

Cuba Libra

March 23 – 30, 2019



Bobby-Headed Turtle

March 23, 2019
Calgary Airport

Fifteen years ago we put a turtle in a box – this week he will see the light of day.

Marshall was 13 and Riley was 12 when we went to Mexico in 2004. We were in a restaurant one night, talking about the future, and decided to make a time capsule. We all wrote out our expectations and put them in a sealed box, along with a few pictures. We bought a bobby-headed turtle from a trinket-seller and sealed him in the capsule to watch over our predictions.



The box was to have been opened in 2014, but somehow an extra half decade slipped by. Today we are all on our way to Cuba, so we thought it would be appropriate to unseal the capsule and bring the contents with us.

Marshall and Riley are all grown up and traveling with their partners. Bear and I have grown “out” more than “up”, but still on top of the world.

Bobby is the only one who hasn't changed much.



Tear Down This Wall

March 24, 2019

Hotel Meliá Habana, Cuba

When Ronald Reagan made his “Tear Down This Wall” speech in Berlin in 1987, ramifications were felt all over the world – even this hotel, half a world away in Havana, was affected.



The Meliá was under construction at the time, with funding and building materials imported from the Soviet Union. Cuba had aligned itself with the Communist government of the USSR, so when that regime collapsed and subsidies stopped flowing, projects all over Cuba stalled.

The hotel was just off the ground, with only 2-3 stories built, when the money ran out. Construction halted altogether in 1990 and didn't restart until two years later when a Spanish company bought the project.

We have a nice room on the third floor - I am not sure if our walls are made of.....

Soviet or Spanish wood.

Fixing Cuba's Plumbing

March 24, 2019

Plaza de Armas, Havana

Every time somebody approaches you anywhere in Havana, assume they are looking for money. They usually have a product or service to sell – panhandling is technically illegal, but sometimes the product can be nebulous. Like the guy who offered to lend us a sharpie to write our names on a wall. He said it was a tradition but forgot to mention that he expected \$10 for the use of his pen.

Later, in the Plaza de Armas, a fellow named Roberto sat down beside us, I momentarily forgot rule number one above. Roberto was dressed like a tourist and spoke almost perfect English. He didn't start the conversation with a request for money; he just introduced himself and seemed genuinely interested in having a conversation.

Roberto never did ask for money – I volunteered \$10 bucks when we parted company and I considered it a bargain. This is what he had to say;



Roberto works at a hospital every second day to make \$25 per month. He supplements his income doing what he was doing today – telling his story to tourists.

Roberto escaped Cuba on a raft, in 1974. He landed in Florida and spent 24 years living all over America. He returned to Cuba in the late 1990's because he missed his family, but life in Cuba is hard.

Some of Roberto's friends escaped Cuba by swimming shark infested waters to the US military base at Guantanamo. They covered their bodies with oil and petrol to discourage the sharks and landed safely as refugees in US territory. Others weren't so lucky.

The communist government gives every citizen rice, beans, sugar and five eggs every month. They get some cooking oil and fruit and can buy pork or chicken at subsidized prices (when they can find chicken). Beef and fish are not available to Cubans as those products are reserved for the tourist industry. Roberto and his family have enough to eat but there is little variety and no luxuries.

The family doesn't pay rent on their 105-year-old house and utilities are heavily subsidized, but there is no money for repairs. Part of the roof of Roberto's house collapsed during a hurricane in December and broke their only toilet. They have been using a can with plastic bags for months. Roberto's sister in Miami sent them money for a new toilet but Roberto hasn't installed it yet for lack of plumbing parts, mortar and labour.

Roberto was sentenced to 18 months for talking to tourists (a.k.a. panhandling) last year. He was released after 4 months but his time in "concentration camp" was obviously very difficult. When I asked about prison conditions his voice cracked as he explained that a street dog was treated better.



I asked Roberto what change could fix Cuba. He was very blunt; "Communism doesn't work." "Nothing will change until the old revolutionaries are all dead." "Raul Castro is very old, so are the rest of the old guard, so change could start happening soon, but most Cuban's, the ones who never left, or have never known anything different, don't want to change. They are afraid of Capitalism because they don't understand it."

Roberto's wrinkled brown eyes and weathered features conveyed an impression of defeat; not destitution, but something very close.

