

Probably the most celebrated case of the attempted use of psychiatric "treatment" to intimidate, silence, or discredit a trouble maker involved retired General Edwin Walker. He was arrested by Federal marshals in Jackson, Mississippi, during the "Cie Miss" integration crisis. Allegedly, he was inciting the students to riot. Rather than being indicted, he was, on orders of the Attorney General, placed on a plane and flown to the Federal mental hospital at Springfield, Missouri. ^{His} This peregrination received much publicity. Although he was soon released on a writ of habeas corpus, the general impression had been sown that he was "nuts."

The military frequently uses psychiatric treatment as a means to discipline non-conformists. A typical case involved a Navy Commander who volunteered information about the Tonkin Gulf incident to Senator William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was "hospitalized" for four weeks, found fit, then restored to duty. He said, however, that he fully expected the Navy ultimately to take reprisals against him.

A much more unusual case involved another Navy Commander who sought me out while I served as Chief Counsel to a Senate investigating committee. He had been "hospitalized" earlier to seal his lips with respect to an incident which he considered of great historical significance. Although he was on active duty with

the Office of Naval Intelligence at the time, he feared another "hospitalization" or, as he put it, "worse." In future negotiations, the Commander became known ^{to us} as Uncle Charlie. So, let's call him that here.

Here is his story.

Uncle Charlie had spent most of his adult life in Naval Intelligence. Immediately after the Bay of Pigs he was summoned to Washington for a ^{very hush hush} super-secret project: The assassination of Fidel & Raul Castro.

According to Uncle Charlie, after the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy placed personal responsibility for Cuban relations in the hands of his brother, the Attorney General. He was to work with former Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor, Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Arleigh Burke, and CIA Director Allen Dulles.

This RFK Committee had several meetings to discuss possible ways of countering Castro. As another military venture seemed out of the question for the foreseeable future, they considered alternative plans. One of these was the assassination of the Cuban leaders. And Uncle Charlie was brought to Washington to head up this project.

The idea was to recruit Cuban gunmen, transport them to the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo, Cuba, arm and train them, and send them outside the base to attempt to shoot the Castros.

There were on the base at Guantanamo at that time a large number of Cubans who had sought asylum from Castro. A number of these were recruited by Uncle Charlie for his project. One, whom we shall call "Pepé" because he is still alive and in Miami, was already living on the Navy Base. He was selected to make an attempt on the life of Raul Castro.

The chief rifleman, who was selected as the assassin of Fidel, was Alonzo Gonzalez Lasada, a well known Episcopal clergyman from Santiago, Cuba. He was recruited (with others) from among the Cuban refugees in Miami. According to Uncle Charlie, Gonzalez was U.S. educated. In addition, he was alleged to be one of the best riflemen in Cuba; in fact, his absolute fascination with guns had always been considered his only weak point as a clergyman. To top everything else, Gonzalez had been a "lieutenant" in Fidel Castro's "Army" in the "early days." After Fidel came to power, Gonzalez allegedly broke with him and became violently anti-Castro. He seemed perfect and was signed on by Uncle Charlie.

The training of the small unit proceeded at the Guantanamo Base. However, it soon became apparent that there was a double

agent in the unit; all of their activities and actions were being "telegraphed" to the Cuban forces outside the base.

Uncle Charlie suspected Gonzalez was the leak but had no proof. In any event, he sent word to Washington, using a special code, that there should be a delay until the double agent could be identified. The reaction to this communique was instant and wholly unexpected: Uncle Charlie was peremptorily relieved of command of the special unit, packed off via the first plane to the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia, and incarcerated in the psychiatric ward. Six weeks later, he was released back to duty as a Naval Intelligence Officer and was so serving six years later when he brought the story to us in Washington. He had no explanation of what triggered his hasty departure from Guantanamo. However, he was certain that his stay in the Philadelphia hospital's psychiatric ward was designed to cast doubt on his credibility if and when he ever decided to tell about his Cuban ventures, despite the fact that the hospital could find nothing wrong with him and restored him to active duty.

