

Robert Morrow: Reluctant Subversive

Robert Morrow lived in Baltimore and worked as a project engineer for Martin Aircraft Company. Martin's primary customer was the US Defense Department, and most of Martin's revenue derived from DOD contracts for Air Force and Navy projects. Martin also was doing work for the new National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The projects were varied, but they all had a common characteristic: stringent confidentiality and security requirements. They were pilot programs, requiring first that the advanced concepts or theoretical ideas had to be worked out on paper. Morrow was one of the engineers at Martin who would pick up from there, creating the hardware and making it work according to established parameters and specs.

In the process, Morrow built up a reputation as a creative, pragmatic engineer who didn't shy away from challenging projects. He also, as much as possible, avoided bureaucracy and corporate work environment, preferring to work in his home-based laboratory, where he spent most of his working time. But eventually, that led to a parting of the ways. In 1958, he established himself in Washington, DC, as an engineering consultant.

Another former Martin employee, Dr Stan Clark, an expert in radiation effects, hired Morrow to help on a top-secret assignment for an unknown government agency. Morrow didn't know it yet, but that's when he began working for CIA. The assignment was to develop a means to render an enemy population helpless, but very much alive. It must cause minimal physical damage to real property. Their solution involved the effects of radiation on the thyroid gland. By subjecting the enemy population to a certain radioactive isotope, those people would no longer have a functioning thyroid. The antidote was a compound called *thyroxin*, and the supply of it would be totally controlled by the attacker. Without it, individuals would die, leaving them under the absolute control of the attacker. People could function as normal, as long as they followed orders. Otherwise, they would be denied thyroxin, and they wouldn't live long. The radiation could be distributed from a jet, and the people

wouldn't have any idea what was happening to them until it was too late. The problem was, the jet pilot wouldn't live long either, no matter how much he tried to shield himself from the radiation. Morrow's part in the project was wrapped up in July, 1958. He never knew if the client liked the solution he and Clark came up with, or what, if anything, ever became of it.

From there, Morrow worked on the creation of several new electronic devices for various companies. Then he happened to see an old friend, Ross Schoyer. Ross had gone through an extended rough patch, and he jumped at the chance to work with Morrow. Schoyer found an ideal location for a combination office / apartment in Washington to serve as Morrow's base of operations. His reputation as a competent scientist and electronics expert had grown in the area, and Schoyer still had valuable connections in the DC area. Morrow's attorney, Darwin Brown, introduced him to Marshall Diggs, former Deputy Comptroller of Franklin Roosevelt's Treasury Department. Morrow was just the guy Diggs was looking for to help one of Diggs's very respected clients, Mario Garcia Kohly.

What Kohly wanted Diggs and Morrow to do was get rid of Fidel Castro. They were to find a way to destroy the communist dictator politically and kick him out of Cuba for good. Diggs told Morrow that a certain US government agency was already working on a project to accomplish that mission. What they needed was someone with the technical skills to do a wide variety of unusual jobs, the expertise to tackle important communication projects immediately. Someone who was not connected with the intelligence community or with any Cuban nationals. What they needed was Morrow.

For the next several months Morrow was focused on developing and supplying Kohly's forces with communications gear and other things. The two of them worked very closely together, fostering mutual trust and respect.

On March 17, 1960, President Eisenhower authorized covert action against Castro. It involved creating a Cuban government in exile, and a covert intelligence and action group inside Cuba. Kohly already had those agenda items in

place. It also involved launching a major propaganda campaign and creating a paramilitary force (outside of Cuba) for guerilla action at some point. CIA would take care of those agenda items. The propaganda offensive fell to David Atlee Phillips, a propaganda specialist. The paramilitary force was in the hands of Tracy Barnes and E Howard Hunt (of future Watergate infamy).

While working with Kohly took up most of Morrow's time, his associate, Ross Schoyer took over most of the commercial projects Morrow had been working on. Soon, their office/apartment was also occupied by Amy, who became Robert's secretary and lover, even though he still had a wife at home in Baltimore. He and his wife, Cecily, began drifting apart since her father's suicide in 1956. He didn't tell her about Amy.

At the end of March, 1960, Diggs assigned Morrow the task of delivering a truckload of electronic equipment to Useppe Island, off the west coast of Florida. He was to install the equipment, test it, and make sure it all worked smoothly. In June, Diggs summoned Morrow to his home for a meeting. There he was introduced to Mr Brown, and Morrow was asked to explain to Mr Brown his work for Mr Kohly. It was a strange request, but Diggs nodded his approval, and Morrow proceeded to explain the nature of his work for Kohly, wrapping it up in about ten minutes. Neither Diggs nor Brown seemed very interested, and Morrow was soon escorted to the door. Diggs explained that Mr Brown represented one of the financial backers of Kohly's project: the mafia. Only later did Morrow learn that Mr Brown was really New York's mafia don Thomas Luchese.

A couple of days later, Morrow was summoned to Diggs' office, where he met once again with Mr Brown and another man introduced as Tracy Barnes, deputy to CIA's Richard Bissell (Deputy Director of Plans and head of Covert Operations). Barnes asked if Morrow would be interested in doing some special projects for Kohly. Yes. As Morrow left, Diggs cautioned Morrow to not mention the meeting to anyone.

After spending the weekend in Baltimore, Morrow received another call from Diggs on Monday morning, inviting him to meet again at Diggs' home, this time to discuss (on

Tuesday) one of those special projects Barnes had mentioned. Something big was on, Diggs told him. When he arrived, parked cars clogged the street and driveway. Extra chairs were brought to the study to accommodate the group. The speaker was Eladio del Valle, who introduced several Cubans who had recently escaped from Cuba. He then turned the floor over to Kohly, who announced that people in the current administration had for weeks been reviewing Kohly's plan for the future government of Cuba. It included many of the people present at the meeting. Having succeeded in forming the defacto Cuban government in exile, now the group could be assured of the help needed to regain control of their homeland. He cautioned them to be very careful about who they talked to about this, because Castro had agents all over Miami, some of which were considered friends. They would meet again in a few weeks.

Morrow realized that the work he was doing for Kohly would now be fully supported by the federal government. Well, not exactly, as he would learn in a discussion with Barnes right after the meeting. While CIA was an enthusiastic supporter of Kohly's plan, which included Kohly himself as the new Cuban leader, the State Department was opposed to it. The Cuban leaders they selected were strongly opposed to Kohly. So, the State Department and CIA would be in a tug of war to implement their plan and defeat the other. Kohly had another strong ally in addition to CIA: Vice President Richard Nixon. What about President Eisenhower? Well, admitted Barnes, Eisenhower didn't know what CIA was up to. But then, neither did Kohly. He welcomed CIA funding, but he did not want The Agency controlling his project.

The problem was that CIA had already taken charge of the project, and they were manipulating Kohly into doing what they needed him to do. CIA needed Kohly's underground network inside Cuba, so they needed Kohly. That placed Morrow in the uncomfortable position of working for CIA, which meant working with Kohly, but in a way that prevented Kohly from finding out that Morrow was working for CIA. Kohly did not trust the US government, and Morrow, by offering good advice and encouragement, could keep Kohly from getting out of control. Morrow's job would be to keep Kohly happy, assure him that everything was under control (whether it actually was or not), and introduce him to friendly politicians and media people.

There was already a pretty big problem which Kohly didn't know about. State was doing things that could disrupt CIA plans, and Nixon was in an awkward situation, too. He couldn't deal effectively with State without at the same time exposing CIA's activity, which was, of course, out of the question. Hopefully, Nixon would win the 1960 election, and once in office, Nixon could control the State Department. But, that was not the way it was working out.

Problems at State got progressively thorny and delicate over the next few months. Castro actually had a man (William Wieland) in the US State Department, and he was not happy with Kohly's rise to power in the Eisenhower administration. Wieland accused Kohly of being a Batistaite. State ordered Kohly to immediately cease pursuing claims (including legal, real estate, and fiduciary) against Cuba until after the election. Wieland also tried to undermine Kohly by creating an alternative Cuban government in exile – (the Cuban Revolutionary Front, or FRD) that would supersede Kohly's group and depose him.