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I offered Roberto \$10 "to fix his toilet" and we parted company. Having mulled this over for a while, I wish I had given him \$100¹. I got a hell of a lot more from Roberto for \$10 than I did from the pen rental guy.



Cuba's plumbing definitely needs repair.

*The world breaks everyone, and afterward,
some are strong at the broken places.*

– Ernest Hemingway

¹ We went back to Plaza de Armas two days later to find Roberto, but he must have been at home, fixing his toilet.

Arms Outstretched

March 24, 2019
Havana, Cuba

“You can’t make this shit up.”

I don’t know who first uttered these immortal words, but I am almost 100% certain that they were in Cuba when they did. Take these two photographs for example:



In the first photo, Raul Castro, is seen with his arms outstretched, applauding the adoption of a new Cuban constitution. The picture appeared in the January 5, 2019 edition of the *Miami Herald* which reported:

“The ruling Communist Party will remain intact with no opposition.... the party is the “superior political power of society and of the State. Castro, 87, will remain as first secretary of the party.”

The second picture was taken 60 years earlier.

Again, the photo depicts Raul Castro with arms outstretched, but this time his hands are being used to tie a blindfold on a man who is about to be shot by a firing squad. Castro was then a Commander in the Cuban Revolutionary Army led by his brother Fidel, against the dictatorial government of Fulgencio Bautista.



The Castros launched an armed revolution because Bautista’s government was seen as having no opposition, with unilateral political power, and there was no legal or political method of ending Bautista’s stronghold on the country.

Sound Familiar? As they say,.....

you can’t make this shit up!

Yes, We Have No Bananas!

March 25, 2019

Viva Car Rental, Habana

Me: Hola! Do you rent 6-passenger vehicles?

Rental Agent: Yes – but not today.

Me: Ok – how about tomorrow?

Rental Agent: Maybe....

Me: I will drop by in the morning.

Rental Agent: No, not morning, try in the afternoon.

Me: Afternoon? - OK. Can I reserve?

Rental Agent: No.

Me: No? Why not?

Rental Agent: Because we don't know if we will have any cars tomorrow.

Me: Okay...

Me (under my breath): Yes, we have no bananas!



Behind the Cactus Curtain

March 25, 2019

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba



Torture at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba started long before the American Navy established a military prison there.

In 1738, a British merchant ship moored in the bay was suspected of smuggling arms. Spanish authorities boarded the ship, arrested Captain Robert Jenkins, tied him to a mast and sliced off one

ear. They told Jenkins to deliver the ear to King George and tell him; *“the same will happen to him (the king) if caught doing the same.”*

The conflict that ensued between Spain and Britain was appropriately called *The War of Jenkins' Ear* (1739-1748).

This satirical picture shows the unfortunate Jenkins displaying his severed ear to the Prime Minister (although there is some doubt whether that actually happened).



Cuba eventually gained independence from Spanish colonists and aligned themselves with the Americans. During those friendly times, around 1903, Cuba leased 120 sq. km of land and water at Guantanamo Bay to the US Navy on a perpetual basis. The Navy established a supply base and a detention camp and have never left.

The affiliation worked well for both countries; the US provided military protection to Cuba, in exchange for a Caribbean base for military operations - until 1958.....



Things got heated between Cuba and the US after the Revolution, so the Navy built a wall around the Guantanamo compound. They considered concrete, steel and other materials but in the end, they decided on Opuntia Cactus. The gnarly plant grows naturally in the area and a wall of cacti provided a formidable barrier to entry. Just to be sure, the Navy buried land mines among the cactus.

For forty years after the Revolution, protected behind their Cactus Curtain, the Americans relaxed and used the base for the relatively benign purpose of housing Cuban and Haitian refugees.

The events of 9-11 changed all that. Since 2001, the US military has upped their game at Gitmo to detaining and torturing suspected Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists. Much international controversy surrounds the activity occurring at Guantanamo Bay, but I won't venture into that arena.

I like my ears where they are.



Gitmo Trivia:

Guantanamera is perhaps Cuba's best-known song. The song's patriotic lyrics are attributed to José Martí, Cuban poet and national hero. Guajira Guantanamera translates as "peasant woman from Guantanamo".

