

**WELCOME  
HOME**



# WELCOME HOME

**Torturers, Assassins and terrorists in refuge in the U.S.**

EDITORIAL



Editorial Capitán San Luis  
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## Prologue

*Gerardo Hernández Nordelo*

I will never forget the first time I was able to get hold of some old copies of *Bohemia* magazine published right after the victory of the Revolution. The magazine denounced the crimes committed by the Batista dictatorship and contained the most horrific images I had ever seen. The bodies of youths riddled with bullets, the mutilated backs of persons who had been tortured and would always bear the scars of the blows and burns they had received; instruments used by henchmen of the regime to pull out nails, crush fingers and apply electricity to the genitals of their prisoners. My childish innocence did not allow me to comprehend that human beings could commit such abhorrent actions. I was far from imagining that years later, I would be entrusted with a mission in Florida and faced with the unpleasant experience of actually having to see and hear some of those assassins and others as despicable

The authors of these atrocities were welcomed, given shelter and made heroes once they reached Miami. In the same way, they turned anti-Cuban terrorists and criminals into “Anti-Castro activists” or “freedom fighters” immediately upon their arrival to the United States.

Even though this may seem incredible, these people proudly describe their past feats and announce their future plans to the media, especially on certain radio stations in Florida. They consider pre-revolutionary Cuba a “paradise” to which they eagerly aspire to return some day. Many have openly confessed they were part of the Batista regime and shamelessly proclaim

that they will resort to “harsh methods” in order to make Castro’s followers “toe the line” and thereby recover their luxurious properties and take over government positions that they have divvied up among themselves more than once.

Some of these individuals managed to escape justice and died peacefully of old age. While for others, their only punishment was not to be able to return to the country they plundered and survived to witness the development and advancement of our revolutionary process. Many assassins and torturers have gone unpunished throughout successive presidential administrations that protected them despite the many crimes they committed in this country.

Many Americans and other foreign nationals who reside in Miami would be horrified if they knew who that kindly old man sitting next to them in the doctor’s office really is; or that man, perhaps not as old, they often see in supermarkets or that public figure, with his aura of innocence and humanitarian disguise who always appears in the news.

But there they are and nobody bothers them. They are the “illustrious guests” of the same country that accuses Cuba of harboring terrorists. Meanwhile, many families in our country evoke memories of their loved ones, victims of their crimes, with great sorrow and pain and yet their cry for justice remains unheard.

In order to refresh the memory of those who cast false accusations against Cuba, so that the world may learn the truth and our people never forget this book by the Editorial Capitán San Luis and a group of prominent writers is an important contribution to the struggle against terrorism.

This is a terrorism that the “free ” and “world-wide” press has been forbidden to talk about.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo  
Victorville Federal Prison,  
California  
January 12, 2005



Nunca podré olvidar el día en que tuve por primera vez en mis manos unos viejos ejemplares de "Bohemia", publicados poco tiempo después del triunfo de la Revolución. En las páginas de la revista se denunciaban los crímenes cometidos por la dictadura de Batista, y las fotografías eran las más espeluznantes que había visto en mi vida: jóvenes acuchillados a palazos, cuerpos mutilados, espaldas de personas torturadas que conservarían para siempre las cicatrices de los golpes y quemaduras, artefactos empleados para sacar uñas, para machucar dedos, para aplicar corriente eléctrica en los órganos genitales... Mi inocencia infantil me impedía entender que actos tan horrendos pudieran ser cometidos por seres humanos. Lejos estaba de imaginar que años más tarde, cuando cumpliríamos nuestra misión en La Florida, tendríamos la desagradable experiencia de ver o escuchar a algunos de aquellos asesinos, y a otros tan despreciables como ellos.

Los autores de tales atrocidades fueron recibidos, protegidos y convertidos en "héroes" en Miami, de la misma manera en que han convertido en "combatientes anticastelistas" o "luchadores por la libertad" a cuanto criminoso y terrorista notoriamente ha llegado a los Estados Unidos.

Por increíble que resulte, en la prensa de La Florida, principalmente en ciertas estaciones de radio, estas personas describen con orgullo sus "hazañas" pasadas y sus planes futuros. Para ellos la Cuba pre-revolucionaria era el "paraíso" al que sueñan regresar algún día. Muchos se declaran abiertamente batistianos, y proclaman su pudor que necesitarán "mano dura" para "hacer por el año a los castristas", para recuperar sus lujosas propiedades y poder ejercer los puestos gubernamentales que más de una vez se han repartido.

Algunos de estos individuos que escaparon al brazo de la justicia vivieron pacientemente hasta el último de sus días. Para ellos el único castigo por el no poder regresar al país de sus destinos, y el haber tenido que sufrir, día a día, la supervivencia y el desarrollo de nuestro proceso revolucionario. Otros asesinos y terroristas aún gozan de la impunidad conde sucesivas administraciones norteamericanas los han amparado, a pesar de que no poco de sus crímenes han sido perpetrados en territorio de este país.

MUCHOS NORTEAMERICANOS, Y PERSONAS DE OTRAS NACIONALIDADES RESIDENTES EN MIAMI, SE HORRORIZARÍAN SI SUPIERAN QUIÉN ES EL VISITTO QUE SE LES MIENTA AL LADO EN LA CONSULTA DE UN MÉDICO, O EL OTRO SUJETO, NO TAN MAYOR, COMO QUIEN COINCIDEN EN EL MERCADO, O EL PERSONAJE PÚBLICO, CON CARA DE INOCENTE Y DISFRAZ HUMANITARIO, A QUIEN VEN SIEMPRE EN LAS NOTICIAS... PERO AHÍ ESTÁN, Y NADIE LOS HUESTA. SON HUESTRAS "ILUSTRES" DEL MISMO PAÍS QUE ACUSA A CUBA DE ABERGAR A TERRORISTAS. MIENTRAS TANTO, EN NUESTRA PATRIA, NO SON FOCAS LAS FAMILIAS QUE RECUERDAN CON DOLOR A SUS SERES QUERIDOS ASESINADOS, Y RECLAMAN LA JUSTICIA QUE SE LES NIEGA.

PARA REFRESCAR LA MEMORIA A QUIENES INFAMAN CON FALSAS ACUSACIONES, PARA QUE EL MUNDO CONOZCA Y NUESTRO PUEBLO NUNCA OLVIDE, SON LAS PÁGINAS DE ESTE LIBRO, IMPORTANTE CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LA EDITORIAL "CAPITÁN SAN LUIS", Y DE UN GRUPO DE PRESTIGIOSOS ESCRITORES, A LA LUCHA CONTRA EL TERRORISMO.

CONTRA UN TERRORISMO DEL CUAL A LA GRAN PRENSA "LIBRE" Y "GLOBALIZADA" LE ESTÁ PROMIENDO HABLAR.

Premón Tilden de Victorville, California

Enero 12, 2005.

# **Esteban Ventura Novo: The Man in the White Suit**

*Heriberto Rosabal*

While our trial was underway in this courtroom, Esteban Ventura Novo passed away in Miami and I am bringing this up because I believe it is symbolic of something.

[..]

When the Revolutionary Government took power in Cuba, Ventura Novo and others like him, perpetrators of crimes against the Cuban people, were received and sheltered by this country's government. Many of them were advised, directed and financed by U.S. intelligence agencies, in their dirty war against a government that obviously enjoyed and continues to enjoy the support of its people.