When he heard about Wieland, Kohly asked Diggs to convey his concerns to Richard Nixon. Kohly was soon summoned to Washington to meet with General Robert E Cushman, Jr, Nixon's military advisor. Cushman, however, was not at the meeting. Instead, Kohly met a CIA man who tried to persuade him to give at least superficial allegiance to FRD because the Front would be chaired by E Howard Hunt, whose allegiance was really to Kohly. He was not impressed by the CIA man who claimed to represent both Gen Cushman and Richard Nixon, and he was not persuaded by his arguments. He knew that members of FRD were former members of Castro's government hierarchy, and they were known socialist and communist sympathizers. Kohly refused to cooperate.

Kohly, confident he could work everything out once he had a chance to meet with Nixon, returned to Miami and continued preparing for an invasion of Cuba. Soon he forgot about Wieland. But Wieland did not forget about Kohly. Wieland continued to press CIA, against the wishes of Nixon and E Howard Hunt, to accept more leftist leaders into FRD, based on the premise that Kohly and his selected conservative leaders would be considered former Batistaite, and that

made them unacceptable to the Cuban people. Wieland's influence in the State Department prompted naïve liberals in CIA to form their own group of Cubans, comprised of the most extreme leftists from FRD. They called it the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC), and its mission was to (a) control FRD, and (b) sabotage or destroy Kohly's group. That left E Howard Hunt badly outmaneuvered and Kohly on the sidelines.

Now, in addition to the war between CIA and the State Department, there was civil war within CIA, bitterly divided between liberal and conservative factions. Plus there was increased friction between Kohly and CIA. Morrow's increasingly delicate position forced him to walk a tightrope between Kohly and CIA, as well as between warring factions within The Agency. But when Kohly finally realized that he had been used by both sides, he was livid, and his wrath was directed largely at Morrow, accused by Kohly of being a CIA operative. Morrow was forced to lie to his associate to prevent him from finding out just how accurate that accusation was. Morrow had promised Barnes to play this role, and he would keep his word, even though he hated lying. Kohly eventually calmed down and bought Morrow's assurances that he was solidly aligned with Kohly (which was true).

CIA was committed to using Kohly's US exile group, his underground force in Cuba, and his guerrilla army, which was hidden in the Escambray Mountains in Cuba. E Howard Hunt was selected as CRC's invasion coordinator.

Nixon was in a predicament. In the 1960 election race, JFK exploited the Cuban issue. Nixon was unable to defend himself effectively, because he couldn't publicly endorse Kohly or his expose his role in preparing for an invasion of Cuba. That was all top secret, and it had to remain that way. CIA decided to help Nixon with a different approach to the Cuban problem. They would assassinate Castro. It could be accomplished either prior to or coincident with the invasion.

As invasion coordinator, E Howard Hunt simply decided to make the assassination an integral part of the overall Cuban plan. He got things started by sending a memo to Barnes, which was in his hands within hours. Barnes then needed to make sure Morrow was convinced he could succeed in

assuring Kohly that he had not been abandoned or betrayed by the US federal government. Morrow could name Diggs as his source of information. Diggs would confirm to Kohly that Nixon himself was promising to assassinate Castro and invade Cuba. (Barnes would notify Diggs of his role.)

Barnes submitted Hunt's memo to Richard Bissell, who assigned the project to Colonel Sheffield Edwards, CIA's Director of Security, who assigned it to James O'Connell, Operational Support Chief (and former FBI agent). O'Connell determined that the best plan of attack was to have the Cuban mafia perform the hit on Castro. He reported to Edwards, who reported to Bissell, who gave the green light to Edwards, who gave it to O'Connell, who got in touch with an old FBI colleague, Robert A Maheu, and Johnny Roselli, Las Vegas mafia don. Maheu had known Roselli for years. They met at the Brown Derby restaurant in Beverly Hills. Roselli was hesitant at first, but that changed when Maheu explained that high-level federal officials needed his assistance in recruiting Cubans to assassinate Castro. Roselli, like his friend Carlos Marcello (New Orleans mafia don), faced deportation proceedings (thanks to RFK). Doing favors for the feds might help them both in their fight against RFK. However, Roselli insisted on hearing for himself the murder mission from one of those high-level government officials. No problem. Maheu and Roselli met with O'Connell at the Plaza Hotel in New York on September 14, 1960. Roselli had met O'Connell socially. That closed the deal.

Meanwhile, Bissell and Edwards briefed CID Allen Dulles and his Deputy Director, General Charles Cabell on CIA's assassination plans, which was a CIA / mafia cooperative effort. Roselli, on Maheu's request, reached out to Sam Giancana (mafia's number two man), who reached out to Santos Trafficante, Jr (Florida mafia). Bissell and Cabell briefed VP Nixon on the assassination plan. Just before the November election, Nixon and Cabell met with Kohly on the golf course at the Burning Tree Club in the DC area. Kohly was satisfied, and the official name of the plan was *Operation Forty*. You may have noticed that the name Eisenhower is not mentioned in this whole process. Eisenhower did not give his approval. Because he didn't know about it.

Part of Operation Forty was a provision that authorized Kohly to kill all the leftist leaders of CRC once the invasion had succeeded. (That meant Kohly would become the new Cuban leader.) That would be accomplished by CIA rounding up and imprisoning all the leftist FDR and CRC leaders prior to the invasion. Once the landing had been secured, all those leaders would be transported to the beach, where they would be killed in action by Kohly's men. Morrow confirmed with Barnes (with Cabell present) that Nixon had made a deal with Kohly, assuring that Kohly would become to new Cuban leader. Today we know of *Operation Forty* as the *Bay of Pigs*.

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The Cuban issue took center stage in the 1960 election campaigns. Kohly's nemesis (Wieland) leaked classified information to the JFK campaign. Dulles had already informed (on July 23, 1960) Kennedy of the developing situation in Cuba. Dulles didn't consider JFK a serious threat to Nixon's election hopes. Wieland, on the other hand, was willing to put his career on the line to help the young Kennedy win the election.

Armed with that knowledge, the Democrat shrewdly came out for a very strong and aggressive policy of action toward Cuba. Although Nixon didn't disagree, he couldn't say so publicly. He had to parrot the official line of no US invasion of Cuba. Instead, Nixon advocated a quarantine of the island nation (which is exactly what JFK ended up doing later). Nixon was forced to attack JFK's position as reckless and irresponsible. However, in their political debate, JFK clearly won the minds of American voters. They wanted action on Cuba, and Nixon appeared weak.

JFK's narrow election victory was largely attributable to these two factors: (a) Democrats' effective exploitation of the Cuban issue; (b) intervention by Sam Giancana, who owned Chicago mayor Richard Daley and his powerful political network. Giancana and Daley together delivered Chicago and Illinois to JFK in the 1960 election.

The new president embraced CRC and Wieland. That prevented Kohly from achieving significant power, which prevented him from achieving his goals. He and his followers

were frantic, and Morrow didn't know how to calm his fears. He considered maybe admitting to Kohly his CIA affiliation, but Diggs squelched that idea in the most emphatic terms. Morrow never revealed his CIA connection, but he never denied it when Kohly asked him directly. Kohly gradually calmed down and seemed to accept that Morrow and CIA were solidly behind him.

Soon after taking the oath of office, JFK was briefed by Dulles and Bissell about Cuban exile training in Florida and Guatemala. He was told about Kohly's guerilla fighters and underground resistance forces in Cuba, who would provide support to the Cuban exile expeditionary force. These plans were sanctioned by Eisenhower and NSC. JFK was not told about the Nixon / Kohly alliance or the CIA / mafia alliance bent on taking out Castro.

Kennedy's response to the Dulles / Bissell briefing was to order CIA to put a temporary hold on invasion plans, because JFK wanted a second opinion. The order was, obviously, not well received by Dulles and Bissell. The Agency interpreted that as a sign that JFK was a weak president, unwilling to take the strong, decisive action against Cuba (and communism in general) that CIA desperately wanted. JFK sent some of the CRC's leftist leaders to Guatemala to take control of the invasion operation there. Half the force, including the brigade commander, resigned. By the end of January, 1960, the other half of the force was on the verge of mutiny.

Again, Morrow was tasked with reassuring Kohly of the federal government's support. Without Kohly, the invasion was impossible. CIA worked behind the scenes to install a new brigade commander: Manuel Artime. He was a former Castro officer, but he became a trusted associate of Kohly.

