

## Chapter 1

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Sitting in a bar in a small village forty miles northwest of Managua, Nicaragua, Bartolo Landeira was in a dark mood. A fetid late afternoon in sweltering heat following a rain. Soaked in sweat drinking lukewarm lousy local beer. His third week in this shithole. Waiting for his team of four U.S. marine instructors to join him. Their day spent setting up for tomorrow's exercise. The marines painted a bleak picture about the fighting quality of the Guatemalan rebel force. After two weeks of making his own evaluation, Landeira shared their assessment. Rather than trying to explain the problem, he chose to stage a realistic exercise to simulate the rebel's military objective. Landeira demanded the CIA team leader and the Guatemalan rebel commander in Managua arrive in the early morning to observe the exercise.

The cause of his misery neither the oppressive climate nor anything immediate for that matter. Festering circumstances years in the making. Guatemala only the inflection point in a long arch of a developing existential crisis. The year is 1954. Feelings of service to his country since in 1942 progressively deteriorated over the years since the end of the World War Two. His present circumstances now ethically repugnant. How had things come so far?

Going to war following Pearl Harbor seemed a natural response as it was for so many Americans. World War Two left no ambiguity. Every American felt a personal identification with

the threat to the United States by the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Spending almost four years as a field operative in the clandestine Office of Strategic Services, the OSS proved a violent experience for Bart Landeira. Yet one of clarity of purpose.

Following Allied victory in 1945, communism in the form of the Soviet Union loomed as the next threat to America's security. Valued for his wartime work in American intelligence, the offer to continue working in peacetime intelligence work appeared attractive. Admittedly, engaging in a form of foreign adventurism and intrigue proved more attractive than his civilian alternatives.

Following an undergraduate degree in journalism, he pursued a law degree unenthusiastically and joined his father's law firm in Tampa, Florida in 1940. Eighteen months of dealing with contracts and investment consulting while working closely with his father left him disenchanted about his career choice. America's entry into World War provided escape. With the war over, difficult to reconcile a return to practicing law given those pre-war memories. Having never held a job in journalism made that earlier career aspiration now seemingly out of reach with the passing of too many years since earning his undergraduate degree. Whether practicing law or journalism, skills in guerrilla warfare provided no basis for a civilian career.

The prospects of returning to a normal civilian life also held uncertainty. Like tens of thousands of American demobilized servicemen, it meant restarting an interrupted career. A seismic shift from combat to peacetime normality. Although in constant danger, serving in the OSS proved an intense endeavor in which he excelled. Surviving behind enemy lines by your wits and skills proved a unique wartime experience. Often terrifying, always exhilarating, he prevailed by his own devices. The normality of a civilian career could never match the effects of those life or death experiences.

In his case, he had no close family ties to facilitate a comforting return to civilian life in the States. His mother died just before the United States joined the war. A largely distant family

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other than his father. Two older married sisters lived in Florida. A remote extended family living in Cuba. As to his father, they respected each other, but their relationship held little warmth. Equally strong-willed, tensions flared into argument. The elder Landeira was a product of the strong Latin patriarchal family-centered environment. His son viewed his relationship differently. Too independent to conform to rigid cultural protocols simply because of ethnic background.

Therefore, the offer to remain in the clandestine world of U.S. intelligence with its intrigue and international travel held the draw of something familiar. World War Two may have ended in 1945, yet world peace remained an illusion. The new enemy of international communism produced a collective threat to Western democracies giving intelligence work a new purpose.

Unfortunately, the Cold War lacked the clarity of World War Two from the onset. The hysteria wrought by the threat of communism distorted both the domestic and international political climate of the United States. The Cold War warrior waged unconventional warfare against an indistinct enemy. They enemy those pulling the levers of power in the Soviet Union. For the warrior, an enemy taken largely on faith. The threat either indirect or obscure. Of course, that was not immediately evident to Landeira as the post-World War Two era unfolded.

The violence of his war service in the OSS left no ambiguity. From his first assignment accompanying Allied forces in North Africa in November 1942 to German surrender in May 1945, he engaged in sabotage and killing Germans and Italians behind enemy lines. Circumstances changed with the end of war.

