

TheAmericano: Fighting With Castro For Cuba's Freedom - Aran Shetterly

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"Why do I fight here in this land so foreign to my own? Why did I come here far from my home and family?...Is it because I seek adventure? No...I am here because I believe that the most important thing for free men to do is to protect the freedom of others."-William Morgan, in a letter to Herbert Matthews at the New York Times

When William Morgan was twenty-two years old, he was working as a high school janitor in Toledo Ohio. Seven years later, in 1958, he walked into a Rebel camp in the Cuban Jungle to join the revolutionaries in their fight to overthrow the corrupt Cuban president, Fulgencio Batista. They were wary of the broad-shouldered, blond-haired, blue-eyed americano but Morgan's dedication and passion, his military skill and charisma, led him to become a chief comandante in Castro's army-he was the only foreigner to hold such a rank, with the exception of Che Guevera. Vicious battles in the jungles were followed by victorious revelry in the cities. Morgan married a Cuban beauty. He single-handedly thwarted the Dominican Republic's attempt to overthrow Castro. And he was chosen to work with Castro and other high ranking Rebels to improve the quality of life for all people. This man who had lived under the radar in America was now a Cuban hero on the watch lists of several governments, all of whom wondered whose side he was really on. It all ended in 1961, when, at age thirty-two, Morgan was executed by firing squad, at the hands of Fidel Castro.

Journalist Aran Shetterly takes us back to an era when democracy could have flourished in Cuba. He interviewed Morgan's friends and family and former Cuban Rebels, and examined FBI and CIA documents in search of the truth. What emerged was the true story of a young man who had never fit in but finally found his place in the world by fighting another country's war.

Author: Shetterly, Aran Publisher: Algonquin Books Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: TheAmericano: Fighting with Castro for Cuba's Freedom Pages: 00000 (Encrypted EPUB) On Sale: 2007-08-10 SKU-13/ISBN: 9781565124585 Category: Biography & Autobiography : Political Category: History : Caribbean & West Indies - Cuba

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