

EXCLUSIVE

# THE BAYO-PAWLEY AFFAIR

## A Plot To Destroy JFK And Invade Cuba

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By Miguel Acoca and Robert K. Brown

Five months before he was shot to death in Dallas, a group of conspirators attempted to destroy John F. Kennedy, by political means. The group, which included officials of Time Inc., former ultra-conservative assistant Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary of Defense, William D. Pawley, disgruntled CIA agents and anti-Castro Cubans, proposed to spirit two Russian colonels out of Cuba, to testify that Soviet offensive ballistic missiles were still based on Cuban soil. Their testimony, if true, and if it could be proved — would have meant the end of John Kennedy's political career, for it would have shown that the Cuban Missile crisis had ended, not in a qualified U.S. victory, but in a monumental bungle eclipsing the Bay of Pigs disaster.

Such a revelation would have so discredited Kennedy that he could have been defeated in the 1964 election, by someone willing to topple the Castro regime by direct American military intervention — Barry Goldwater, for instance. Alternatively, the disclosure could have forced Kennedy, himself, to re-impose the blockade, order air strikes, and land the Marines. To the dedicated cold warriors and adventurers who planned "Operation Red Cross," — as the plot was christened — that outcome was equally desirable.

Operation Red Cross, however, did not succeed. The ten Cubans who took part in it are missing, and presumed dead; so is a Mafioso, who served as a key contact in bringing the plotters together. Time Inc., which bank-rolled the adventure on the recommendation of Life Managing Editor George P. Hunt, is out \$15,000, and Pawley, who used his yacht in the operation, isn't saying much. One of the three CIA agents who accompanied the operation, is dead; the other two are unidentified.

This story is an excerpt from the unpublished manuscript, *Ripped Cloak, Rusty Dagger: JFK, LBJ and the CIA's Secret War Against Castro*

Miguel Acoca was a staff writer for Life magazine for nine years, operating out of Life's Miami office. Since the demise of Life, he has been employed by the Washington Post and Newsweek in Paris, Madrid and Lisbon.

Robert Brown, a long-time, free-lance, photo-journalist, has been a close observer of the Cuban scene since his first visit to Cuba in 1958. He was one of the organizers of an anti-Batista movement at the University of Colorado in 1958; journeyed to Cuba in '59, and '60. In April, 1960, after having determined the Castro regime was going communist, he began supporting and working with anti-Castro exile organizations.

Brown first became aware of the Bayo-Pawley affair in the summer of 1967 while researching a yet uncompleted manuscript, *Ripped Cloak, Rusty Dagger: JFK LBJ & the CIA's Secret War Against Castro*. In early April 1964, Brown flew to Madrid to co-author the book with Acoca. Work on the manuscript was terminated when Acoca was ordered to Lisbon to cover the coup.

Subsequent research clarified some aspects of the story while raising even more questions that are yet unanswered. A major coup was scored when Terrance Spencer, the Life photographer who accompanied the Bayo-Pawley operation, was located and SOF. obtained the photographs he took on said operation.

Kennedy was assassinated a few months after the Cubans disappeared over the side of Pawley's yacht, the Flying Tiger II, as it lay off the southeast coast of Cuba in June 1963. The two events may not have been entirely unrelated.

In today's context, Operation Red Cross, seems, at best, bizarre; to understand the actions and motivations of the parties involved, it's necessary to recall the national atmosphere and the mood of the restive Cuban exile community in Miami, in the spring of 1963.

It was almost eight months after the missile crisis. The assassination of John F. Kennedy was five months away. While the rest of the country thought that the missile crisis ended in victory, to those closest to the situation — the Cubans in Miami and the CIA contingent there — the Bay of Pigs remained unavenged, a defeat which had been raised to the degree of moral sin, and the sinner, to an armed band of Americans and Cubans, was President John F. Kennedy.

These angry men — including CIA guerrilla warriors acting as advisers, controllers and directors of secret operations against Fidel Castro's Cuba — had been gleeful the previous year when intelligence reports said that the Soviet Union was arming Castro with missiles.

The Soviet move had seemed a perfect provocation for moving against Castro, and wiping out the "Communist beachhead 90 miles from the U.S."

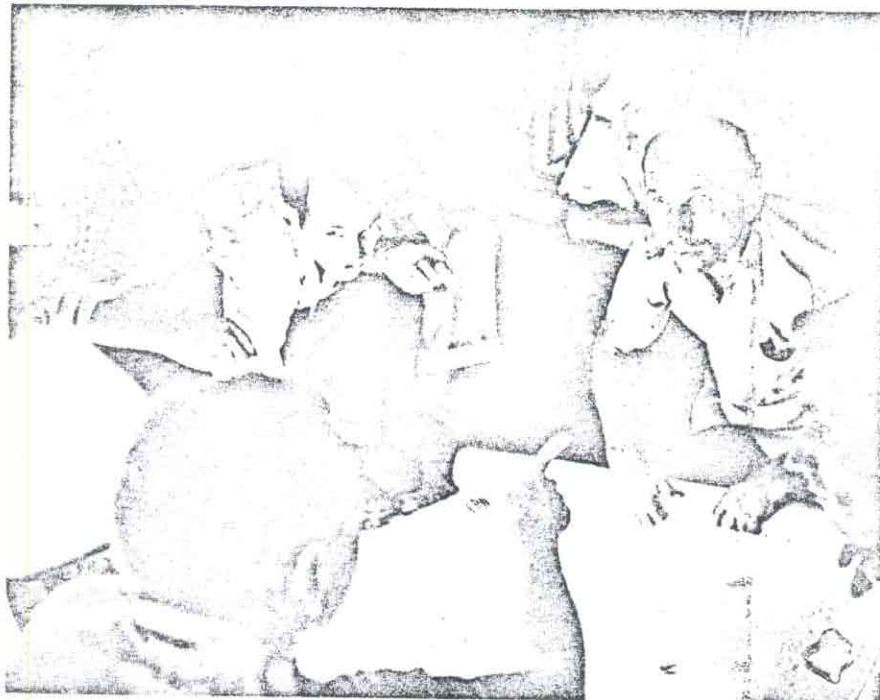
But Kennedy was marching to a different drum. He not only refused to confirm the presence of missiles in Cuba, he acted as if the shipments of missiles were the chimera of madmen. Angered by Kennedy's silence, they began to leak hard intelligence reports to favored newsmen. One of these, Hal Hendrix, began to report the build-up in the Miami



News long before President Kennedy's dramatic confirmation on October 22, 1962, that Cuba was indeed bristling with deadly Soviet missiles.

