

## Concocting the Dots

*Brothers in Arms: The Kennedys, the Castros, and the Politics of Murder*

By Gus Russo and Stephen Molton

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*By Brian Latell*

Fidel Castro looms large in fewer than a dozen books among the hundreds written about the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Two of them are the work of irrepressible conspiracy theorist and researcher Gus Russo. In his 1998 book, *Live by the Sword*, and now in *Brothers in Arms*, written with Stephen Molton, Russo labors to implicate Castro in the murder in Dallas.<sup>[1]</sup>

It is not an unreasonable postulation. No one had more compelling motive to eliminate the president than the Cuban leader who had known of CIA and White House plots against his life since at least 1961. His regime was the target of unrelenting American assaults—sabotage operations, assassination plots, support for guerrillas, and encouragement of military coup plotters—that began with the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, persisted after the missile crisis in October 1962, and lasted the entirety of the Kennedy administration.

On the receiving end, Castro had no illusions about the source of all this or how determined his enemies were to annihilate his revolution. He feared Kennedy and had every reason to plot against him in a similar fashion. In early September, 1963, during an impromptu press conference in Havana, Castro even warned the Kennedy administration that “We are prepared to fight them and answer in kind. United States leaders should think that if they are aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe.”<sup>[2]</sup> Never one to issue idle threats, or to let enemies conspire against him with impunity, Fidel, at a minimum, must have considered retaliation in kind.<sup>[3]</sup>

By the early 1960s, Castro was amply experienced in plotting and ordering assassinations of adversaries. As a university student in the late 1940s, he was implicated in three or four attempts, once even seriously proposing the murder of Cuba’s president during a visit with other students to the presidential residence.<sup>[4]</sup> As a revolutionary in Mexico in 1956 he ordered his brother Raúl to execute a Cuban who was no longer trusted. Once in power in 1959, Fidel ordered many other executions and murders of foes at home and abroad. And by late 1963, as the conspiratorial czar of Cuban intelligence, he had built up one of the world’s most proficient and lethal covert capabilities.

These capacities encompassed all manner of *medidas activas* (active measures), including sophisticated disinformation campaigns devised to point the finger of suspicion for Kennedy's death anywhere but toward Havana. Within a few days of the assassination, Castro went to his speaker's platform and launched a propaganda campaign to suggest that right-wing conspirators, probably linked to the CIA, were really responsible. Later, two international conferences sponsored by Cuban intelligence pushed the same exculpatory line. Indeed, to this day the Castro regime is responsible for a ceaseless stream of books, feature articles in the controlled-Cuban press, and other publications that have one thing in common: they all attempt to pin the Kennedy assassination on a right-wing conspiracy.<sup>[5]</sup>

But explaining away Lee Harvey Oswald's Cuban connections has not been easy for Cuban intelligence. As an impressionable young Marine in California in 1958, he fantasized about going AWOL to join Castro's guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra. He hung Fidel's picture on the wall of his apartment in New Orleans. He mused about naming his unborn first child Fidel. The alias he used when he bought the assassination rifle (A. Hidell) rhymed with Fidel. He tried to talk his wife Marina into helping him hijack a plane to Cuba so he could fight for "Uncle Fidel." He read copious amounts of print propaganda about his idol and was adept at repeating it.

His infatuation with Cuba's experience filled him with hope and loathing, the hope to fight for Cuban causes and the loathing of Fidel's enemies. Inspired by the unabashed violence of Castro's revolution, Oswald took up arms himself, nearly succeeding in a murder attempt on a retired right-wing American general, Edwin A. Walker. The famous photo of Oswald dressed in black, armed with rifle and pistol, and clutching copies of Marxist magazines, probably was intended to impress Cuban officials he hoped would welcome him as a comrade-in-arms.