Gitmo is a little bit of America in a Communist country. In fact, Guantanamo Bay is the only place in Cuba you can shop at MacDonalds, KFC or Starbucks. As appealing as that sounds, we decided not to travel to the area.

Guantanamo Bay detention camp has a reputation as a human-rights-free-zone, holding inmates without trial. Several incidents of torture and more than a few "suicides" while in detention have occurred. Amnesty International labelled Gitmo "the Gulag of our times".

"Don't tell me it doesn't work — torture works," "Half these guys [say]: 'Torture doesn't work.' Believe me, it works." - Candidate Donald Trump at a rally in Bluffton, SC Feb 17, 2016.

Arnaldo Tamayo Méndez is a Guantanamo province native. Tamayo, born in 1942, was an orphaned child who worked as a shoeshine boy, vegetable vendor and carpenter's assistant during his youth. After the Cuban revolution he entered the Rebel Army Technical Institute and became a fighter pilot. Tamayo distinguished himself in aerial combat, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1978 he was selected for Russian cosmonaut training and, on September 18, 1980, became the first Afro-Cuban Vegetable Picker in space.



Tamayo, now 77 years old, still resides in Guantanamo province and represents his home province in the Cuban National Assembly. His spacesuit is on display in the Museum of the Revolution in Havana.

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An article in Wikipedia states: *"It has been reported that prisoners cooperating with interrogations have been rewarded with Happy Meals from the McDonald's on base."*

Will the torture never cease!

Yo Ho Ho

March 26, 2019

Castillo de la Real Fuerza, Havana, Cuba

The story of rum is entwined with Cuban history, and equally fascinating. A very early reference to the beverage was made in a 1651 document which stated:

"The chief fuddling they make in the island is Rumbullion, alias Kill-Divil, and this is made of sugar canes distilled, a hot, hellish, and terrible liquor."

Not an auspicious start.

Another early fermented beverage made from sugarcane molasses was called *Aguardiente* (translates from Spanish as "*fiery water*"). *Aguardiente* was the drink of choice for pirates. The fiery gruel caused ferocious headaches, which may account for their surly reputation.

Other nicknames for primitive rum were equally unappetizing; *Nelson's blood*, *kill-devil*, *demon water*, *bumbo* and *pirate's drink*. Whatever the grog was called, it was accessible, portable and cheap. For almost 200 years, crude rum was the thirst-quencher of choice for sailors and common people.

In 1862, Cuban Facundo Bacardi set about purifying the lowly beverage and introduced it to a more refined audience. Bacardi had no concept of alcohol strains – the science didn't exist yet, but through trial and error Bacardi separated methanol and other noxious alcohol types from his rum ("ron" in Spanish) and produced a mellow product of unequalled flavour.



Bacardi adopted the fruit bat, a symbol of good fortune, and used it as the logo on his barrels and bottles. Ron Bacardi quickly spread across Cuba, then around the world.

Ten fathoms deep on the road to Hell...
Fifteen men on a dead man's chest
Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum
Drink and the devil had done for the rest
Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum.

Cuba Libra

March 26, 2019

Castillo de la Real Fuerza, Havana, Cuba



Bacardi wasn't the only Cuban to produce high-quality rum. Another family, the Arechabala's, started fermenting sugarcane in 1878. Their *Havana Club* brand has become a household name, globally.

By a strange twist of political and corporate machinations, rum bottled in Cuba under the name *Havana Club* cannot be sold in the United States. But an American rum producer contends that the trade name *Havana Club* isn't proprietary; they produce rum in Puerto Rico, in the same bottle and with the same logo, and sell it in America.