President Truman disbanded the OSS following the end of the war. A premature reaction by siding with critics warning of the ultra-secretive organization as unnecessary in peacetime and a possible domestic threat. However, necessity allowed for the secret intelligence and counterespionage branches of the wartime OSS to survive, becoming the Strategic Services Unit. Within months, the SSU became the Office of Special Operations within the newly formed Central Intelligence Group. In 1947, the

CIG transformed into the Central Intelligence Agency under the National Security Act of 1947.

Within the National Security Act was an obscure buried sub clause. Subsection D of Section 102 stated in deliberately vague language, the CIA might be tasked *to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence gathering affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct*. In effect, it authorized the NSC to conduct any action deemed necessary, including covert operations with no limitations or oversight. With his recognized wartime exploits in the field, Landeira became part of the newly created semi-autonomous section called the Office of Policy Coordination. The OPC became the covert operations section of the CIA headed by former senior OSS officer Frank Wisner in 1948. Purposely set apart from the intelligence gathering operations, the OPC afforded the fig leaf of plausible deniability for the President, Secretary of State, and even the Director of the CIA for clandestine activities conducted in foreign countries.

Landeira then followed his OSS boss in wartime Italy in a seamless transition into American peacetime foreign intelligence engaging in covert operations. A new American governmental institution, nonexistent prior to World War Two. From the onset, its agents had only wartime experiences to fall back on. The Cold War presented entirely new challenges. The singular enemy identified as international communism. Actual military confrontations took the form of proxy wars between the superpower adversaries of the United States and Soviet Union.

From the onset, American covert intelligence fixed on using right wing proxies to counter any political movement deemed socialistic, or even with progressive objectives. Political thought harboring policies of land reform, labor organization, and social justice, or anything threatening to the conservative status quo, appeared as foundations for communist infiltration. Such political circumstances in strategic locations provided justification to interfere by any means necessary, no matter how contrary to American democratic ideals.

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When Landeira arrived in Nicaragua in 1954, he had served in a succession of clandestine operations beginning with staying on in post-war Italy to thwart the Italian Communist Party's election chances. The CIA arranged for him to secure a position as foreign correspondent with the Miami Herald as his cover. Not exactly his idea of a career in journalism, but it provided a start.

In Greece from 1949 to 1950, he represented American interests supporting the heavily U.S.-subsidized government. The CIA mission was to prevent a largely non-existent Communist threat in securing a forward position close to the Balkans. From Greece, Landeira engaged in running agents into Communist Albania.

Egypt in 1952 followed with Landeira participating in engineering a coup d'état as part of the CIA's *Project Fat Fucker*. The derogatory name for Egyptian King Farouk stemmed from his wide girth, a product of a lavish lifestyle. His regime a holdover from the old Ottoman Empire, the Eisenhower administration feared the developing internal revolutionary political instability might invite communism. The U.S. pressured Farouk to make political reforms to replace the corrupt political system in Egypt with a government more internationally acceptable. With efforts unsuccessful, the CIA reverted to regime change by backing a military takeover by General Mohammed Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. A regrettable move that would carry unintended consequences in succeeding years.

Using *Project Fat Fucker* as a template, the CIA engineered a coup d'état with *Project Ajax* in Iran in 1953. Here the issue was control of petroleum reserves and the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh of a constitutional monarchy. After the Iranian parliament nationalized the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, concern arose of Iran turning toward the Soviet Union. Joining forces with British MI6, the CIA orchestrated the removal of Mosaddegh. A new government formed under an Iranian army general allowed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to acquire the real power as monarch, relying heavily on U.S. support.

From its creation, the CIA began engaging widely in covert operations as the intelligence arm of the world's singular superpower. There was scant history of intelligence gathering of its predecessor agency in the wartime OSS. The OSS was predominately a clandestine operational organization. Populated with many OSS veterans, the CIA inclination tended to pursue active subversion over passive intelligence gathering.