And, of course, there was his activism as a one-man Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans, an adoring pro-Castro radio performance there, and his week-long, still mysterious, sojourn to Mexico City where he lobbied at Castro's embassy for approval to migrate to Cuba. According to Fidel himself, as reported by an American communist who actually was a trusted FBI informant, Oswald left the embassy in late September 1963 bitterly disappointed because Cuba refused to grant him a visa. He allegedly said that he would kill Kennedy in retaliation.<sup>[6]</sup>

Earlier writers—notably Alfred H. Newman in 1970 and Jean Davison in 1983—were impressed with the evidence of Oswald's Cuba obsession and managed to offer what the Warren Commission had omitted.<sup>[7]</sup> They demonstrated convincingly that Oswald was motivated to kill Kennedy because of his attraction to the Cuban revolution and hatred of Castro's enemies. But that is where they and other scrupulous researchers have always had to stop when considering the lethal corollary of that judgment: the possibility of active Cuban government involvement with Oswald in the period leading up to the assassination.

Two congressional investigations in the 1970s looked for possible linkages but found little new. There was certainly no smoking gun. Expanding on the 1975-76 investigation by the Church Committee in the Senate, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded in 1979 that the Cuban government was not involved. Subsequently, in the 1990s, the Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB) spent years making sure that all relevant CIA and other US government records were declassified and open to the public. Not a single document from that mountain of paper has implicated Havana in any novel or persuasive way.

The absence of a last, critical link is not altogether surprising. Given the skill and discipline of Cuban intelligence (particularly in compartmenting its most sensitive operations) it has always seemed unlikely that documentary evidence, or reliable testimony by former Cuban operatives, would materialize to connect Oswald, Cuban spy services, and Fidel Castro to Kennedy's assassination. Fidel, after all, would do everything possible to be sure nothing survived that could possibly implicate him.

### Missing Dots

Yet this is the central concoction of Russo and Molton in *Brothers in Arms*. In their words, Oswald “did it with the aid and comfort of Fidel and Raúl Castro.”<sup>[8]</sup> Russo, of course, has worked the thesis before, repeatedly trying, but failing, to demonstrate that Havana was somehow responsible for what happened in Dallas. The proposition was evident in his earlier book, *Live by the Sword*, and even more so in the German and English-language documentary, *Rendezvous mit dem Tod* (*Rendezvous with Death*), that Russo produced in 2006 with Wilfried Huismann. Now, with co-author Molton, Russo presents the culmination of his decades-long quest, only to fall short again. What is claimed to be definitive evidence of a Cuban intelligence connection to Oswald simply does not stand up to scrutiny.

Numerous factual errors undermine a reader's confidence in the authors' case long before they finish making it. For example, Adolf A. Berle, Jr. was never Kennedy's assistant secretary of State for Latin America (four others rotated in and out of that post), though Berle was an influential adviser. A Cuban peasant named Eutimio Guerra did conspire against Fidel and was captured and executed, but not in the time frame or manner described in the book. Ion Mihai Pacepa was a Romanian intelligence officer, not “one of the highest-ranking KGB officers ever to defect.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Fidel did not “[lead] a unit of the Cuban Army” to attack and seize a Soviet surface-to-air missile base in eastern Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis.<sup>[10]</sup> He was at the opposite end of the island. And Bill Harvey, the legendary CIA officer of Berlin tunnel fame and assassination operations against Castro, did not have a frequently reported conversation with President Kennedy, who was supposed to have said to him, “So you are our James Bond?” Asked under oath during testimony before the Church Committee if that old canard was true, Harvey said, “Absolutely not.”<sup>[11]</sup>

More central to the book's main argument, Raúl Castro was not in charge of Cuban intelligence—neither the *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (DGI, or General Directorate of Intelligence, responsible for foreign intelligence), nor the *Dirección de Seguridad del Estado* (DSE, or Department of State Security, responsible for internal security) in the early 1960s. Both were under the command of the Minister of Interior, Raúl's most powerful rival then and in later years. Raúl did not get control of Cuban intelligence until 1989, when he had his crony Abelardo Colomé Ibarra installed as Minister of Interior. But even then, Raúl played second fiddle to Fidel, Cuba's inveterate spymaster and all-powerful overseer of clandestine operations.

