

THE CUBAN PROGRAM

Maltreatment of U.S. POWs in North Vietnam, 1967-68

CUBA'S MOST WANTED

CAPTURED

Rube Waddell





Jay Cobb and Rosa determine that 'Fidel', Amarales Pardo, and Lt.Col. Miguel Fuentes are the same person. Jay and Rosa enjoyed planning with the DEA, both working with the Mexican Government, to capture or force 'Fidel' to leave Mexico.

Cuba's Most Wanted

by Rube Waddell

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**'The Cuban Program'
North Vietnam 1967-1968**

Maltreatment Of American POWs

CUBA'S MOST WANTED

**By
Rube Waddell**

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Title: "Cuba's Most Wanted"

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“Cuba's Most Wanted” Book #3

FOREWORD

It is history now! Most Americans will not remember the date of 12 February 1973, but there are millions of American servicemen, past and present, who will. That is the day the First C-141 lifted into the sky over Gia Lam Airfield in North Vietnam and began bringing home 591 military brothers who had suffered years in captivity in Hanoi prisons. This was "Operation Homecoming"! It was the end of the nightmarish incarceration of our American Prisoners of War in SEAsia.

This event will undoubtedly continue to fade from the world's memory. However, the tales of horror at the hands of Cuban interrogators must always be remembered. Not until our returnees began speaking of the brutality, torture, maiming, death and disappearance of some service members did we even begin to take notice.

During the period of 1967 through 1968, two groups of ten men were singled out to be in "The Cuban Program". This program was begun in order to display to the North Vietnamese an array of methods designed to bring POWs into submission and obtain military intelligence. Its implementation was under the direction of the Cuban leader American POWs referred to as 'Fidel'. There were two other Cubans the Americans referred to as 'Chico' and 'Garcia', whose purpose was to teach the techniques of "terror-style" interrogation and torture to the North Vietnamese. These were proven methods used against anti-Castro dissidents in Cuba to gain dominance over, and submission of, prisoners. This is not to say the North Vietnamese didn't use similar methods.

The FBI, CIA, DIA, DOD and the U.S. Congress, have made unsuccessful attempts to find the identities of these three Cubans. Since 1973, when "The Cuban Program" was first exposed, until 1998-99, no U.S. Agency had confirmed the identities of these men. Accusations of 'foot dragging' and concealing information, has been leveled at all U.S. Agencies for their apparent lack of determination, but the well quoted response is that, "International and Diplomatic concerns have to be weighed against the eventual outcome".

A Puerto Rican news magazine, *El Veraz*, published an article, "***Torturadores Cubanos en Vietnam***" in which three men were identified as the torturers of the American POWs in Vietnam. The same article displayed a photo and three composite artist sketches of 'Fidel', 'Chico' and 'Garcia'. The names of the three individuals identified in the article as the torturers are Fernando Vecino Alegret, Eduardo Morejon Esteves and Luis Perez Jaen. The photos are displayed for your consideration.

El Presidente Fidel Castro of Cuba is on the record as stating that retired General Fernando Vecino Alegret was never in North Vietnam. However, the syndicated columnist who first identified Fernando Vecino had intercepted orders from the Castro regime ordering Vecino to North Vietnam in 1967. Vecino is presently serving in Cuba as the Minister of Higher Education, and also the author of numerous books. Records show that Eduardo Morejon Estevez was assigned as the Assistant Military Attache to North Vietnam during the period 1967 through 1968. The connection of Luis Perez Jaen to 'The Cuban Program' has neither been confirmed nor denied by any U.S. Agency.

In North Vietnam, the Cuban Embassy-65 Ly Thuong Kiet, Hanoi, lists the names of the Military Attache's from Cuba during 1967-1968 being:

Manuel Bravo Yanes, Capt.	Military Attache
Eduardo Morejon Estevez	Assistant Attache
Guillermo Frank Yanes	Assistant Attache
Jose Milan Santana	Air Attache

By listing these names the hope is that the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam might possibly research records through the 1967 – 1968 time frame, and make an official connection to support or deny the claim that individuals from the Cuban Embassy in North Vietnam, during the war, were involved in "The Cuban Program".

As time progresses, those returnees who withstood the utmost inhumane methods at the hands of the Cubans, will begin to forget these atrocities and allow themselves to take on the normal enjoyment of 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness'. Those with life-long infirmities, physical disabilities and/or mental traumatic stress will not so easily forget, their nightmares will take decades to even begin to fade. The U.S. Government and all Agencies must be persistent in order to bring truth and justice, and to pointedly

reaffirm to all future fighting men that being imprisoned as a POW will never again have permanent or serious consequences.

As a past U.S. Serviceman and Air Force pilot, I cringe at the vision of being shot down and becoming a POW. I fear I would betray myself and my country by giving way to such harsh treatment just to keep my sanity. No fighting man should have that fear placed on his shoulders. He should know the U.S. Government, his government, will pursue with absolute vigor any and all efforts to bring justice to those monsters engaging in such brutal atrocities.

This book is a work of fiction. It shows how one man's persistence brought about the identification U.S. Agencies could not. The purpose is to focus a continuing light on "The Cuban Program". The men who endured such brutal treatment don't seek sympathy. They simply want to know what they endured was not in vain. They deserve to know who their torturing interrogators were, and what action the U.S. Government must take to resolve the many secrets of "The Cuban Program". This frightening past will remain a disturbing mystery in their lives, and will never end until the individuals dubbed, 'Fidel', 'Chico' and 'Garcia' have been positively identified.

PROLOGUE

“Wait!” Rosa silenced the discussion Jay Cobb and Ramon Avila were having after landing at the Cancun International Airport. They sat inside the DEA jet aircraft, steaming over their failed attempt to arrest Raphael Pardo, Benetez Aguillar, and the governor of the State of Quintana Roo, Mexico. All were disgusted and completely confused about what the next steps should be.

Rosa's loud tone filled the plane's cabin. “We made an assumption two days ago and told the world that Raphael Pardo was, in fact, Miguel Fuentes. As it turned out, we were right.” Rosa paused as she got their undivided attention. “Listen, Jay found Pardo's limosine at his docking site near Majahual.” Rosa was strong and positive. “So...maybe it's time we made another assumption. We should assume Fuentes is on that fuel barge going to Cuba. If that's true, we have essentially done our job! Fuentes is out of Mexico.” She spoke directly to Ramon. “Listen, if you're going to send a message to your agency, you should suggest a follow-on action!”

Ramon Avila asked. “What kind of action do I suggest?”

Rosa quickly answered, “Tell them Fuentes is on the fuel barge and Cuba is the most likely destination. That's what I'm going to tell my boss at CIA. He needs to know Fuentes is on his way back to Cuba on a fuel barge with twenty-seven thousand gallons of black market gasoline, and fifty kilos of cocaine, so he can find a way to ‘back-channel’ the information to the Cuban Government. We all know how much Castro hates any kind of illicit drugs coming into his country and he'll make certain the fuel barge is met and stopped at the wharf in *La Bajada*.”

Sending the message to her boss via the Quantum 50 communications installed in the aircraft, Rosa began. By separate channel, she sent another message to the Swiss Embassy in Havana to the attention of the Station Chief, U.S. Interests Section in Havana, requesting the Department of Security Chief be made aware of the imminent arrival of Miguel Fuentes the next morning at approximately 11:00 a.m. She additionally

stated that a Cessna Citation jet aircraft, belonging to the DEA, would be 'shadowing' the fuel barge, and she would advise of the barge's final destination as soon as it was confirmed. The agents aboard the DEA aircraft desired nothing more than to be in on the arrest.

Rosa knew her message was most important and all she could do was to cross her fingers and hope that Lt. Col. Hernandez, the DSE Chief, would get the message, remember Miguel Fuentes and make a determined effort to complete the arrests. With the messages sent forward, the only thing to do was wait.