Artime, however, was not well received by the leftist Cubans who controlled the invasion operation in Guatemala. They complained to JFK, who was angered by another CIA affront to his authority. He was determined to meet this CIA insubordination with a clear demonstration that he, not CIA, was the Commander-in-Chief. He refused to set a date for the invasion. His vindictive attitude toward CIA spread to his brother, Bobby, US Attorney General. Their anger was further fueled when Wieland told them that the Guatemalan

invasion force was partially funded by the mafia. (They were keenly interested in regaining control over their profitable enterprises shut down by Castro.)

That was totally unacceptable to the Kennedy brothers for several reasons. Bobby had been working for years to reign in the mafia, and destroying the mob was the top priority for his tenure as AG. The CIA / mafia association exposed democrats to potential political damage. It left both JFK and RFK vulnerable to pressure from mafia leaders. It threatened to publicly expose the plan to eliminate Castro, rendering the invasion impossible. It suggested, as well, that CIA was, or at least they considered themselves to be, totally autonomous. JFK was having none of that.

By late February, Dulles warned JFK that further delay meant the invasion would be fatal. The Kennedys ignored Dulles and determined to seek the advice of unbiased advisors and consultants. But, by that time, Castro had heard about the invasion plan and took immediate steps to secure his position in Cuba with an offensive against resistance forces, including Kohly's group in the Escambray Mountains. Barnes told Morrow there was nothing he could do.

Neither Kennedy knew yet that CIA and mafia were working together to assassinate Castro. But, based on what Wieland had told them, Bobby saw it as an opportunity to embarrass CIA and attack the mafia at the same time. His first target was Carlos Marcello.

Meanwhile, John called a meeting at the White House on March 11 to discuss the invasion of Cuba. Among those present were: Dulles, Bissell, the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. JFK decided against Trinidad as the landing sight. He wanted a landing site that provided for a quiet landing at night, and one that needed no American intervention. He gave his minions two weeks to come up with suggestions. JFK chose the Bay of Pigs. He didn't know it yet, but he had doomed the invasion to failure. Castro was ready for them.

Kohly's resistance forces, just before they were completely wiped out by Castro's forces, provided proof that Russian missile sites were being constructed on Cuban soil. Kohly

relayed the information to Diggs, who arranged a meeting between Kohly and RFK. RFK didn't take Kohly or his revelation seriously, dismissing Kohly with the standard *we'll look into it* bureaucratic brushoff. RFK buried the information, but that only delayed its inevitable journey to the public eye. Shortly after the Bay of Pigs, all Americans knew about the missiles, and they were terrified.

Twelve days before the Bay of Pigs, RFK ordered Marcello kidnapped, put on a plane, and dumped in the jungles of Guatemala. He was given no time to call his wife or his attorney. He didn't have time to pack a bag. RFK did not expect Marcello to survive his jungle experience. With Marcello neutralized, Kohly had lost his funding, so he turned to other mafia figures for monetary support. He promised Santos Trafficante and Meyer Lansky that, once Kohly became president of Cuba, they would be able to fire up their casino operations again, in return for which the mafia duo would provide immediate financial assistance to Kohly's operation. The deal was struck in Kohly's DC residence, with Morrow present, and it was then finalized in Diggs' office. (Trafficante and Lansky weren't there, but their representative, C H Polley, was.)

Trafficante wasted no time taking action. Clearly, the mafia needed to get rid of Castro and install Kohly as the new Cuban leader. The best way to do that was to invade the island nation. Trafficante put pressure on Maheu to use CIA clout to put pressure on JFK to stop delaying and get on with the urgent task of dealing with Castro.

It was probably due more to the impact of his March 11 meeting than CIA pressure sparked by Trafficante, but, for whatever reason, JFK suddenly reversed course and consented on April 10 to the invasion. Morrow learned from Barnes that JFK had been briefed on further details of the invasion plan, secrets known only by Dulles, Bissell, and General Cabell. The landing at Bay of Pigs was the main of two landings, the second located 30 miles east of the Guantanamo US Navy base. The secondary landing was to serve as a diversion from the main landing, which was, in part, a diversion from a clandestine aircraft landing.

The purpose of the aircraft landing was to assess Russian progress on the missile installations. Morrow would serve as

part of that mission. David Ferry would fly the two of them into Cuba's Camaguey Province. Morrow got a call from Diggs on Friday evening, April 14, saying the mission was a go. The two of them would meet at Diggs' home on Sunday morning at 8:00. When he arrived, Morrow was greeted by Tracy and Diggs, waiting for him outside the house. Barnes and Morrow drove away in Barnes' car, headed for a briefing. On the way, Barnes stopped to pick up Ferrie, Morrow's pilot for the mission. The briefing was conducted by General Cabell at the Naval Research Facility, across from the State Department.

The purpose of the mission was to analyze weak, unusual pulse signals being picked up by Guantanamo, apparently coming from Camaguey. What was the function of those signals? Who was sending them? It was Morrow's job to find out. He and Ferry were also to pick up Eladio del Valle, a key lieutenant in Kohly's group, who might be able to shed more light on the signals. The briefing lasted about an hour, then Morrow and Ferry headed to the airport for a flight to Miami.

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The mission into Cuba was a success, even though Ferry was wounded, requiring Morrow to assume the role of pilot for the return flight. Back on US soil, Morrow learned that the invasion was not so successful. JFK had refused to authorize the second air strike, and the Cuban invasion force was being slaughtered on the beach while the US Navy sat offshore, unable to help them.

JFK was furious, vowing to splinter CIA into a thousand pieces. He refused to acknowledge that his refusal to authorize the air strike had caused or at least contributed to the Bay of Pigs disaster.

While Ferry and Morrow were on their mission, members of the CRC were meeting at the Lexington Hotel in New York. They had, the day before, already announced the cabinet posts in the new Cuban provisional government expecting to soon take control of a Castroless Cuba. After the meeting, members were escorted by five plain-clothes Americans out the rear entrance of the hotel to a waiting plane, which took them to Opa Locka Naval Air Base in southern Florida. The

press was told they were continuing their meeting at a secret location. In fact, they were placed under house arrest and held there until it was time to deliver them to the beach at Bay of Pigs for their pre-determined combat deaths.

The Cuban captives sat for three days while the Bay of Pigs ground to its inevitable disastrous denouement. On April 19, one of them (Tony Verona) managed to escape through a bathroom window. He called the White House. JFK dispatched Arthur Schlesinger Jr and A A Berle to rescue the Cubans and bring them to DC on an Air Force plane. That further fueled JFK's rage.

Battle lines were drawn. JFK was determined to obliterate CIA. The Agency and Cuban refugees were united in rage and resentment toward the backstabbing president. This internecine struggle was the backdrop for the next big crisis to test the strength and courage of JFK.

On April 25, 1961, Morrow met with Barnes and Diggs for lunch at the Golden Parrot (known locally as the *Dirty Bird*) restaurant. Morrow learned that the data he brought back from Cuba confirmed that the strange signals were part of the guidance system for medium- or long-range missiles located seven miles from where Morrow had gathered the information. However, JFK had ordered (at the end of March) CIA to drop the missile issue. As of 10:00 am that very day, all documents related to the missile matter were to be handed over to the Attorney General (RFK). The name of every person who had been involved on the project was to be turned over to the Defense Department. Those workers would be transferred to a new agency, which would be called the Defense Intelligence Agency. It would replace CIA, which would cease to exist.

Morrow couldn't understand why JFK, knowing there were IRBMs 90 miles from Florida, would want to hush it up. U-2 flights would see them soon enough, and word would get out anyway. Barnes said that would take about a year to develop, because the missile sites were well camouflaged. Kohly's forces had to get within 200 yards to get the pictures Eladio del Valle brought back with him. As for why, Barnes and CIA suspected JFK wanted full control over any response to the missile provocation so he could use it somehow for political advantage later. For example, he

might spring it on the public just before the 1962 congressional elections as a sort of *don't-switch-horses-in-the-middle* campaign.

Morrow also learned that Barnes knew before Ferrie and Morrow left Miami that the second air strike had been cancelled by JFK, yet he didn't tell either of them about it. Barnes also knew ahead of time that the leader of the diversionary force that was supposed to draw attention away from Ferrie and Morrow had aborted the mission. Yet Barnes didn't tell Ferrie or Morrow, who obviously felt angry and betrayed. Barnes argued that they had no choice. The mission was too important. Morrow understood on one level, but he never fully trusted Barnes again.