Fernando González Llor<sup>1</sup>

Corporal Caro, one of the assassins under the orders of Colonel Esteban Ventura Novo, was sentenced to death after the triumph of the Revolution. Among the charges presented against him were the detention and eventual disappearance of Lidia Doce y Clodomira Ferrals, two messengers of the Rebel Army who were arrested in Havana on September 12, 1958. During the trial, Caro recounted the horrors to which these two heroic women were submitted:

[...] From Juanelo they were taken to the 11th police precinct ...on the 13th, Ventura ordered me to fetch them and I took

<sup>1</sup>One of the five Cubans imprisoned by the empire. Fernando Gonzalez Llor<sup>1</sup> and his comrades, Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, Ramon Labañino Salazar and Rene Gonzalez Schwerert, are currently serving harsh sentences in a U.S. prison following a rigged trial during which the Miami Cuban counterrevolutionary mafia exercised its strong influence. Fernando was accused of conspiracy to commit espionage against the United States; possession and use of forged identification documents and of being an unauthorized foreign agent, although his «real» crime was to keep the Cuban authorities informed of the terrorists plans prepared by anti-Cuban counterrevolutionary organizations based in the United States against which the latter government does not take any action.

them to the basement of the 9th precinct where Ariel Lima<sup>2</sup> pushed them causing Lidia to fall flat on her face after which she could hardly stand up. Then he hit her with a club on the head. Her eyes almost bulged from their sockets when she hit the floor... The skinny one managed to break loose and threw herself at him, ripping his shirt and clawing her nails across his face. I tried to pull her off him and then she jumped on me, closing her legs around my waist and he had to pull her away by hitting her until she was knocked out.

[...] The older one, Lidia, could no longer speak, she only groaned. She was limping and in very bad condition. On the night of the 14th, Laurent called Ventura and asked him if the prisoners had talked to which he responded:

“These animals have beaten them so badly to get them to talk that the older one is unconscious and the mouth of the younger one is all swollen and broken by the blows that you can only understand when she curses.” Laurent told him to send the women to him and Ventura sent them “temporarily” because they were his prisoners. We took the milk truck, which we used when we wanted to conceal the transfer of prisoners or bodies that were kept at the 10th precinct.

[...] Laurent tortured them but could not make them utter a single word (this was during the early hours of the 15th) then the dying women were put on a boat that was docked at la Puntilla, behind the Castillo de la Chorrera, placed in sacks filled with rocks, repeatedly dumped into the water and taken out again to no avail, until they were finally cast into the sea. [...]

During those years Havana, as had always, was a very active city, with a nightlife that would go on until dawn. The new ho-

<sup>2</sup> Traitor to the 26th of July Movement who accepted the position of police lieutenant under the orders of Esteban Ventura Novo. He provided information that led to the arrests, and sometimes the deaths, of many of his former comrades-in-arms. After the triumph of the Revolution, he was arrested, tried and condemned to death by a firing squad. He confessed to having assassinated seven individuals, as was demonstrated during his trial, and to other crimes.

tel-casinos—Capri, Riviera, and Havana Hilton—competed with the aristocratic Hotel Nacional. The Tunnel of Havana, built in record time by the French company Des Grands Travaux de Marseille, stretched under the clear waters of the narrow canal that leads across the harbor, all the way from La Punta to El Morro and La Cabaña fortresses. At that point in time, this thriving city had earned the reputation of the “Monte Carlo of the Caribbean”. And although this was not the case, it did however have its attractions: Tropicana, Sans Souci, voluptuous mulattas, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra, wild parties, tourists, mostly Americans, sporting gaudy, tropical-motif shirts drinking rum and trying to play and dance Rumba as they squandered large sums of money in exchange for forbidden pleasures. However, this city of bright neon lights had a more somber side, one of bombs, arrests, searches, patrol cars, sirens howling in the middle of the night, shootouts even during the day, money laundering, Mafiosi, derelicts, shoeshine boys, street lottery vendors, prostitutes, pimps, juke boxes, street musicians, student demonstrations and an underground struggle.

The airs of peace and tranquility only blew from the Malecon down Quinta Avenida, bordered by exuberant trees and beautiful parks, to the exclusive clubs and luxurious mansions inhabited by stately “caballeros” elegant “señoras”, beautiful “señoritas” and “señoritos”, waited on by maids dressed in freshly pressed uniforms in the posh Miramar and Biltmore suburban neighborhoods, located to the west of the capital. Beyond the limits of the city, in all directions, there were slums, sugar mills, cattle, the Guardia Rural (the rural police); famished wood charcoal makers, latifundia, the United Fruit Company, thatched-roof huts, evictions, children plagued with parasites and without teachers, seasonal closures, in a country that under conditions of extreme poverty, made a true revolution.

And revolutions, especially real revolutions, are never made without bloodshed.

From March 1952 to December 1958, the bodies of more than 600 men and women who had been electrocuted, beaten, hanged or shot to death were taken to the city morgue, a two-story building situated in the middle of the city. This figure

accounted for only 5% of the persons who were assassinated by the repressive forces of the Batista dictatorship during that period, according to estimates made by the director of the facility and published in *Bohemia* magazine in February of 1959. Many more were found later in clandestine graves, while others simply disappeared. Most of the victims had been chosen at random, in retaliation for a bomb that had exploded, an attack against a policeman or any other action against the regime that had a public impact.

In the beginning, they tried to conceal their crimes by complying with certain legal formalities, even post mortems. The police would inform that they had discovered a body and the forensics would go to the site of the discovery, conduct some investigations and then hand over the remains to the relatives.

However, in time, killing became an even greater addiction, out of control and encouraged by the de facto regime. Promotions and decorations were handed out, even on behalf of the President of the Republic, to those who better ensured the “security and tranquility of the civilian population and national stability” at gunpoint and through beatings using all sorts of methods. Eventually all formalities were discarded. The bodies were put in either patrol or civilian cars and abandoned at the entrance of the morgue without any documentation. The employees would load the corpses in to carts, photograph and number them and send the fingerprints to the National Identification Office, in order to determine their name, exact age and address. At times, the victims were under 14 years of age. Others were kept in cold storage for weeks until a relative or someone would come and identify the body, amid tears and cries of sorrow and despair, as they stared at the ceiling, praying for some sort of comfort from a merciful god. If no one claimed a body, it was then sent to Colon Cemetery where it was cast into a grave for unidentified persons, with no one present to offer them a final farewell.

Esteban Ventura Novo could have been a farmworker, shoemaker, grocer or with some luck he could have gone to college or studied to become a priest; however, he enlisted in the army and quickly became accustomed to the uniform, its

martial demeanor and to all the other real or apparent attributes derived from military authority until finally he joined the police, of his own choice. Once in the force, he began his career as a patrolman and was promoted to the rank of colonel. He eventually manacled Havana, and in time, people began to fear the very mention of his name. Word would go round: "Here comes Officer Ventura" and the neighborhoods surrounding the 5th precinct would become deserted.

He almost died during his childhood from a curable disease not tended to in time; however, he died of cardiac arrest at 87. He could have lived out his life in his hometown of Pijirigua, Artemisa, if the path he had chosen would have been different or he could have been tried for his numerous crimes by a revolutionary tribunal after the victory of the Revolution. However, things turned out differently. He died in Miami, in the United States of America. He was buried in Woodlawn Park North Cemetery, following a requiem mass, according to the custom, offered at Saint Michaels's Church on Flagger Street and 29th Avenue.

