 'Bay of Pigs' to lense

By Kevin Phinney

Scott Barry, formerly an expert on ambushes for the CIA, is about to take his view of the Bay of Pigs debacle to the big screen.

Preproduction on "Bay of Pigs" is scheduled for March 16, with July set as a start date for filming. Locations are planned to include Florida, Washington and the Dominican Republic. Barry, who wrote the script, is also co-producing the film with Meteliko Tualeva under the banner of Twelfth Night Entertainment. The proposed budget is \$25 million, already raised through independent sources.

"It's really a drama using the Bay of Pigs as a backdrop," Barry said. "The story revolves around two guys, an American and a Cuban, who overcome their cultural differences for a common goal. You'd call it a buddy movie if the subject matter wasn't so serious."

After graduating from West Point in 1973, Barry's military service led him into CIA service, where he trained members of the Contras in Guatemala.

In Barry's view, the Bay of Pigs remains one of the great fiascoes

in U.S. political and military history. In spring 1961, President Kennedy inherited from the Eisenhower administration a plan to retake Cuba from Castro's communist revolutionaries by training a force of Cuban expatriates who would then invade their homeland to "liberate" the island.

"And it would have worked," Barry said. "The Cuban freedom fighters were supposed to hold out for 72 hours, and they came very close. But their ammunition was sunk off the beachhead and the air support that was promised never materialized. There were U.S. Marines on the carrier Essex and they were only waiting for the word to assist the invasion."

According to Barry, President Kennedy chose to give the invasion minimum support, refusing any presence of U.S. warplanes and changing the invasion site from Zapata Beach to the infamous bay because he did not want civilians jeopardized. Barry said many CIA operatives harbored ill will toward Kennedy because of the botched invasion, but disagreed

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with director Oliver Stone's hypothesis in "JFK" that a disgruntled CIA faction plotted and carried out Kennedy's assassination.

"But the Bay of Pigs was a clandestine operation and he was being threatened by Khrushchev, who said the Russians would invade Berlin if Kennedy moved against Cuba. It was a very delicate operation and he'd only been in office for three months at the time. It's a hell of a way to get on-the-job training," Barry said.

Barry spent eight years researching the film, interviewing CIA officials, Bay of Pigs veterans on both sides and Kennedy administration figures. □