Barnes asked Morrow if he would be willing to meet with General Cabell, who wanted to talk. Morrow wasn't sure at first, but he met the general only an hour after leaving the Golden Parrot. Along with Morrow and Barnes in Cabell's office was Bissell. Cabell asked if Barnes had briefed Morrow, and then he turned to Morrow to affirm that he understood the difficult and delicate situation that was forcing CIA to act independently. The Agency would act in defiance of the president's wishes? Yes, Cabell replied, in this case. And he showed Morrow something which the general thought would help Morrow understand why. Morrow opened a large file folder which had, among other documents, a memorandum written by the Vice President, Lyndon Johnson to General Cabell.

The memo said that LBJ had learned (quite by accident) about orders from JFK to defense secretary, Robert MacNamara. DOD was to fully assume all power and authority of CIA, and to assume responsibility for all of CIA's active programs and projects. MacNamara was also directed to establish a new intelligence agency to replace CIA as soon as Dulles and Bissell were fired. The memo also summarized a meeting between JFK and the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The chairman was requested to launch an investigation into CIA misuse of power, which should result in severe restrictions on use of unvouchered Agency funds. JFK also wanted CIA's charter revoked and replaced by one which placed all US intelligence activities under the control of the Defense Intelligence Agency, which would soon be established. The

memo concluded abruptly with the initials **LBJ**. It was not dated.

Morrow looked up at the faces of the other men in the room. They were all watching very closely for Morrow's reaction, any expression that might hint at what he was thinking. What Morrow was thinking about was the question: why was he being allowed to read this document? He suspected it was because he was being set up. Cabell broke the silence:

Read the next report. It was handed to us by one of the president's Secret Service bodyguards. If you accept another assignment, it will be important to you.

It was a carbon copy of a short memo: **Memorandum to the Attorney General: If possible, try to apprehend all Cuban and American personnel currently engaged in manufacturing bogus Cuban currency. As you know, in its efforts to overthrow the Castro regime, the CIA has disregarded our direct orders and placed us in a politically embarrassing position. The names of all the parties involved in the conspiracy should be in the Agency's file. Also, you might consider leaking to the Cuban authorities that a massive counterfeiting scheme may be launched against them that could jeopardize the Cuban economy. Jack.**

Morrow said it sounded like treason. Cabell replied that it could be explained away as just a part of a diplomatic strategy. He asked Morrow to keep reading through the reports. It took about 30 minutes to work his way through documentation of JFK's use of dirty campaign tricks and his pelvic encounters with an array of women. Cabell, Bissell, and Barnes all waited patiently to read Morrow's reaction, which was simply: **What now?**

Cabell explained that Diggs had arranged a meeting between Robert Kennedy and Mario Kohly. The purpose was to confront RFK with proof of the Russian missiles in Cuba. If Bobby didn't respond well, Kohly would immediately head for a TV interview to expose the story himself. Then the Kennedy brothers would be forced to admit the truth and start dealing with it. Since Morrow was the only CIA agent in Kohly's inner circle, they needed Morrow to go with Kohly to the meeting.

That was the first of two assignments for Morrow. The second was to become a counterfeiter. CIA had contracted with a printer, and millions of counterfeit pesos had been produced, but there had been a problem with the ink, and orders had gone out from Kennedy to arrest those involved, so that initial operation had to be shut down two days ago. Morrow would set up a new counterfeit operation in his office / lab / apartment. The idea was to so weaken and destabilize Cuba that it would be easily overtaken by CIA before The Agency could be eliminated by Kennedy.

So, the question was, would Morrow agree to keep working for CIA. Answering with a question of his own, Morrow wanted to know how much time he had. None. The Kohly / RFK meeting was to begin that very afternoon, and Morrow would have to leave right away to get Kohly there in time. Even though just a short time ago Morrow had felt betrayed by CIA, now he was willing to continue working for them. He had grown fond of the action and the perks. Plus, he agreed with their cause, even though he had serious concerns about The Agency's decision to directly defy the orders of the President. He could now understand why it was necessary.

Morrow's car had been replaced with a souped up yellow Buick which looked and sounded much like any other Buick. Morrow used it to drive Kohly to the meeting with RFK. The meeting did not go well. RFK rejected all of Kohly's proof, accused him of fabricating it, and he refused to budge on the issue. Morrow then drove Kohly to the TV station and waited in the parking lot to take him to the airport, then fly him to Florida.

Waiting for them at Montgomery County Airport in Gaithersburg was a modified (in typical CIA style) Comanche, full of fuel and good to go. On the way, Kohly asked Morrow how long he had been with CIA. Morrow could no longer deny it, since a plane like this and a car like the Buick cost a lot more than Morrow could afford. But it was not time for a full confession, either. Morrow told him he had just signed on that very day, since it was the only way to keep working with Kohly.

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Counterfeiting the new Mexican currency proved much more challenging than the old pesos. Still, Morrow, with the help of his wife, Cecily, made great progress, and they were on the brink of being ready to mass produce the new counterfeit pesos. However, the project never got that far. Morrow was abruptly ordered to put the counterfeiting project on hold, indefinitely. Why?

Destabilization of the Mexican currency was supposed to have been a part of another Cuban invasion. However, that invasion operation was no longer possible, because Castro had learned about it. The dictator vowed that if there were another invasion attempt, all prisoners from the Bay of Pigs disaster would be publicly executed. Furthermore, major changes were being made in CIA's top echelon. Everything was on hold until those changes could be evaluated and new strategies developed.

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During the period of December 1961 through October 1962, the Cuban situation was volatile. Russian buildup in Cuba was massive. JFK did his best to keep a lid on it, but the press got occasional leaks from the Defense Department and members of Congress. JFK downplayed those revelations, stalling the inevitable as long as he could.

Morrow, working feverishly on the counterfeiting project, had lost touch with unfolding developments. However, once that project was shelved, Morrow met with Barnes for the first time in about a year and got a sobering update. JFK had fired Dulles and Cabell, leaving CIA shaken but still intact. U-2 flights had resumed over Cuba. Jack Ruby, able to gain access into Cuba via Mexico City, had spent quite a bit of time on the island in April and July. CIA was well aware that he was running weapons for Kohly's underground, but now it was becoming clear that Ruby was also smuggling cocaine out of Cuba for himself or for Carlos Marcello.

Just before the Bay of Pigs invasion, CIA's Richard Bissell instructed the Technical Services Section to establish a special assassinations unit to function under the Executive Action Program code name of ZR/RIFLE. It was staffed by a group of people whose most important job was to recruit and supervise a pool of assassins from other countries. One of

those assassins was Thomas Davis, who had been involved in gunrunning operations with Jack Ruby since 1959. Davis was also involved with training anti-Castro Cuban exiles for assassination operations.

Davis was currently working with Clay Shaw in New Orleans. He was also working with Carlos Marcello, who was determined to get rid of both JFK and RFK. In other words, there was a CIA-sanctioned assassination team currently operating in New Orleans under the direction of Clay Shaw. Also working with Shaw and Marcello in New Orleans was David Ferrie, also a CIA operative. Meanwhile, Jack Ruby was openly running a narcotics business in Dallas under CIA protection. Barnes couldn't do anything about it without also exposing ZR/RIFLE.

Morrow asked if Clay Shaw was aware of Jack Ruby's narcotics activity? Barnes said he doubted it, but they couldn't take any chances. He also needed to make certain that Kohly wasn't involved in any way, and since Morrow was closest to Kohly, Morrow was tasked with finding out. Who else might be involved? Guy Banister. He might be controlling Ruby, or it could be Shaw and Marcello pulling Ruby's strings. Barnes wasn't sure, nor did he know who in CIA could be trusted any more. That's why Morrow was brought into it. Prior to now, there was no need to involve him, but now they had to make sure Kohly wasn't getting away from them.

Morrow, after listening carefully to all that Barnes was telling him, trying to take it all in, had to ask this question, even though he was confident he knew what Barnes' answer would be. What did Barnes think would happen when JFK finally announced that the Russians had nuclear missiles pointing at us from less than 100 miles away, in Cuba? Barnes, stating the obvious, predicted that all hell would break loose. There would be no shortage of people out for JFK's scalp. Reluctantly, Barnes admitted he was afraid that someone might try to assassinate the president. Morrow wanted some assurance that CIA wouldn't allow that to happen. Of course, they would do everything they possible could to stop it, but it would be close to impossible to stop someone they didn't know or know about.

Part of Morrow's next assignment was to find out as much as possible about all the players, plots, and potential problems in New Orleans. Barnes gave Morrow a quick rundown on all the known players and what they were known to be up to. Morrow had to memorize it all for future reference.