Dispatched to Nicaragua in the spring of 1954 directly from Tehran, Landeira was a proven asset in CIA coup d'état subversive operations. This new project in Guatemala code-named *Project Success* was to be a repeat of Egypt and Iran. Landeira's assignment was to train a proxy ragtag rebel army. Staging took place in nearby Nicaragua under the CIA-friendly cooperation of dictator Anastasio Somoza. This time the mission was to force regime change of a democratically elected Guatemalan government feared leaning too far toward communism. The evidence against Guatemalan President Jacobo Árbenz was however exceedingly thin.

Through Landeira's nine years of post-war participation in covert subversive operations, his personal feelings about his work progressed from unease, to distaste, to outright disgust. Not how he envisioned service to his country. Landeira saw America repudiating its core values once its interests moved outside its territorial boundaries. The CIA becoming a tool of American imperialism leaving in its wake corrupt totalitarian regimes holding power through force. In every developing country touched by the United States, the result was the same. Oppression by inflicting every form of brutality to suppress political opposition.

Nothing intended to foster democracy. Simply a counter to the other post-war superpower the Soviet Union. Furthering American interests by extending control over smaller proxy states became strategical important.

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What astounded Landeira about CIA covert operations were crackpot methods built around flawed expectations then compounded by poor planning. During World War Two, you did not survive as a field operative by engaging in such ill-conceived adventurism. The difference seemed to stem from the CIA using proxy combatants for the dirty work. Deficient planning risked only the lives of expendable functionaries rather than CIA agents.

*Project Success* was another such amateurish mission. A successor operation to *Project Fortune* of 1952 under the Truman administration. The plan therefore evolving as a continually changing work in progress. Landeira's role in Nicaragua just one part in a collection of ad hoc moves directed toward coercing the Guatemalan army to depose the Árbenz government and replace it with one acceptable to the United States.

Arriving first in Miami, Deputy Director Frank Wisner briefed Landeira on the mission. Wisner made a case for Árbenz reshaping Guatemala into a communist state. The first in the United States' backyard. A threat that could then spread throughout Central America. The Panama Canal potentially placed in jeopardy. Without knowing the true facts, Wisner expected his operatives to buy into the program. Already skeptical of CIA propaganda, Landeira soon learned Wisner's portrayal of circumstances in Guatemala was entirely bullshit. Bullshit however with an ulterior motive.

Landeira learned this from none other than his boss in Nicaragua, William Campbell after arriving in Managua. While not some sort of CIA heretic, Campbell simply held no concerns about the ethical relevance. Campbell loved the life of intrigue. A dirty business but necessary. A soldier serving his country by following orders. A part of a larger struggle of international politics.

Campbell's candor explaining the real background of this mission nothing more than enjoying the game of double-dealing. A former officer in U.S. Naval Intelligence during the war, Campbell lacked field experience. Telling Landeira of the various tactical aspects of *Project Success*, he did not even recognize

just how bizarre this mission sounded to someone with Landeira's experience.

At his first meeting with Campbell in the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Landeira said, "My cover as a journalist gives me a lot of access to other journalists. There is no public evidence that Árbenz is a closet communist. Educated at a military academy, a former army officer, and national defense minister. Hardly a left-leaning background."

Campbell shrugged. "Some say his Marxist leanings come from his wife. Doesn't really matter. Árbenz stepped on the wrong toes. His land reform policies included confiscating unused land owned by United Fruit of Boston. In Central America, United Fruit is the 800-pound economic guerrilla. They enjoy a powerful lobby in Washington. Portraying Guatemala as ripe for communist takeover, they played to the receptive Eisenhower administration."

Landeira said, "With that asshole McCarthy conducting his theatrical senate hearings, a perfect environment. A communist behind every banana plant."

"Perhaps. Anyway, Árbenz sufficiently concerns the Eisenhower administration. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen Dulles our CIA Director have their sights set on changing the current regime governing Guatemala."

"Wisner said my job is to train an army of mercenaries to invade Guatemala. Why Nicaragua which doesn't border Guatemala?"

Campbell smiled. "An invasion of course must come from bordering Mexico, Honduras, or El Salvador. Honduras is the best prospect. Training started there but relocated to Nicaragua after becoming too obvious. Needs some sorting out since United Fruit workers there just went on a general strike over pay. Honduras will eventually come around and we will launch operations from there. The operation is getting material cooperation from Nicaraguan President Somoza and Dominican Republic President Trujillo."