Those who knew him intimately and mere acquaintances agree that he was tallish, rather good-looking and was always elegantly dressed in a white, custom-made linen or English muslin suit or sporting an impeccable blue police uniform. One might think that someone who is so careful of his personal appearance would prefer not to touch or be touched by others. And they say its true, that he did not always take part in the beatings of detainees because he did not want to get hurt or soil his clothes. When he wanted, he could be polite and even affable to his prisoners, in order to size up their courage with his dark brown eyes. He liked to taunt his prisoners, just as a cat plays with the mouse before it kills it. And his victims knew or sensed that this game could be fatal and that all the stories that were circulating around Havana and beyond about this particular policeman were not old wives tales but absolutely true. And so were the stories about the screams that could be heard during the night, which could be heard outside the walls of the precinct on Calle Belascoaín, the stains on the walls and floors of the detention cells and the sadistic faces of his underlings, always awaiting the order to take over.

Ventura could pass from a calm, sedate voice to a state that terrorized his victims, cursing and frantically gesturing with his arms. He could order his henchmen to either “make them talk” or to “kill them” with a mere sign, a word or by asking his close friend Pedro Garcia Mellado, the doctor, to indicate how presentable the prisoners were before they could be shown in public. “This one is dead”, “This one will only be blind”, “this one is fine, he only has a few bruises”, such were the diagnoses issued by Mellado.

Many persons consider Esteban Ventura the prototype of the assassin during the revolutionary struggle in Cuba; the one who committed the most brutal, bloodiest actions and barbarous torture and caused the greatest number of mortal victims. A cold blooded assassin who, backed by his rank in the National Police, was able to advance his career and gain promotions based on acts of violence, as the sole means to make more than just money.

“The man in the white suit”, as he was called, presented a sharp contrast between the color of his preference and his murky record. He boasted of being brave, yet he was never alone. He always moved about in several cars, surrounded by thugs and brandished his 45-caliber gun before getting out of the car. His picture was constantly in the papers and on television, where he always appeared immaculately dressed, amid the blinding flashes of photographers, presenting weapons, propaganda and explosives taken from on prisoners— which in most cases was trumped up – during operations under his orders.

To journalists, and because he felt confident of the terror that his mere presence infused, he would calmly indicate, while pointing to prisoners whose signs of torture had been badly concealed: “Look at them closely, boys, they are all in good physical shape. You can bear witness...”

His service record at the National Identification Department (DNI) of the Ministry of Interior proves that he was a member of the police force during the time when Fulgencio Batista was referred to as “The Man.”

The ID Card of this uniformed, arrogant assassin reads: *Republic of Cuba, Ministry of National Defense. ID Card No: 11.751. Fingerprint record No. 11.196. Name: Esteban Ventura Novo. Rank: Commander (1st category) DC. Born in: Artemisa. Color of Skin: white. Color of Hair: brown. Date of*



*Birth: December 26, 1913. Color of Eyes: brown; Height: 1.75; Weight: 70 kg; Blood Group: O POSITIVE. Other marks: None. Issued in Havana on September 19, 1957. Signed by the chief of police. The signature of the individual in question and his fingerprints are visible through the plastic cover that protects the document from the wear and tear that time produces on everyone and on everything.*

## **Humboldt 7: Death on Easter Saturday**

It happened on April 20, 1957, Easter Saturday, the day on which Catholics do not attend mass but pray in silence because Christ was laid to rest in his sepulcher [O vos omnes qui transitis per viam... Oh, all who pass through this road hear and see if there is any pain similar to mine... is the lament of the Church]. It is also the day that believers prepare for the Easter vigil, the day of the resurrection of Christ and each person celebrates this singular event in his own fashion although many are not actually familiar with the origin of this festivity.

The broadcaster on Radio Reloj announced that it was almost five o'clock in the afternoon and those who usually did their shopping at that hour confused the sound of the first gunshots with that of harmless firecrackers launched by patrons in the Detroit Bar. A policeman known as "Negritico" was coming down Calle Hospital, wielding his gun and ordering the neighbors to stay in their houses and not to leave. The tenants who lived in the Cantera building located on Calle Humboldt saw what occurred in apartment 7. There were only a few people, except for those who lived in the neighborhood. All the offices and shops had already closed. Several patrol cars and uniformed officers arrived, and more were coming to the scene, and they seemed tense and ready to use their weapons.

From the corner of Calle Humboldt and P, another witness heard the clatter of machine guns and instinctively ran to hide in a bar that was close by. Word had it that a group of revolutionaries had been discovered hiding in the Cantera building. Then someone came and said that the shooting was not

there but at Humboldt 7. The police searched everyone and prohibited people from passing through the area that had been cordoned off. There was a large deployment of forces, although most were concentrated in front of the of the building where, in fact, four young revolutionaries were hiding, who would be dead by the time of the newscast: Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez, Juan Pedro Carbó Serviá, Joe Westbrook Rosales and José Machado Rodríguez.

The four youths had survived the intense persecution triggered by the attack on the Presidential Palace and Radio Reloj a month and a week before, exactly on March 13, under the orders of the leader of the Directorio Estudiantil Revolucionario (Revolutionary Student Directorate) José Antonio Echeverría, who died in combat.

A traitor, Marcos Rodríguez Alfonso (aka Marquitos), supposedly a revolutionary militant phoned Ventura and informed him of the exact location of the young combatants: "They're at Humboldt 7, apartment 202".

A woman from the neighborhood, who was waiting by the door in order to watch the Easter Saturday procession that, according to a friend, was supposed to pass that afternoon by the building, saw Ventura arrive, surrounded as usual by his thugs, elegantly dressed and carrying a long club.

"Get inside!" he screamed as he passed by and immediately the woman slipped away, only to hear him say a few minutes later: "I want them dead!"

"It must have been around ten minutes to six in the evening", recounted Enrique Rodriguez Loeches, who also took part in the March 13th attack. "When Esteban Ventura Novo and his thugs violently broke down the door of the apartment with their rifle butts the comrades, half dressed, were getting ready to escape. Not all of them were armed. Joe Westbrook managed to reach the apartment on the floor below and asked the owner to let him in. The woman agreed and Joe calmly sat on the sofa in the living room, pretending to be a visitor. The woman was trembling with fear ...A few minutes later they knocked on the door ...he knew all was lost and without losing his sense of chivalry even on the threshold of death, he tried to calm down the woman and then he opened the door. The woman, realizing

that he was hardly more than a boy, begged the police not to harm him. Joe Westbrook had only walked a few yards down the hall when a burst of machine gun fire reached him and he collapsed dead on the floor. His face was intact and in his casket he seemed to be asleep. Joe was unarmed when he was killed.

His comrades, scaied dressed, jumped down a ventilation shaft in the kitchen of the apartment, which was connected to a house on the ground floor. When they landed, they told the lady of the house not to be alarmed and then they ran in different directions. Apparently they did not know that they were completely surrounded both from within and outside the building. Juan Pedro Carbó ran to the elevator but was shot at point-blank range without mercy. His face and body were riddled with bullets. It seems that he had been recognized and the assassins vented all their fury on him. The scapular that he always wore over his chest was the only thing that was not hit by the hail of bullets. Machadito and Fructuoso ran in the opposite direction, down the hallway and jumped out a window to the ground floor. They landed in an alley that belonged to the Santé Motors Co. automobile agency. It was long and narrow and closed at the end by a locked gate blocking their escape. When the employees heard the noise of the bodies as they landed, they ran to the site. They thought that one of their co-workers, who was fixing a TV antenna at the time, had suffered an accident. The window they both jumped from was too high and Fructuoso lay unconscious on the floor while Machadito made a great effort to stand but to no avail. When one of the Santé employees arrived at the scene, he signaled to him to wait and went to get the key, in order to open the gate. However, the police arrived at that very instant. One of the murderers placed the barrel of his machine gun between the bars of the gate as Machadito cried: "Don't kill us, we are unarmed..." That would have been enough for any normal human being; however this language could not be understood by one of Batista's beasts. And thus, they began the macabre task of firing at a man who was laying semi- unconscious on the floor and at another who could not stand up. Because of the fall, Machadito had fractured both ankles. While this was occurring, another

policeman walked to the bar on the corner and asked for a hammer to break the lock on the gate. Once inside, both Fructuoso and Machadito were finished off.