One of those known characters in New Orleans was an ex-Marine named Lee Harvey Oswald (LHO). He was trained as a radar operator and as a cryptographer; he was assigned to the US base in Atsugi, Japan, where he learned Russian; he worked undercover in the Philippines; and he applied for a hardship discharge in September, 1959. The discharge was CIA's idea, not LHO's. He went to New Orleans, spent a few days with his mother, and collected \$2000 from CIA's local field office in the federal building, located across from 544 Camp Street, where Guy Banister's office was located. He had a top secret clearance, a crypto clearance, and a new assignment.

LHO's sensitive mission was to get into Russia. Once there, he would revoke his US citizenship and defect to the Russian side in the cold war. He would offer Russians top secret codes, radar and frequencies information, and whatever else he could memorize before leaving US soil. He was instructed to make contact with a Moscow girl whose uncle was a colonel in the KGB. He would get the girl out of Russia, clearing the way for her uncle to defect to the US. She was his only blood relative. The codes and frequencies would be changed shortly after LHO's arrival in Russia, giving them enough time to verify their authenticity but not enough time to exploit the information.

At first, the mission worked as planned. But then LHO was exiled to Minsk for two years. Still, Oswald managed to marry the Russian girl (Marina) and get his wife and daughter out of Russia. Pulling that off required him to slit his wrists and act like a maniac. As pre-planned, he went to the US Embassy, where he was provided with a loan of \$400 and a passport. Once back in the US, after being debriefed, he was sent to Dallas to await further instructions. In Dallas, LHO was in contact with Jack Ruby. Oswald was also probably being used by the FBI.

After the meeting with Barnes, Morrow called Kohly and learned that he already had a strike force ready to go. The plan was for that team to strike the Cuban control center the following night. If successful, that would neutralize the Cuban threat.

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Morrow returned to his lab and worked on completing several commercial projects. The next day he was waiting anxiously to hear about Kohly's mission. When the call finally came from Barnes, Morrow knew immediately that it wasn't good news. They met a couple of hours later at a restaurant. Only one of Kohly's men had survived the failed mission, and he was tortured to death in Havana. They badly damaged the control center, but they didn't destroy it. They did manage, however, to secure reliable evidence of the missile threat in Cuba. Kohly's people briefed Senator Keating, who confronted the President with the information. There was no response from the White House.

How could the President continue to ignore or deny what was so obvious and dangerous? Barnes figured it could only be a political ploy. Democrats were on track to lose both houses of Congress in the 1962 elections. Their one hope of turning it around could be using the Cuban crisis to their advantage. They could pull that off if Jack and Bobby could take on Krushchev and convince him to back down in Cuba. They would be perceived as the heroes, even though they were the ones who allowed the crisis to get this far, endangering the nation. Even that, however, wouldn't be the end of JFK's political problems. Polls showed that two-thirds of Americans favored a large-scale response to Soviet expansion in Asia. JFK had decided to pull out of Viet Nam.

Finally, JFK was forced to admit what Keating had been saying for months and what British intelligence had known for two years: Russia had installed missile sites throughout Cuba. They were armed with nuclear warheads and aimed directly at the US. The Soviet Union could have annihilated the US if it had decided to do so. Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of Cuba (which is exactly what Nixon had suggested much earlier). Intense negotiations between Kennedy and Krushchev continued throughout the two-week period before the congressional elections. Just before

election day, JFK announced that Krushchev had agreed to withdraw his missiles and technical advisors from Cuba. In a tsunami of support for the President in particular, and Democrats in general, their continued control over Congress was accomplished. It even helped defeat Nixon in the California governor race.

The Kennedys, however, had very little time to congratulate themselves, and the nation had but a fleeting moment of feeling safe from the Communist menace. Mario Kohly once again met with Robert Kennedy, this time with irrefutable evidence that Krushchev was not keeping his promises. Many of the IRBMs (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles) were still in place and good to go. Once again, RFK's response was a temper tantrum. The Attorney General, as usual, accused Kohly of fabricating the evidence, and rudely ushered him to the door.

Widespread resentment toward JFK intensified. The President had made two major concessions to Krushchev. He agreed to withdraw US missiles from Turkey, and he agreed to a hands-off policy toward Cuba. To Kohly's friends in CIA and DOD, that was totally unacceptable. A successful Cuban invasion by the US, our allies, or any US-supported group was now impossible. CIA had had enough of JFK's self-serving political manipulation and his compromises of national security. CIA felt they had little choice but to take matters into their own hands, for the sake of the nation. There would be another invasion of Cuba, The Agency decided. This time the operation would be based in Costa Rica.

That meant that Morrow's counterfeit project was reactivated. Some of the fake pesos would be used by Kohly's men to bribe Cuban military officers to gain their support in an exile landing. Barnes' approval led Morrow to believe that JFK had probably given his tacit support to the operation. Barnes set the record straight, however. CIA was being pressured to keep a lid on all proposed activity by Cuban exiles. JFK fully intended to strictly enforce the hands-off-Cuba policy. CIA was acting in defiance of the President's orders, but they weren't the only ones who refused to obey the White House. Cuban exile groups decided to present their proof of Russian missiles still in Cuba to the American media, in hopes of forcing the

administration to take action. But, they did not succeed in getting the attention of the media.

JFK continued a campaign of media censorship that had begun at the earliest stages of the Cuban missile crisis. He sensed his continued vulnerability, and he dealt with it by launching an even more vigorous program of media manipulation and control. The American people had no idea of the continued threat of Russian missiles in Cuba. Cuban exiles in New Orleans and Miami weren't fooled. They understood the threat, and they took action, in spite of withdrawn US support. A militant group attacked a Soviet military post and two Soviet freighters at a Cuban port. Russia protested vehemently, of course. The Cuban militant leader held a press conference in Washington, which embarrassed and infuriated JFK, in Costa Rica at the time, trying to secure Latin-American support for his hands-off-Cuba policy.

On December 30, 1962, JFK responded by ordering departments of State and Justice to disavow any part in the raid and to issue statements to the effect that the US would take all necessary steps to prevent such raids from being launched, manned, or equipped from US territory. Other groups, however, continued to harass Russian ships, prompting the Soviet Union to formally charge the US with complicity. Still, Cuban exile attacks and administration responses continued. The Cuban exiles found support in conservative and right-wing groups, and even from the left-leaning faction of the Cuban exile community.

Then, in an astonishing shift, the exiles began to get the support of the Kennedy administration. Enrique Williams, a personal friend of RFK and the leader of the Bay of Pigs invasion, promised Miami's anti-Castro Cuban leaders an invasion of Cuba in December, 1963. Williams assured them that RFK himself had promised arms, money, and CIA support for the mission.

Kohly had told Morrow about plans for the December invasion, and Barnes had verified Kohly's information. The administration knew about the renewed counterfeiting operation and the planned December invasion from Costa Rica. Morrow discovered, however, that JFK's approval and

support had all been an elaborate hoax designed to appease the Cuban exiles for a while.

JFK's lie was, for the exiles, the last straw. They were no longer working, temporarily at least, to end the Castro regime. They were now devoted to ending the life of JFK. In this new endeavor, they joined forces with the mafia. Carlos Marcello had put out a contract on JFK in April, 1963. The mafia boss was looking for anyone who could get the job done. The exiles were aware of the contract, and they offered their services to fulfill it. They reasoned that it was the only way to stop JFK's interference in their efforts to liberate Cuba. They also reasoned that this course would provide them with the funds they needed to carry on their anti-Castro activities. And it might make those activities unnecessary if the new president was inclined to deal with Cuba forcefully. LBJ was.

The consortium would include Cuban Mafia mercenaries controlled by Santos Trafficante; Kohly's group of anti-Castro exiles; associates working inside the Dallas police force; and John Michael Mertz, an expert assassin working in CIA's official hit squad. Rolando Masferrer would take care of the financing of Trafficante's and Kohly's groups. Carlos Marcello would use Guy Bannister and David Ferrie, who controlled Kohly's group of exiles at Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana (just north of New Orleans). Eladio del Valle would be the liaison between Kohly's group and his own group of exiles in Miami. Much of this organization had been in place since the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Marcello, comfortably protected in his large estate in New Orleans, directed Guy Banister and David Ferrie to design the assassination plan and make it work. Ferrie was the chief architect and organizer. He worked closely with Clay Shaw and Sergio Arcacha Smith (New Orleans), and del Valle (Miami). In fact, Ferrie was the genius behind both Marcello's and Shaw's organizations. Nobody in the mafia could match Ferrie's organizational skills. Nor could anybody in the exile communities.