Raúl ran the Cuban revolutionary armed forces (not the “Red Army”) beginning in October 1959, and, as he recently boasted, was history's longest-serving defense minister when he finally gave the portfolio to another crony in February 2008. Running the military was an enormous, demanding responsibility that allowed him no time to dabble in foreign intelligence.

His ministry, to be sure, housed important counterintelligence components and trained foreign guerrilla recruits. But once Raúl took over the management of the military, Fidel relied on other men to run intelligence operations. Ernesto “Che” Guevara, however, was never a key adviser on intelligence matters once Castro seized power. And Guevara never ran the Ministry of Interior either, as Russo and Molton believe. Fidel did not trust him sufficiently to delegate such exceptional power. And that ministry never controlled the Cuban government “for all intents and purposes” as the authors claim.[\[12\]](#)

The authors' misunderstanding of Raúl's historic role is perhaps a necessary contrivance because the premise of the book is that the four Castro and Kennedy brothers were all jousting in secret and lethal intelligence wars across the Florida Straits. But Raúl, in reality, was a minor player in such activity. Probably misunderstanding *After Fidel*, my biographical study of Raúl, who has indeed been an indispensable partner with Fidel for more than five decades, the authors exaggerate my findings.

They write, for example, that when Fidel wavered in his ideological commitments in the early years of their regime, Raúl “reeled him back in,” and similarly, that Fidel fell into ideological “line with Raúl and Che.”[\[13\]](#) The reality, though, is that Fidel has always been the dominant, controlling brother, at least until recently. He and Raúl had no doctrinal disagreements in those years, only conflicting views about how and when to assert their Marxist convictions.

Doubts about the authors' reliability are deepened by several instances of what appear to be deliberate embellishments. Co-author Molton is described as a novelist and screenwriter, and those skills are evident. One distortion was obviously intended to dab with purple a story I was the first to tell in print. In *After Fidel*, I described the execution of a Cuban in Mexico City by Raúl Castro. I wrote all I knew of that incident: that “Raúl is said to have murdered the man with cool detachment.”[\[14\]](#) My source, who heard the story directly from Raúl in Cuba, knew no more details.

But Russo and Molton have taken liberties with the story. In their version, “Raúl picked up a gun, cornered the man, and dispatched him without hesitation.”<sup>[15]</sup> There’s almost no chance that Raúl Castro has talked to the authors. I know my source has not either, and no one else outside of Cuba has first hand knowledge of the incident. The embellishment is a small one—the cornering and shooting—and all that could even be true. But these are invented details, a fiction writer’s embroidering of a story for dramatic effect.

I was pleased, as any author would be, to find that Russo and Molton rely extensively on my work, even when they do not always acknowledge it. But they have taken liberties with information presented in *After Fidel*. I have written and stated many times, as they recount, that Cuban intelligence ranks “among the four or five best anywhere in the world.” But I can’t recall writing or stating (much less insisting, as they claim) that “Fidel owes his life to Raúl, many times over.”<sup>[16]</sup> In a sense it is true because Raúl ran the armed forces so proficiently that there has never been a viable military conspiracy against his brother, and special uniformed units have ensured Fidel’s personal security. But I am at pains to recall a specific incident in which Raúl himself actually saved Fidel’s life.

Another apparently insignificant embellishment calls into question the accuracy of a larger story the authors tell. They write that “a remarkable group of senior” Cuban intelligence officers sat down for lunch together in Havana and proceeded to discuss Oswald’s visit in Mexico City.<sup>[17]</sup> This is an important juncture in their story, and to enhance the verisimilitude of the moment, Russo and Molton describe the meal these men supposedly ate. But no one who knows anything about Cuban culture and cuisine could imagine a Cuban eating both paella and yellow rice at the same sitting. For an American it would be like ordering a filet mignon and a hamburger. No source information is provided for either the imagined meal or the alleged meeting of the Cuban operatives.