After waiting in the aircraft for two and a half hours, the response Rosa waited for finally arrived. TO COBRA: STATION CHIEF, US INTERESTS SECTION IN HAVANA WITH CUBAN AGREEMENT APPROVES YOUR ARRIVAL AT JOSE MARTI AIRPORT. DSE DIRECTOR, LT. COL. JULIO HERNANDEZ AGREES TO MEET YOU AND ALLOW YOU TO BE IN ON THE FINAL ARREST OF LT. COL. MIGUEL FUENTES. AS SOON AS YOU CONFIRM THE DESTINATION OF FUENTES, ADVISE THIS OFFICE WITH THE INFORMATION AND IT WILL BE FORWARDED TO US INTEREST SECTION. GOOD LUCK: WILLIAM OSBOURNE, DDO LATIN AFFAIRS, CIA, LANGLEY, VA.

"Yes!" Rosa shouted out! "It's approved. We're going to Cuba!"

The DEA Cessna Citation, filled with passionate passengers, took-off from Mexico to 'shadow' the fuel barge and eventually land at the Jose Marti Airport in Havana, Cuba.

The next morning Lt. Col. Hernandez, four police officers, Ramon Avila, Rosa and Jay waited in quiet anticipation behind the wharf dockside, in the hamlet of *La Bajada* in the western most Province of *Pinar Del Rio*. They waited, as patiently as possible, for the fuel barge to be secured before advancing, but as soon as the hawser lines were slung over the dock pilings and the crew secured the barge, the waiting officers jumped into action.

Four men in battle dress utility clothing with side arms drawn, captured the two crewmen and placed them in handcuffs. The DSE Chief with Ramon, Rosa and Jay

swarmed onto the barge and raced up the stairs to the bridge, thrilled to be arresting Miguel Fuentes and bringing the frustration to an end. But after a thorough search, Fuentes was nowhere to be found.

All the Cuban DSE Chief and the others could do was stand in amazed silence. Why? Why was this four hour trip to *La Bajada* not successful? The chorus of sighs were heavy; either the information had been wrong or their assumption had, once again, led them astray.

Lt. Col. Hernandez returned the disappointed agents to the Jose Marti Airport and the DEA Cessna Citation was cleared for the flight back to Mexico. As the pilots waited for clearance and readied the aircraft, Ramon Avila, Rosa and Jay sat quietly in their frustration. Miguel Fuentes had slipped away again.

The communications officer closed the step ramp and the pilot pushed the throttles forward to begin taxiing. An odd sight met their eyes as they stared down at a lone ground crewman running in front of the aircraft to signal the pilots to stop. When the aircraft was braked to a stop, the ground crewman externally plugged into the aircraft intercom to pass a message, a message from the DSE Chief advising Rosalita Gutierrez to disembark. She would be staying in Cuba.

Rosa received the information from the communications officer who spoke directly into her ear to be heard above the engine noise. Perplexed, she casually exited down the step ramp and walked toward the DSE van to get clarification. The step ramp was closed, and the pilot added power to continue taxiing. Hearing the engine noise increase, Rosa quickly turned around. The feelings of complete shock and disbelief flooded her as she realized that the aircraft was leaving and she wasn't onboard. Rosa tried to get the attention of the pilots but to no avail, she even ran along beside the aircraft in a frantic effort to stop the plane from continuing.

Jay looked out to see the confused terror in Rosa's face, and jumped up from his seat and rushed toward the cockpit.

"Stop this plane...stop it right now!" Jay reached for the throttles to pull off the power, but the co-pilot grabbed Jay's hand. The moment was surreal. Jay could not believe what was happening.

Jay looked out the co-pilot's window and watched as Rosa stood on the tarmac with both hands holding her hair tightly to the side of her head, shocked and in sheer panic. Tears streamed down her cheeks as Rosa frantically searched the passenger windows looking for Jay. With the aircraft leaving Jay would be gone forever. Her heart sank deep within her chest and all she could feel was the frighteningly cold feeling of being all alone.

Suddenly the pilot braked the aircraft to a stop and shut down the right engine. The step ramp opened, Rosa ran as fast as she could up the steps. Jay moved toward the entry way and met Rosa. They grabbed each other like it was their last moment together on earth. Rosa held him tightly in her grasp, unwilling to let go.

Jay announced to Ramon Avila, "I'm getting off, too!"

"You can't get off here!" Ramon strongly objected.

"Why the hell not? I'm getting off this plane whether anyone likes it or not!"

Jay's voice overshadowed the objection as he collected his belongings. With a bag in each hand, he started walking off the plane. Rosa grabbed the smallest one for comfort. If she could carry just one of his bags off the plane, somehow that was her reassurance he would be staying. Her smile finally returned. At last they would be together for one last time. Amid the mumbled laughter and the happy tears, Rosa and Jay exited the aircraft.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In my book, 'Crying Blood', I used numerous sources for information. One of the most intriguing and shocking stories was that of Michael D. Benge. His tale of survival found a special place in my thoughts. As I was preparing to write this final novel regarding "The Cuban Program", I again reviewed my material and for a second time was totally absorbed by this man's hardships during the war in SEAsia. He was in Vietnam in 1963, long before most of us knew about, or expected, a war in this small Asian country. He was serving our country in the International Voluntary Services (IVS), a service which became The Peace Corps.

During the Tet offensive in January 1968, Michael Benge was captured by the North Vietnamese Army in South Vietnam and until December 1969 was marched through South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam to his ultimate POW status in Hanoi. He endured cerebral malaria, dysentery, malnutrition, beri-beri, scurvy, leeches, fungus infection, jungle ulcers and pyorrhea...loosening his teeth and infecting his gums. He buried his friends as they died during their trek northward.

He was confined in several POW camps in Hanoi. Michael Benge was not a part of "The Cuban Program"; however he was interrogated by the man dubbed as "Fidel" and "The Lump" while in another camp. I acknowledge Michael Benge because he was my inspiration. Anytime I felt a need for a 'kick' to move forward, I would go back and re-read his story.

After our men returned in "Operation Homecoming", Mike became an activist for POW/MIA Affairs. In October 1999 Mike wrote a paper for the National Alliance of Families titled, "Cuban War Crimes Against American POWs During the Vietnam War", and through his research he was able to identify one of the torturers as Major Fernando Vecino Alegret. On November 4, 1999 he was asked to testify before the House International Relations Committee at which time he produced a photo of Major Vecino. His fellow POWs who were in "The Cuban Program" and present at the Hearings also positively identified Major Fernando Vecino Alegret as "Fidel", their chief torturer.

I eventually contacted Mike Benge, I wanted to know what makes such men the survivors they become. To my chagrin, Mike is once again fighting for survival; undergoing surgery and chemo therapy to win his new battle. He is seventy-six years old and says, "I went through hell as a POW and I can handle this!" This is a man I pray for and each of you should join me.

Col. Donald R. Waddell, USAF Ret.

CHAPTER I

Rosa remained teary-eyed as she and Jay entered the awaiting DSE white Toyota van at the Jose Marti Airport. The Cuban Department of Security vehicle was assigned to drive them to the Swiss Embassy building on Calle 'L' in the Vedado suburbs of Havana. Rosa's duties in the Embassy as the U.S. Interests Section consular representative would resume, and continue to be her cover. Immediately she instructed the driver to take them to the airport terminal area for a Customs Inspection. She knew it would be far less troublesome to get Jay into the country legally, and it would help his departure back to the States.

Jay and Rosa carried the two suitcases through the inspection lanes. Due to their fast and unexpected departure from Mexico, all of Rosa's belongings were left behind. Entering the customs inspection lanes, Rosa was shocked to see Carlos Rodriguez acting as a Department of Security (DSE) representative overlooking the inspection lanes. Rosa attempted to hide her surprise and offered a subtle, casual nod to Carlos. When their eyes met, surprise registered in his gaze, as well. This was definitely unexpected, and he inconspicuously returned her glance.