Landeira made an expression of disgust. Both repressive brutal dictatorships. "Who makes up this invasion army?"

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"Mostly former Guatemalan soldiers. Following officers loyal to a right wing Guatemalan colonel named Carlos Castillo Armas. Paid mercenaries. Armas participated in a failed coup in 1949 then fled into exile in Honduras. The United States nominated him to front this regime change."

"So our mission is to install another dictator in the Americas," Landeira commented.

Campbell responded, "You have a problem doing this work, Landeira?"

"I'll do what I do best. Don't have to like it." Landeira needed to reserve his antagonism for a different audience. "How big is this rebel force?"

"Right now a few hundred."

"Jesus Christ. You intend to invade Guatemala with such an insignificant force? To accomplish what?"

"Didn't Wisner tell you the mission objective is to force the Guatemalan military to overthrow Árbenz? The invasion of rebel forces is just another means of exerting pressure."

"Wisner mentioned arms sanctions, the implied threat of U.S. invasion, a propaganda campaign, and a rebel invasion force. He never mentioned this invasion force only amounted to a few hundred. A bunch of unmotivated mercenaries does not constitute a viable force capable of achieving any military objective. Do I assume they are also not going to engage in guerilla tactics?"

"Only to the extent of targeting small Guatemalan remote garrisons. Capture weapons and destroy tanks and trucks. Avoiding any major engagement. The expectation is to demoralize the Guatemalan Army with simultaneous air and ground attacks sufficient for them depose Árbenz and install Armas."

"Why should the Army do that? Wisner even said Árbenz enjoys strong support among the officer corps."

"Because the Army by this point will be convinced that if they do not act to depose Árbenz clearly demanded by the United States, they invite invasion by the U.S. Marines."

Not that farfetched. The United States had a history of invading its small southern neighboring countries that did not bend to U.S. foreign policy interests.

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In the morning, Campbell arrived with Colonel Armas and another officer. Campbell was in a sour mood. As a deskbound intelligence officer, the rigors of the tropical climate left him sweating profusely. An entire day spent outside with the temperature climbing. Worse yet, Landeira was presenting him with a problem. Campbell resented Landeira insisting he come and view the situation. Also demanding he bring along Colonel Armas the rebel commander to explain the sorry state of his forces' readiness.

Arriving at the field headquarters in a jeep driven by a Nicaraguan sergeant, Campbell introduced Colonel Armas. Sharply dressed in starched battle dress with the U.S. insignia of a full colonel. Sidearm in a polished leather holster and belt. Polished boots. In contrast, Campbell looked wilted with his shirt clinging, mopping his forehead with a damp handkerchief.

"This better be goddamn important, Landeira. What exactly is the problem?"

Campbell spoke no Spanish, so in English Landeira said, "It's an exaggeration to call these troops soldiers. They cannot follow even basic instructions. Live fire scares the shit out of them. The Guatemalan officers expected to lead this rabble know nothing of tactics."

"Well that's why you are here to turn them into a fighting force."

"You do not understand. Even with months of training, these guys will never become an effective military force. The marine instructors are first-rate. They feel the same way. You need to talk to them yourself."

Armas took offense at Landeira's remarks. "These are former Guatemalan soldiers and officers. You make them sound like raw recruits."

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Switching to Spanish, "Sorry if this offends your professional pride, Colonel. I fought with Italian partisans with no military training during World War Two. They would cut your troops to pieces. Your officers are incompetent. Your soldiers do not represent a fighting force capable of taking on even small units of the Guatemalan army."

Campbell uttered, "Shit. What are you suggesting, Landeira?"

"Not suggesting anything. I didn't create this problem. Just telling you it cannot be fixed without months of intensive training and many more trainers."

Campbell shook his head. "We don't have that kind of time."

"Like I said, that is your problem. Tomorrow you and Colonel Armas can see for yourself. Draw your own conclusions. I have set up a live action simulation of a mission to attack a Guatemalan border garrison."

"Christ, I am not a military expert. That's your job."