The unidentified source for such a meeting—though not the menu—might be a Cuban intelligence defector who provided the US government with its first penetrating look at the DGI’s operations and personnel.<sup>[18]</sup> Vladimir Rodríguez Lahera (code-named AMMUG by the CIA) even shared second-hand information about Oswald’s visit in late September and early October 1963 to the Cuban embassy in Mexico City where he interacted with DGI officers. The authors’ claim, however, that Rodríguez also provided the “first clear confirmation” that Oswald “had probably been considered at least some sort of Cuban asset before he made his embassy threats against JFK in September.”<sup>[19]</sup> They allege, too, that Rodríguez provided information that Oswald maintained contact with the DGI after he returned to Dallas

If such a thoroughly vetted and trusted CIA source had actually reported these incriminating details, *Brothers in Arms* might have to be taken seriously in its essential claims. But documentary evidence from declassified CIA files at the National Archives flatly contradicts them. A memo dated May 8, 1964, signed by the chief of counterintelligence of the agency’s Cuba desk, quotes Rodríguez: “I have no personal knowledge of Lee Harvey OSWALD or his activities and I do not know that OSWALD

was an agent of the *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (DGI) or any other directorate or department of the Cuban government.”[\[20\]](#)

### A Cast of Dubious Characters

The startling discoveries the authors claim to present in *Brothers in Arms* take up surprisingly little space in this lengthy tome. Most of the effort, often repetitive, covers well-trod territory. Their treatments of Oswald, the Kennedy brothers, and the CIA are drawn almost entirely from familiar sources. Nothing new is revealed about Fidel Castro. And, after early appearances as an essential player, Raúl Castro all but disappears. What remains are a small number of nuggets that supposedly glow in the dark, i.e., the authors’ “evidence” of Cuban intelligence contacts with Oswald, mined from a few wildly questionable sources.

The only one of them Russo and Molton claim to have met themselves is the thoroughly discredited Antulio Ramírez Ortiz, a Puerto Rican who hijacked a plane to Cuba in 1961 and served time in prisons there and in the United States. All of his incredible claims are taken at face value: he knew Fidel and Che; eavesdropped on conversations at Cuban intelligence headquarters about killing Kennedy; and was able to slip unnoticed into sensitive archives where almost immediately he just happened to come across the dossier on Oswald. It included the notation, “Our embassy in Mexico has been instructed to get in contact with him.”[\[21\]](#) To believe Ramírez is to accept that security and compartmentation in the innermost sanctum of Cuban intelligence was no better than what a troop of Boy Scouts might devise.

“Nikolai,” ostensibly a Russian intelligence careerist, is just as suspect. The jaw-dropping information this anonymous source is said to have memorized, during unauthorized forays into Soviet intelligence archives, links Oswald to Rolando Cubela, a Cuban who was used by the CIA in an assassination plot against Fidel (more of him below). The authors had no direct contact with “Nikolai.” All of his testimony is second-hand, taken by Russo’s German filmmaking colleague Wilfried Huismann or someone acting for him. Nothing is revealed about Huismann’s investigative methods and the authors do not indicate that they made any effort to meet with “Nikolai” or independently to verify his bona fides.

We are told he was already a KGB officer in November 1963. He ascended through its ranks and those of its successor, the Russian FSB, where he was still active 42 years later, necessarily having survived uncounted upheavals in the Kremlin and its intelligence agencies. In August 2005 he met clandestinely in an Austrian mountain village with “one of the authors’ investigative partners.” They were told by the durable, stealthy “Nikolai” that he had searched “one of the most subterranean of Soviet archives” where he found “encrypted” records about Lee and Marina Oswald. (Presumably he also found the necessary decryption ciphers conveniently stored nearby).[\[22\]](#)

Moreover, “Nikolai” was able, he claimed, to read (it’s not clear how) and memorize microfilmed KGB records. Somehow, despite such access, he was never able to use a copying machine or hidden camera to reproduce documents because “the risk would be too high.”<sup>[23]</sup> Russo and Molton build much of their case on “Nikolai.” But he does not ring true. Without anything more tangible to verify his claims, even the most novice intelligence analysts would suspect he is a fabricator.