The shooting was so intense that the tenants in the neighboring buildings went to their doors and balconies. Euphoric and victorious, Captain Esteban Ventura was continuously going in and out of the building, giving orders and making decisions. If the murder itself seemed macabre, the task of removing the bodies from the places where they had been killed was even more horrible. They simply weren't human! Luis Alfaro Sierra, Officer Mirabal, Corporal Carratala, brother of the infamous Colonel Carratalá and later promoted to lieutenant... dragged the bodies by their hair to the street, under the gaze of all. And then they dragged them to the corner. The people began to shout angered cries of protests from their balconies, asking for mercy. An elderly woman fainted as she watched from her balcony, powerless to do anything. A round of machine gun fire dispersed the curious onlookers. The bullet holes can still be seen today on the façade of the buildings next to Humboldt No. 7. The epilogue occurred at the emergency room at the hospital on Calle San Lázaro. One of the henchmen exclaimed before the doctors and nurses: "These revolutionaries have dirtied my clothes! My army jacket was soiled with so much blood that I had to take it off and put it in a paper bag because, after finishing one of them off, blood came spurting from his mouth and dirtied my uniform [...]"<sup>3</sup>

There are many more testimonials about this terrible event, especially a much-publicized photograph of a child standing at the end of the staircase of the building where these atrocious crimes were committed. The child is seen staring at a trail of blood that runs down the stairs and forms a puddle on the floor in front of him.

The police, after twenty minutes of shooting and dragging the bodies to the street, ordered the child's father, who was the janitor of the building: "Go clean up all this blood before we

<sup>3</sup>Enrique Rodríguez Loeches: «El crimen de Humboldt 7», in *De la Sierra al llano*, Editora Casa de las Américas, 1969.

leave”. At that moment, there were approximately 60 policemen in the building armed with Thompson machine guns and Ventura was in the middle of it all, giving orders.

The man who once was that child has never been able to forget how his body trembled each time he heard the sound of the lifeless human bodies as they were being dragged by those assassins down the stairs.

Any one of those witnesses could have said, when confronted with so much horror: *Oh, all who pass through this road, hear and see if there is any pain similar to mine...*

### **After confession, no evidence is needed**

“ Those who held leading positions in the Armed Forces of our country are the true anti-communist veterans because we were the first to combat them.”

Esteban Ventura Novo wrote these words in an open letter addressed to Tony Varona, former prime minister and speaker of the Senate during the government of Carlos Prior Socarrás, who publicly vetoed him from entering the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States during the months immediately after the victory of the Revolution, when all sorts of aggressions were being organized against Cuba and the individuals who would carry them out were being recruited with the knowledge and complicity of the highest authorities of that country. The former colonel could not accept that he had been passed by while others, once under his orders, such as the notorious Ramón Calviño Insua<sup>4</sup>, had been taken into account.

During the Batista dictatorship, the regime referred to all revolutionary fighters as communists, and they were on file as such. The police tortured and beat all those who were arrested

<sup>4</sup> Traitor to the 26th of July Movement. He became one of the most repulsive assassins and torturers under the orders of Esteban Ventura. He fled to the United States after the victory of the Revolution. In April 1961, he returned as part of the mercenary invasion of the Bay of Pigs, where he was captured, tried and condemned to death for his numerous crimes.

and frequently killed them. Ventura, safe from revolutionary justice in his lair in Miami, shamelessly confirmed in public what everyone knew: “We were the first to combat them”. After such a confession, no evidence is needed.

Nevertheless, abundant evidence exists in case anyone might consider that this confession was not enough. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba denounced him on numerous occasions to the highest authorities of the United States as a war criminal, providing evidence justifying its request for his extradition. However, it was never accepted, neither in this case nor in any other, thus preventing these individuals from being tried for the numerous crimes they had committed during the Batista dictatorship and who had escaped to the same destination.

A brief chronology of the curriculum vitae of this notorious butcher shows that, in addition to the massacre committed at Humboldt 7, there are other events which also stand out in his vast and infamous history.

*April 9, 1958:* At around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Marcelo Salado Lastra, the young chief of Revolutionary Actions of the 26th of July Movement in Havana, was on his way to a meeting of the general staff of the movement's militia scheduled to take place in an apartment on the 7th floor of a building on Calle G between 23rd and 25th, in the Vedado district of downtown Havana. As he was about to cross Calle G, accompanied by Ramona Barber Gutierrez, a patrol car driven by several of Ventura's henchmen including Ramón Calviño intercepted them. Marcelo, while trying to protect his companion, received a hail of bullets. Not satisfied, Calviño descended from the car, finished him off and remained on the scene, flaunting his “courageous feat.” The body of the young revolutionary received 33 bullet wounds before he was finally killed.

*June 13, 1958:* That Sunday, sisters Cristina and Lourdes Giralt Abreu were coming back from a visit to their parents. It was Father's Day and they had gone to see their family in their hometown of Cienfuegos. They were returning to their apartment on Calle 19 and 24, also in the Vedado district. Both sisters not only shared the apartment but also their wish to see revolutionary

changes in Cuba and were fighting for it. Both belonged to the Civic Resistance Movement and sold bonds, distributed different forms of propaganda, prepared first-aid kits and helped transfer weapons to the Sierra Maestra Mountains. Ventura's thugs had set up an ambush and were waiting for Eduardo Garcia Lavandero, Enrique Rodríguez Loeches and Faure Chomon, all members of the underground movement who were hiding in an apartment next to that of the Giralt sisters. When they heard footsteps, the police opened fire. Cristina received 9 shots and María de Lourdes 13.

*August 1, 1958:* In the galleys of the Castillo del Principe prison, Julio Reinaldo Gutiérrez Otaño (19 years old, 15 gun shots); Vicente Ponce Carrasco (25 year old, wounded and later shot while on the floor) and Roberto de la Rosa (39 years old was riddled with gunshots in galley number one), these men were all unarmed and behind bars. Nine comrades were also wounded. A riot had broken out in the prison headed by members of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, protesting against unjust prison conditions, including the suspension of safeguards. The National Police chief, Brigadier Pilar García; Colonel Esteban Ventura Novo; Colonel Conrado Carratalá Ugalde; Lieutenant Colonel Irenaldo García Báez, second-in-command of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM); Oscar González and Martin Pérez of the National Police, together with other officers and henchmen, all immediately went to the prison and decided to silence the rebellion the way they knew best: opening fire on the inmates.

*September 12, 1958:* After being tipped off that a group of revolutionaries were hiding in an apartment in El Juanello, at 4 o'clock in the morning, Esteban Ventura and his men surprised Reinaldo Cruz (20 years old), Alberto Alvarez (21 years old and head of the 26th of July Movement in Regla), Onelio Dampiel (22 years old) and Leonardo Valdés (23 years old) together with Lidia Doce and Clodomira Ferrals (both messengers of the rebel forces fighting in the Sierra Maestra Mountains). After they were brutally beaten, the four young men were riddled with bullets. Lidia and Clodomira began to hit the assassins, in an

attempt to defend their comrades. However, the women were arrested, tortured and later cast into the sea. On Alberto Alvarez, they found a piece of paper with a poem by Raúl Ferrer. One of the verses reads:

*As long as there is one word,  
One look, one gesture left in me  
I will never lower my guard  
Because I love my people,  
And I don't want to or can't fail.*

*September 27, 1958:* Fernando Alfonso Torice (Morua), a militia captain of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, was gunned down while walking down a street in Arroyo Apolo, Párraga. His body had 65 bullet wounds.