Castro himself, in a stirring speech, five weeks earlier, on September 11, had, in effect, confirmed that he had weapons which could wreak havoc on American cities, and warned he would use them if the U.S. tried to invade Cuba. Castro did not use the word "missile," but his meaning was crystal clear, and Castrologists the world over did not miss the meaning. Yet his warning was largely ignored in the U.S. The Kennedy administration minimized the speech. Only Hendrix, who won a Pulitzer prize, and Senator Kenneth Keating, the New York Republican later defeated by Robert Kennedy, kept whipping up public opinion against Kennedy for covering up the presence of missiles in Cuba in the weeks prior to the October crises. There is no doubt that Hendrix was fed his material by a CIA source in Homestead Airforce Base, just south of Miami. There is no doubt, either, that Keating was receiving CIA intelligence material.

Most Americans perceive of the Cuban missile crisis as ending in a clear American win — an expiation of the humiliation suffered at the Bay of Pigs and a demonstration that American was the foremost nuclear power. Among the huge Cuban exile community in Miami, however, the perception was far dif-



Above: One of the many planning sessions held in Bayo's house. John Martino, Mafia figure, (in foreground) points to Luis Carlin over map of Cuba. Bayo, third from the left, sparked "Operation Red Cross," with letter that alleged Russian missile personnel wished to defect.

Left: Financier William D. Pawley poses before his yacht, *Flying Tiger II*, with model of P-40. Pawley was instrumental in organizing the Flying Tigers of pre-WW II fame.



## Why Did LIFE MAGAZINE Invest \$15,000?

ferent. To them, the only proper response would have been an American invasion of Cuba and the liquidation of the Castro regime, by military means. The Cubans interpreted the missile crisis as a failure of American nerve.

The subsequent Kennedy-Khrushchev deal fell like a bomb among the Americans opposed to Castro, the CIA warriors, and the Cuban exiles. It was another sell-out a thumping defeat. Rich Cuban exiles who had bought Cuban bonds and had seen them rise in price on the New York stock exchange, suddenly began to unload. Plans to return home — after Castro's defeat, which somehow was expected to be immediate — were dropped. Once again Kennedy had failed to pass the test of strength. What's more, he trusted Khrushchev, a Communist, to withdraw all the missiles from Cuba. This they did not believe.

Neither Khrushchev nor Castro, they were convinced, would ever live up to the agreement. In their view, the President

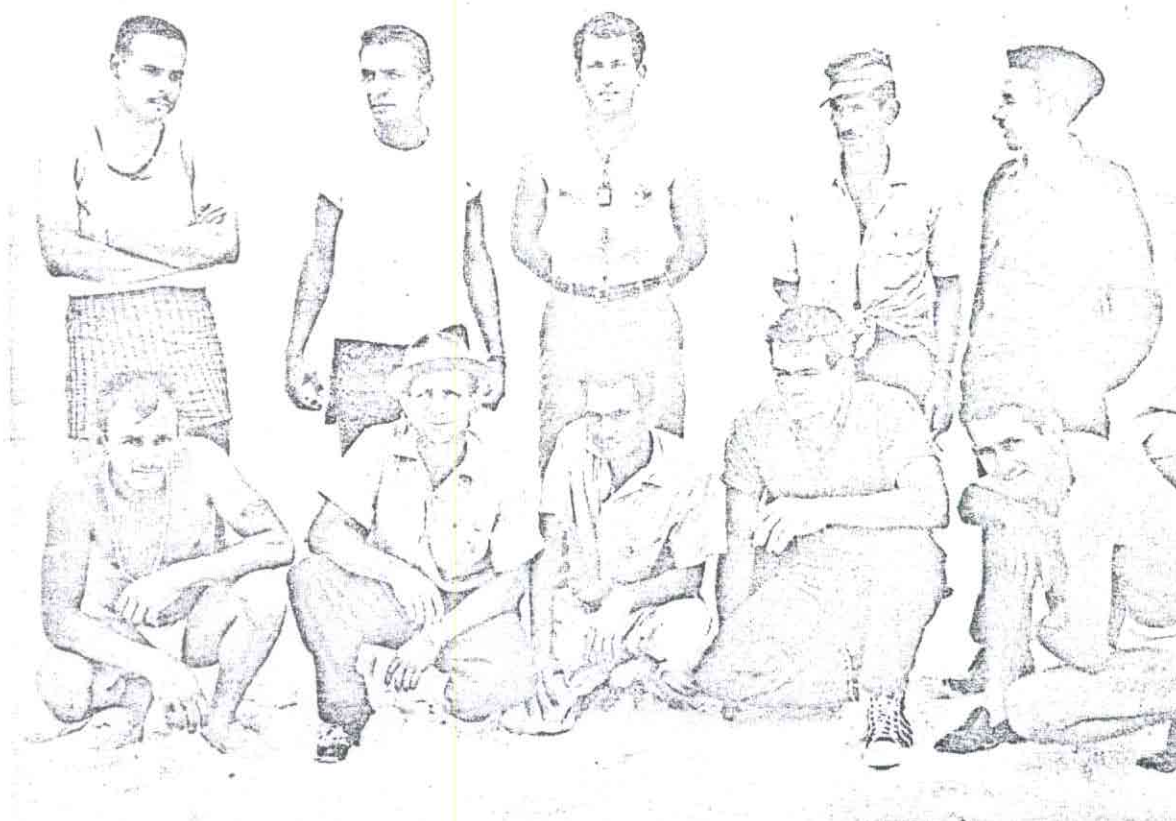
was not only a coward, but a fool to boot. Khrushchev, they firmly believed, hid a clutch of missiles in Cuba, and they set out to prove this was a fact.

What follows is the story of how the thought of hidden missiles became the father of a mission to Cuba which involved the CIA, its secret network of ships and planes, and such people as former U. S. ambassador William Pawley, a conservative Republican, James Sourwine, counsel to the Senate's Internal Security Committee, a Life Magazine regional editor, Life managing editor George P. Hunt, British free-lance Photographer Terry Spencer, John Martino, a minor Mafia figure, who had been a roulette wheel mechanic in Havana and jailed by Castro, and three U.S. military officers in the service of the CIA, known only by their noms-de-guerre — "Rip," "Mike", and "Ken."

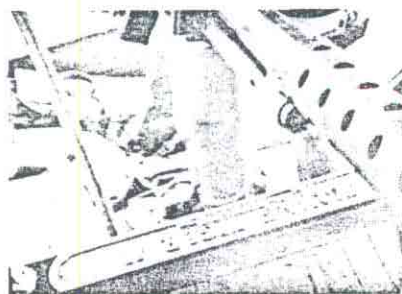
It was a plot to destroy President Kennedy politically, and the CIA played a major role. Without the CIA, in fact, the weird adventure could not have taken place. Without its agents, planes, ships and communications, "Operation Red Cross", the code name dreamed up by Life, which was anxious to publish the pictures and tell where the missiles were hidden in the words of Soviet defectors, could never have sailed toward Cuba.

Without CIA cooperation, this non-event which cost Cuban lives would have remained the dream of the kingpin of the action a fiesty Cuban exile named Eduardo Perez. His war name was "Bayo." He is probably dead now.