Landeira could no longer contain his disgust. The larger issue was his falling out with the CIA. Putting an incompetent like Campbell in charge of a military operation another manifestation of the CIA's hubris.

"This is a stupid cockup. Whether Dulles or Wisner's idea, if this turns to shit, they will blame you, Campbell. I am trying to protect you."

"Protect me? Really? I didn't request you. They said you were highly experienced at this sort of thing. If you can't pull this off, it will be your head, Landeira, not my doing."

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The same four marine sergeant instructors worked with the small Guatemalan rebel force earlier for over two months when in Honduras. Circumventing the U.S. arms embargo, the Árbenz regime landed 2000 tons of weapons from Czechoslovakia on the *SS Alphem* on May 15.

Landeira's predecessor CIA officer received instructions to destroy the weapons shipment. He hastily assembled a ten-man

rebel demolition team from among the rebels. Without direct operational involvement by the U.S. marine instructors, the rebels botched the attempt to blow up the train carrying the weapons from the port of Puerto Barrios on the Caribbean coast to Guatemala City. The massive stock of weapons served instead to strengthen the capability of the Guatemalan regular army.

The political environment of a general strike in Honduras by United Fruit workers then forced the rebels to withdraw eastward to continue training in more politically friendly Nicaragua. The CIA reassigned Bart Landeira to assess the effectivity of the 480-man rebel force. After three weeks observation he concluded the small force was totally unreliable even for small-scale operations against even minor Guatemalan objectives.

Landeira's demonstration exercise consisted of a 90-man force attacking a defended position of 25 men. The target an abandoned barn the U.S. marines configured to simulate a Guatemalan border garrison signified by a Guatemalan flag. Landeira ordered the exercise without the marine instructors coordinating. A test of the capabilities of this questionable rebel force using only their own officers.

The attack plan called for three attacking forces converging on the target from different directions. The theory being infiltration of the Guatemalan border accomplished best using smaller units. Reading maps and navigating was a critical component along with radio communications. Demonstrating those capabilities represented the expectation of the exercise.

Landeira, Campbell, Armas, and the four marines followed in two jeeps behind one column designated Baker platoon. The purpose to act only as observers. Landeira intentionally chose this unit rather than Alpha platoon under the overall Guatemalan commander as a test of the leadership. The starting point for each 30-man platoon placed each a two-hour march from the objective. The area unfamiliar to all the Guatemalans but selected to simulate conditions expected when penetrating the Guatemalan border for real.

Baker platoon arrived within sight of the objective on schedule.

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An unhappy Campbell said, "What's the big deal, Landeira? These guys navigated to the objective with no problem."

From there the situation deteriorated.

The officer in overall command of the operation a captain radioed his position from Alpha platoon. "Alpha platoon is in sight of objective to our west. Baker and Charlie platoons report your position."

The lieutenant commanding Baker platoon responded they were in position facing the objective to the north.

After repeated attempts to raise Charlie platoon, a minute later came a confusing response. "Charlie platoon reporting. Arrived at target."

"Signal your position relative to the objective," The captain radioed.

"Directly in front of the building facing north."

Landeira and the four marines looked at each other with questioning expressions. That was *their* position. Charlie platoon was nowhere in sight.

The background sound of heavy small arms firing suddenly came through the radio. "Taking heavy fire!"

"What the fuck?" The senior marine exclaimed, bewildered by the radio message. They were standing two hundred meters from the abandoned barn flying the Guatemalan flag. Where was Charlie platoon? *Taking fire?*

After a confused back and forth radio exchange, the sound of gunfire over the radio intensified. Even without the radio, they heard the sound in the distance.

Landeira immediately realized what likely happened. Grabbing the radio, he yelled, "The flag! The flag! What flag do you see?"

Moments later came the reply. "The Nicaraguan flag."

"Christ. The stupid fuckers attacked a Nicaraguan border garrison!" Landeira took out a map and pointed, "Here according to the sound of gunfire."

Landeira rushed to a jeep followed by Campbell and Armas.

"What the hell happened, Landeira?" Campbell shouted frantically as Landeira drove as fast as possible on the dirt road.

"Shut up, Campbell. I warned you about these guys."

"Did you set this up to fail?" Campbell said.