The DSE is the primary Cuban Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of the Interior. It was standard procedure for the Ministry to randomly assign an agent to spot-check custom inspection activities in the airport terminal. Carlos had been assigned these tasks for the day and stood immediately behind the two inspectors.

Carlos Rodriguez was a CIA undercover agent, who had successfully infiltrated the Cuban Department of Security four years earlier. He knew Rosa; the two attended a training seminar at Quantico together before being assigned to Cuba. Each had different assignment roles, but the two met frequently around Havana.

Jay stared at Carlos. He knew his face looked familiar but couldn't remember why. Jay's lack of identifying Carlos left him slightly uneasy but he didn't let it be disturbing.

Rosa, in an attempt to display some importance to the customs inspectors, greeted Carlos in fluent Spanish. Rosa and Carlos walked across the room to an isolated corner where they could talk.

"It's good to see you Carlos." Rosa said in a low whispery tone. "Can you bring me up to speed about the situation here in Havana?"

Carlos nodded. "Things are pretty much the same as they were when you left. I'm still in deep cover and no one suspects a thing. Within the DSE, the situation has greatly improved since Lt. Col. Miguel Fuentes left the country. Dissidents are no longer being persecuted; the wealthy elite aren't being harassed and no one has had their property confiscated." Carlos paused, searching the room for anyone too close to their conversation. "Law enforcement is about the same, too. CDR's, (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) remain the backbone of peace keeping in each community. The black market of hard-to-get goods still flourishes. Petit theft has tripled in three years because Castro's communism isn't working and the lower economic class has to do something to survive. I can see some change in the atmosphere within the government. Castro still hates the U.S. and carries a hard-line on drugs and drug offenders."

He sighed. "Corruption within government has been raising its ugly head in the past two years, though. Castro has leaned toward capitalism to bolster his bad economy by allowing Foreign Investors to build mega resorts in places like Matanzas Province, with its white sandy beaches, in the Varadero peninsula. Castro needs the tourist dollars for the economy. He envisions having a "Cuban Cancun" eventuating in a positive money flow. The European investors are bribing government officials and it's getting way out of hand. There's now a crack-down on bribery, and the stage is set for someone like Fuentes to bring back organized crime just like the Mafia did during the Batista era.

The country is changing but very slowly."

Rosa's brain began to overload with all this current information. "What about you, Carlos? Are you still searching for maltreatment of dissident prisoners and making the rounds of all the prison facilities?"

“Oh, Yes! I still visit prison facilities as much as I can. But they are so scattered about, that getting to those in the far reaches of the island usually takes all day. Most of the time, I have to go on my days off. Why do you ask?”

“Have you ever heard of the Taino Prison in the Pinar del Rio Province?”

“Yes!” He paused to analyze her question. “That prison was closed many years ago, because that area is under populated. Why?”

It was Rosa's turn to check that the conversation was still private. Her voice grew even lower. “We just came from there. I met a man named Ormos Viega Esperanza, he was imprisoned in the Taino prison along with eight others. He thinks Lt. Col. Miguel Fuentes is still the Chief of DSE and he told us that Fuentes was there last night with fifty pounds of cocaine. Esperanza also said that the product was repackaged into two once finger-wraps for Fuentes to resell and distribute.”

Carlos attempted not to show alarm but was completely dumbfounded at hearing this information. “You've got to be kidding! Are you saying Fuentes is back in the country and carrying out illegal drug operations?”

“Shuhh!” Rosa warned. “That's exactly what I'm saying, and he's using those eight prisoners in Taino Prison as his own personal lackeys. He's also involved in the black market of gasoline. We followed a barge, with Fuentes on board, that was carrying at least 30,000 gallons of gasoline into *La Bajada*. Tanker trucks were there waiting to off-load the fuel. Carlos, that arrangement has been going on for some time. His illegal activities have never stopped. Your boss, Lt. Col. Julio Hernandez, was there with us. He spoke with Senor Esperanza and witnessed the Taino Prison. He knows about the illegal activities.”

Carlos' heart skipped a few beats. He tried not to show concern. “Well...I guess we will all be alerted to be on the lookout for Miguel Fuentes. What about the eight other prisoners? Are they still there in Taino Prison?”

Rosa shook her head. “No! Hernandez ordered a prison vehicle from *San Juan Y Martinez* to come and collect the eight prisoners. I assume they were taken back there.”

“What about Fuentes? Where do you think he is?” Carlos was more than curious.

“My guess, right now, he's still in the vicinity of *La Bajada* and *Playa Marie La Gorda*. We could really use your help!”

Rosa pointed to Jay. "See the man going through customs inspection? His name is Emanuel Jay Cobb."

Carlos stared across the room at the 6' 2" individual wearing a blue broadcloth, button-down collar shirt with khaki pants. His mind suddenly clicked into gear. "Oh, hell yes!" He declared. "I remember him from three years ago. We had to chase you both out of Cuba. Is he still mad at me? What I had to do was to get both of you to leave Cuba, or else you both would have been arrested. Fuentes was the boss back then, you and your friend were about to be put in jail and the key thrown away. I'm really glad you escaped!" He smiled.

Rosa casually commented, "We're both back and still trying to track down Fuentes. We chased him out of Mexico where he was a big crime boss. I swear to you, that man has millions stashed away in the U.S. and is probably carrying several million with him along with the fifty kilos of cocaine he had the Taino prisoners to repackage. Fuentes was operating in Mexico under the alias of Raphael Pardo, who we killed in Majagua. He might continue using that name here, but I suspect he'll develop a new identity. He knows he has to disappear, and we've got to get after him before his trail gets cold and he successfully disappears." She raised an eyebrow. "Can you get a vehicle and drive us to *La Bajada*? We have to get after Fuentes as soon as possible."

"I have tomorrow off. I think I can get a DSE vehicle for the day for prison inspections." Carlos thought a moment. "It's about a three or four hour drive to the peninsula, so let's plan on departing Havana between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. Are you still in the U.S. Interests Section like before?"

Rosa nodded. "I, at least, hope so! I can only assume that's where we'll be staying. If not, I'll leave a message with the receptionist in the lobby. If at all possible, we'll be ready and waiting at the North entrance." Rosa turned to see if Jay was finished. "Thanks Carlos!" Rosa casually strolled back to Jay's location.

Jay had finished going through customs and had gathered his bags waiting impatiently for Rosa to finish her conversation.

When Jay was settled into his seat in the white van, he turned to Rosa. "Who was the guy you were talking to? I think I've seen him before, but can't remember where."

She whispered. "I'll tell you later. The driver can listen to anything we say." Rosa knew Carlos as a brother agent, code name 'Copperhead', and she needed to protect his cover, no matter what.

The driver was very accommodating to Rosa and Jay as they traveled from the Jose Marti Airport to the Swiss Embassy building at the end of Calle 'L', along the wide waterfront seawall boulevard known as the Malecon.

The Swiss Embassy building, prior to the Fidel Castro take-over from the Batista regime, was the U.S. Embassy. The building and grounds remained the property of the U.S. Government but functioned under the legal presence of the Swiss. As such, the Interest Section continued to function in low level diplomatic interactions between the U.S. and Cuba serving mostly in consular affairs. Rosa's tasks in the U.S. Interests Section were mostly consular.

Jay had the urge to reacquaint himself with Havana and asked the driver to take a ride through the University of Havana area. The University was one of the first locations his visiting group of tourists had scheduled for orientation and conversational Spanish classes three years earlier. It was also the beginning of his investigation to locate Pardo and Fuentes. Now he'd returned, still tracking Miguel Luis Fuentes.

Rosa was thrilled and ecstatic over being back in Cuba after sitting behind a desk for three years. This time her visit was by 'invitation' from the Cuban Department of Security, and this made her arrival even sweeter. Watching the scenery, Rosa was brimming with enthusiasm.