“Oscar Marino,” the alias of an alleged former Cuban intelligence officer living somewhere in Latin America, is also a key source in the authors’ bestiary. The authors don’t seem to know his true identity or much about his background. “Marino” was supposedly one of Fidel’s colleagues who fought in the urban underground of a rival revolutionary faction, and later, in 1961, was allegedly a founder of the Cuban “G2.”<sup>[24]</sup> In reality, however, Fidel never entrusted security and intelligence responsibilities to leaders and members of rival factions. And all the most important components of Cuban intelligence had been founded during the first year or so of the revolution, that is, well before 1961.

In any event, “Marino” must have rapidly moved up in its hierarchy and quickly come to enjoy Fidel’s trust because he is said to have gained access to Cuba’s most sensitive operational information by 1962. “Marino” held a position of “strategic leadership” and was regularly “apprised of all the operations in progress.” This is how he claimed to know that Cuban intelligence first initiated contact with Oswald in the fall of 1962, when “he was recruited.”<sup>[25]</sup> It was the same Rolando Cubela, fingered by “Nikolai,” who supposedly made the pitch.

But in truth, rules of compartmentation in Cuban intelligence tradecraft are strict and rigidly enforced. Aside from Fidel himself, there could not have been more than one or two other top Cuban spies who were apprised of all operations in progress. “Oscar Marino” is, therefore, as much a cipher as “Nikolai.” No one familiar with the history of the Castro era in Cuba—historians, other Cuban defectors, or knowledgeable exiles—have the slightest idea who this anonymous person might be. In Huisman and Russo’s *Rendezvous with Death* documentary “Marino” is briefly seen in profile and heard speaking a few sentences. But by his accent, he does not even sound like a Cuban.

Two other anonymous Cubans, also interviewed in Mexico City by Huisman or a representative, claim to have seen Oswald surreptitiously talking to Cuban intelligence officers at the Cuban embassy there. Both are supposedly former low level agents, although Russo and Molton say nothing of having tried independently to substantiate their allegations. “Reynoso” told contradictory stories about Oswald traveling either to Cuba or Mexico to meet with Cuban spies, and in this instance the authors prudently admit to well-founded doubts about his reliability. “Antonio,” however, is taken at his word. He claims to have been was a security guard at the Mexico City embassy in 1963 and saw Oswald talking at different times with two men he knew to be Cuban operatives.

One of those operatives was supposedly Fabián Escalante, a well-known Cuban government propagandist and ranking intelligence officer, and the son and nephew of prominent, pre-Castro Cuban communist leaders. Escalante is certainly a legitimate figure of interest in Kennedy assassination inquiries, but his periodic appearances in Russo and Molton's account don't add up to anything persuasive. Their evidence is either too flimsy or plainly preposterous to be credible.

Without citing their sources, for example, they claim Escalante was studying intelligence tradecraft at a Soviet school in Minsk when Oswald was living and working there. "It seems possible," they write "that Oswald befriended" him.[\[26\]](#) But they provide no evidence of that. They suggest that later in his career, Escalante was a regime assassin, again without providing any corroboration. In their efforts to make this prominent Cuban even more intriguing than he is, they even accept as true a ridiculous story they say appeared in a Buenos Aires newspaper in 1967. It held that Raúl Castro and Escalante were seen in neighboring Uruguay at the time of an inter-American conference attended by President Lyndon Johnson. The absurd implication is that Cuba's defense minister and Escalante were there personally plotting Johnson's murder.

But the authors' most startling and unbelievable assertions about Escalante link him to Oswald. Citing the anonymous "Antonio," they claim Escalante met surreptitiously with Oswald in Mexico City in September 1963. Citing an American source, they then assert that Escalante flew secretly to Dallas on the day of the Kennedy assassination. The [discredited Marty Underwood](#), a political advance man for Lyndon Johnson, is their sole source for the Dallas fable.[\[27\]](#) What Escalante's sinister mission in Dallas was supposed to have been is not explained. In any event, an ARRB staff member reviewed classified CIA files about Escalante, and the staffer determined there was nothing in them relevant in any way to the Kennedy assassination, much less the role that Russo and Molton have reserved for Escalante.[\[28\]](#)