Like all cities by the sea, Miami gives off a strong odor of corruption which mingles with the heat of the sun, is wafted and perfumed by the prevailing northwesterly winds, and then dispersed. Miami is a womb of obsessions — with money, sex, gambling, and real estate claimed from the water. But its major



Above: "Operation Red Cross" strike team on atoll off southeast coast of Cuba. Standing, from left to right — Tomas Vaquero, Luis Jiménez, Denys Regal, Rolando Martínez and Rene Lomolru. Kneeling, from left to right — "Francisco", Luis Cantin, Eddie Bayo, Alfredo Mir and Duenas, first name unknown.



Far left: Bayo, foreground, and Denys Regal, on board the Flying Tiger II, examine WWII Finnish-made 20mm Lahti anti-tank gun. Capable of penetrating 2½ inches of armor at 500 meters with a 2130 grain projectile that zipped along at 2690 fps, the Lahti was favored by Cuban exile groups as it would play havoc with Castro patrol boats. To left of flag, note 22-foot launch being towed.

obsession is Cuba.

Miamians feel, or at least felt, that Cuba — the Cuba which had everything Miami has and then some — was an extension of Miami's soul, and that Miami was both the sovereign and mecca of Cuba and Cubans. It's a myth which has nothing to do with reality. But once Fidel Castro came to power, a portion of

Miami became in fact a Cuban city — the haven of thousands who had fled Castro, and the seat of the secret war against Castro.

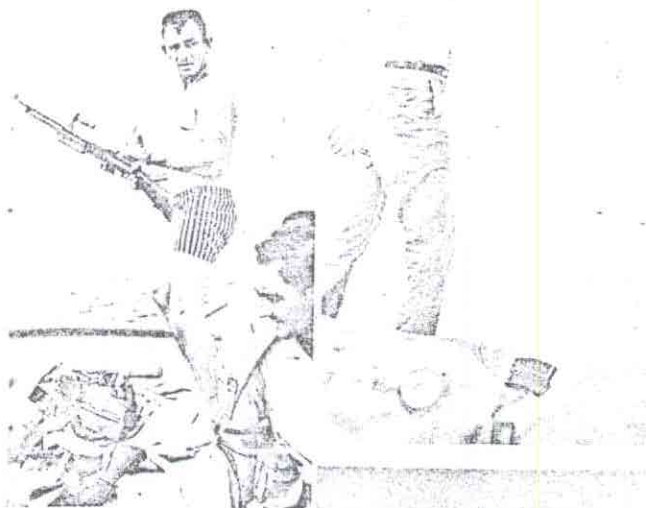
The fact that Castro had gone over to the Communist side, that he had defeated the Bay of Pigs invasion, that he had been on the verge of using the island as a

Center left: In editing Life photography Terry Spencer's negatives, CIA failed to recognize Flying Tiger II name plate attached to deck. Blowup of negative clearly shows name plate which is indistinguishable in photo to the left.

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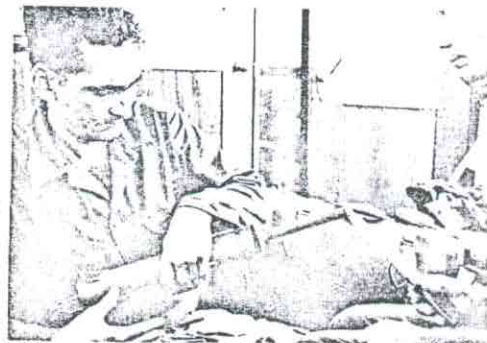


Below: "Francisco," standing, examines a Browning Automatic Rifle, while Bayo, lower right, adjusts web gear. Strike team was well-armed and equipped for the mission.

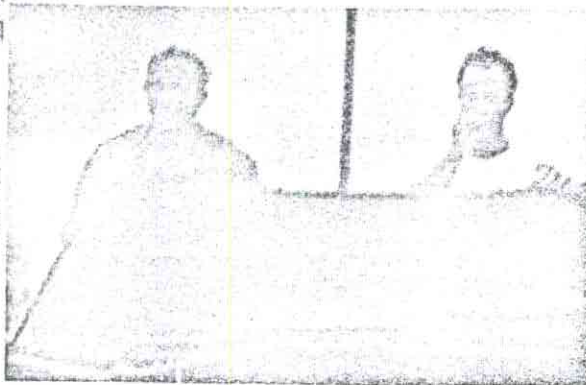


Left: CIA PBY-6A, operating under cover of Aircraft Ferry Co., Inc., 280 S.W. 34th St., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, flies over atoll, to insure all strike personnel are safe.

Below: Bayo, left, examines a U.S. .45 cal. M-3 submachine gun inside cabin of *Flying Tiger II*, prior to embarking for the Cuban coast.



Right: Blowup of 35mm negative reveals personnel who may be CIA agents, that accompanied Bayo and team.



Above: Tomas Vaquero, right, helps unknown strike team member adjust load bearing straps for PRC-10 radio, a standard issue item of the U.S. military during the '60's.

Below: Former Life photographer Terrance Spencer on board CIA PBY-6A that carried strike team to rendezvous with *Flying Tiger II*.



Above: One of last photos, taken with infrared film, of strike team as they load on 22-ft. launch and prepare to leave on mission of doom.

Left: Bayo takes aim with Belgian assault rifle on *Flying Tiger II*. Note attack launch in background.



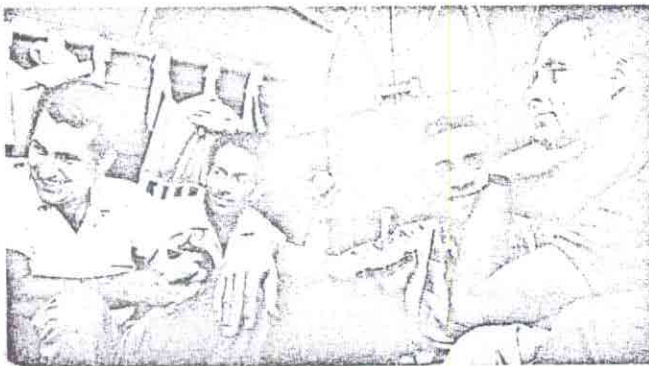


Left: John Martino, Mafia figure, served as the go-between for Bayo and Pawley. He died recently.

Right: Eddie Bayo, aka Perez, was hard-bitten, fearless. He claimed to have a guerrilla unit operating in Cuba.

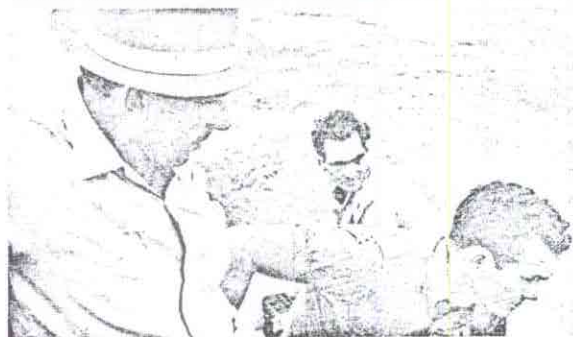


Below left: Members of strike team in CIA PBV-6A en route to rendezvous with *Flying Tiger II*.