The exile groups continued to prepare for the December invasion of Cuba. But it became increasingly apparent that the invasion would never take place. JFK, although he had promised support for the invasion, continued to enforce his

hands-off-Cuba policy, and his real goal was to ultimately arrest Kohly and destroy the second counterfeiting operation that Morrow was working on.

Ferrie reasoned if there was another failed attempt to assassinate Castro, he would probably launch some sort of retaliatory strike against the US. The death of JFK could easily be blamed on Castro, which would trigger a US attack on Castro, liberating Cuba. Everybody would win, except of course the Kennedys and Castro.

The plan didn't require another botched attempt to kill Castro. What was needed was a way to make Castro believe he was being targeted again. This phase of the conspiracy was handled by Trafficante. He would play the role of a double agent who would warn Castro about a plot to assassinate him on orders from JFK. Trafficante would assign a couple of subordinates to play the role of assassin. They would believe they were working for CIA, and so would Castro when the two "assassins" were caught with evidence clearly linking them to CIA. The two expendable lackeys would be tortured, and they would confess. That would prompt Castro to issue a statement of his desire to punish the US government. After JFK's murder, Castro's angry response to the latest assassination attempt would be sufficient proof in the minds of American citizens that Castro was behind the JFK hit.

The plan worked. Castro told Dan Harker, an AP reporter, that the US was assisting and supporting assassination attempts against him. He also threatened that if the US government continued in such plots, those leaders would find their own lives at risk. However, Trafficante didn't have time to rest on his laurels. He was the mastermind, but he was also a problem.

There was a conversation between a Cuban mafia member and a wealthy Cuban exile, Jose Aleman of Miami. Aleman was told that Trafficante felt indebted to Aleman's cousin. The cousin was trying to build a new hotel, but he was having cash flow problems. Trafficante had arranged for a \$1.5 million loan from Jimmy Hoffa's Teamster Pension Fund. Trafficante met with Aleman to hand over the loan money, and the two had a lengthy conversation that evening. Both men were relaxed and Trafficante expressed bluntly his

feelings about the Kennedy brothers. Eventually, Trafficante also disclosed to Aleman the plot to assassinate JFK. He also talked frankly about the feud between Robert Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa, and the fact that Hoffa would play a key role in the JFK hit.

Trafficante didn't know that he was talking to an FBI informant. Aleman wasted no time reporting the conversation to his FBI contacts, who passed the information up the chain of command, all the way to Hoover's desk. So, Hoover knew that JFK would be killed before November 4, 1964, and he quickly realized that the plot was the work of Carlos Marcello. He was the only mafia boss with enough clout to pull this off without the need for approval from the national mafia families. He was the one mafia figure who had been personally humiliated and almost killed by the Kennedys.

It wasn't difficult for Hoover to decide how to handle this information. He would do nothing. He was almost as desperate as Marcello to get rid of the Kennedys. He knew his tenure at FBI was quickly coming to an end if the Kennedy brothers had their way. But how could he know he would fare any better with LBJ in the oval office? Not a problem. He and LBJ had been friends for a long time. Furthermore, Hoover had collected a lot of dirt on his longtime friend. LBJ had helped cover up the crimes of Billy Sol Estes. Hoover knew all about LBJ's involvement with Bobby Baker, and that case was posing a threat to LBJ's career. That information and his friendship guaranteed that Hoover would be treated kindly by an LBJ administration. There was the risk that, once in office, LBJ would vigorously pursue an investigation into the JFK murder. Hoover was willing to take that chance. (What he didn't know, yet, was that LBJ was himself involved in the JFK murder conspiracy.)

Of course, Hoover had also dug up a lot of dirt on the Kennedys. But he had not been successful in his bids to parlay that knowledge into blackmail. The murder plot was now his only hope of keeping his job as FBI director. (We now know that Hoover became a key player in the cover-up, along with LBJ.)

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Investigations of Billy Sol Estes and Bobby Baker had threatened the political career of LBJ by 1963. Johnson's association with those shady characters and the mafia had started to become public, exposing the Kennedys to potentially devastating political embarrassment. JFK had decided to replace LBJ on the 1964 ticket, and the Texan was aware of it.

The Kennedys were also determined to force Hoover to retire on his 70th birthday. Hoover's threatened use of his files documenting their sexual and political misconduct had failed to persuade the Kennedy brothers to back off. It had become a stalemate by early 1963. JFK was the unstoppable force against Hoover, the immovable object. One of them would have to go, and neither of them had the slightest intention of losing.

So, LBJ and Hoover were in the same predicament. Unless JFK was removed from power, both their careers would soon be over. It was inevitable that they would combine forces to deal with the despised Kennedys. They had been longtime friends. They both had mafia connections. They were both close to Clint Murchison and other oil-rich Texans. They were natural allies.

Hoover believed that it was the job of the FBI to maintain the internal security of the US. He also believed that, as the head of that organization, he was above the very law he helped enforce on the rest of the nation. So his decision to allow the plot against JFK to play out did not trigger a moral dilemma for the Director. He was also not bothered by the fact that responsibility for the nation's internal security had been transferred to CIA. That, too, would change once JFK was out of the way.

The distinction between foreign and domestic intelligence had always been vague and open to encroachment by both CIA and FBI. They had struggled to a stalemate of sorts, but JFK's departure would tilt the balance in Hoover's favor. That's because of Hoover's astonishing ability to gather intelligence, sometimes inside information that even the president himself did not know. For example, JFK wasn't aware of all CIA/mafia attempts to kill Castro. As a matter of

fact, the CIA's director didn't know all there was to know about that, either. Hoover knew how to find out what was going on, and he knew how to use that information to his advantage. That's how he had kept his job for so long. He wasn't about to be pushed out now. Especially by the Kennedys.

Here's another example of Hoover's uncanny ability to learn closely-held secrets. He had at one time approached postal officials to negotiate a program of opening and reading the mail of persons of interest in FBI investigations. Because of that, he learned in February 1963 that CIA had already been doing its own mail snooping. That was against the law for CIA, so Hoover used that information to force Richard Helms to stay out of Hoover's way. They negotiated an uneasy truce in which each would tolerate the other's infractions, and both agencies would back the other in case their illegal activities were exposed.

CIA issued a memo in 1962 advising agents how to handle the problem if CIA's domestic mail surveillance operation became public. Originally, it was intended to target only former Soviet agents, suspected agents, defectors, and suspicious foreigners. The purpose was to learn about Soviet plans and activities. It was, in other words, probably not a violation of American law. But it gradually expanded in scope to include American citizens with no known connections to foreign powers. There was no effective way to spin it if it were exposed, so the memo said:

Since no good can be served by an official admission of the violation, and existing federal statutes preclude the concoction of any legal excuse for the violation . . . it is important that all federal law enforcement and US intelligence agencies vigorously deny any association, direct or indirect, with any such activity if charged.

So, CIA, as well as FBI, was by now comfortable ignoring and defying the law. Certainly not all agents within either agency, but certain key players in each. JFK and RFK further encouraged this contempt for the law, in part because they too felt they were above the law. More importantly, they felt they were immune to or more powerful than the political consequences of their actions, which were often

incompetent and considered very dangerous by their political enemies.

One such consequence was the hatred of anti-Castro Cuban exiles for JFK. The exiles had supported Kennedy in his 1960 election bid because he had promised to support and subsidize them. But now they felt JFK had hung them out to dry. Given their deep sense of betrayal, they felt they were entitled and obligated to take matters into their own hands, no matter the legality of their actions.

The mafia, obviously never much concerned with American law, also felt they were fully justified in whatever actions they determined were necessary and in their own best interest. They, too, had generously supported JFK's 1960 election bid, and they believed they had received assurance from the Kennedys that, in exchange for that support, JFK and RFK would leave the mafia alone. That assurance had come from Frank Sinatra, the self-appointed liaison between the Kennedys and the mafia. Sinatra's promise, as it turned out, had been premature, and when Joe Kennedy learned of it, he was livid. But that did not mitigate the mafia's sense of betrayal by the Kennedys. Add to that the illegal means RFK had used in his conviction of Jimmy Hoffa and his deportation of Carlos Marcello, and the mafia felt much more than betrayed. They felt the Kennedy brothers had spit in their face, and a decisive, ruthless response was the only appropriate course of action for them.