Local time was approaching 6:00 p.m., and they hadn't eaten since the early afternoon snack at the airport. Both were starving but way more interested in Havana than in quenching their appetites. When the driver stopped in front of the Swiss Embassy building, Jay and Rosa remained in their seats; neither wanted to move. Sitting there and enjoying the panoramic view of the beautiful azure blue waters of the Straits of Florida allowed the two to finally take in a full breath of fresh air and realize the real beauty of Cuba. But several minutes of sitting quietly and searching the horizons, time raced by and both reluctantly exited the vehicle carrying Jay's two suitcases, a little more rested from their brief moments of peace.

It was like a time warp to Rosa. She had been away for three years but nothing had changed. As a tenant, she was never too involved with the low level Foreign Service Officers working in the consular section on the first floor. As she walked through the marbled corridor and peered into every open door, her idea that nothing had changed was reinforced. It was after business hours but a few conscientious employees remained at their desks, busily catching up from another hectic day. Passing by the second door, Rosa pointed out to Jay where her desk had been located three years earlier. She told him how her cover scenario required her to have an important desk within the U.S. Interests Section, and her assigned task was '*Asistencia al Viajero*' - to assist U.S. citizens in distress. She reminded Jay how she'd been contacted by his travel group leader to keep him out of trouble.

The consular section on the bottom floor was staffed by career American Foreign Service Officers, many of which were dual citizens of the U.S. and Cuba. Rosa thought she should seek out the mission chief and introduce herself, as was required by protocol, so she stood before the information directory to locate the name of the U.S. State Department Station Chief. The name listed was Evanston B. Harrington, III Esq. Rosa's smile slowly formed at the corners of her mouth, and she quickly turned away before she burst out in embarrassing laughter. The lengthy name struck her whimsical side. For the first time in over a month, Rosa finally had something amusing in her hectic life.

They walked straight to the elevator and went to the third floor bypassing the second and the Station Chief's Office. She wasn't ready for any action or reaction out of the Station Chief. Rosa didn't hold State Department representatives in high esteem. Many were appointees with high social standing in the diplomatic hierarchy and none were picked for their heart-felt dedication to 'Foreign Service'. A stop-in visit was essential, but she wanted to wait until she had the opportunity to clean up a bit. More importantly, Rosa hoped her headquarters had sent all the preliminary documentation to the Station Chief announcing her arrival, and previewing her assigned tasks and cover level.

A third floor apartment had once been her home and she longed to see it again. Being unannounced and without any keys for entry, Rosa fully expected to locate

someone from the maintenance staff, find an empty residence, and get inside. But when they arrived on the third floor, it was totally vacant.

Rosa went to the door of her previous residence. It was locked as expected, and there was no one around. Rosa's mind conjured a memory from three years earlier. She remembered hiding extra keys. One key had been under her doormat, but there was no doormat anymore. The other key she'd placed in one of the two huge, green silk imitation house plants in the hallway. The key still hung on the trunk of the plant. Three years ago, her sudden and scary departure with Jay hadn't allowed her the luxury of packing properly, and she had to leave all her belongings behind. Being back and holding the key to her door, Rosa was reluctant to unlock it fearing someone else might be living there, but her curiosity got the best of her.

Rosa knocked loudly on the door and waited before unlocking the door. She then pushed it open very slowly. Standing at the threshold, Rosa breathed a sigh of relief. The apartment was exactly as she'd left it. The memories instantly returned.

"Come on in Jay. I think I'm home...again!" Rosa walked in and continued to search each and every item, becoming truly enthusiastic as she remembered it all. Every time she saw a particular item she blurted out, "Look. It's just like I left it!"

Jay dropped his bags in the middle of the floor and sat down, watching as Rosa wandered through her old apartment making new declarations item by item. Her apartment, during the U.S. Embassy years, had served as two offices. The floors were tiled with twelve-inch white marble squares, the waist-high wainscoting was of white marble slabs, and the lighting that drenched the two rooms came from expensive chandeliers, elegant but cold. A 9 X 12 foot throw rug seemed to be the only attempt at warmth in an otherwise 'office-like' atmosphere.

Rosa walked into the adjoining room which served as her bedroom. Her eyes surveyed the surroundings as she casually opened the closet door. All her clothing, displaying a good amount of dust balls, was arranged exactly as it had been three years earlier. She pulled out a hanger holding an off-shoulder-top and a very short mini-skirt, and carried it into the living room where Jay was sitting. Holding it high she asked, "Do you remember this?"

Jay stared at the outfit. "No, I don't remember it."

She grinned. "This is the outfit I wore the first night we met in the bar."

"Oh, Yes." Jay grinned back. "That night I was so glad you showed up. But...I thought you were a prostitute and didn't think about anything beyond getting out of that bar. I was very cautious with you, expecting to be 'had' in some manner. You saved me from those two goons that were following me." A smile formed on his face as he remembered.

Rosa laughed. "That's why I was sent there. I had to intercede to keep you out of trouble. My role as a 'jinitera', a lady of the night, was a charade."

Jay acknowledged with surprise. "Do you know what I remember the most?" He didn't wait for an answer. "I remember you the next day walking down the street towards me. We were meeting to eat at a 'paladares'. I didn't know it was you, but, I knew I was looking at the most beautiful woman in the world. You were so fashionably dressed, walking with your hands in the small pockets of your wrap-around dress...the breeze blowing through your hair. When you got closer I realized it was you, and my mind went crazy. It was impossible to believe you were a 'street walker'. From that time on, I was delighted to have you with me. You were... 'are'...absolutely gorgeous."

"Well, thank you. A woman always likes compliments."

Rosa went back into the bedroom and handled nearly every piece of clothing in her closet. Each piece held a separate memory that flashed through her mind. After almost ten minutes of 'memory lane' Rosa closed the closet doors and wandered through the adjoining bathroom. A toothbrush with dried and curled bristles, a soap dish with the cracked remnant of a cake of soap, an unused towel hanging on the rack, and numerous make-up items remained on the counter, all had been undisturbed for three years.

Rosa returned to the living room and looked at Jay. "I feel like I've never left. Everything is just as I left it. I expected this space to be used for some other purpose. Fate...it has to be fate! Someone knew I would return." She declared, emphatically. "I always kept a key under the rug in front of the door, but the rug was gone. I believed someone else was living here. But clearly, no one has been in here since we escaped. Hell...Just look at all the dust!" She grinned. "This is still my apartment."

Another thought raced into her mind. Walking back into her bedroom to a five foot chest of drawers, Rosa opened one and pulled out her passport and a small Saturday-

night special .22 caliber automatic handgun. Holding them both in her hands, she raced back to Jay. "Look!" These items were her final reassurance that someone had fully expected her to return. Or no one in the system did their job of correctly handling matters when an agent disappears.

Returning to the bedroom Rosa placed the items back in the drawer. Compelled to further explore, she immediately opened each of the remaining drawers and rifled through them. Completely satisfied she needed nothing, Rosa returned to Jay and sat on the couch beside him.

She queried Jay. "You said before that I saved you from those two goons in the bar. Do you remember that incident?" She waited for him to acknowledge her question. "Those were the same two men who met you and your travel group at the airport when you arrived and they followed you anytime you came out of the hotel. Remember?"

Jay nodded, but his recollection wasn't as clear as Rosa's.

She continued, "I picked you up in the bar just before they came in. I had a heated discussion with them and then you and I escaped through a rear exit."

"Yes...I remember that," Jay said.

"Then do you remember me talking to a man wearing sunglasses as you went through customs at the airport, just two hours ago?"

Jay nodded. "I thought I recognized him."

"That was Carlos Rodriguez. He's an undercover agent for us who infiltrated the DSE four years ago."

Jay's eyes lit up. "Yes!" He declared, emphatically. "I remember him now. He helped us get away when all of the DSE was looking for us. I should have remembered and thanked him at the airport."

"No! You should not have remembered him. He's in deep cover and recognizing him could have blown his status. Keep that in mind. We still need him to be undercover."

Rosa pulled her legs up under herself into the soft cushions of the couch, finally feeling a moment of comfort. Leaning her head back against the cushion, Rosa closed her eyes to further enjoy the moment of true relaxation.