*November 1, 1958:* In a cafeteria known as El Encanto situated on Calle 100 and Avenida 51, Marianao, men under the orders of Esteban Ventura murdered Julio Manuel Aguiar García (Manolito), a student leader and militia captain of the 26th of July Movement.

*November 8, 1958:* One of the most heroic passages of the revolutionary struggle occurred on this day. At 1:58 am, the neighbors at Goicuría and O'Farrill were awakened by the sound of bombs, grenades and machine gun fire. One of the patrol cars stationed on the block was ablaze. A "select group" of troops headed by Ventura, Irenaldo Garcia Baez, Martin Pérez and Carratalá surrounded building No. 523 from where a group of revolutionaries comprised of Angel Ameijeiras (Machaco), 33 years old, Head of the Action and Sabotage Division of the 26th of July Movement; Pedro Gutiérrez (Pedrito), 30 years old; Rogelio Perea (Rogito), 21 years old, and Norma Porras, 19 years old, who was Machaco's wife and pregnant, were responding to the attack. The combat, during which 10 of the government forces were wounded, lasted until dawn, when the revolutionaries ran out of ammunition. The three men were arrested and the people saw them walk out of the building.



Norma was captured on the roof of a neighboring house from where she was taken to a hospital, tried and thrown in prison where she remained until the triumph of the Revolution.

On November 9<sup>th</sup> the newspapers reported that the “communist” Machaco Ameijeiras and his two companions had died during the shootout. Actually, they were killed shortly after their arrest, at 11 o’clock in the morning. Years later, Norma Porra revealed that they had mutilated his testicles and burned his wounds. Radio Rebelde issued a communiqué from somewhere in the Sierra Maestra, Free Territory of Cuba, in which it reported of Machaco’s posthumous promotion to the rank of Commander as a tribute to these brave fighters.

As a result of his “heroic” participation in these appalling events, Esteban Ventura Novo, in less than two years, was promoted first from captain to commander and then to colonel of the National Police. As this assassin acknowledged from his safe haven in the United States: “We are the true anticommunist veterans because we were the first to combat them.”

### **“General, we’re leaving together”**

Villa El Rosario, located along the road that joins the towns of San Antonio de los Baños and La Salud, in Havana province is now a home for the elderly.

At the end of the 1950s, this was the peaceful retreat of Esteban Ventura Novo, surrounded by a stone wall, with abundant trees and luxuriant foliage. The entrance was guarded by a heavy iron gate from where an asphalt road, edged on either side by majestic palm trees led to the main house, a modern construction according to the standards of the time. Armed men and faithful servants watched over the tranquility of the owner and tended to his every whim and to those of his frequent guests.

Word has it that Ventura was going to set up his permanent residence there. When the revolutionary authorities occupied the villa after January 1, 1959, they found construction materials and a number of unfinished works along with already existing ones. The main house was a two-story structure,

with a spacious living room, a music room decorated with furniture inlaid with gold, a ballroom, several air-conditioned bedrooms equipped with TV sets, a bar, a kitchen fully equipped with modern appliances and a gambling room. The gardens included swimming pools, a playground and other recreational facilities. However, a library was nowhere to be found and the only written material in the house was a telephone directory!

Aside from the cows, swine, pheasants and other domestic animals, a 30 caliber anti-aircraft machine gun, an M-1 rifle, 171 grenades, 6 machine guns with their magazines and two revolvers were seized from the premises.

However, First Lieutenant Raul Menéndez Tomashevich, the rebel officer entrusted with the search and capture of the assassin, did not find a single trace of Ventura.

A little after midnight on New Years Eve, 1958, Colonel Ventura, probably in civilian clothing and carrying what he needed to ensure his future existence in a suitcase, picked up his friend Dr. García Mellado and together they headed for the Columbia military encampment. Anyone could guess that the game was over, or in other words, that the whole thing had gone sour and they had no intention of remaining in the country, where they surely would be arrested, tried and sent before a firing squad.

With the desperation of a cornered animal and wielding his gun, Ventura boarded the plane in which Batista himself would flee the country.

“We’re leaving together, General” is presumably what he said, or something along those lines, to the man who had always backed his promotions and who had attended his housewarming party at Villa El Rosario, along with Brigadier General Pilar García. There, in his country house, he had been privately commissioned with more than one “sensitive” mission.

“The Man” had not thought of him when he fled. However, Ventura had sensed that this would occur, and consequently he was careful not to drink too much, and did not lose any time at the New Year’s Eve dinner. Others might lose this opportunity, but not him. “Once on the plane”, according to the memoirs of a notorious criminal published in 1966 in

reference to his escape from Cuba together with Batista, “one of the advisors suggested they go to the Dominican Republic”.

This sinister individual lived for forty-two years in the United States until the moment of his peaceful demise. During this time, the authorities, both state and federal, never took any action against him for his long history of crime and torture in Cuba. The repeated petitions for extradition presented by the Cuban government were continually overlooked and, of course, refused.

In time, people talked less and less about him, even in Miami where he lived. We know that from the very beginning, Ventura continued to break the law, before he became an “entrepreneur,” committing felonies that ranged from carrying a gun without a license for illegal gambling. Carlos Benito Fernandez, father of the current Dade County District Attorney, served as his defense lawyer during his trial for these charges.

During one of his last appearances in public, he was seen running after his young wife down a busy street in Coral Gables, brandishing a gun and shooting at her. Fortunately for the frightened woman, he missed.

Guided by the hatred he felt for his native country and for the people he so savagely massacred, he became involved, especially early on, with counterrevolutionary organizations financed, instigated and directed by the CIA and the government of the United States of America. In 1959, he was part of the Trujillista Conspiracy against Cuba. During the 1960’s, he moved in circles that included other Batista henchmen and violent counterrevolutionary elements both in Miami and in Central America. In 1977, he established links with the leaders of Abdala, a counterrevolutionary organization and maintained close ties with individuals such as now deceased terrorist Rolando Borges, a member of the club for former inmates known as the ExClub and with Roberto Martin Perez, former head of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF).

One of his sons, the one who bears his name, was among those who in April 2000 surrounded the house of Lázaro González, the great-uncle of Elián González. They threatened

to open fire if the police and immigration forces attempted to enter the house to rescue the small boy, whose return had been legally demanded by his father, maternal and paternal grandparents and by the whole country.

As an “entrepreneur,” war criminal Esteban Ventura Novo founded Preventive Security Service and Investigation, a private detective agency comprised of former soldiers and detectives who offered their services to Cuban companies, including the Republic Bank, which at that point was the most important bank in Miami. Coincidentally, it granted the late Jorge Mas Canosa, former president of CANF, his initial loan for purchasing the Church and Tower Company.

The head office of this agency was located on First Street, South West and Bacon Boulevard Avenue, precisely where one of the company that organizes charter flights to Cuba is based. When Ventura moved his business from the premises, the owners of the building hired a “babalao” (a Santeria high priest) to exorcize the place since no one wanted to rent the office, stating that the ghosts of the people who had died at the hands of Ventura haunted it.

On one occasion, revolutionary justice almost caught up with this man who, even after death, continues to be an insult to his victims since his pictures in which he appears impeccably dressed in a white suit as he cynically stares at the camera holding a gun in his right hand, stirs bitter memories.

