

4/18/71-HW

"CIA Plotted to Blast Cuba Refinery" is the Washington Post's ~~today's~~ ^{yesterday's} headline on Jack Anderson's column. Today's is headed, "JFK Death Halted Cuban Oil Raid".

The first I do not for a minute ~~believe~~ doubt. The second I do not for a minute believe. Which makes me wonder why at this time, why with false emphasis, why pin on JFK what is so clearly opposite JFK's policy and was for a year before his assassination. One of the obvious inferences is plant, and one of the most obvious inspirations is CIA, which can consider that it will be regarded as no worse than GungHo for such a plot, and accomplishes two things with the JFK pin: gets even for what he did vs it and makes it seem to another segment that ~~the~~ JBJ is the good guy who stopped it.

Any in existence bu 11/1/62 were against JFK's policies, if not orders.

The first story, which represents joint CIA and Army collaboration on plans, thus really means collaboration against both JFK and national policy.

The two stories are really parts of a single one. They come, essentially, from One Bradley Ayers, a former Army captain who is writing a book to "tell all" and, of course, pin "all" on JFK, where it cannot be, not rightly.

And, of course, Ayers like all the other is no less than a dedicated patriot, with only the motives of patriotism.

There is also a real possibility that the CIA did not plant this if it has nothing to do with Ayers' book. Such an advance "plant" is a norma with publishers, mine excepted, that is.

There is no basis now for conjecture either way, so I can say only that CIA interest in a book with this doctrine is not unlikely. It says nothing new, only that JFK was behind it when he could not have been, and there is nothing in this that is in any way unpleasant to the CIA.



Jack Anderson *Post 4/18/71*

JFK Death Halted Cuban Oil Raid

THE SUPPRESSED STORY can now be told of how the Central Intelligence Agency organized a Cuban exile raid on Cuba's key oil refinery in 1963 but aborted it after the assassination of President Kennedy.

Insiders say the corporate oil giants, hoping eventually to recover their property in Cuba, brought quiet pressure to quash any raids upon refineries. Lyndon Johnson, who canceled the raid after succeeding Mr. Kennedy in the White House, was close to Texas oil interests.

We have learned the dramatic details from Bradley Ayers, a 36-year-old former Army captain, who was selected by the CIA to train Cuban exiles for infiltration and assault missions including the refinery raid in Matanzas province.

We have checked out Ayers' story with our own sources, who confirm he is correct about names, places and dates. From a group of pictures, Ayers also was able to pick out immediately a CIA undercover operative who we knew had been involved in the CIA raids against Cuba.

The rugged Ayers, a former Army ranger instructor, trained the refinery raiders. The recruiting for the mission had already been completed before he was assigned to the project. CIA officials took him by motor launch through swampy Everglades canals and across the open sea to secluded Florida Keys to meet the recruits.

Ayers and the CIA men selected Palo Alto Key, Upper Key Largo and Card Sound on the edge of the Everglades as training sites. "Most of the Cubans," said Ayers, "were bank clerks, busboys, waiters, musicians, laborers, men who had fled to the United States. Many had never fired a weapon. They were disorganized and undisciplined. I got the job of reorganizing the training program."

AYERS ran off simulated

raids near Card Sound against a local Southern Bell microwave facility with a high security fence. Other nights, he shared black beans and rice, drank and smoked "pot" with his Cuban cadre.

The rag-tag recruits gradually became a fighting team. For firsthand experience, he secretly accompanied two infiltration groups on missions to Cuba.

"We went on a commercially rigged trawler, a 'cover' vessel," he said. "We ran blackout under a quarter moon, towing a V-20 launch, a high-powered fiberglass boat.

"We exchanged light signals with the partisans ashore in Pinar del Rio and launched two rubber boats. The team made contact with the partisans, and we picked up a wounded man who'd been a prisoner of Castro. But the Cuban partisans were careless with the lights.

"After we got the wounded man into a rubber boat, we were discovered by a Soviet-type patrol craft with spotlights. We covered our withdrawal with machineguns from the V-20 boat. Although we took casualties, we finally got back to the trawler. Our boats were pretty well shot up.

"On the way home, we saw a Cuban fishing craft flying a distress flag and found it had a load of refugees. We took them on board."

A second sortie to cache supplies for agents already in Cuba was less eventful. Finally, in September, 1963, Ayers was instructed by the CIA to make detailed training plans for the refinery raid.

He was given specific orders not to land on Cuba himself during the raid. But he was too emotionally involved with the Cubans' cause to stay out and wrote himself into the plans. "We were all on a live-for-today, tomorrow-we-die philosophy," he explained.