Her voice was calm as she continued. "Carlos has the task of seeking out and validating inhumane treatment of prisoners, and reporting all indiscretions back to

headquarters. The Congressional Intelligence Committee continually gets alerted by relatives of detainees, and they hear many claims of maltreatment of loved ones imprisoned in Cuba. It took Carlos two years to get hired and infiltrate the DSE. He knows where all the prisons and all the prisoners are located. When I spoke to him at the airport, I told him of the Taino Prison and the eight prisoners we located there. He didn't know there was a Taino Prison, nor did he know of Senor Ormos Viega Esperanza. Tomorrow morning he will be off-duty and has agreed to drive us back to *La Bajada* and the Taino Prison. He wants to see it. I told him of the cemetery, too, and he is very interested in tracking down the names of those U.S. prisoners who were buried in Taino. His purpose is the same as yours, Jay. He wants to account for missing military personnel lost during the revolution and those lost in the Bay of Pigs fiasco fighting the Castro regime.

He will pick us up at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow morning at the North side entrance of our building along the Malecon." Rosa waited for Jay's reaction.

Jay was slow to respond, he nodded carefully as he collected his thoughts. "There is a whole helluva lot of things running around in my brain. Where is Fuentes? What name can we expect him to use, Fuentes or Pardo? How did that son-of-a-bitch get away?" Jay drew his hands into fists. "If he's now one of Cuba's 'Most Wanted', where can he go? Who were all those men in the Taino Prison? What were the names of those buried in the Taino Cemetery? I couldn't be more thankful for Carlos' help, but...I would prefer that just you and I go on this hunt. If we could get transportation we could do better, and we wouldn't be involved in possibly blowing his cover. I'm glad...but concerned about the circumstances we're placing ourselves in, let alone Carlos."

Jay took a long pause. As soon as he spoke the words, he knew Rosa was unhappy. She didn't say anything, nor did her face reveal any anger, but Jay's heart beat with the same symbiotic rhythm as Rosa's. Clairvoyantly he knew her every thought, emotion, and reaction, because they both thought as one. She didn't have to say a word for Jay to know that he had struck a nerve.

"I'm sorry." He looked quickly at Rosa. "I know you're glad to use Carlos' volunteer help. I am too, and I do like getting started as soon as we can. We need to get back on Fuentes' trail before it gets too cold. I do like going to the prison and the

cemetery. However, I think it's more important to get on Fuentes' trail first. The DSE Chief, Lt. Col. Hernandez, searched the barge and had his men search it again. They found nothing. But, you and I searching the barge alone with lots of time, might find some important fact or piece of information which could be a small piece of the big puzzle. Something that might have meaning to us may not have any meaning to them. You and I are the ones who will bring Fuentes to justice because we care and I have a very personal reason. To everyone else, it will be just a job. I especially like you and me working together, alone, without outside help."

"Well, should I cancel tomorrow's meeting with Carlos?" Rosa asked.

"Hell, no! Let's go with him tomorrow. Maybe we could convince him to search beyond the prison, go to the fuel barge and search it out ourselves. Or, possibly, go to Playa Maria la Gorda and ask a few questions. We need to find that bastard Fuentes as soon as possible before his trail cools down. But," He said with a smile. "Right now we need to get something to eat."

Rosa looked troubled. "Tell me Jay... Tell me again why you are so determined to catch up to Fuentes? What was it he did to you? The reason I need to know is that I believe we both need to assess our determination. Our government has no interest in tracking down Fuentes here in Cuba. My assignment was to get him arrested by Mexican authorities or run him out of Mexico, and we've done that. We may not get any assistance from this Station Chief or from my own office back in the States, so I'm at a lost as to what I should be doing officially."

"Have you forgotten why I'm here?" Jay stared at Rosa, and took a long deep breath. Removing himself from the couch, he sat down at the small, make-shift dining table so he could easily see Rosa. Closing his eyes for a good thirty seconds, Jay calmly began.

"My family lives in Oklahoma. My Dad was an F-105 pilot in the Air Force. In January 1968 while on a mission over North Vietnam, he was shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese. He was subsequently imprisoned at the Cu Loc POW camp, a place referred to by the POWs as 'The Zoo'. The airplane my Dad was flying was a two seat aircraft, and he and the guy in the rear seat survived the bail-out. The name of the

other man was William Sutton. He lives in the Orlando area of Florida and I've had a recent talk with him. Are you with me so far?"

Rosa's brow wrinkled in deep thought. She stood up from the couch and sat at the table opposite Jay. Nodding her head, she offered the kindest stare she could.

Jay continued, "I was five-years-old when the Air Force called my Mother to tell her my Dad had been shot down over North Vietnam and taken as a prisoner of war. Five years later, when I was twelve, all U.S. Prisoners of War were released. Their wives- my Mom's friends- were notified that their husbands would be returning, but my father wasn't on that list of returnees. Needless to say, my Mom was devastated. She immediately called the Air Force to find out why, and they gave her no information other than he was still listed as a POW. A short while later he was erroneously listed in a Defense Intelligence Agency document as MIA, missing in action. First reports said he was a POW then that was changed to Missing in Action. That made no sense. Mother didn't know what to think. She had the name of William Sutton, so she contacted him to find out what he knew." Jay's voice grew deep. "The discussion by Mr. Sutton was very brutal in relating my Dad's treatment as a POW. My Mom was devastated.

"In 1979, Mom's friends, those she'd corresponded with during the POW/MIA confusion, called her to offer her their condolences. When she asked why, she was told that my Dad had been listed as DIC, Died in Captivity. Now all of a sudden, my Dad was again re-listed as dead. Again my Mom was tossed into full blown depression."

Jay sighed. "Mom began a project of her own. Under the 'Freedom of Information Act' she contacted the Air Force, the DOD, the CIA, the DIA, the FBI, her Congressman, her Senator, and anyone else she could think of, seeking information regarding my father's capture and subsequent death. Nothing came! No one gave my family any information. In 1988 my Mom was asked to go to Washington to testify before a Senate Select Committee and a House Congressional Committee about POW/MIA problems, but that was all a showcase for politicians and nothing for the victims. Now, it's 1999, eleven years later, and we still have no official information regarding my father's death."

Jay took a deep breath and stared into Rosa's eyes. "Just before I met you, three years ago, I started my own investigation. I went to see William Sutton in Orlando, he told me that my father was tortured to death by a Cuban interrogator they called 'Fidel'.

This matched what I thought was a mistake. In some of the papers given to my mother, there were two names, Benetez Aguillar, and Antonio Guillermo. I found Mr. Guillermo living in Little Havana in Miami. He was under the Witness Protection Program through the FBI, and he was being paid and supported by our government. After I found Mr. Antonio Guillermo, I also discovered that Benetez Aguillar and Mr. Guillermo were the same person. I forced him to give me the names of the other two interrogators. They were Miguel Fuentes Luis and Raphael Pardo Amarales. These three were part of a project called, "The Cuban Program" in North Vietnam.

"Bill Sutton told me how the POWs named the Cuban Interrogators. The main interrogator was called, 'Fidel'. The other two were named 'Chico' and 'Garcia'. In subsequent papers published by the National Alliance of Families for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen, we all realized that "The Cuban Program" was an official program created by Fidel Castro and sent to North Vietnam. The object of the program was to obtain total submission of POWs through Cuban Interrogation Methods and to teach the North Vietnamese every aspect of these monstrous methods. Torture was used by the Cubans to obtain submission. When a POW didn't break he was unmercifully beaten...until he broke. If he never broke, he was tortured to his ultimate death. I know this happened to at least twenty POWs and my Dad was one of those." Jays tone changed as he talked.

"You and I found Raphael Pardo and he subsequently died after our encounter." Jay's anger was exploding in his voice. "I know that Fuentes is the remaining Cuban interrogator and is the man the POWs referred to as 'Fidel'." Jay's face churned red. "Fuentes was the boss of the program and he killed my Dad!" Jay stopped talking and sat silent. Rosa respectably remained silent also.