At the beginning of 1960, a Cuban State Security agent secretly known as Agent 105, was standing at a short distance from the assassin. The agent had been given the mission of becoming part of the crew of a small boat carrying mail between Havana and Miami.

The real crew had been detained one morning in November 1959 by Florida immigration authorities. A man introduced himself as a former member of the Batista regime and told them that he could obtain their release provided they served as links between the criminals who had been given refuge in US territory in coordination with the CIA and counterrevolutionaries on the island.

Cuban security forces were informed of the action by the protagonists themselves and on his first trip to Miami, Agent

105 was interviewed there by a man named Novo, a former Mariel customs official. As they advanced in their work, one day Novo instructed the agent to meet “The Boss” and gave him an address in Miami Beach. Together with the skipper of the boat, Agent 105 went to the meeting that took place in an open garage where everyone could see them.

Novo was waiting for them at the door:

“Have you ever heard of The Boss?” he asked them as he pointed to an office inside. “There he is.”

Later, Agent 105 wrote the following report about this encounter:

[...] I remembered an image, a photograph I had seen published many times in the newspapers and magazines of the time. A figure, a face, a cynical expression, a man wearing an expensive white suit; his spectacles were on the table, and with one hand he pointed a 45 caliber gun at the camera. I studied his face, his features. Esteban Ventura Novo was standing there in front of me. I must confess that I felt all sorts of emotions. I automatically looked at the butt of the gun. But after a great effort, I managed to overcome my repugnance and was able to control my violence. I remembered that this was not my mission. And only this stopped me from executing the henchman as he stood before me.

The agent saw Esteban Ventura once more during his mission.

Furthermore, he was never ordered to execute this man, since this is something that could only be ruled on by the corresponding court, following a trial in keeping with the laws of Revolutionary Cuba. Even in the case of human scum like Esteban Ventura, a man who personally tortured, murdered and killed, this principle was observed, which proves that the regime that so many victims fought to remove, a regime that he and others like him contributed to upholding with their many crimes, was not replaced with a similar one but with a revolution that was truly just, definitive and authentic.



**JUNE 16 AND 17, 1998:** Authorities of Cuban State Security, and in an exchange with the FBI, handed over 230 pages on terrorist activities against Cuba, five video cassettes with conversations and information transmitted by television chains on terrorist activities against Cuba and eight audio cassettes with a duration of 2 hours and 40 minutes. The FBI said it was impressed by the abundance of evidence and responded that they would answer in two weeks. It failed to do so. The terrorists continue acting with impunity.

*On different dates and homes, Antonio, Fernando, Gerardo, Ramón y René were born. Many years later some met during the difficult mission of infiltrating terrorist groups in Miami. Others identified each other during the risks and hardships of the unjust imprisonment imposed on them on September of 1998 for fighting terrorism. Since then, they call each other brothers.*



## **Rafael Díaz-Balart and family: Souls on auction**

*Mercedes Alonso y Pedro A. García*

That day, spirits were fired in Miami airport. The last measures of the Bush administration had sparked anger and indignation in the Cuban community in the U.S.

—“We want to go to Cuba. We want to travel” — shouted furious émigrés of different political tendencies.

Arriving at the air terminal from Washington was Republican representative Lincoln Díaz-Balart. Television chains transmitted scenes taken by an indiscreet camera that was around there; at first the congressman confused the demonstrators with possible admirers.

—“Barefaced liar, this is all your fault” — shown quite the contrary by an angry woman.

—“Lincoln, son of a b...”, “scum” “Batistiano” — he was showered with insults in Spanish, English and Spanglish.

—“You have gotten rich on our backs” — an old man spat at him.

—“Castroites” — Diaz-Balart replied with a trembling voice.

A husky demonstrator approached him menacingly: —“What’s the matter with you?” — The politician took refuge in his limousine with windows shut tight followed by insults and the car sped away.

## The founders of the clan

Both Lincoln and his brother have assured that the founder of the clan was the mythical Rafael Díaz-Balart —or simply Balart—who “fought and died in the Cuban independence war”. Many historians on both ends of the gulf learned of the existence of this “hero”. There is no mambi registered with that name in the archives of Banes Museum —locality of the family.

A bit better known is Rafael J. Díaz-Balart, who was legal advisor for the Banes Division of the United Fruit Company (UFC). This Yankee company of sad reputation, whose lands extended from the northern coast to the south of the Island obtained lands by means that weren't always legal: falsification of documents, extortion, threats and all kinds of violence that did not exclude murder. For this purpose it relied on the rural police and a band of lawyers, a kind of “legal samurai” who did the dirty work of the transnational.

Mamita Yunai, derogatory name of the UFC that is the title of a well-known novel by the Costa Rican writer, Carlos Luis Fallas, funded election campaigns of many politicians; it also built up the careers of some salaried politicians. In the case of Rafael J. Díaz-Balart he received the mayoralty of Banes in 1932 and was removed by the revolution of 1933 a year later. In 1936 he stood for representative of Oriente from the ranks of the Liberal Party and had him elected for two years.

Of his passage in Parliament he is only known for his vote in favor of removal from office of President Miguel Mariano Gómez in 1936, as ordered by Batista as head of the army who had threatened to close down Congress.

Much has been speculated of the origins of the relationship with the sergeant who became colonel and later president general, with this family. According to historian José A. Tabares and journalist Mario Kuchilán, the mother of the tyrant, Carmela Zaldívar, was the cook of the Díaz-Balart. Then Batista was not even Fulgencio but Rubén Zaldívar, el Benó, a fatherless mulatto who was insistently rumored to pick pocket watches of some illustrious citizens of Banes. Years later, already “the strong man of Cuba” he “found” a mambi father, the mythical Belisario Batista.

## The young follower of Batista

One of the sons of Don Rafael would go down in history as an incredible case in Cuban youth. According to Cuban journalist, Jorge A. Hortsman, “before the *cañonazo* of March 10, Batista only had two supporters in the University: Rafaelito Díaz-Balart and Julia Esther Miyares” who, according to the journalist would soon be disillusioned with her idol. The former, the reporter said, “was one of the few university students who, before 1952, was a militant in Batista ranks”.

Born in Banes on January 17, 1926, as he told a reporter from Bohemia once, Rafael Lincoln Díaz-Balart Gutiérrez did his high school in La Progresiva, in Cárdenas and began studies in Havana University; studies that he never completed. “It was a strange case, a young man and supporter of Batista –our colleague Gustavo Robreño Dolz affirmed – because if there was one sector of the population where Batista had no support was in that young population that was always hostile to him”.

“Rafaelito was not even a schooled journalist” –he explains– . “At the time of the March 10 coup he was not a doctor in anything; he finished nothing in the University. In January of 1959 the press published a photocopy of a law degree he received in the University of North Holguin. These were manufactured to sell titles or give them to these kind of people because even the well known torturer Irenaldo García also *graduated* from there”.

Founder of the Partido Acción Unitaria (PAU) in 1949, together with his boss, Batista, Rafaelito together with Andrés Rivero Agüero –the principal lackey of the tyrant –they had a radio program called Tribuna Unitaria transmitted by Unión Radio. When the general took power at dawn, he was given the post of undersecretary of the Interior.

The young follower of Batista also managed to get his father, don Rafael, designated Transportation Minister –very much in demand that allowed personal enrichment –and his brothers Waldo and Frank as director of the Treasury and Taxation, of the Treasury Ministry and director of Supplies of the Ministry of Public Works, respectively. All made a heavy fortune.

At the same time, the bright new Undersecretary of the Interior generously dealt out “botellas”\* to his family and that of his wife. Even distant cousins benefited during the three years that he was Vice Minister. An irony of life: his sons Lincoln and Mario now deny family relationships to uncles and nephews of Cuban residents in the United States.