Rolando Cubela, the CIA's famous AMLASH, is even more central to the authors' convoluted tale of conspiracy. "Marino" fingered him, in effect, as Oswald's Cuban case officer. By his accounting, Cubela was the first Cuban to contact Oswald, 11 months before his documented visit to Mexico City, and funneled money to him. To complicate the matter further, Cubela at the time was a trusted CIA recruit, conspiring in an assassination plot and military coup against Castro.[\[29\]](#)

The authors vacillate about whether Cubela was a Cuban double agent deceiving the Agency, yet believe an incredible tale they got indirectly from "Nikolai." Ostensibly, Oswald told Cubela of his attempt to kill Walker, the retired American general in Dallas in April 1963. That information, we are supposed to believe, Cubela soon shared with the CIA and then, through the work of a Soviet mole in Langley, it was acquired by the KGB.

It might be slightly easier to believe some of that if Russo and Molton did not make so many other verifiable errors in their treatment of Cubela. He was never "among the most trusted members of Fidel Castro's inner circle," as they allege.[\[30\]](#) He was instead a

leader of a rival revolutionary group that Fidel always sought to marginalize. Cubela did not fight in the Sierra Maestra with the Castros 26th of July Movement, but in the distant Escambray mountains with colleagues from the *Directório Revolucionário Estudantil* (DRE or Revolutionary Student Directorate).

He was not an army major general, a rank that has never existed in the Castros' military. He did not assassinate a military leader of the old dictatorship in 1956 "on Fidel's orders," because his group operated independently of Castro. Nor did Cubela "[stare] into [Che Guevara's] eyes" in February 1966 after being arrested for conspiring with the CIA.<sup>[31]</sup> Guevara was in hiding in Prague until that July, an interlude between his failed guerrilla adventures in the Congo and Bolivia. And in what language does one imagine Oswald and Cubela communicated? Neither spoke the other's native tongue beyond a few words and phrases.

The language barrier is not the least of many reasons why Cubela would never have been chosen as Oswald's case officer, if in fact there ever was one. Cubela was a novice at intelligence tradecraft, and an emotionally unstable one at that. Besides, someone from outside the Castro regime's inner sanctum would never have been entrusted with such an extraordinarily sensitive mission. The single most telling reason, however, is the fourth and last one. If Cubela was, in fact, a double agent working for Fidel, he would have had his hands full double-dealing the CIA and pretending to be its assassin, and in the process, exposing and betraying to state security other Cubans willing to conspire against the regime. Mixing up such a crucial set of missions with a simultaneous covert relationship with Oswald would never have been contemplated by Cuba's intelligence masterminds.

There is no doubt that Oswald had contact with one or more Cuban intelligence officers at the Cuban embassy in Mexico City during his visit there weeks before the assassination. But Russo and Molton abuse the common sense of informed readers in the tales they invent about both Escalante and Cubela.

Fidel Castro, and perhaps one or two other surviving Cuban leaders, have never told all they know about Oswald's visit to their embassy. And they may also know a lot more about the Kennedy assassination than has ever been revealed.

But *Brothers in Arms* does not do anything credible to fill that void.

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[1] Gus Russo, *Live by the Sword: The Secret War Against Castro and the Death of JFK* (Baltimore, MD: Bancroft Press, 1998).

[2] Daniel Harker, "[Castro Blasts Raids on Cuba](#)," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 9 September 1963. Russo and Molton, relying on Daniel Schorr, add that Castro also made an explicit threat against the president and attorney general: "Let Kennedy and his brother Robert take care of themselves since they too can be the victims of an attempt which will cause *their* death." Schorr's source was a [passage from the Church Committee report](#) that briefly mentioned a late November 1963 press release by a "former Cuban diplomat."

