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EXCLUSIVE

THE BAYO-PAW AFFAIR

A Plot To Desti And Invade C

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P-Acoca, Miguel
P-Brown, Robert K.
CIA4 Cuba
Kennedy, John F.
Pawley, William D.
SOCY.01.1 Time (Life)
P-Hendrix, Hal
Keating, Kenneth
Perez, Eduardo (alias Bayo)
CI.44.01 Operation Red-Cross
(orig under Acoca)

By Miguel Acoca and Robert

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

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.

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 observor 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 resesarch clarified some aspects of the story while raising even more questions that are yet unanswered. A Major Joup... Spencer, the Life photographer who accompanied the Bayo-Pawley operation,

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 Kenndy was marching to a different drum. He not only refused to confirm the present 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

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