Havana Club has been suing *Havana Club* for decades. **Confused yet? Welcome to Cuba!**

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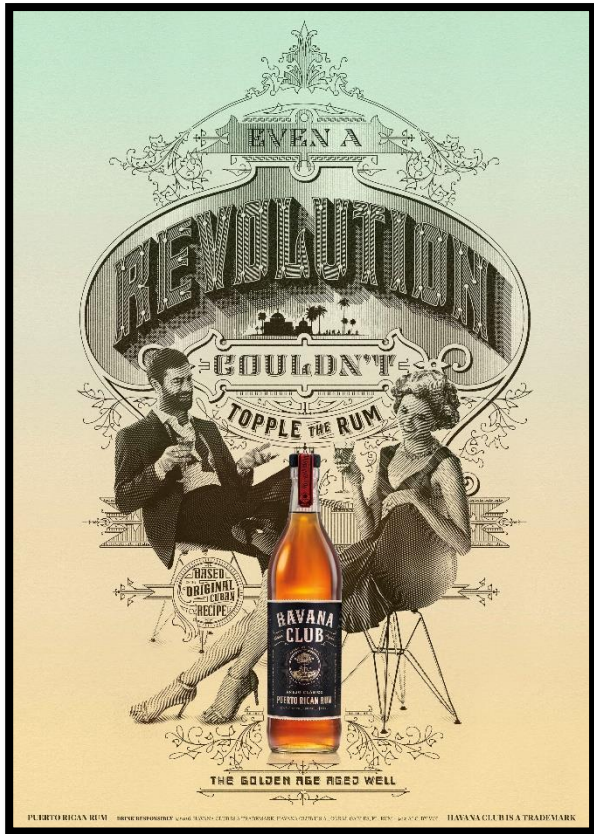
The woman on the logo of *Havana Club* is Isabel de Bobadilla.

She has stood atop the Castillo de la Real, overlooking Havana Harbour, since 1634. Isabel is a relative latecomer to the Castle, which was originally built in 1562. La Giraldilla watchtower and Isabel showed up 72 years later.



The story goes that Isabel was appointed provisional governor of Cuba in 1539, when her governor-husband left Havana to explore and conquer Florida. Isabel waited and watched from the shore for her husband to return, but he never did. Many years after she died, her search was immortalised with this statue.

We took a tour of the Havana Club Museum then enjoyed a few cocktails in a restaurant nearby, under the watchful eye of Isabel de Bobadilla.



Still no word from her husband.

This “in-your-face” ad was produced by the “other” Havana Club to market their Puerto Rican rum in the USA and taunt the original Havana Club.



Irony:

The cocktail you get when you combine that most American of beverages – Coca-Cola with Cuban Rum is called a

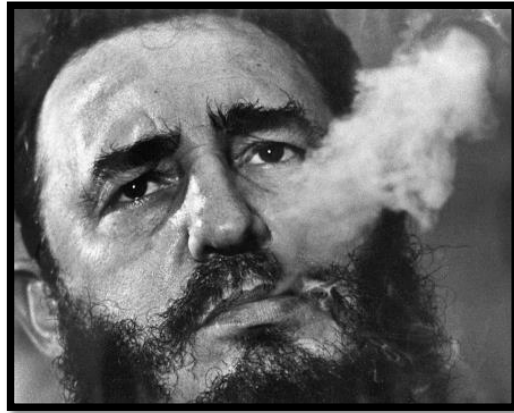
Cuba Libre.

Close, but no Cigar

March 26, 2019

Havana, Cuba

These two were mortal enemies, in the truest sense of the word. If Kennedy and Castro could have killed one another, they would have.



But they had one thing in common – they both enjoyed Cuban cigars. In 1962, President Kennedy imposed an embargo on Cuban goods, but not before enlisting his staff to procure a hearty supply of his favourite Cuban brands for personal consumption.

The American embargo on cigars from Cuba was the most effective marketing program ever devised for a product. When Kennedy prohibited Americans (except him) access to Cuban tobacco, he created a forbidden fruit of biblical proportions. The appetite for Cohibas and Montecristos rose astronomically, as did their value.



The embargo worked for a time thereby creating a shortage, which only intensified the craving for Cuban smoke. A robust black market sprang up and Cuba increased production to accommodate the demand. According to Stubbs's Cigar Book, pre-revolution exports of Cuban cigars were about 79 million world-wide. Exports dropped to about 55 million immediately following the embargo but, within a decade, 120 million cigars were being exported from Cuba annually, at significantly higher prices.

The American embargo came **close, but no Cigar**.

The expression "close but no cigar" comes from the practice of giving away cigars as prizes in fairground games which require the player to hit a target. - Wikipedia

Sobremesa

March 26, 2019
Havana, Cuba

Rum, Cigars and Dominoes are a way of life in Cuba. In fact, Cubans have a single word that describes the ritual of playing a game and smoking, while sharing a bottle of rum – *Sobremesa*.