After his long pause, Jay began by pounding on the table accentuating every word and declaring his determination. "I want Fuentes dead!"

Rosa arose from her chair. Moved behind Jay and put her arms around Jay's shoulders attempting to offer comfort.

"I want Fuentes dead! This time, if I have the opportunity, I will kill the bastard! I must avenge my families 'crying blood'."

Rosa attempted to break the silence. Looking straight at Jay, she tried to be as comforting as possible. "I can fix us a meal right here. We have all kinds of canned foods. What would you like?" She took his hand, waiting for a response.

Jay recaptured his composure. "I'd like to have a sit-down meal in a nice restaurant, have a drink before dinner and coffee afterwards, and then a quiet night with you."

Rosa smiled. "That sounds good to me! Do you want to go as we are or change clothes? I know just the right place. It is the 'El Bistro', and it faces the Florida Straits along the Malecon on Calle 'K'. It's a nice evening and we can sit and eat on a balcony overlooking the water. And," she added. "this could be my date. I would like that. We could have three or four drinks and do some snuggling afterwards."

Jay's eye's lit up and his thoughts turned completely toward Rosa and to what might happen later. "Let's go right now, just as we are." He was eager to get on with it.

Rosa walked into the bathroom to make herself presentable. She wanted to stop on the second floor to present herself to the U.S. Station Chief. His office was a part of his living quarters, and was always open for business, even after hours.

The stainless steel elevator stopped on the second floor. The hallway certainly 'screamed out' Station Chief. The furnishings were chic and very fashionable. There was a plush maroon leather couch with a coffee table cluttered with numerous American magazines. A brass, highly polished plaque had the Station Chief's name next to his entry door and a buzzer for entry. 'Official-dom' was easily announced by all the trappings. Rosa pushed the buzzer and waited. Suddenly, a taped voice from a hidden speaker announced, ACCESS GRANTED, PUSH TO ENTER. Rosa pushed the huge door open and they entered the Station Chief's Office.

Jay was uneasy about entering and looked down at his watch, knowing it had to be well after hours. But no matter what he said, Rosa totally dismissed any concern.

A highly polished, heavily decorated carved mahogany door opened at the rear of the room, and the Station Chief walked through. Rosa instantly observed the man with his elevator shoes and his odd state of dress. The combination of a silk smoking jacket with a black velvet chesterfield styled collar made Rosa take a step back. His very expensive, white long sleeved shirt extended beyond the arms of the jacket displaying starched cuffs

and diamond studded cufflinks. His tie was flawlessly positioned. Rosa had to stifle a laugh. Here was a short man she had to look down to see, a well-groomed puppet with a possible manservant to help him dress. Standing nearly 5' 4" with his elevator shoes, further magnified Rosa's need to laugh. His demeanor, however, was diplomatic. He was suave, elegant, urbane, and cheerful; the Beau Brummel of the State Department.

Jay took it all in and stole a glance at Rosa to see her reaction to the little twit. Jay stood a head taller than the diminutive Lothario, and had to tighten his jaw muscles and take his mind someplace else in order to keep from laughing out loud.

"Good evening! I am Evanston B. Harrington the Third." His smile and demeanor was a highly practiced diplomatic welcoming façade.

"Good evening Mr. Ambass..." Rosa caught herself quickly. "Mr. Station Chief Harrington. It is very nice to meet you." She turned to Jay. "And this is Emanuel J. Cobb Jr." Both shook his hand as courteously as possible.

He motioned for the two to sit down. "What can I do for you?"

Both continued to stand as Rosa quickly stated her intentions. "We can't stay. We arrived just this afternoon. I received a message from my boss in Washington, Mr. William Osbourne, the Deputy Director for Latin Affairs within the Central Intelligence Agency, assigning me to the U.S. Interests Section here in Havana. I wanted to introduce myself and let you know I had arrived. I don't have the message, but you should have received a copy or a similar announcement from him. It might even have been a forwarded message from CIA to the State Department then to you."

"Oh, yes!" The Station Chief faked his knowledge. Rosa knew this man didn't have a clue regarding the arrangement. Promptly going behind his huge wooden desk, the man immediately started rummaging through all the paperwork in his in-basket. His rush through the incoming papers added to his amusing persona. He quickly scurried through anything and everything on his desk like a squirrel determined to find the nut.

He stated. "I think I have your message here somewhere. Who do you work for, again?"

Rosa answered quickly, "The Central Intelligence Agency."

"And what do you want from me?"

“It is protocol to present myself to you. I am Rosalita Gutierrez and I will be working with the Cuban DSE.” Rosa turned to Jay and rolled her eyes acknowledging the display of bureaucratic ineptness.

“And who is this DSE?”

Rosa took the cue. She knew the man knew absolutely nothing, so she decided to treat him very nicely. “I am so sorry we intruded on your quiet time this late in the day. I have been assigned to help the Cuban Department of Security track down a fugitive, Mr. Miguel Fuentes Luis, he is one of Cuba's ‘Most Wanted’ criminals. I live on the third floor but have been away for three years. I simply wanted you to know, I am back and presently living upstairs once again. I will also be using your secure communications in the basement. We will not bother you any further. Thanks for meeting us!” Rosa turned to leave.

“Where, again, is the secure communications you want to use?”

Rosa stopped in her tracks and answered emphatically as she was losing her patience. “It-is-located-in-the- basement-of-this-building. I will use it tonight after we find something to eat.” Jay could hear the disgust in her voice and winced at her loud single word articulation. He knew if this man had any sensibility at all he would be affronted by her response, but he proved that his sensitiveness wasn't an attribute!

“And where is it you are staying?”

“We are staying in my apartment on the third floor!” Rosa tried to be emphatic but this time with a little more respect. This man had no abilities and didn't know when he was being ridiculed, so she shouldn't waste any more effort.

The Station Chief found a note pad next to his phone and scribbled something down. “OK, you have permission to use the communications facility. I will research the arrangements for your third floor apartment. As for now, you are granted permission to continue to use the apartment until further notice. Would you spell your last name?”

Rosa was ready to burst a seam. The entire scene was ludicrous. She meticulously spelled her name. “Thank you Mr. Harrington. I will try not to bother you in the future. And thanks for permission to use your facilities. I will pass along your regards to my boss!”

The Station Chief spoke up. "Tomorrow you should check in with Ethyl Ramirez. She's in charge of the Office of Consular Affairs, and will assign you your duties."

Rosa grabbed Jay's arm and forced him to leave as fast as possible. She wanted no further interaction with this polished idiot. Holding her breath helped to keep her cool.

As they entered the hallway and walked toward the elevator, Jay asked, "How old do you think he is?"

"Ooh...about twelve or thirteen!"

Rosa's face broke open in laughter, and her laugh was so infectious, Jay joined in.

"I think his mommie still changes his diaper." Rosa mumbled with humor.

Jay responded. "If she doesn't, his manservant will. Somebody has to wipe his ass. I think he is in gender confusion or denial...gay as a mule!"

"And to think our State Department is represented by such an unintelligent droll. I hope they keep him hidden!" Rosa was beyond irritated at the State Department for sending such a moronic individual to such an important assignment. She ridiculed further. "I have permission to live in my own apartment and I have permission to use communications he didn't know existed. What a jerk!" She spoke with exasperated sarcasm. "I hope he is potty trained." She giggled. "God...he is enough to scare women away from child bearing." Rosa chuckled as she punched the elevator button for the main floor. "I think he had make-up on his face."