LBJ had no more regard for the law than the mafia had. He, throughout his political career, had acted with criminal disregard for what is legal, moral, ethical, or right in any way for anyone other than himself. He was responsible for voter fraud, murder, and corruption of all varieties. His reckless career was catching up with him in 1963. Legal and media attention focused on Billy Sol Estes and Bobby Baker threatened to expose LBJ's crimes and character. He was no longer sure he could keep a lid on all his secrets. If exposed, his political career would be over, and he would almost certainly spend the rest of his life behind bars. If he could only find a way to realize his lifelong goal of becoming President of the United States, all his legal problems and most of his political problems would quickly disappear.

As if that wasn't motivation enough to want JFK dead, we must factor in the mutual hatred between the Kennedys and Johnson. The only reason LBJ was on the 1960 ticket was because LBJ knew where some of the Kennedy bodies were buried, and because JFK realized he couldn't win the election without Texas. And, of course, he couldn't win Texas without LBJ. Jack had very reluctantly accepted the political facts of the matter, swallowed hard, and invited LBJ to be his running mate. Robert, however, fought tooth and nail against Jack's decision. There were times during the campaign when it seemed Jack and Bobby were fighting against each other, and times when Robert seemed to have no idea what John was doing. So relations between both Kennedys and Johnson had been extremely tense even before the election, and the hatred grew deeper as time went on. It is probably impossible to overstate or overestimate how much the Kennedys and Johnson hated each other.

Nor is hatred too strong a word to describe how some top-level CIA players felt about JFK. CIA also felt betrayed. Jack had refused to acknowledge that the Bay of Pigs disaster was in part the result of his own incompetence. His on again, off again indecision on the operation had doomed the plan before it ever got started. His decision to cancel the second air strike had doomed the Cuban exiles on the beach. To make matters worse, JFK had then fired Dulles and Cabell, and he had threatened to end CIA's very existence. CIA felt they had no choice but to take matters into their own hands, for their own preservation and for the security of the nation. They were determined to do whatever it took to end JFK's destruction of America. To them, it wasn't treason. It was the only patriotic, responsible course of action left to them by this reckless administration.

All these powerful forces came together in 1963 in a perfect storm bearing down on JFK. Kennedy was riding on a sea of hatred, resentment, bitterness, and lust for revenge. Like the turbulent waves in a storm, there were shifting alliances among the players in the unfolding drama. Clay Shaw, a long-time dependable and resourceful CIA agent, was now a loose cannon. He and Carlos Marcello together supplied the men and material for the plot to kill JFK. Marcello also had the assistance and support of Santos Trafficante and Sam Giancana.

Many others were drawn into the conspiracy, often not having any idea that they were part of it. Even most of those who were generally aware did not have the whole picture. Very few people understood the conspiracy in its entirety. Many of the players believed they were doing something good for their country, totally unaware of the role they were actually playing. That helps explain how such a massive conspiracy could be pulled off and covered up. Men like LBJ and Hoover were the central figures in the cover up, though not necessarily the murder itself. Men like David Ferrie seemed to be all things to all men. He was comfortable working with both CIA and mafia. He played a key role in the JFK murder plot, but he also played a key role in a program to try to save JFK's life. He was such a good liar and actor that it's very difficult to know what he really wanted to happen. There's no such doubt about Lee Harvey Oswald's intent, however. He did not want JFK to be killed, and he did everything in his power to prevent it.

Robert Morrow's role in the assassination plot began in the summer of 1963. Tracy Barnes, on July 1, asked Morrow to purchase four rifles for a clandestine operation. They were to be Mannlicher 7.35 mm surplus rifles, available in the Baltimore area. Morrow was instructed to modify them so that they could easily be dismantled and reassembled quickly, allowing them to be hidden. That task had been completed by July 15; disassembly required the simple removal of three screws.

On July 2, Morrow got a call from del Valle requesting four transceivers that could not be detected by any communications equipment on the market. David Ferrie would pick up the transceivers and rifles. The equipment was to be used in del Valle's Free Cuba Committee activities. Clay Shaw and David Ferrie were assisting del Valle in the operation. The transceivers were finished by August 1. By then, Morrow had learned that one of the screws used for the rifles had stripped, and Morrow suggested he replace it, but Barnes said three rifles would be enough.

Ferrie called during the first week of August and asked Morrow to deliver the equipment right away in Baltimore. Although Ferrie was clearly in a hurry, Morrow asked him who the rifles were to be used on. Ferrie said they were to

be used for the assassination of Juan Bosh of the Dominican Republic. Morrow didn't learn until later that he had just delivered the very weapons that would be used to kill John F Kennedy.

Meanwhile, during July and August, Trafficante's scheme played out without a hitch. His team had been dispatched to Cuba with orders to kill Castro, who had been tipped off and was ready for them. CIA-supplied poison pills and high-powered rifles told Castro all he needed to know. Or so he thought. He had just been set up to take the blame for JFK's murder. David Ferrie's assassination plot was already underway.

The next phase of the program focused on Lee Harvey Oswald (LHO). Ferrie himself had selected and recommended LHO for the role of patsy. The two had met in 1955 when Ferrie was the captain of the New Orleans chapter of the Civil Air Patrol. LHO joined the unit as a cadet (and there is a widely available picture of them together in that unit). They met again when LHO returned from Russia. Ferrie contacted him when he arrived in New Orleans, where LHO met Guy Banister, who was told that Oswald was a CIA affiliate. That information came from Tracy Barnes, and it was confirmed by other CIA agents. After the assassination, The Agency denied any affiliation with LHO, and all files to the contrary suddenly ceased to exist. Ferrie also denied knowing or ever meeting LHO, but there was just too much evidence to the contrary.

Ferrie and his conspiracy associates used LHO doubles in various staged incidents during 1963 across the country to establish his image as a loud and arrogant man, a Castro supporter, a former defector to the Soviet Union, and an expert marksman. He was also portrayed as a man who expected to come into a great deal of money soon.

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Dr Rolando Cubelo was a high-level official in Fidel Castro's government. Cubelo had met with CIA case officers in Brazil in 1961. He had expressed his growing dissatisfaction with Castro and offered to defect to the US. Meanwhile he would provide intelligence on Castro and Russian activities in Cuba. CIA had persuaded him to remain in Cuba to be able to keep a closer watch on Castro and Russia, and he provided information to The Agency for two years. Now, he was willing to do even more. He offered to kill Castro himself.

CIA's Special Affairs Staff (SAS), in Langley, Virginia, got word of Cubelo's offer on September 7, 1963. However, no immediate action was taken because James Angleton (Chief of Counterintelligence) suspected that Cubelo (code name AM/LASH) was a double agent. On September 12 there was a meeting attended by Robert Kennedy, Gen Maxwell Taylor, John McCone (CIA Director), Lyman Lemnitzer (a member of the Joint Chiefs), McGeorge Bundy (the President's National Security Advisor), and Roswell Gilpatric (Undersecretary of Defense). RFK vetoed the Cubelo offer and took steps to prevent the Cuban exiles' December invasion of their homeland. Among those steps was the arrest of Kohly and Morrow for their counterfeit operation.

In mid-October, 1963, Richard Helms gave the green light for the Cubelo assassination plan. The President did not know about it. The Attorney General did not know about it. Helms' boss, the CIA Director, didn't know about it. At the end of October, Cubelo demanded some sort of personal assurance from the Attorney General that the administration actively supported him and his effort. That being impossible, it fell to SAS chief Desmond Fitzgerald to meet with Cubelo as RFK's personal representative. Since Fitzgerald was well-known in Washington, it shouldn't be too difficult to deceive Cubelo. The ruse worked. Fitzgerald also assured Cubelo that the President himself was involved, and he was fully supportive.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald told Cubelo that he had personally written part of JFK's speech to be delivered in Miami on November 18. Cubelo was to listen for these words: The Cuban government was a **small band of conspirators** that,

once removed, would ensure United States' assistance to the Cuban nation. That would be Cubelo's signal to proceed with the assassination plan. On November 19, Fitzgerald instructed his case officer to set up another meeting with Cubelo to discuss specifics. The meeting was scheduled for November 22, 1963.