Landeira pulled the jeep to a skidding stop. "Open your mouth again and I'll dump you out of the jeep you stupid desk-jockey."

Landeira found his way to the Nicaraguan garrison. By now hearing no gunfire.

He pulled up on a slight rise of the dirt road. The marines in a second jeep stopped behind. The sight told the story. Disarmed Guatemalans stood in a tight group surrounded by a half dozen Nicaraguan border guards.

Approaching on foot, Landeira observed just how far the exercise went awry. Five Guatemalans lay in the tall grass. A Nicaraguan soldier applying a bandage to one.

Landeira recognized the Nicaraguan lieutenant he met days earlier when making arrangements accompanied by a senior Nicaraguan officer for the exercise to take place north of this garrison position.

The lieutenant angrily approached Landeira. "What the hell is this? Two of my men are seriously wounded."

"I will let the Guatemalan commander explain."

After telling Campbell and Armas to deal with the Nicaraguan officer, he joined the marines already shouting at the Guatemalan officer responsible for the disaster."

Landeira pushed the marines aside to deal with the officer personally. "You cannot even read a map, you stupid shit. Five of your men casualties against friendlies."

He intended the exercise to demonstrate to Campbell the lack of capabilities of the rebels to undertake basic military logistical operations. Never fathomed a catastrophe like this. His anger getting the best of him, he struck the Guatemalan lieutenant in the jaw knocking him to the ground.

Campbell, Armas, and the Nicaraguan lieutenant approached while witnessing Landeira's action. Armas made the mistake of confronting Landeira.

Armas said, "You struck one of my officers."

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"Should have shot him. You command idiots not soldiers, Colonel."

Armas turned to Campbell, "I demand you arrest Landeira."

Now incensed, Landeira stepped aggressively toward Armas as Campbell attempted to intervene fearing what Landeira might do. Campbell's mistake.

Landeira grabbed Campbell's arm and dumped him hard to the ground using a judo move. Immediately Landeira turned on the startled Armas grabbing him by his fatigue shirt. With his face inches from Armas, he screamed, "You pompous shithead. Somebody should shoot you and save these idiots from dying for your stupidity. You have an undisciplined rabble not a fighting force."

"Jesus, Landeira have you gone nuts?" Campbell yelled while getting up with sand clinging to his sweat-soaked shirt. "Release the Colonel."

The aftermath left three dead Guatemalans, two others wounded, and two wounded Nicaraguans. The practice location and the Nicaraguan garrison were two miles apart. Landeira previously alerted the Nicaraguans to the exercise using the abandoned barn as a practice target to avoid just this type of misunderstanding.

Distressed over the catastrophe, Landeira felt a measure of responsibility. They were not ready for this exercise without their marine instructors supervising. The practice location, a barn with a collapsed roof displayed a makeshift flagpole with a Guatemalan flag. The marines rigged the target with simulated defenders using helmets sitting atop wood planks. All this fully explained to the rebel officers. The objective was to assess tactical proficiency. Map reading and navigation, communications coordination, and assault tactics.

Looking up at the Nicaraguan flag, Landeira realized something he did not previously consider. The Nicaraguan flag consists of two *horizontal* blue stripes separated by white. The Guatemalan flag flying over the simulated exercise target has two *vertical* blue stripes separated by white. A seemingly obvious

difference, but maybe not to an inexperienced officer in command under stress to perform well.

Regardless why the outcome proved a deadly disaster, Landeira's pent up dissatisfaction pushed him over the edge. "You can have this mess, Campbell. Everything about this entire operation disgusts me. Wisner's folly from the beginning. He does not understand operations any more than you do. If you idiots use this miserable rabble led by this asshole colonel and his cashiered Guatemalan officers, you are nothing more than criminals. I'm out of here."

Campbell responded, "What the hell does that mean?"

"Means I quit. Fuck the CIA. I will call Wisner myself but feel free to get to him first."

With that, Landeira took one of the jeeps leaving Campbell and Armas and the four marines to deal with the aftermath. Landeira drove nonstop to Managua. After checking into a hotel, he made a flight reservation to Miami for the following morning. Settling into the hotel bar he felt a sense of relief. This was not simply a rash emotion move. No regrets. Too long in coming. Should have quit after Egypt. Certainly after Iran. Joining the CIA became a protracted existential crisis.