Rosa continued with verbal abuse. "You know what? That dumb twit doesn't even know about the history of the U.S. Interests Section. When the U.S. Embassy was closed after Castro took over the country, The State Department, the FBI, and the CIA came up with a plan for the Embassy. They knew the CIA would need to keep agents on scene for intelligence gathering, and all agreed to give the CIA a lease in perpetuity for the third floor. When he said I had permission to stay there for the time being, he was way off base. I already had use of the premises through the CIA, and he doesn't have any jurisdiction over the property. I wasn't going to tell him that. Let him find out for himself!" Rosa was slightly agitated over the Station Chief pretending to be a 'ruler' over an empire he didn't even own. "And you know what? He never asked any questions about you! Who you are? Where did you come from? What's your purpose? Nothing! Not one word about you! Why was that?"

Jay merely shrugged his shoulders at her comments. He was focused on their earlier conversation and the interaction with the little Napoleon was meaningless.

They entered the elevator, went to the main floor, and walked out through the North side entrance. There was enthusiasm in their walk; the visit had an uplifting effect. Each stride was filled with energy, and the walk westward along the Malecon to 'El Bistro' seemed effortless. Both frequently looked at the water and enjoyed the view across the Straits of Florida. Rosa reached for Jay and they walked hand-in-hand along the waterfront boulevard.

Looking westward, they witnessed a magnificent setting sun beginning to drop below the horizon. Rosa had a noticeable bounce in her walk. So much so that Jay had a bit of difficulty keeping in step with her strides. They were short, then long, and occasionally she swung their hands high in the air like teenagers in a new found love. She was happy. Her actions were reminiscent of a mating ritual, except the female was acting out the amorous pursuit. For the moment the load seemed lifted from her shoulders and she thoroughly enjoyed the walk. Both felt relief in not having to look over their shoulders.

Entering '*El Bistro*' was exciting. It was obviously French Mediterranean, with a Cuban taste for art. A huge mural was painted on the far wall displaying a scene of the Eiffel Tower, while Cuban artworks nearly covered the remaining walls; some were canvas art painted in oil, and others were water color, and all were tastefully excellent.

Rosa asked the 'maitre d'hotel' for an outside balcony table, and they were immediately escorted up the back stairs then forward to the balcony. The view was awe-inspiring. Although nearly dark, the red glow of the setting sun could be seen on the horizon. The waves breaking into white foam as they rolled over the calmer water offered a peaceful, tranquilizing mood. The colors couldn't be seen, but Rosa knew the water was emerald green as it crashed over the seawall. The vehicle traffic along the Malecon was light. This was the scene and the moment Rosa needed. She knew she was back in her element and all was right with the world. She was determined not to allow thoughts of Fuentes and her awaiting tasks to invade her perfect moment. The warm feeling of looking forward to sharing intimate time with Jay sent darts of electricity throughout her entire body. She moved her chair closer to Jay.

“Would you like to make love to me?” Rosa couldn't have been more direct, but her comment was spoken in humor. Jay was in the process of sipping his drink and nearly choked at the comment.

His answer was typically male. “Right here?” He grinned as he spoke. Rosa's intentions could not be misunderstood, and he felt it necessary to steer the conversation away from physical desire even if it was playfully intended.

Jay turned the conversation back to business. “Are you going to send a message to your boss when we get back to the apartment?”

Rosa rolled her eyes. “Why do you bring that up? Let me enjoy the night as long as I can. This is the most peaceful place- the most peaceful moment- I've had in more than three years. I love Cuba. I love the scenery. I love the people. This is a moment to enjoy. Let's not think about business and allow me to have my date.” She reached across the table and squeezed Jay's hand. “I want to enjoy you tonight.” Jay could feel the passion as her hand touched his. The warmth telegraphed a need and Jay couldn't stop the smile from forming. Rosa was back!

“What do you think of me?” Jay was just as direct.

Rosa pulled away, sat straight up in her chair and sipped her drink as she considered her answer. “I think you are the perfect man; intelligent, strong-willed, loyal, always concerned, gentlemanly, macho and very sexy!” Rosa paused, knowing it was her turn. “So what do you think of me?”

“I think you are the perfect woman; delightfully direct, intelligent, strong of character, exuding womanliness but thinking like a man, beautiful, athletic and possessing the ideal body.” Jay searched for stronger words. “You are a very dynamic woman with an unapproachable quality of genuineness.”

“You will have to explain that. What do you mean by genuineness?” The words from Jay were engaging and Rosa, like the typical female, wanted to hear more.

His voice turned to thoughtfulness. “In my teenage years, when I got my driver's license, I would drive down to Claremore in the family car. Spending Saturday afternoons at the Indian Trading Center was something I looked forward to. There was a large youth center attached to the building where we met friends and enjoyed all sort of games. Miss Ailala, hired by the Indian Council, was the lady in charge and she was

always there. She helped everyone and she was only five or six years older than most of us. Her ubiquitous smile and outgoing personality made her so attractive.

“One Saturday I hit a car in the parking lot. The owner of the other car was a Caucasian man in his sixties. He was furious and called me all sorts of names...firewater boy, brown skin slug, worthless Indian, dregs of society, and many more. I was sixteen years-old and he provoked me to tears, not because of the damage to his vehicle but because of my Indian heritage. I cried at being called all those names, I felt like I didn't belong and wanted to go hide.” Jay's words were softly spoken.

“Miss Ailala heard the commotion and came running out of the center. She stood in front of me and let the man give her hell. She protected me. When the man walked away, she turned around and hugged me, hugged me real tight. I felt secure in her arms. Her feelings were genuine. She truly cared!

“She and I made a connection right there at that moment. As impressionable as I was, I believed our hearts met. From that time on, I had a crush on her and even thought I was in love. She possessed a dynamic and attractive quality which drew me to her.”

Jay made certain he was staring deeply into Rosa's eyes. “You have that quality...plus an undeniably sensual body. I quiver all over just thinking about you and me in an intimate moment.”

Rosa smiled, set her drink down, and moved closer to Jay. “Is that a ‘yes’?”

“Why do you have to be so direct? Let's just allow things to happen!”

“You haven't mentioned Penny in two weeks. Shouldn't we talk about your wife?” Rosa didn't wait for an answer. “We are in Cuba...the land of Latin lovers. If we follow our desires...it would only be a night for me to remember forever. I don't expect it to go beyond that!”

Jay sipped his drink slowly. “It has to go beyond that!”

Rosa was taken aback by the remark. With a puzzled stare, she asked. “Why?”

Jay wanted to reply but needed time to put the words together. Finally, he was ready with his answer. “I love my wife and my family, but when I'm with you they move into the background. Penny and I have made love more times than I can count and have been intimate too many times to be forgotten. We have made a family together, and as a family, we've been successful. Nothing seems to be missing.” He paused to allow his

words to sink in. "Today, when the aircraft was leaving without you, back at the airport, and I saw you crying with absolute terror on your face, I became overwhelmed with a desire to hold you and stop your pain. I forced the pilots to stop and when you came rushing through the door, we grabbed each other. Without thinking we rushed to comfort each other. At that moment, I felt our hearts meet. That feeling hasn't gone away and it never will. That was our moment of connection." Jay searched Rosa's face. "I have never had that same kind of feeling with Penny. When you say it doesn't have to go beyond tonight...it does! Knowing you, being with you, desiring you more than anything else in the entire world, has enlarged my need for something else...and that something else is you!"

Rosa stared deeply into Jay's eyes...flattered, bewildered, and uncertain of a response. She understood Jay's concern. As he explained his feelings she, too, had those same thoughts and knew the exact moment he was talking about. The moment their hearts met. Rosa slipped her arm under Jay's and pulled him close. Both sat quietly, neither wanting to break the silence or alter the electrified atmosphere. Rosa allowed her mind to grasp spiritual satisfaction from the conversation. This togetherness, mutually appreciated, rose to a higher level. It was an emotion Rosa had never experienced before. And Jay was right, it can't stop!

Jay was reluctant to break the silence after his confession. He had spoken the words of endearment and knew the impact couldn't be dismissed. Jay turned the conversation back to business. "Are you going to send a message to your boss when we get back to your apartment?"