Sobremesa is Cuba's favourite pastime, second only to baseball. It translates literally as.....

“over the table”.



My Mom's favourite treat was a Cuban Lunch chocolate bar. The snacks were manufactured in Winnipeg by the McCormicks Company. The only thing “Cuban” about them was the *Spanish* peanuts; which were covered in milk chocolate. McCormicks went out of business in the 1990's and nobody picked up the brand, which is a shame;

Mom would have swum to Havana for one.



La Bella Cubana

March 27, 2019

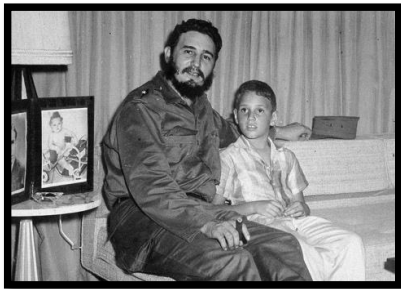
La Bella Cubana Restaurant, Melia Habana Hotel, Cuba

A multi-generational family group walked through the restaurant we were dining at this evening. The only reason I paid any attention to them at all was the fact that we were having a multi-generational evening and I had a flash of synonymy as the Cuban family passed by.

We were engrossed in a lively conversation, prompted by reading the contents of a time capsule we had sealed 15 years ago, so I barely noticed the five or six other guests leaving.

When the waiter came by, he told us, in heavily accented english, that the guests who had just left were descendants of Fidel Castro. I couldn't understand the entire lineage but one of the people was the widow of Castro's late son Fidel Ángel Castro Díaz-Balart¹, with one or two of Castro's grandchildren and their cousins.

The waiter mentioned that La Bella Cubana restaurant had hosted many famous guests, including Mick Jagger and Barack Obama, but I was pleased that the celebrities *du jour* were Cuban "royalty".



We continued with our family celebration, reminiscing, making plans, kidding one another and generally enjoying our anonymity.

I cannot imagine the kind of hell a famous person must endure. It is one thing to be prominent in a "rock star" or "ex-president" kind of way, but to be famous because you have the same name as an icon must be grotesque.

Fidel Ángel Castro bore the brunt of that burden. He was successful on his own account, but he could never shake the effects of his father's omnipresence. No matter his achievements, "Fidel Castro's son" was the title everyone used when referring to him. That and the diminutive "Fidelito".

¹ His name uses Spanish naming customs: the first or paternal family name is Castro and the second or maternal family name is Díaz-Balart.

Fidelito suffered from depression most of his adult life. When he could no longer carry the burden of his name, Fidel Ángel Castro committed suicide in Havana, on February 1, 2018.

I don't know what the Castro's talked about this evening, but I doubt they had as much fun as we did. The only expectations of us were our own. And, nobody hounded us for autographs as we walked out of....

La Bella Cubana.



La Bella Cubanas y Cubanos.



Type II Fun

March 29, 2012

Havana, Cuba

Taylor introduced me to the concept of “Type II Fun” yesterday. It appears to be a variation of the old “when the world hands you lemons, make lemonade” idiom.

Riley and Taylor, Deanna and Marshall intended to go to a great restaurant Bear and I had found earlier. We recommended they use the same cab driver to take them to El Cochino, an upscale, roof-top restaurant, with fine food and beautiful people located nearby. Through a combination of miss-information, language barrier and taxi-driver chicanery, they ended up at an “authentic” Cuban restaurant downtown. I didn’t get the whole story, but it included words like “fish heads”, “live chickens” and “salsa music”. At one point Deanna mentioned a “peacock”.

The point is; what they expected was not what they got, but they all found a way to have *Type II* fun with the experience.

People unaccustomed to making paradigm shifts really shouldn’t travel to Cuba. Very few things work the way they are supposed to, cash machines don’t always have cash, benches may, or may not, have seats and, what comes out of a tap when you turn it on might be water, might be something else, or nothing.