Meanwhile, other plans were proceeding. On November 10, Morrow got a call from del Valle. He asked Morrow to call him back at 5:00 that afternoon. Morrow understood that del Valle was acting on the assumption that Morrow's phones, and maybe del Valle's, were still being tapped by either Secret Service or the Attorney General. So, Morrow checked into a nearby hotel and called del Valle at 5:00. He expressed concern because the transceivers were not getting clear reception. Morrow explained the cause of the problem and what to do about it. Del Valle said they had better work perfectly, because they were for Texas. Morrow didn't understand what del Valle was telling him. They were for Dallas, del Valle explained. For a head of state, remember? Yes, Ferrie had said they were for Juan Bosh, but Morrow still didn't understand. "You will", del Valle assured him. "I just found out about it last night. Kennedy's going to get hit in Dallas". Del Valle then promptly hung up.

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JFK was murdered in Dallas on November 22, 1963, around noon. That same afternoon, J Edgar Hoover instructed his Assistant Director, Clyde Tolson, to *exert pressure on all the senior Bureau officials to complete an investigation of the assassination and issue a factual report that would support a conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman.*

Without conducting anything that could reasonably be called an investigation, Hoover was ready to wrap it up and blame Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination. Once Jack Ruby conveniently eliminated any threat of exposure from LHO, Hoover knew he'd have no trouble pinning everything on the dead patsy. The FBI already had their man, so there was no need to waste investigators' time looking into it further. The nation's most massive cover-up and miscarriage of justice had begun well before JFK's head exploded. It had all been well choreographed well in advance, so all the players knew exactly what they needed to do. Hoover's role was to

prevent any real investigation by either the FBI or the Dallas Police Department. Later, he made sure there was no real investigation by the Warren Commission.

His partner in that phase of the cover-up operation was the new president, LBJ, who was well informed of the assassination plot all along. He carefully selected people he could trust for the Warren Commission, starting with his long-time friend, Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren. He wanted nothing to do with the commission because he felt it was beneath a Supreme Court Chief Justice to serve in such a capacity. But LBJ was not a man who had ever taken no for an answer from anyone. He needed someone of Warren's solid reputation and stature to make the commission appear legitimate. LBJ knew that Warren could be trusted to come to the correct conclusion: that LHO was the lone assassin.

Warren played his role as expected, doing no independent investigation by the commission, and allowing no independent investigation by anyone on the staff whose job it was to perform an independent investigation. Together, LBJ and Hoover kept a close eye on everything said and done by the commission and quickly dealt with any potential problem as it arose. Their work was made much easier by Gerald Ford, who was Hoover's secret eyes and ears on the commission.

However, there were problems with the cover-up. One of them was created by J Edgar Hoover himself. When he instructed FBI agents across the nation to quickly wrap up their investigations before they had a chance to even start their investigations, he went a step further with his New Orleans and Dallas field offices. They were ordered to destroy any evidence that could be embarrassing to the FBI. In a twist so richly ironic that it mimics bad fiction, Hoover was not aware that his Assistant Director (also Chief of Domestic Intelligence Operations) William Sullivan, was also close to CIA. Sullivan had been providing information to CIA's support chief, Col Sheffield Edwards. That would come back to haunt Hoover later.

Another problem arose during the official autopsy of JFK's body at Bethesda, Maryland, beginning at 8:00pm on November 22, 1963. The procedure was performed by

Commander James J Humes at the National Naval Medical Center. JFK had been shot in the throat. That shot most likely was the first, coming from the grassy knoll (in front and to the right of the President's car). The bullet entered the front of JFK's throat, deflected off the spine, and ended up in his chest cavity. That fact was obscured by the need for a tracheotomy tube, which was inserted into the bullet's entry wound. From that point on, the throat wound was not considered an entry wound caused by a bullet. However, the bullet that was lodged in the chest cavity proved that there had been four shots fired, and that proved that there had been a conspiracy.

The solution was fairly simple. For one thing, Dr Humes burned his original medical report and notes. Also, the bullet was removed from JFK's body and placed in the hands of FBI special agents Francis X O'Neill Jr and James W Sibert, who were accompanied by Dr Russell Morgan, head of radiology at John Hopkins. (Dr Morgan would supervise all of the X-rays from the autopsy.) O'Neill and Sibert signed a receipt for the bullet, and they handed the receipt to Dr Humes, who gave it to the Secret Service.

That receipt stayed hidden away until 1977. (It turned up as part of a Freedom of Information Act suit by Mark Lane, a Washington attorney.) In 1978 the House Select Committee on Assassinations determined that a shot did come from the grassy knoll (in all probability). But by then, the cover-up had been successful.

Meanwhile, CIA was busy with its own cover-up contribution. They scrambled to get rid of any evidence (or individual, if necessary) who might link LHO or Cuban exile groups to CIA. There could be no public exposure of CIA/mafia cooperation in attempts to assassinate Castro. Top-level officials took steps to make sure that only certain CIA officials gained access to information that would or could potentially be embarrassing to The Agency. Even CIA Director John McCone was kept in the dark about some CIA activities. Richard Helms masterminded CIA's coverup.

Still, CIA was vulnerable, because there were too many people who had inside information that could be used at any time to blackmail The Agency. The most obvious, of course, was LHO himself, who was quickly eliminated by Jack Ruby.

But even Ruby could potentially expose CIA's roll in the JFK murder and other activities. He was fairly secure in jail, but even that wasn't good enough. Eventually, Ruby had to be eliminated, too. That little project was handled by a doctor who visited Ruby in jail, ostensibly to treat Ruby for minor symptoms. He, as part of that treatment, was exposed to X-rays far more powerful than any ordinary patient. The purpose was to weaken his immune system for the next phase of the project. That involved injecting Ruby with a very powerful strain of cancer virus that had been developed by a secret group of doctors and scientists in New Orleans during the summer of 1963. The original plan was to use the cancer super-virus on Castro, but JFK was killed before that could happen. So, the super-virus was used on Ruby, who died just a few days later, ostensibly of natural causes, even though Ruby had never before been diagnosed with cancer.

On November 24, 1963, McCone went to the oval office to brief the new president. The most urgent piece of business was the signing of National Security Memorandum 278. That classified document reversed JFK's policy of Viet Nam de-escalation. From that point on, CIA had power plenipotentiary to conduct full-scale war in the Far East. The center of the war was, of course, Viet Nam, which would involve more than half a million Americans in a struggle that needed no Congressional approval.

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What would be known as the Warren Commission was created by Executive Order 1130 by LBJ on November 29, 1963. Warren did not want to serve on the commission and Hoover did not want it formed. But LBJ almost always got whatever LBJ wanted. And Hoover came around when he began to realize the political advantages of the commission.

There didn't seem to be much of a downside. Between Richard Helms at CIA and Hoover at FBI, the commission would not be fed any information that those two didn't approve of beforehand. Warren himself could be trusted to make sure both CIA and FBI were protected.

Still, there were problems. The staff didn't know they weren't supposed to do any actual investigating. So, they read reports and investigated leads, just as investigators

generally do. And they grew ever more suspicious of the fact that Hoover had shut down the FBI's investigation so quickly and the fact that CIA was unwilling to provide information. They also began to discover that there had, indeed, been connections between LHO and both FBI and CIA. For example, Texas Attorney General, Waggoner Carr claimed he knew that LHO had been recruited as an FBI informant. LHO had been assigned informant number S-179 on September, 1962, and he was paid \$200 per month.

That placed Lee Rankin (Warren Commission's General Counsel) in a predicament. Warren Commission people were generally terrified of J Edgar Hoover. If they approached Hoover with this information, he was likely to explode in their faces. However, if they just accepted Hoover's word that there was no LHO/FBI connection, the public wouldn't buy it, and the commission would lose all credibility with the public. Former Director of CIA, Allen Dulles, was now a member of the Warren commission. He said Hoover would most likely lie under oath about any FBI/LHO connection, so pressing Hoover wouldn't do any good. He went on to say that he himself would have lied as CIA Director if he believed it was in the best interest of The Agency or the US. (He wouldn't have lied to the president, though, he claimed.) Current CIA Director Richard Helms felt the same way, but with the additional admission that he would withhold information from the president.

The commission finally decided to leave it up to Rankin to approach Hoover in whatever manner he saw fit. Just as they expected, Hoover flatly denied that LHO had been an FBI informant. The commission was happy to leave it at that. That was due in large part to the fact that each commission member was well aware of the embarrassing file about them in Hoover's possession.