"Why do you bring that up again?" Rosa pulled her arm away and sat with both hands on the table, aimlessly fondling her drink. "I asked you to please let me enjoy the night as long as I can. This is the moment I will cherish forever. I love Cuba. I love the scenery. I love the people. I love you! This is a moment I must have. Let's not think about business. Just allow me to have my date." Reaching for Jay's hand, Rosa tossed her head back letting her hair capture the slight breeze. She brought her head down slowly with teasing seductiveness. She was the voice of the temptress. "I want to enjoy you tonight."

Jay again felt her passion. Rosa was back! She was tempting, beguiling and offering! How could he not smile and reciprocate?

After three drinks each and a full stomach, they left *'El Bistro'* and walked along the *'Malecon'* back to Rosa's apartment. Entering the building Rosa, allowed the veil of business to take hold.

She turned to Jay. "Could I possibly send a message to my boss without it breaking the atmosphere? I promise I'll be quick and I promise not to let it interfere with our mutual pleasure."

Jay nodded his approval, and offered his best smile.

The inside entry to the basement communications room was down a flight of stairs. As a security measure, the elevator wasn't built for going to the basement. Rosa and Jay were very careful stepping down the dimly lit corridor. The stairs ended in front of the communications room door. The sign *'Access for Authorized Personnel Only'* was a joke. The steel door was unlocked, anyone could gain access to the comm. room.

Rosa remembered using the General Electric Model S200 international phone scrambler in the past but didn't see one anywhere in the darkened basement. Instead, she stood in front of a teletype keyboard and considered typing her message

Rosa sat down in front of the keyboard. Jay watched in awe. He hadn't seen an AT&T teletype machine in over fifteen years. He searched for the data plate out of curiosity. This particular unit was a Model 15 manufactured in June, 1939. The oldest heavy duty teletype ever made. The same model was used in many Western Union locations. He watched in silence as Rosa sat down at the keyboard unit to type her message.

Jay laughed. "Why don't you ask who Evanston B. Harrington, the Third is?"

"Naw...I can't do that...strictly business." She put her fingers on the keyboard and paused, mentally formulating her message before typing.

TO: WILLIAM OSBOURNE, DDO LATIN AFFAIRS, CIA HQTRS.
PATH: USCIA, USDEPSTATE, CUBASECUR, MOD15, SPOOL.MU

SENDER: USINTSECCUBA
DATE: 11MAY 1999 20:31:46 GMT
FROM: COBRA
SUBJECT: ARRIVAL/CHECK-IN

ARRIVED TODAY 6:00 P.M. LOCAL. STAYING IN MY OLD QUARTERS. TOMORROW I WILL BEGIN TO TRACK FUENTES, AKA PARDO. KNOW NOTHING AS YET. PLEASE SEND OFFICIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY APARTMENT, 3RD FLOOR. FUENTES ESCAPED CAPTURE AND DISAPPEARED. BENETEZ AGUILLAR, AKA ANTONIO GUILLERMO, ESCAPED VIA C-45. PLEASE PUT OUT AN ALERT FOR HIS CAPTURE AND NOTIFY AGENT SAM BASCOM OF AGUILLAR'S RETURN TO MIAMI. WILL BE WORKING WITH COPPERHEAD PLEASE SEND PHONE NUMBER FOR CONTACT VIA SCRAMBLER. SEND ID AND CREDENTIALS TO STATION CHIEF. DEVELOP ME A COVER AND COMMUNICATE SAME WITH STATION CHIEF. PLEASE ADVISE ME OF FINANCING XOMLPT WILL STAY IN TOUCH. COBRA

Rosa stood up and turned to Jay. "I think this sucks. All messages from here have to go through the State Department before reaching my boss. I can't communicate directly with headquarters. And...there is no one here watching this machine. I can only assume someone comes periodically to collect the messages." Rosa looked at the printer unit. "Look at these!" She pulled a string of messages up from behind the printer. The string of correspondence was at least five foot long. The date/time group on the very end of the string of messages was in 10 May, 1999. She worked her way to the most recent messages. The second communication out of the printer was the message announcing Rosalita Gutierrez being assigned to the US Interests Section as a Foreign Service Officer to assist travelers.

Rosa blurted out in anger. "No wonder Evanston B. Harrington, the Third didn't know we were coming, here is the message. The Station Chief better get his act together. I can't report him for a poor job because of the parochial character each agency possesses in maintaining their style of sovereignty. Outside interference comes at a big price." Rosa thought for a moment and turned to survey the room. In the front of the room next to the entry door was a voice scrambler. She nodded at Jay. "The next time I come down here, I'm going to call my boss by phone and use the scrambler."

Jay nodded but didn't have the slightest idea what she was talking about. "OK!" He was delighted she was done for the night. He was beginning to feel excitement in anticipation of what was to come. Jay allowed their shoulders to touch as they walked up

the stairs. He took her arm as if to assist, but really just wanted to touch her and feel the electricity flow between them.

Back in her apartment, Rosa searched her cupboards for any kind of bottled alcohol. She found a half bottle of Bacardi rum and made two drinks. Handing Jay's to him she made a semi toast. "Here's to tonight!" She spoke with a gleam in her eye.

Jay knew instantly what she meant and could barely contain his excitement that he was finally going to get lucky.

Rosa sat down beside Jay on the leather couch and melted gently against his side. Jay instantly felt her soft, warm body push against his, and allowed the mutual desire to flow between them. Both could feel the long awaited moment of expectation creeping ever so closely. Jay finished his drink quickly, sat his glass down and put an arm around Rosa's shoulder. Jay's breathing became heavy as his hands moved to caress her body. He could feel Rosa's heavy breathing. She put her lips against the soft tissue under his chin, and sent cascades of passion coursing through his body.

The phone rang interrupting the magic moment. The ring was shrill and disturbing. Rosa pulled away from Jay completely bewildered. Looking at each other with puzzled stares, Jay shrugged his shoulders as Rosa walked to the phone. She wanted to answer and find out who was calling. After all she thought. 'No one knows I'm here'.

"Alo, habla Rosalita Gutierrez." The sounds coming from the phone were loud. Lots of raucous laughter and numerous voices were practically screaming in the background. It was as if she was listening to a drinking party at its apex.

She tried again. *"Alo, habla Rosalita Gutierrez."*

A strong voice responded. *"Mi nombre es Miguel."*

"Miguel...me lo repite, por favor?" She asked the caller to repeat himself.

"Miguel...Miguel Fuentes...bienvenido a Cuba." The phone went silent.

Rosa slammed the phone back into its cradle and began cursing. Thoughts of Escobar and the night she was raped slammed into her brain. She stood mesmerized, unthinking, rattled to her core and stared at Jay with the most profoundly puzzled look.

"That was Fuentes!"

"Who?" Jay couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"It was Miguel Fuentes!"

“What the hell! Why would he call you, and how did he know you were here?” Jay was filled with concern.

“He knows I’m alive and still after him.” Rosa’s mood changed instantly. “He wanted me to know that. He’s sparring with me! The phone call indicates Fuentes has a network right here in Cuba that is beyond imagination. I don’t know that we will ever get that son-of-a-bitch but I am damn well going to try. I hate that s.o.b.!”

The night’s anticipation was instantly cooled...cooled beyond any recovery. Jay hated Fuentes even more now that his perfect night had come to a screeching halt.

CHAPTER II

Rosa never slept. Her mind remained focused on Fuentes and her burning hatred of him. The expected and long anticipated intimacy had never happened. Jay only slept intermittently throughout the night, physically tortured by not continuing beyond the intended foreplay. On his honeymoon the anticipation of being with his wife for the first time placed him on a euphoric high he never even knew existed. Rosa’s unmistakable overtures accelerated him to a new, unknown level of excitement; a plateau from which he couldn’t retreat.



Jay Cobb and Rosa determine that 'Fidel', Amarales Pardo, and Lt.Col. Miguel Fuentes are the same person. Jay and Rosa enjoyed planning with the DEA, both working with the Mexican Government, to capture or force 'Fidel' to leave Mexico.

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