## **Apprentice to be a gunman**

From the moment he took up his post Rafaelito tried to get in league with the “tough guys” of the regime, mostly with the main figures of the repressive apparatus. To forge a public image of “man of action”, he lost no opportunity to be photographed next to Orlando Piedra, of the sinister Bureau of Investigations or Ugalde Carrillo, murderer of defenseless farmers.

His only known “action” was the attack of the radio program, *La Universidad del Aire*, during the early months of the tyranny when a group of armed anti-socials of the Batista Youth, beat up respected university professors, many elderly and imposed their wide numerical superiority against a group of students present.

“Rafaelito organized the attack but did not take part” –Gustavo Robreño explains –, “he was a screamer with airs of power, with a never demonstrated personal courage. He never had a history as a man of action, either before or after March 10”. Years later his sons, Lincoln and Mario, used similar methods in Miami except that now the young Batista supporters call themselves Mambi Vigilantes but equally burst into electoral college as they did in 2000 to prevent the counting of votes that did not favor Bush or in the case of Elian, preventing federal authorities to liberate the kidnapped child or suppressing the Cuban-Americans who want to demonstrate freely in the streets of Miami against the recent measures of the present administration.

After the electoral farce of 1954, the favored son of don Rafael became representative of Congress. Batista dismissed him as Vice Minister and Youth head: as compensation he made him leader of the Partido Acción Progresista, political apparatus

of the tyrant. “The highest post he obtained (during the Batista tyranny) he was undersecretary of the Interior”, historian Arnaldo Silva explains –, after 1955 he was no longer a part of the intimate friends of the dictator, rather in a second or third place”.

According to Gustavo Robreño, “during the last years of the tyranny, [Rafael Lincoln] was closely linked to the repressive forces and was very close to Masferrer with whom he made a sort of entente because they had common politicking interests in the northern region of Oriente”. Memorable are the scandalous frauds committed in the 1954 elections by this entente in Holguin: the Electoral College where Batista supporter, Isabel Beritán, voted; she didn’t even vote for herself! Does it sound like recent history?

## **The dollar garden**

During the last years of the tyranny, this former leader of the Batista youth was seen increasingly visiting the U.S. embassy. Although the dictator did not tell him State secrets, he was well informed. As soon as he learned, first hand, that the United States had withdrawn support of the tyranny he gathered together his family to prepare their flight.

According to testimony of Carlos Rivero Collado –son of Rivero Agüero –Waldo Díaz-Balart Gutiérrez took a quick trip to New York and deposited millions of dollars in Chase Manhattan Bank. On December 20, 1958, alleging “business trips” Rafaelito left with his wife and children to Spain. At the time, many were unaware that he was traveling with his entire fortune.

Fifteen days after the flight of Batista, he was already in New York. He had no migratory problems. There he founded La Rosa Blanca, an organization allegedly to “fight for recovery and for Cuban freedom”. Among those of the direction board was Pedro Alomá Kessel, his friend since the time of the Batista Youth and notorious drug trafficker, and Merob Sosa, claimed by Cuban justice for his large crimes against civilians.

For Rivero Collado, a member of La Rosa Blanca “the activities of this group were limited to absurd declarations to the

press by the dandy, Díaz-Balart, useless meeting in a basement in Upper Manhattan and picketing any Cuban delegation that traveled to the U.S”. In Cuba they carried out many terrorist activities and suffered many setbacks at the hands of Cuban Security. Until the rose withered. “Rafaelito was a well known supporter of Batista” – Robreño Dolz commented –and the CIA ostracized him in the preparation of the Bay of Pigs; he did not accept coming as a soldier, like many others, although I believe that as a chief he wouldn’t have come”.

Rivero Collado tells that, with part of his fortune –perhaps collected through La Rosa Blanca, that some in Miami called “the garden of dollars” –the Díaz-Balart speculated with Dominican sugar and obtained a net profit of four million dollars. The favorite son of don Rafael went to Spain again. There they saw him cry at the burial of Fulgencio Batista although he was treated as a second-class personality.

## **The pups are loose**

Now, Miami and Latin America must suffer a new generation of Díaz-Balart. Rafael the 3<sup>rd</sup>, first born of former Batista Youth leader is an investment banker in Florida and, according to rumors, the financial brain of the clan. The political capo is Lincoln (Havana, August 13, 1951). He is followed by José a TV star who worked for the CBS morning show and now works for Telemundo; and Mario (Fort Lauderdale, Florida, September 25, 1961) who is expected to become the first federal senator in the family and... why not? ...president of the United States.

Lincoln learned English as a child in a Florida school but did his high school in Spain. He graduated law in a university in Cleveland and practiced his profession in Miami where he provided legal services to counterrevolutionary terrorists. For these services he was appointed state assistant district attorney; later he became a partner in Fowler-White law offices.

When Carter was U.S. president, Lincoln was a democrat but when Reagan was elected he switched over and became a staunch republican. He was elected to the Florida legislature in

1986; occupied a vacant seat in the State Senate and was reelected the following year.

The Miami Mafia sent him to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992 where he rapidly joined the Jewish lobby. With this support he was appointed to the Rule's Committee that decides which laws to send to the floor and which amendments can be debated. From his post he torpedoed anything that smelled of softening the blockade against the Cuban people or that was not to the liking of Israel.

It has been said that part of the extra-territorial Helms-Burton Law came from Lincoln's pen. Equally, he is considered the pillar of Bush's "triumph" in Florida in 2000. This grandson of don Rafael was the person who placed before the House the Joint Resolution that gave the Yankee president free hands to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. In appreciation Congress that had a republican majority, appointed him to the Committee on National Security.

For many in Washington, Mario is a listless image of his older brother; he looks more like a surfer than a politician, they say. He studied in the South Florida University, although some consider he did not finish any career and from there went to work in the Miami mayor's office. At 27 he was elected to the Florida legislature and at 31 to the State Senate. Since 2003 he is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Political media call him The Slasher – one who stabs or, in another meaning, one who lowers prices, salaries, etc. – due to his custom of always wanting to cut the budget, above all in social expenditures. But his nickname also means "one who kills with the knife". "He is capable of stabbing anyone in the back," said a Cuban resident in Miami who, obviously, demanded anonymity.

## **Family symbols**

A certain Miami pen pusher, when describing the office of Lincoln in Congress mentioned "there were the mementos of his life and his thoughts. He referred to the "family photos" that include the former mayor of Banes, the former Batista youth leader ... "a gallery of Cuban heroes" and, unbelievable, Martí

shares the wall with the tyrant Batista! Photographs of Nixon, Reagan, Bush father and son ...”.

He tends to publicly brag of the “unforgettable opportunity of talking to Batista who he greatly admired”. As for Reagan, he confesses: “He made me a republican with his battle against communism, specially in this hemisphere. I have learned most from him who I admire greatly”. Referring to Jeanne Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United States who was characterized for her reactionary activity in that forum. He calls her “his twin soul, a woman whose manner of thinking and acting are exactly in tune with me”.

He chooses his greatest praise for the current U.S. president: “He is almost as good as Reagan. I like his intuition. When they take a problem to his office he correctly solves it”. Lincoln and, of course, Mario, also admire the brother of the president, Florida governor Jeb Bush: “He is the most likeable person I know” –the older brother says –; “you can talk to him about all that is human and divine, such as the next budget, it doesn’t matter. He is tops in everything and speaks Spanish fluidly”.