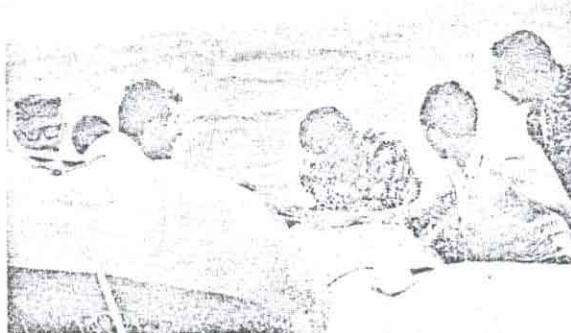


Left: Blowup of PBV identification numbers.

Below: Strike team personnel being towed to atoll from PBV.

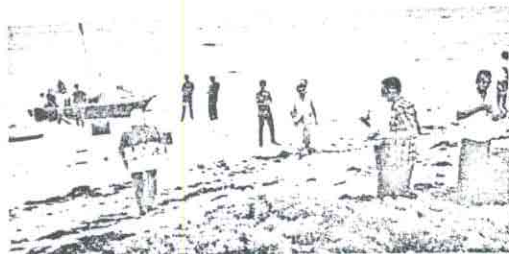


Above: Luis Cantin, Alfredo Mir and Bayo disembark PBV into rubber raft. Note PBV identification numbers on fuselage which are difficult to identify from negative or contact proof.



Below: Martino and Bayo with supplies and weapons on atoll. Deny Regals, center, holds Belgian F.N. assault rifle. In foreground, note M-2 carbine with paratrooper stock. Fate of strike team is still a mystery.

Below: This barren, unnamed atoll served as transfer point for personnel. *Flying Tiger II*, with CIA agents, Pawley, Life personnel, and Martino returned to this atoll awaiting word from Bayo. None came.





## "Did the Kennedys know about 'Operation Red Cross?'"

launching platform for Soviet missiles aimed at U.S. cities, turned Miami into a hive of conspiracy where plots were hatched in bars, swimming pools, boatyards, and hotel rooms. The climate of tension, fear and distrust of President Kennedy was such, that even the most outlandish plot could be sold to backers who wanted to embarrass — if not destroy — the President who had failed them.

In the spring of 1963, Eduardo Perez, known as Bayo to Cuban exiles, Mafia figures, FBI and CIA agents, began to show a letter he claimed he had received from a guerrilla unit operating in Cuba. The smuggled letter said the guerrillas were holding two Soviet army missile colonels who had defeated and wanted asylum in the U.S. The colonels — the letter stated in no uncertain terms — knew where Nikita Khrushchev, with Fidel Castro's connivance, had hidden missiles in violation of the agreement with President Kennedy.

Bayo was no ordinary exile. He had fought alongside Fidel Castro's brother, Raul, and had become his military aide. After turning against Castro, Bayo, who was the only living holder of the rebel army's highest military award, the Frank Pais Medal, equivalent to the Congressional Medal of Honor, went to work for the CIA. He reputedly engaged in anti-Castro operations out of Guantanamo Navy Base in Cuba, and later, when the CIA organized its massive Miami network, he became part of the hand-picked team of the Tejana III, the legendary gunrunning converted U.S. Navy sub-chaser, which was used to supply the Cuban underground before the Bay of Pigs. Bayo fought World War II in the U.S. Army, and was a naturalized U.S. citizen. He was hard-bitten and often bullied men working with him, but he had an air of self-possession and intense determination.

An American soldier-of-fortune pilot, Howard Davis, who had been active over the years in aiding Cuban and Haitian exile groups, stated that Bayo had worked for the CIA and operated out of Guantanamo Naval Base. Bayo didn't limit himself to fighting Castro's Communism in Cuba and the surrounding waters. In February, 1963, Bayo and another soldier-of-fortune set off a bomb at the front door of the Miami residence of a suspected Castro G-2 agent, which blew the front of the house away.

The letter from the underground, was, to put it simply, explosive; and Bayo tossed it out as bait to hook right-wing political enemies of John Kennedy in the Florida conservative establishment. But, he told Cuban exile friends who had tried to mount anti-Castro raids with him before and after the Bay of Pigs, "I want no part of the CIA."

What he had in mind was to find somebody rich enough to pay for weapons, equipment and a boat to go to

Cuba to exfiltrate, to use secret war terminology, the two assets and bring them to the U.S. Then, according to Bayo's scenario, the two colonels would expose the President of the United States as a fool, at best, and a liar at worst.

Like so many Americans and Cubans participating in the secret Caribbean war, Bayo was frustrated and had developed an intense hatred of Kennedy and his policies. He also mistrusted the CIA and the haughty professional U.S. military officers assigned to train and control Cuban raiders.

By early 1963, Bayo was bitter. His plans to mount an operation designed to topple Haiti's President Francois Duvalier, the hated "Papa Doc," was getting nowhere. Like many exiles, CIA strategists, and President Kennedy himself, Bayo thought that Haiti was the ideal base for attacks against Cuba, and "Papa Doc" an easy target.

In those early weeks of 1963, Bayo, told friends he had to go back to Cuba, because "My people are waiting for me." Bayo's friends included a group of Americans who were serving as self-appointed advisors to any Cuban or Haitian group that desired their talents.

Joseph C. Garman, a tall, lanky Kentuckian, who came to Miami immediately after the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion to "join up", and stayed on to become a free-lance military advisor to various exile groups, related that, "Bayo had separated from the original 'Commando L', one of the most daring and effective non-CIA Cuban exile groups and now had a small group of his own. He wanted to go to Cuba and make some hits and we wanted to go with him. Lynn Clark, a West Coast freelance photographer, was selling him on taking us along, not only because we knew what we were doing, but also so we could get photographs of the action, which would raise more money."

"Later", Garman continued, "Bayo told us that two Russian officers had defected in Cuba. They wanted political asylum. If they could be gotten out, it would result in a lot of publicity and money to get more guns and make bigger hits. We finally drifted away from him because he was always stalling — always supposed to leave and never did. We got our weapons back that we had stored with him and that was it."

Another long-time Miami soldier-of-fortune, Jerry Patrick Hemming, first met Bayo in early 1960. He and Davis introduced Bayo to a third American adventurer who had worked for the dictator Trujillo until the latter's violent demise. "John," who had lost his lucrative job upon Trujillo's death, was plotting with a group of Haitian exiles, to put together one of their periodic attempts to overthrow the atavistic dictator of Haiti, Francois Duvalier. Relizing that the Haitians involved were short on military training, not to mention

combat experience, "John" was for some type of commando bolster the eager but amateur

"Bayo met with 'John' sever and 'John' was impressed," E relates. "In fact, the two of them formal agreement in 'John's' liv which stated that in return for overthrow Duvalier, the new regime would grant the Cuban from which they could operate Castro."