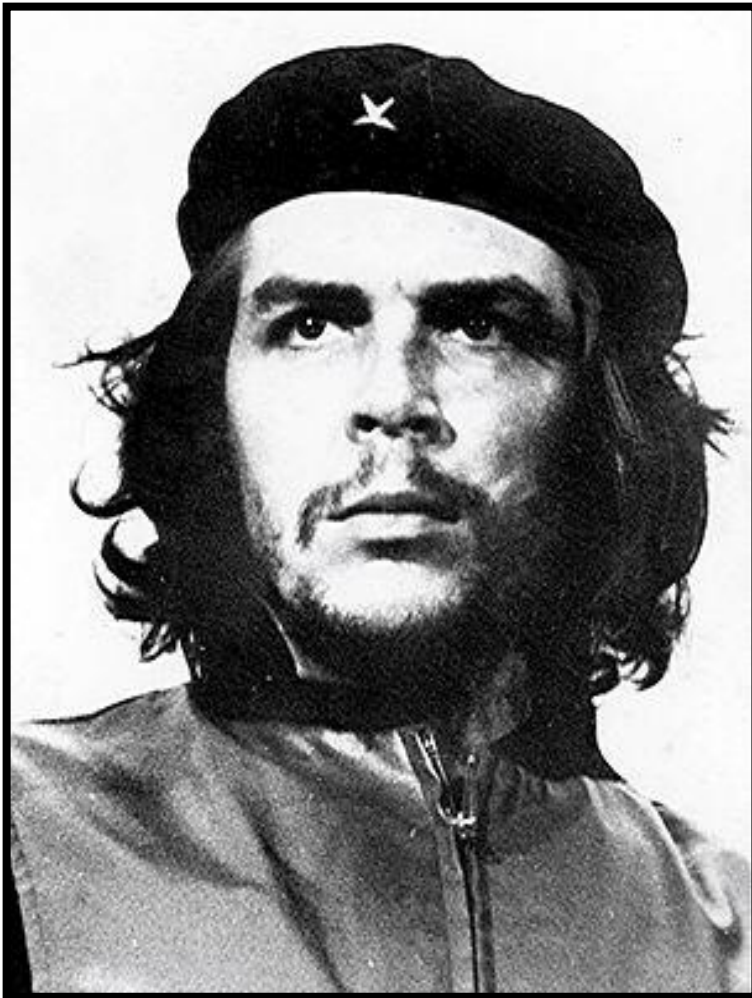
To combine the old and the new descriptives;

**In Cuba, if you don’t have a mechanism to switch to Type II,
you are going to suck on a lot of lemons.**



Guerrillero Heroico

March 29, 2019
Havana, Cuba



This photograph has been reproduced more often than any other image in the history of photography.

Cuban photographer, Alberto Korda captured the stoic image of Ernesto "Che" Guevara on March 5, 1960. Korda called the photo "*Guerrillero Heroico*" (Heroic Guerrilla Fighter) and it was to become a worldwide symbol of revolution and rebellion.

A true socialist, Korda never collected a penny in royalties for the image. He cherished the photo but didn't publish it. In 1967, Giangiaco Feltrinelli an Italian filmmaker, saw the photo and asked Korda if he could use it in a documentary film he was producing, about Castro and the Cuban Revolution,

Korda gave the photo to Feltrinelli free of charge.

Six months after Feltrinelli acquired the the photo, Che Guevara was captured by the CIA and summarily executed. Feltrinelli printed two million copies and distributed them worldwide. Che Guevara was elevated to martyrdom.

To this day, the handsome rebel's portrait is an icon of leftist movements. It has been painted, printed, digitized, embroidered, tattooed, silk-screened, sculpted and sketched on every surface imaginable.

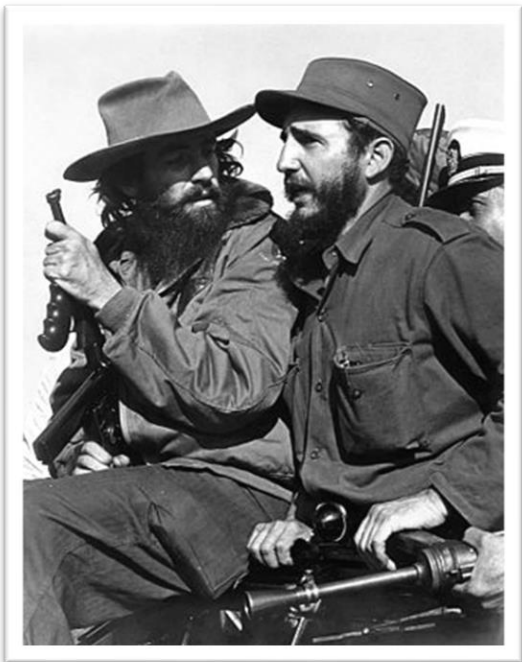
**Like Che Guevara himself,
the hero's image appears wherever there is conflict.**