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The fiasco in Nicaragua did not deter Frank Wisner from pursuing *Project Success* to conclusion. Wisner attributed Landeira's warnings and expletive laced telephone call to a mental breakdown of a good field operative. Yet the overall efforts of the CIA played out as dark tragicomedy.

Relocated to Honduras and El Salvador, the 480-man rebel force split into four formations planning to cross the Guatemalan border at widely separated locations. The objective to conduct harassing raids and sow panic in the capital. Simultaneously, rebel aircraft would buzz government buildings in Guatemala City and drop small bombs.

Before the planned day to begin the invasion, Salvadoran police spotted the formation deployed in the south and arrested all

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the rebels. They confiscated a large cache of weapons including 21 machineguns and jailed the rebels. Another formation of 122 rebels encountered a garrison of 30 police. After a 36-hour battle, the rebels lost 92 men as casualties or captured. The following day, the largest force of 170 rebels suffered a similar defeat while attacking the port city of Puerto Barrios. Police aided by dockworkers arrested a large number of rebels and drove off the remainder who fled back across the border into Honduras, refusing to take up arms again.

A formation led personally by Armas struggled in taking their objective a few miles from the border while encountering only light resistance. Another formation succeeded in capturing a small Guatemalan police garrison three miles from the border. These meager results

on the ground and random air assaults failed to inflict real damage, nor induce panic in the Guatemalan population.

U.S. combined overt and covert actions eventually made clear the United States would not back off without regime change. With the loss of Guatemalan military support, President Árbenz bowed to the inevitable and resigned ten days later, seeking asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Guatemala City. After turning over his presidential powers over to Col. Enrique Diaz. In a final act of defiance to the U.S., Diaz refused to negotiate with Armas.

On the same day that Árbenz left office, a P-38 without markings, operated by the CIA and piloted by an American, bombed the British registered freighter *SS Springfjord* in Puerto San José with napalm. The freighter was loading a mixed cargo including mostly coffee. Guatemala claimed the aircraft from Nicaragua belonged to the insurgency. The reason for the attack unclear. Another piece of damning evidence in America's obvious heavy-handed interference in Central America.

Ladeira followed events in Guatemala from a hotel in Miami. Nothing surprising, just disappointing. Guatemala would soon join the fraternity of dictatorships in the Americas. Now free of the CIA, introspection followed in an attempt to discover where he went wrong for so long.

Blaming his anxiety and depression on the excesses of the CIA was a flawed excuse. He could have left long before Guatemala. In truth, he never directed his future. Undecided about pursuing a career in journalism following his undergraduate degree, he let his father persuade him to consider corporate law. That poor choice abruptly altered by World War Two.

Even after the war ended, he opted to take the easier path of the job offer to remain in peacetime U.S. intelligence. In retrospect, a choice of convenience when he saw no viable alternative other than returning to a pre-war legal career in his father's law practice.

Now set adrift, introspection prompted a more candid assessment. Roaming about the world doing secretive work served his avoidance of close relationships. Easy enough with estrangement from family. Although possessing a normal sex drive, his profession became an excuse for avoiding sustained romantic involvements. Skilled in social environments, he accumulated acquaintances but no real friends. In a moment of clarity, he saw himself too much like his father. A disturbing conclusion.

Although arriving in Florida weeks earlier, he avoided contacting his father. He wanted first to position his next move to deflect renewed pressure to join the law firm. Still accredited by the Miami Herald, journalism seemed the most attractive prospect. Although senior management of the Miami Herald unofficially knew of his association with the CIA, his journalism role was real and substantive. Tell them he was relocating to Havana as his base of operations to cover the Caribbean. Havana seemed a familiar refuge from his past.

The thought occurred that he might do an investigative piece on United Fruit Corporation. Campbell alluded to their involvement in the political turmoil in Guatemala. How far did their influence extend to other banana producing countries in the Americas? What was the role of United Fruit with repeated U.S. military interventions in the *Banana Wars* of the early part of the 20th century?