"The Haitians were supporti all the way," Jerry continued were paying for the fiberglassir boat, provided money for weapon whole bit. 'John' admitted to me was impressed with Bayo. He ha of a strike force and a hell of a r

While the Haitian plot sputtere a new factor crept into the picture winter of 1963 two Miami-based ; of fortune who had seen Bayo' journeyed to New York to meet wealthy New York CPA and fir Theodore Racoosin who alleged high contacts in the Kennet ministration. One was Howard D pilot who had flown for the anti-rebels and later aided anti-elements and a Swede whose fam close to the New York CPA. The p of the meeting was to interest R in supporting and perhaps f Bayo's projected operation or : someone who would.

Davis' recollection of Raco subsequent involvement is worth q at length:

"We discussed Bayo's plan Racoosin and he came down to Miam week. When he arrived, he said he high official in the Kennedy adminis interested in getting the Russian technicians out of Cuba. He wou identify who it was. He met with Ba at that time was satisfied that ther indeed such technicians that had de,

Racoosin returned to New York a didn't hear from him for a week. Tl called and told me that they (his conu the administration) were trying to out Bayo's story; that no intelli reports were available that would sa the story.

Bayo had claimed that he had men mountains, a group, a column in O province; that somehow, these R missile technicians had defected and in the mountains with his men. All was waiting for was transportation weapons to go in and bring them o

Now comes the sticky part. Bayo sai Russians didn't trust the CIA. He ins on being given a boat, weapons support, so that he could go in and vince the defectors to meet with Ame intelligence agents. Racoosin sugg that an intelligence agent accom Bayo to Cuba, to meet with the Russ Bayo refused, restating that the Rus did not trust the Americans. He insiste should go alone.



## "What role did the Mafia play in the plot?"

As I recall, Racoosin's contacts in the administration were wary of Bayo and his story, thinking it could have been some scheme to sucker in a U.S. intelligence agent, so he could be captured and the event publicized. They also felt that he may have been making the story up, to simply obtain arms. Racoosin said his contacts just weren't convinced.

I also received a call to go to Palm Beach and meet with a man very close to Kennedy. I don't remember his name. He was interested in Bayo's story and was enthusiastic about getting the Russians out. He also checked with Washington and then had second thoughts.

Meanwhile, Racoosin called me and said he had been contacted by someone in the White House, who had authorized him to organize meetings of Cuban exile leaders in order to obtain information on the CIA's Cuba operations; that Kennedy was distrustful of the CIA because he felt he was receiving bad information."

Davis stated that Racoosin was a personal friend of the head of Radio Free Europe who was working with him on the Bayo project.

Subsequently, Davis contacted several Cuban exile leaders and other interested parties who met with Racoosin in the conference room adjoining the office of Miami News editor Bill Baggs.

"The meeting was attended by myself, Bill Baggs, and Racoosin," Jerry Hemming recalls, "as well as all the action people — Tony Questa, Mario Fontela, Larry LaBorde, Ramon Font, Eddie Bayo, and the boys from the DRE. They were giving the scoop on all the CIA screw ups." Questa and Font were leaders of the independent Cuban exile group, "Commando L." Mario Fontela was the head of the FORDC, an exile anti-Castro labor movement; Larry LaBorde, an American, was the captain of the Tejana III, the DRE was the anti-Castro student organization. Ironically, both the FORDC and the DRE were being funded by the CIA, although both organizations resented the CIA's restrictions on their operational activities. Also at the meeting was John Martino, a shadowy mafia figure, who had been released from a Castro prison along with the Bay of Pigs veterans, only three months before.

"Another meeting was held in the conference room of Jack Gore, editor of the Fort Lauderdale News, Hemming continued. "This meeting was attended by Gore, Congressman Kramer, John Martino, Frank Fiorini, Jerry Buchanan, Mrs. John Perry, Howard Davis, Racoosin, myself and the Cubans."

Frank Fiorini, now known as Frank

Sturgis, later gained notoriety as one of the Watergate Five. Fiorini had a long history of involvement with Cuban exile activities from the time that he joined Castro in the mountains in 1958. Jerry Buchanan was a local newspaper reporter, and Mrs. Perry owned several newspapers in the South.

"The meeting was primarily concerned with how anti-Castro guerrillas had been sold out before the Bay of Pigs," Hemming recollected.

After the formal aspect of the meeting was concluded, the group broke up into small conversational groups. One of the most interesting topics of conversation was Bayo's letter from the Russian defectors.

About this time, Martino contacted conservative author Nathaniel Wye, who had written *Red Star Over Cuba*, describing the communist infiltration and seizure of Cuba, and interested him in Bayo's story. They, in turn, contacted the Regional Editor for Life, located in Miami and William D. Pawley, for support.

William D. Pawley had long been a man to reckon with.


He organized and became President of Compania Nacional Cubana de Aviacion Curtiss, Havana, Cuba, in 1928, which he then sold to Pan American in 1932. Between 1934 and 1938, he built three aircraft factories for the Chinese government and in 1940, organized the legendary Flying Tigers. He later became President of the Hindustan Aircraft Manufacturing Company in Bangalore, India and built India's first ammosulfate plant in Travancore.

He was appointed American Ambassador to Peru in 1945, and Brazil in 1946. Subsequently, he served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of State in 1951, Special Assistant to Secretary of Defense, 1951-52, and Special Assistant, Department of State, in 1954. In 1954, he was involved in the overthrow of the communist government of Guatemala. He was also a delegate to the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security in Petropolis, Brazil, and to the Ninth International Conference of American States in Bogota, Colombia.

He holds the U.S. Medal for Merit, the Air Medal of Peru, the Grand Cross of the Cruzeiro do Sul of Brazil, the Orden Del Merito de Duarte, Sanchez Y Mella and Gran Cruz of the Dominican Republic, the Grand Cross of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes of Cuba, and the Order of the Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, from the Republic of China.


In pre-Castro Cuba, Pawley owned the Havana bus system, as well as sugar mills. He also, at one time, owned the bus lines in the metropolitan area of Miami.

On December 9, 1958, Pawley went to Cuba as a secret emissary from Washington, in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade Batista to establish a junta,



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relinquish his power and leave Cuba altogether. The powers-that-were in Washington hoped this would force Castro into the political arena, as a candidate for election.

Subsequently, Pawley became an unofficial spokesman for the old-line Cuban conservatives. He had several conferences with President Eisenhower, and finally, Eisenhower was convinced that the exiled Cubans should be armed and assisted in overthrowing Castro. Pawley then collaborated with the CIA and Allen Dulles in recruiting anti-Castro Cubans from the refugees arriving in Miami.