One Hundred Fires

March 26, 2019

Playa Los Coloradas, Cuba

Revolution is a risky business; and those who revolt as a matter of habit count their days in hours.



Camilo Cienfuegos and Fidel Castro

Most of the eighty-two soldiers who sailed to Cuba with Castro aboard the *Granma* were seasoned revolutionaries. They had been in combat against the Bautista government for years, so when they disembarked on the beach at Playa Los Coloradas on December 2, 1956, Castro's small army was battle ready.

Unfortunately, Bautista's much larger army was also prepared for combat. The Cuban military had become aware of the revolutionaries plans and 500 Cuban militia were on the beach to confront the 82 insurgents.

Only eighteen of Castro's revolutionaries survived the first week of fighting.

Fidel Castro and his brother Raul, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos (translates as; *one hundred fires*) were among the survivors. Over the course of three weeks, Castro and

his few remaining soldiers recruited civilian volunteers and Cuban army defectors, en masse. The motley guerrilla force toppled the Bautista regime on New Year's Day 1957.

Fidel Castro survived the revolution and lived to the ripe old age of 90. His brother Raul is still alive. But they are the exceptions.

Che Guevara was appointed to several positions of authority within the new government but he soon tired of life as a bureaucrat. Guevara traveled to Africa and Central America to promote socialist revolutionary causes worldwide. On October 9,

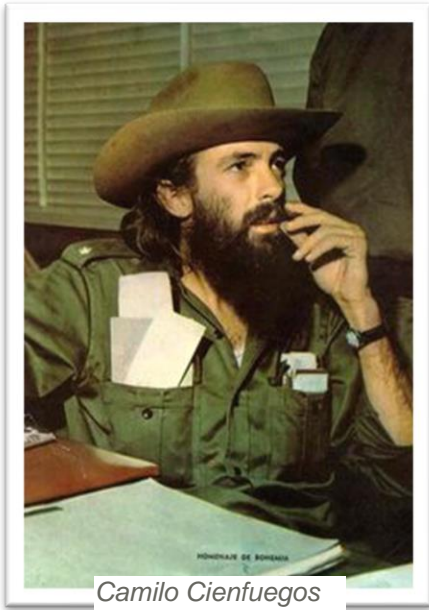


Che Guevara

1967, Che Guevara was captured by CIA operatives in Belize and executed in captivity.

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After the revolution, Camilo Cienfuegos was appointed Chief of Staff of the Cuban Army. He became increasingly uncomfortable in the role, as Castro's government veered toward Marxism and Authoritarianism. Cienfuegos made his objections public, in Cuba and abroad.



Camilo Cienfuegos

On the evening of October 28, 1959, Camilo Cienfuegos's Cessna 310 disappeared over the Straits of Florida during a clear night flight, without a distress signal. The aircraft and Cienfuegos's body were never found.

Many suspected Castro of orchestrating a political execution, but it could have been CIA action, bad piloting or just bad luck. However it happened, Cienfuegos' 100 fires were extinguished, at the age of 27.

*The flame that burns twice as bright
burns half as long.*

Che Guevara told this story about how he was appointed President of the National Bank of Cuba: *"We were in meetings one day and Fidel asked; who here is a dedicated economist? I thought he said 'communist', so I put up my hand and Fidel gave me the job!"*



Just One More....

March 26, 2019

Playa Los Coloradas, Cuba

Let me know when you are tired of hearing Cuban revolutionary stories. They are just so fascinating I can't stop. Here's one more.....

William Alexander Morgan – The Yankee Comandante

Bill Alexander was born in Ohio in 1929. He Joined the US Army in 1946, went AWOL, was arrested, escaped, was recaptured, court-marshalled and spent 2 years in jail.