That former diplomat was Dr. Emilio Núñez Portuondo, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations until Castro seized power in January 1959. At the time of the assassination, Núñez Portuondo was living in exile in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. *El Universal*, one of the leading newspapers in Mexico City, asked him for his opinion about the assassination and he quickly prepared an analysis that was delivered to the newspaper by an old colleague, a former official of the Batista regime living in Mexico City. The analysis was published as a front-page "exclusive" to *El Universal* on November 25.

The gist of Núñez Portuondo's speculation was that the assassination was in keeping with Communist doctrine, and that Castro was the "[intellectual murderer of President Kennedy](#)." Specifically, Núñez Portuondo claimed that Castro, using the language cited above, had threatened the Kennedy brothers when he visited the Brazilian embassy on 7 September 1963, during an impromptu speech/press conference that was the basis for Harker's AP article. But the quote Núñez Portuondo attributed to Castro did not appear in any published version of Harker's article and must be regarded as apocryphal—part and parcel of a transparent effort to blame Castro by a Cuban exile bitterly opposed to his rule. Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 295; Daniel Schorr, *Clearing the Air* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 165; US Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Final Report, Book V: The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Performance of the Intelligence Agencies* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), [41](#); Testimony of Carlos Bringuier, Warren Commission Hearings, Volume X, [48](#); UPI, "Cuban Seized for Activity in 'Kennedy Plot,'" *Chicago Tribune*, 27 November 1963; "John Kennedy y su Hermano sí Pueden ser Víctimas de un Atentado, Amenazó Castro," *El Universal* (Mexico City), 25 November 1963.

[3] In point of fact, the FBI apprehended Cuban agents in the fall of 1962 and charged them with conspiring to carry out acts of sabotage in case war broke out over the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Milton Bracker, "2 Cuban Attachés Leave for Mexico," *New York Times*, 20 November 1962.

[4] Castro urged fellow students to join him in murdering President Ramón Grau San Martín by throwing him off the balcony of the presidential palace. See Brian Latell, [After](#)

## Washington Decoded

[Fidel: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader](#) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87.

[5] See, for example, Reuters, "[Cuban Talks of Conspiracy in Kennedy Killing](#)," *New York Times*, 28 November 1993; Fabián Escalante, [JFK: The Cuba Files, The Untold Story of the Plot to Kill Kennedy](#) (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2006); Gabriel Molina, "[The CIA Nostra](#)," *Granma International*, 21 November 2008.

[6] John Barron, [Operation Solo: The FBI's Man in the Kremlin](#) (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1996), 113.

[7] Alfred H. Newman, *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: The Reasons Why* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970); Jean Davison, *Oswald's Game* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983).

[8] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 237.

[9] *Ibid.*, 299.

[10] *Ibid.*, 214.

[11] *Ibid.*, 106. [Testimony of William K. Harvey](#) before the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 11 July 1975, RIF 157-10011-10053, Kennedy Assassination Records Collection, National Archives.

[12] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 104.

[13] *Ibid.*, 56.

[14] Latell, *After Fidel*, 51.

[15] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 29.

[16] *Ibid.*, 140-141.

[17] *Ibid.*, 400.

[18] A large volume of CIA records about Rodríguez were declassified in the 1990s and deposited at the National Archives following reviews by the Assassination Records Review Board.

[19] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 403.

[20] "[Debriefing of AMMUG on the Oswald Case](#)," 8 May 1964, RIF 104-10054-10441, Kennedy Assassination Records Collection, National Archives.

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- [21] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 136, 140, 187-188.
- [22] *Ibid.*, 6-7, 163.
- [23] *Ibid.*, 184.
- [24] *Ibid.*, 185-186.
- [25] *Ibid.*, 186, 224.
- [26] *Ibid.*, 69.
- [27] Max Holland, "[The Underwood Hoax](#)," *Washington Decoded*, 11 December 2008.
- [28] Jeremy Gunn e-mail, 15 December 2008.
- [29] "[CIA Inspector General's Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro](#)," 23 May 1967, RIF 104-10213-10101, Kennedy Assassination Records Collection, National Archives.
- [30] Russo and Molton, *Brothers in Arms*, 11.
- [31] *Ibid.*, 30-31, 428-429.