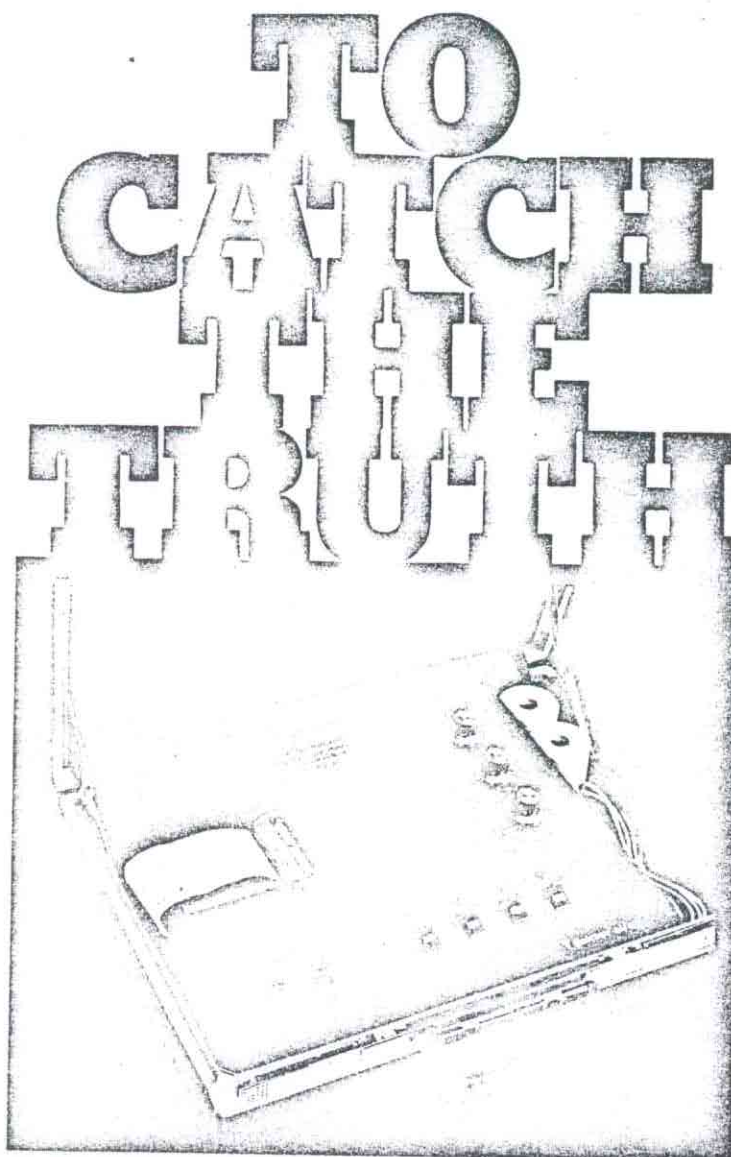
A year after the Bay of Pigs disaster, Pawley learned that two of his close Cuban friends were starving to death in a Castro prison. He knew that Castro desperately needed money and initiated efforts to purchase their release. Working through his friend, Livingston Merchant, U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Pawley negotiated the freedom of three prisoners, putting up \$25,000 of his own money to secure the release of Nester Williams, a Cuban black. After their release, in July 1962, Pawley remained involved in negotiating for release of 1,113 remaining prisoners, until they were exchanged for \$50 million-worth of medical supplies.

"I was always ashamed that we had to bargain for those men," Pawley told the press, "rather than go there and secure their release by force, as we easily could have done."

Though obviously interested in events in Cuba and staunchly opposing the Red regime in Cuba, to the best of our knowledge, it appears that "Operation Red Cross" was the only activist Cuban exile effort that he directly participated in.

Subsequently, Life Managing Editor George P. Hunt, authorized the Life Regional Editor, to give Bayo \$15,000 for the purchase of the necessary equipment, weapons and supplies. Concurrently, the CIA, at least at the lower levels, was brought into the plot. A deal was made between Life and the CIA, that for providing the operational funds, Life would receive an exclusive if the operation were successful. If it were not, Life agreed not to publish anything concerning the operation.

Precisely why it was necessary for Life to ante up the \$15,000, when the CIA, with its unlimited, unvouchered funds, ships, planes and agents, was involved, is unclear. Perhaps the Agency wanted to use Life Magazine as a cutout, in case the reaction to the Russian defectors' revelations wasn't quite what was suspected, e.g., they turned out to be self-seekers who defected with no more than a cock and bull story, or to disassociate the Agency from revelations that would be highly embarrassing to JFK, and with which it would not want to be directly connected.



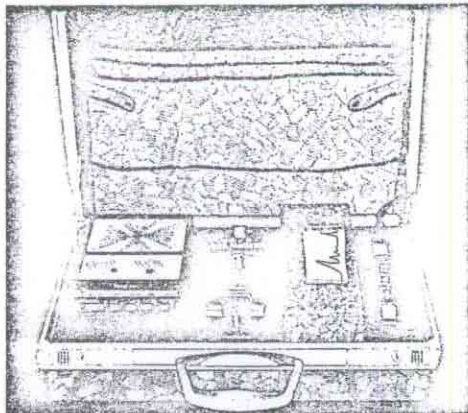
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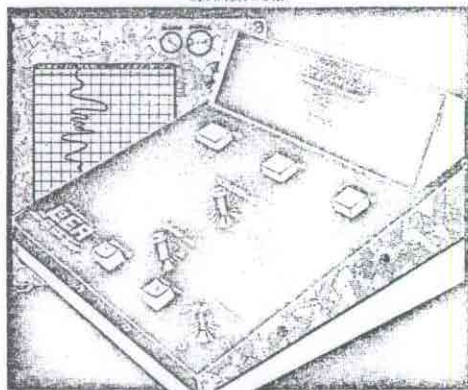




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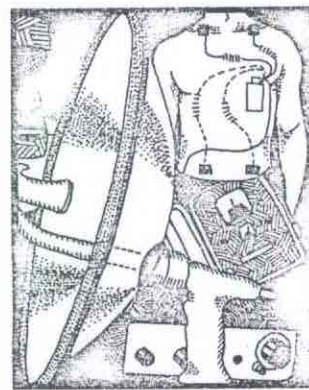
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in the background, and once again, playing king-maker? Or king-destroyer?

At this point, it is appropriate to consider the possibilities as to who knew what and why Operation Red Cross developed as it did:

1. Kennedy was aware of the pending operation and was monitoring it;

2. Kennedy, aware of the plot through the efforts of Racoosin, decided to hold off on pursuing the plot, and was unaware that low-level CIA agents, Pawley, Bayo and crew were pushing ahead with the operation;

3. Important figures in the Kennedy administration were monitoring and or supporting the Bayo-Pawley operation, unbeknown to Kennedy;

4. "Operation Red Cross" was organized and launched by relatively low-level CIA echelons, who could allocate the necessary agents, planes and ships, due to their operational flexibility, without the knowledge of either the Kennedys or CIA headquarters in Langley;

5. An amusing possibility is that Kennedy was aware of the plot; that he knew Bayo's letter was phoney; that he allowed "Operation Red Cross" to proceed as he knew that Bayo was going to "sting" Luce and Life for \$15,000, while he laughed up his sleeve.