Morgan was skilled with firearms and, after his release from prison, those skills caught the attention of the CIA. Morgan was (reportedly) recruited by the CIA and also worked for a time with a crime syndicate.



Bill Morgan, on the right, with Fidel Castro

In 1954 Morgan married Ellen Bethel, a snake charmer in Miami. Three years later, Morgan abandoned his wife and two children (and an unquantified number of snakes) and moved to Cuba.

He joined the Cuban Revolution and rose to the rank of Comandante, fighting alongside the Castro brothers and Che Guevara.

After the Revolution, Morgan developed a frog farming business, selling legs to restaurants and skins for fashion accessories. But, like so many revolutionaries, Morgan could not settle down to civilian life. As Castro veered toward Communism, Morgan left the frog farm and organized a counter-revolutionary force.

Castro uncovered the treasonous plot of his old friend the Yankee Comandante. Castro ordered Morgan arrested and, on March 11, 1961, after a short trial, Bill Morgan, then 32 years old, was shot by firing squad with Fidel and Raul Castro in attendance.



Another revolutionary fire, prematurely extinguished.

Jambe de Bois

March 27, 2019

Havana, Cuba

Havana has this guy to thank for making the city the predominant jurisdiction in Cuba.



François Le Clerc, known as "Jambe de Bois" was a 16th-century French privateer.

Le Clerc had a ferocious reputation. He commanded seven pirate ships and three royal vessels, which were the scourge of the Atlantic. Le Clerc was often the first to board enemy ships during a raid. On one such bold assault, against an English ship, he lost a leg and suffered a badly mangled arm.

His mutilations never stopped Jambe de Bois (Peg Leg), as he was thereafter known. In fact, they just made him crankier. Peg Leg and his crew wreaked havoc all over the Caribbean from 1549 to 1563.

In 1554, at the height of his terror, Le Clerc sacked Santiago de Cuba. His pirates occupied the city for a month, and left with 80,000 pesos in treasure.

Peg Leg so completely devastated Cuba's first capital that it was soon eclipsed by Havana and never recovered its former prosperity.

We never saw any statues or tributes to the mutilated pirate in Havana, despite the fact that the city stands on...

one wooden leg.



Poignant

March 30, 2019

Havana – Toronto - Millarville

There are approximately 250,000 distinct words in the English language. If asked to choose a single word to describe Cuba, my choice would be *poignant*.

From the Oxford English Dictionary:

poignant

poi-n-yuh nt, poi-nuh nt

-adjective

- 1) keenly distressing to the feelings
- 2) keen or strong in mental appeal
- 3) affecting or moving the emotions

Cuba is “keenly distressing to the feelings”.

Poverty, intermingled with profound happiness, produces a cocktail, with euphoric side-effects.

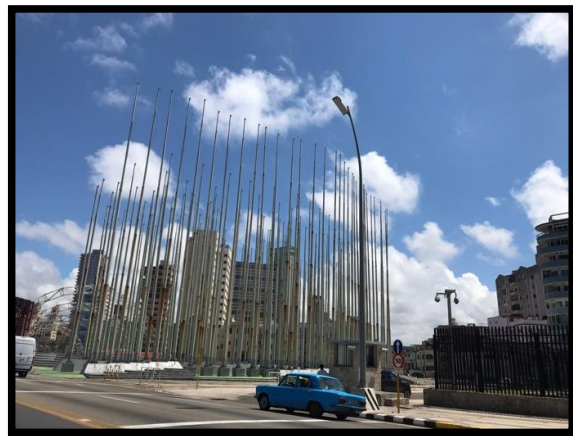
Nothing in Cuba works the way we expect it to, yet there is an almost sensuous rhythm to the chaos.

Along the Malecón, between our hotel and old Havana, we saw the wondrous natural beauty of the Caribbean on one side, and staggering ruin on the other. The effect was simultaneous, polar-emotional, sensations.

In Old Havana we were confronted with highly-educated, healthy people hustling tourists for handouts. This egregious waste of Cuba’s human resource had, yet another, profound effect on the emotions.

My first instinct is to do something about it; it is difficult to stand by and watch when there is something so obviously wrong.

But then I considered the enormity of the task and compared it to the time and energy I have available. The result was an emotion that can only be described as.....



...poignant.