In fact, I had some doubts as to his credibility and said so. I also expressed curiosity about why he was attempting to make his story known. On the latter point, he said that he dreaded the prospect of Robert Kennedy being elected President. Although he, Uncle Charlie, had participated in the plot to kill the Castros, on reflection he thought it was a terrible thing, especially since

It had been approved by RFK who was then Attorney General. He also said that Fidel doubtless knew of the plot, and that this might have had something to do with President Kennedy's murder.

Was the story true? Was Uncle Charlie, like the Navy Commander in the Tonkin Gulf case, put in the psychiatric ward merely to silence him?

We thought we would check.

"Pepo" was located in Miami and interviewed. Naturally, he was terrified, but he did verify Uncle Charlie's story.

We located the following obscure item in a Miami newspaper of April 7, 1966:

"Miami (AP) -- Cuban exiles reported that an episcopal minister, the Rev. Alonzo Gonzalez, was executed by a firing squad in Cuba.

"He landed in a small plane near the American Guantanamo Naval Base in Oriente Province and was immediately arrested by Fidel Castro forces," a spokesman for the Union of Municipalities in Exile said.

"After six months in prison, he was shot February 19 at the wall in La Cabana Prison in Havana."

However, we ^{also} found another report that he had been shot by Castro forces in 1964. Therefore, it is not certain if he is dead or alive today.

Checking Gonzalez's background was very easy. He was educated in the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va. He was a brilliant student, well remembered by the faculty there. Equally substantiated was his reputation as an expert rifleman, Fidel sympathizer, and, ultimately, a recruit of U.S. intelligence.

Uncle Charlie's story checked out at each point. But what was he to do with it? At the time, Robert Kennedy was a powerful U.S. Senator and a possible contender for the Democratic nomination to the Presidency in 1968. Uncle Charlie was advised to keep quiet and await the unfolding of political events. Otherwise, he would probably wind up back in a psychiatric ward even though he could "prove" his story. He agreed.

Needless to say, Lyndon Johnson's announcement of retirement and RFK's race for the Democratic nomination greatly agitated Uncle Charlie. He was again advised to remain silent, and he did so. One would have thought that with the assassination of RFK, Uncle Charlie would have buried his story forever.

Not Uncle Charlie! He insisted that the U.S. plots to assassinate the Castro's were a part of history that should be

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known by the American public, and the public elsewhere. He felt that possibly there should be a considerable delay in making the story public, but he wanted to assure its publicity at some certain date. To achieve this, he waited until the Nixon administration took office and then sought a brief meeting with the new Secretary of the Navy.

What happened? You guessed it!! Back to the psychiatric ward for a few weeks.... this time in Bethesda (Maryland) Naval Hospital. Uncle Charlie was again found fit and returned to active duty, but once again silenced.

Now, Uncle Charlie has retired from the Navy. He still wants his story told. It is told here at his request because it so well illustrates the government technique of incarcerating persons in psychiatric wards to silence them and to discredit them.
~~Generally, it is effective.~~

I think this comes from
a chapter of a book Bud
wrote.

JL*As ~~was~~ soon as I looked at the trash beginning with General Walker and ending with "Uncle Charlie" I remembered it and the dead giveaway on who wrote it. In brief, as you may have decided on your own it is unreasonable, illogical and unfactual. It is also inherently implausible in that no hired hands would be in an assassination deals with the Attorney General. Why did they need a navy officer for this with all the practised pros kicking around? Or select anti-Castros known as such wifely for the shooters? All these stoires are crazy so even if the institutionalization is sued to discredit, how does that crazt stories not crazy? What Walker did was worse than crazy. You may not agree with sending him to Springfield but a later defense could have made much of the failure. How rational is an alleged plot to kill Castro with a well-known anti activist taking off from a small plane in Guantanamo and landing where he would get caught. To off Castro yet! That cat is possibly alive on the sole basis of two different dates for his execution. But he is alleged to have done the deed he did, being really crazy, after there was no doubt about Kennedy policy. The real question of rationality is Bud's in giving any of this a second thought when there was so much else to do. But maybe we are lucky. He hurt nothing with this. Count blessings. There are few enough! I don't think you want more if anything. I recalled tjis and read parts only because I'm too tired for serious work. Ugh! HW 9/30/75