Bayo, meanwhile, was hedging his bet, by continuing to work with the Haitians. He was in Jersey City purchasing weapons for the proposed Haitian invasion, when Martino called and told him to return to Miami immediately — that his ticket was already at the airport.

Martino, with the assistance of Weyl, had found underwriters for Bayo — Life and Pawley. It didn't take much to get Bayo to drop the Haitians. He was as disgusted and fed up with their dallying and indecision, as Joe Graman and the American soldiers-of-fortune were with him.

Initially, Bayo insisted that he be provided with a boat. When this was vetoed, Pawley volunteered his own pleasure yacht, the Flying Tiger II, which he kept anchored behind his luxurious home in Miami.

The weapons to be used on the operation consisted of U.S. M-3 sub-machine guns, FN FAL assault rifles, M-2 carbines and Browning automatic rifles. One individual who went along on the Flying Tiger claimed that the weapons were obtained from the CIA; another source claims that they were commercially purchased by either CIA agents or individuals who had been CIA agents, and who had also been former employees of Pawley in Cuba. In any case, the weapons were top quality and in sufficient quantity. Other equipment for the ten man team included U.S. Army PRC-10 and PRC-5 radios, which, at the time, were not available on the civilian market, an infrared beacon set, new clothing, boots, web gear and a small

Even more intriguing is the ultimate goal of the Life hierarchy. Certainly, the Life editors must have been aware of the impact that such revelations would have had on the Kennedy administration. And Life, itself, had expressed concern over the continuing reports of missiles remaining in Cuba.

For instance, in the February 22, 1963 issue of Life, an editorial entitled "The Most Critical Area in the World," noted that, "... the hardening Soviet military establishment in Cuba is a backyard menace to the U.S., and will remain so until Kennedy finds a way to dismantle it."

"The reason for the undiminished uneasiness about Cuba is two-fold. First, the facts disclosed by McNamara's aerial photography and CIA intelligence are impressive, but by nature, no con-

clusive. Caves cannot be seen into, nor ships' holds... 'Absolute assurance on these matters,' as CIA chief John McCone said himself, 'could only come from continuing, penetrating on-site inspection' (which Castro forbids). Facts found by other means are inevitably subject to a wide margin of interpretative error. Thence, the second ground for uneasiness: that the top interpreters may be over-committed to the view that Khrushchev would not try to fool us again about what he's got in Cuba... The Soviets' 'defensive' weapons are offensive against the Cuban people's hope of liberty, and therefore, against the political security of the whole hemisphere."

Did the knowledge and support of this plot stop with Life Managing Editor George P. Hunt? Or was Henry R. Luce



## "Why did Pawley use his yacht on a CIA mission?"

boat that was to take them from the Flying Tiger to the Cuban coast. This equipment cost nearly \$15,000. (Bayo purchased the weapons with the money he received from Life.)

When finalized, "Operation Red Cross" called for Pawley's Flying Tiger II, manned by Pawley, his Cuban crew and three CIA agents, with noms de guerre of "Rip," "Mike," and "Ken," to sail for a rendezvous point off the southeast coast of Cuba, a small barren atoll. A CIA PBY-6A was to carry Bayo, his team, the Life Regional Editor and Terrance Spencer, a former Spitfire pilot, turned freelance photographer, and then disembark them near an atoll in rubber rafts. The aircraft would be employed to minimize the amount of time that the Cubans and Martino would have to spend on the Flying Tiger II, thus reducing the possibility of treachery. They would then link up with and transfer to, the Flying Tiger II, which in turn, would carry them to their departure point near the Cuban coast. The strike team would travel the remaining distance in a 22-foot launch that had been towed from Miami by Pawley's yacht. Bayo would locate the Russian defectors, rendezvous with the Flying Tiger II at sea, and all personnel would then return to the U.S.

Precisely how the defectors were to be utilized is still cloudy. We do know that Life had retained a Russian linguist to interrogate the defectors somewhere along the line; that, at some point the defectors were to be delivered to James Sourwine, Chief Consul to the U.S. Senate Internal Security Committee, for interrogation.

We do not yet know how the results of the interrogation were to be used.

The PBY, operated by the CIA, under cover of a legitimate aircraft ferry firm, surprisingly enough named Aircraft Ferry Company, Inc., then located at 280 S.W. 34th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and flown by a Navy pilot, took off from Miami International Airport, around midnight on June 7, 1963, and some eight hours later, landed near the designated atoll. Spencer recalls that en route, all the passengers were locked in the center compartment. Upon landing, they loaded into rubber rafts and pushed off for the atoll.

There are two versions of what followed. Sometime after the operation in 1963, the Life editor who accompanied the operation claimed that, as the Flying Tiger II had become lost, the CIA raider ship, Rex, was ordered to the rendezvous, to meet the two rafts. One of the Rex's 22-foot launches, normally used to carry CIA Cuban exile commando teams, agents and supplies, to and from the Rex and the Cuban coast, was lowered and met the rafts. A squall swept in, and as a storm threatened, the launch

began to tow both rubber boats. One began to lose air and all personnel were transferred to the launch. Dangerously overcrowded, the launch rode out the storm and then landed the personnel on the atoll, where they waited until the Flying Tiger II arrived.

Terry Spencer, however, states that the Rex was not on the scene, but that the rubber boats were towed to the atoll by the Flying Tiger II launch.

Once again, we have two versions of what happened on the Flying Tiger II.

The Life Regional Editor had also stated, that the three CIA agents had kept their submachine guns trained on the Cubans and Martino, the entire time that they were on the Flying Tiger II, as they did not trust them.

Spencer again contradicts this account, stating that "The CIA agents and the Cubans were quite friendly."

The Life Editor, when recently questioned by Robert K. Brown about these inconsistencies was uncooperative, as the following conversation indicates: Brown: We are finally publishing the Bayo-Pawley story.

Life Editor: The "what" story?

Brown: The Bayo-Pawley story.

Life Editor: Oh, Yeah? OK.

Brown: I've been working with Mike on it. He requested my not using your name. I assume you don't want me to, so I won't.

Life Editor: Yeah, I'd just as soon you didn't use my name.

continued on page 60

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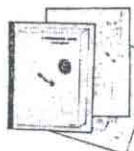
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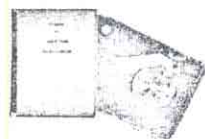
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continued from page 21

Brown: I obtained the pictures from Terry Spencer, which I'm using to supplement the article. I want to clarify a few points. The main one being just what part the Rex played in the operation.

Life Editor: Bob, look, uh... if Spencer wants to break my deal, he can do it. I can't go along with this. And therefore, I don't want to sound unfriendly, but I can't cooperate with you.

Brown: OK.

Life Editor: I made a deal not to publish those pictures if we didn't find those guys again, and those pictures don't belong to Spencer. Therefore, he doesn't have any right to give them to you. If he gave them to you, he can get his ass burned. They belong to Time, Inc., still, and somebody may get sued, so that's all I really want to tell you about it. I think that you're making a mistake.