But on the day of the final rehearsal, President Kennedy was killed, and the CIA ordered Ayers to shut down the operation. "I was in a sort of trauma," said the swashbuckling instructor. "I made trips to Washington to plead the cause of the freedom fighters with the minor officials I knew. But I just got disappointed and angry."

Finally in October, 1964, Ayers resigned from active duty with a long statement of principle to his CIA and Army superiors. "As a soldier, I had been taught I shouldn't question political or diplomatic action," he wrote. "But as a free-thinking American citizen, I couldn't subordinate my duty. My country was no longer playing to win, and my faith in the goals to which I dedicated my life was shaken."

CIA Plotted to Blast Cuba Refinery

By Jack Anderson

The full, fantastic story of the Bay of Pigs has been buried for 10 years deep in the Central Intelligence Agency's fortresslike headquarters near Langley, Va.

All the world knows that CIA-trained Cuban exiles stormed ashore on a Cuban beachhead and were cut to pieces by Dictator Fidel Castro's militiamen 10 years ago today. But the CIA has concealed from the world how it continued to send assassination teams and commando squads against Castro.

Bit by bit, stories of these post-invasion sorties are leaking out. We have already revealed, for example, how the CIA used a swashbuckling underworld figure, John Roselli, to make six unsuccessful assassination attempts upon Castro.

The CIA assigned two trusted agents, Billy Harvey and "Big Jim" O'Connell, to direct the murder missions. On the first two tries, Roselli's assassins sought to slip poison pellets into Castro's food. The next four attempts were made by sniper teams equipped with highpowered Belgian rifles, explosives and two-way radios.

There were midnight powerboat dashes to secret landing spots on the Cuban coast and machine-gun exchanges in the dark of night with Cuban patrol boats. The last assas-

sination team actually reached a Havana rooftop within rifle range of Castro. But like the others, this squad also was caught and tortured.

Refinery Raid

Now we have learned of a CIA plot to blow up Cuba's most productive oil refinery. Painstaking preparations were made, and a commando team was given intensive training.

Using U-2 photos so detailed that they showed every bush, Maj. Edward Roderick, an Army engineer on loan to the CIA, constructed a mockup of the plant. He even figured out how mortars could be pre-aimed, then placed by commandos in a precise spot and fired on the run.

But he junked the idea because a human error of an inch or two could send a mortar shell into an inhabited area. Then the whole plan was junked after President Kennedy's assassination.

We have also learned that the CIA scattered \$20 bills around like green confetti to finance the clandestine anti-Castro operations. Bales of money were delivered to Cuban exile leaders, who gave no accounting of how they spent it.

Some were stashed by men since killed. Other thousands were buried in former pirate lairs in the Florida Keys. Still more thousands were strewn on the beaches of Cuba where would-be raiders left their bones.

Yet some of the raiders survived. One of them, a young ex-Army captain named Bradley Ayers, has emerged from under cover. He has given us access to his notes, documents and draft chapters of a book he is writing about his raids for the CIA.

"The Cuban experience," he told us, "has been a plague on the national conscience as it has been on mine. I think it's high time that at least part of the story be told."

CIA Assignment

A former paratrooper, pilot and demolitions expert, Captain Ayers was training rangers at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., when he received orders to report to the Army's Special Activities Group in Washington.

He was put through physical, psychiatric and lie detector examinations for a week, then he was hustled over to the CIA's Cuban section.

He was questioned for three days by CIA officials who, finally satisfied, provided him with a cover story, phony documents and a ticket to Miami. He adopted the name Daniel B. Williams and was assigned to a CIA front called Paragon Air Service.

The CIA lodged Ayers and Roderick in a luxurious beach house in Key Biscayne. The two undercover Army men worked out of a CIA front—a columned building with the cover name of Zenith Technical Enterprises—on the south-

campus of Miami University.

Through its doors passed some of the nation's most secret operatives: the dapper John Roselli, rugged Bill Harvey, "Rip" Robertson and a huge New Mexican remembered only as "The Big Indian."

Ayers got the assignment of training a tough Cuban cadre in the swamps of the Everglades and the beaches of the Keys. He was supposed to teach them enough surf landing skill, underwater swimming, demolition, boat handling and simple survival for them to lead commandos into Cuba to blow up the multimillion-dollar refinery.

The story of their night landings in Cuba and the great oil refinery fizzle will be told in a future column.

Capitol Conversation

From the Horse's Mouth — We have already reported that Attorney General John Mitchell will resign from the Cabinet to run President Nixon's 1972 campaign, operating at first out of his former law office. Now insiders tell us the President is considering William Ruckelshaus, now the environment czar, as Mitchell's replacement . . . During his appearance on the David Frost Show, Mitchell denied our report that Los Angeles Sheriff Peter Pitchess had been sounded out about taking J. Edgar Hoover's job. We got the story from a White House aide.

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