Brown: OK.

Life Editor: Sorry, Bob, I don't like to

sound like that... you can come by Washington and talk about anything else, but that one... and not under those circumstances.

Brown: OK. I wanted to pursue every lead and come up with as accurate a presentation as possible.

Life Editor: I understand that, but to cooperate with something that I can't agree with is wrong.

In any case, all personnel boarded the Flying Tiger II and proceeded to the Cuban coast. In the middle of the night of June 9th, several hundred meters from the Cuban coast, Bayo and his nine men piled into a 22-foot Betram-hulled speedboat powered by two inboard-outboard engines, that had been towed behind the Flying Tiger II from Miami.

Spencer shot a full roll of infrared film as the strike team loaded their gear and made their final preparations. In a few minutes, they sped off into the gloom never to be heard from again.

Spencer recalls, "Other than having to dodge a Cuban gunboat, we had no excitement. We then returned to an atoll and waited for the return of our boys. Finally, on June 12th, it was decided to return to Miami without them."

The CIA PBY flew to the atoll and picked up Spencer, the Life editor, Martino and some of the CIA agents at 2 A.M. on the 13th and flew back to Miami.

"When we arrived back at Miami airport," Spencer recalls, "no one checked my film bag. We checked into the Key Biscayne Hotel and sacked out. After I woke up, I called the Life editor and asked what he wanted me to do with all this film. He laughed a little bit and rang up the CIA in Miami and asked them if they wanted the film. Apparently, they were a bit embarrassed and sent a car over to pick it up. I don't know what happened to it after that, until it was returned to me in England about a year later."

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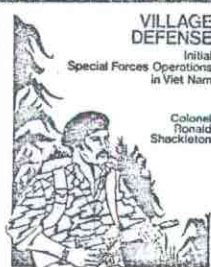


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Meanwhile, Pawley arranged for the PBY to search for signs of Bayo's party. For several days, the PBY attempted to establish radio contact with the group — but no luck. Nothing was ever found — no boat, no debris, no life jackets, no bodies.

There are a variety of theories as to what happened to Bayo and his team. One theory is that they made it to shore and were eventually wiped out by either Castro's militia or a Russian unit. Others believe that they were let off too far from shore, that they ran into heavy seas and sank with all hands.

Eddie Baez, a leader of "Commando L," the exile group that sank the Russian freighter *Baku* in March of 1963, believed the latter. He blamed the skipper of the launch, characterizing him as incompetent. Baez maintained that if Bayo and his team had been killed in a firefight, some word would have seeped out. Certainly, reports would have filtered back if any of Bayo's team had managed to exist in Cuba for any length of time.

Finally, in a brief interview on October 15th of this year, Pawley admitted to a SOF investigator that he participated in "Operation Red Cross," but was surprised to find out that we were publishing an account of the affair. He stated that, "They should get the information from me . . . or they are going to have a very inaccurate book."

Apparently, he was quite confident that his involvement would never reach the public eye, as he said, "I have a letter from *Life* magazine — they own the pictures — that no pictures would be released, and no article written without my consent! I've got that in writing! . . . It's sort of a top secret deal!"

When queried as to what happened to Bayo's commando team, Pawley replied, "We were never able to trace the men. I had a flying boat (the CIA PBY-6A) over the area for five days looking for them. I think they were captured, killed or their boat sank."

Pawley seems to lean toward the latter theory, as he pointed out, "I put them into a smaller boat that I'd brought (Towed behind the *Flying Tiger II* from Miami). The small boat had ten men in it. It shouldn't have had ten men with all the guns and ammunition and everything else."

Asked if he really thought that Bayo could produce the two Russians, Pawley stated, "We thought, or frankly knew, that it was one of those one-in-a-thousand chances — that there was anything to it. For a while, I thought that these men were Castroites, trying to capture us. But we took precautions against that! They refused to take the two rubber boats that I had there, so if they had problems with their boat, they probably sank like a rock. If they got ashore, they may have been killed off by Castro's people — or they may have joined Castro's people and still be down there, living happily!"

If Bayo and company did indeed make it to shore, and were either captured or killed, the question is, why did Fidel not publicize the event? It was his custom to conduct a TV special, and rave about American imperialism, whenever CIA agents or those he wished to portray as CIA agents, were apprehended. Perhaps, if in fact, there were Russian defectors in the mountains, Bayo's people were eliminated and the whole affair was hushed up, to eliminate any embarrassment that would have occurred from having to admit that such defectors existed.

And there are many who question Bayo's true motives. Some observers believe that he may have been plotting the assassination of Castro, or that he simply created the whole defector story out of whole cloth, to obtain enough equipment and weapons to return to Cuba, to conduct guerrilla operations against Castro.

Many of the activist Cuban exiles, who were aware of Bayo's claims, were skeptical. "Alpha 66," another militant exile group, refused to support Bayo. Tony Questa, another leader of "Commando L," who is presently in a Cuban prison, considered the letter, "a farce."

After a few weeks, the heirs of Bayo and his team, contacted Life, in an attempt to obtain the same benefits paid those CIA agents who were killed — a lump sum or monthly payments of \$10,000. They were told to contact the CIA, that Life would not pay them. They were not heard from again and it is unknown whether they did receive any CIA death benefits, although they were certainly entitled to them.

Efforts to shed additional light on "Operation Red Cross," by contacting the participants who returned, have been relatively unproductive. When interviewed in 1967, John Martino refused comment, as he was " . . . afraid of something." He died in August of this year. Efforts to locate the heirs or the Cubans that crewed on the *Flying Tiger II*, have been fruitless. The *Life* Regional Editor had clammed up, as was noted earlier.

Attempts to contact Pawley by phone in 1970 were unsuccessful. His secretary stated that he had no knowledge of any "Eddie Bayo" and that he refused to discuss the subject. A call to his office after his brief phone interview with the SOF investigator brought no results even though we left a message with his secretary that we were going to publish this article and forwarded copies of Terry Spencer's photographs.

We have not been able to contact either George Hunt or Racoonin to get their version of the story.

As we go to press, another bizarre explanation of the fate of Bayo and his men came to light. During our efforts to identify the individuals in Spencer's photographs, we located a Cuban exile

who knew Bayo's second-in-command, who had missed going on the mission due to an injury received in a tractor accident. This Cuban exile, who later married Bayo's widow, and then divorced her, told our contact that he had been told by Cubans who had crewed on the *Flying Tiger II* during Operation Red Cross, that Bayo and his men had been killed when they and their launch had been hit by a round from a 57mm recoilless rifle. Our contact was unclear as to whether the recoilless rifle had been fired from Pawley's yacht or another ship — whether it was done on purpose or was a mistake. In any case, he claims that the man who fired the weapon was killed shortly after he returned to Miami — that the *Flying Tiger II*'s crew and Bayo's second-in-command are fearful of detailing precisely what happened.

After 12 years, the mysteries surrounding Operation Red Cross still stand. Who has the answers? Are there still missiles in Cuba?



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