There is only one person of whom Lincoln does not have a good opinion: “I don’t think that Secretary of State Colin Powell (now former State Secretary) is in tune with what is happening in Latin America”. This does not surprise a Miami journalist of Cuban origin: Powell is not white; do you understand?

## **A terrorist in Congress**

In a recent news interview both Lincoln and Mario said they “were very disturbed by the persistence of pro-Castroism in the U.S. elite”. “Particularly among the academics, the press and Hollywood” the older brother stressed, in one of his worst mental lapsus of his career –, “one thing would be if they ignored Cuba, but they are the ones with the best information on the Cuban regime”. No comment.

In one of his frequent TV appearances, filled with empty words, Lincoln attacked the alleged violation of human rights in Cuba. Corrupt cop Héctor Pesquera (FBI Miami) bragged that by his orders the five Cuban anti-terrorists are locked up in



punishment cells, humiliated and blackmailed. Days later a Cuban American editorialist, and in his modest paper, asked how this Congressman could appear to defend human rights 90 miles away if he keeps quiet about the violation of those rights there in Miami, a few blocks from his house.

In a recent television interview, Oscar Haza, political capo of the Díaz-Balart said: “An assassination of [Fidel] Castro is of utmost importance”. His interviewer, amazed, warned him of his position as a congressman and should never call for the assassination of a Head of State. “I do believe it should be done”, he replied simply. Weeks later, he insisted in his terrorist allegation to the journalist, Adriana Vargas.

At the time, Mr. Bush was repeating his intentions of strengthening the blockade against Cuba with new measures, broadly rejected both by the Cubans in the Island as well as a majority of Cuban residents in the U.S., primarily supported by “the corrupt and insatiable Mafia of former Batista supporters and their descendents”, as Fidel Castro has denounced.



*Cuba needs eyes and ears in Florida*

GENERAL EDWARD BREED ATKENSON,  
former chief of Planning for the Office of  
Intelligence and instructor of the College of  
Intelligence of Defense.

Witness for the defense.

(court transcript of the trial against the Five, 11/04/  
01, pp. 11049-11199)

*We do not have the freedom we all want, although in our hearts and thoughts we are very free men but to compensate for this lack of freedom we have sufficient courage and dignity [...] We are here to win and have all the reasons in the world to stand with heads up high looking at the future, sure of a better time [...]*

Fragment of a letter from  
Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez to his mother,  
October 20, 2001

## **Orlando Piedra: Batista's golden man**

Ciro Bianchi Ross

Havana was living through a blood bath after the attack of the Presidential Palace. In a salon of the presidential mansion, walls riddled with bullet holes and furniture still strewn about, General Fulgencio Batista, in a state of panic and hatred for the audacity of the action by the Directorio Revolucionario who attempted to execute him in his own lair, gave the green light to his bands of murderers and gave them a license to kill. A lesson had to be given to the opponents and the name of Pelayo Cuervo Navarro was insistently mentioned, then, with crass exclamations.

The night of that March 13, 1957, was a sinister one, with deserted streets and cars of the Radio-motorized of the Military Intelligence Service and Bureau of Investigations speeding on the streets on the hunt of suspects. Dread and terror owned the city. There were ominous enterings and leavings in all the repressive forces. Police chiefs, emulating with each other, straining to demonstrate their efficiency and have the best service.

Known houses were raided and old clues were brought out. Safe houses were perfectly identified. It was not difficult to find doctor Pelayo Cuervo who, learning of the events of the Presidential Palace had sought safety with a friendly family. Colonel Orlando Eleno Piedra Negueruela, head of the Bureau of Investigations decided to waste no time and gave the order. At 10 o'clock that night there was movement in the police car

park. A black Cadillac driven by Alfredo García left. Also in the car were Sergeant Rafael Gutiérrez and the others called up. Escorting the car was one of the Drug departments of the bureau, license plate number 31986, with a sergeant and several agents. They had one goal: Pelayo Cuervo! And the orders were to kill him.

It did not take them long to reach the house where the president of the Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo) was hiding. The sergeants brandishing machine guns rudely banged on the door while the men spread out to the surrounding area to prevent his flight. Someone answered the door.

— Where is Pelayo Cuervo?

Before answering the question, the former Senator went forward from a room in the interior of the house, calm and serene, faced those who sought him.

— I am Pelayo Cuervo

— You are under arrest. Come with us.

They put him in the back of the black Cadillac and at his right was sergeant Gutiérrez. But they did not take him to the Bureau of Investigations or any other police station. Both cars sped to the dark and isolated exclusive neighborhood of Havana.

— Tell me doctor, where are you hiding the weapons? — Gutiérrez asked.

— I don't know what you are talking about.

— Common doctor, save yourself a bad time... —the sergeant's voice was both mocking and condescending.

— I have nothing to say.

— Talk or we'll kill you.

— You may kill me but you cannot force me to say what I don't know — Cuervo replied and right then the fist of Gutiérrez smashed his face with a sharp blow. The session of physical beatings and abuse, beatings and insults against a 56-year-old lawyer whose only weapon was his intelligence and who had become an implacable judge of all the excesses and outrage of the dictatorship and its uniformed bands.

The black car and its escorts drove along the streets of the Country Club and stopped by the lake, a happy and joyful spot during the day and terrifying at night. The riders in the other car surrounded the car. Pelayo Cuervo was bent over in his seat and his head hung down. His glasses had fallen off.

— Are you going to talk, yes or no? — Gutiérrez asked.

— There's nothing I can say.

A shot was heard. The sergeant had shot him point-blank and threw him out on the moist grass. Then six more bullets riddled the body of one of the most distinguished persons of Cuban traditional political opposition.

Immediately the two cars sped off in the direction of Almendares River and 15 minutes later they arrived at the Bureau of Investigations to report their service. Phones sounded in the Army High Command and headquarters of the National Police, in the Bureau of Repression of Communist Activities and the Military Intelligence service as well as in the Presidential Palace. The smile of a jackal appeared on the lips of General Fulgencio Batista.<sup>1</sup>

Moments before, perhaps when Pelayo Cuervo was arrested, the Dictator had signed Decree 522 annulling 1909 agreements between the Cuban State and the Cuban Telephone Company, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT) to push forward a new concession allowing the company to increase rates and exempted it from paying four percent of its gross income to the national treasury and authorized it to charge the client any increase that the State required in taxes. It also relieved the company of the required sums that had to be paid to provincial and municipal governments.<sup>2</sup>

Pelayo Cuervo had risen up in defense of the national economy, of the regular citizen's pocket and forcefully opposed authorization of new advantages to the public telephone tentacles. He demonstrated that the un-profitability alleged by the Cuban Telephone Company regarding its operations in the Island were false and called on the government to open up a broad report for the people to find out how far this issue had gone, an issue that directly affected the economy.

<sup>1</sup> “Descubiertos los asesinos de Pelayo Cuervo”. In *Bohemia* (Habana) February 15, 1959. pp. 76-77 and 93.

<sup>2</sup> Carlos Manuel Rubiera: “Desaparecido el expediente sobre el aumento de las tarifas telefónicas”. In *Bohemia* (Havana), February 1, 1959. pp. 44-46, 48, 146-149.

It is enticing to note the great interest shown by Arthur Gardner, then Washington's ambassador to Havana, for Batista to authorize the concessions. He did it so brazenly and openly that the press reported the ambassador was more like a representative of ITT than of his country.

Curiously, the Service Page of Colonel Orlando Piedra Negueruela<sup>3</sup> includes a felicitation, dated June 12, 1957, after the assassination of Cuervo Navarro, received from Ambassador Gardner. However, what is not listed is the reason for this felicitation. Could it be for the death of the leader of the historical *Ortodoxo* party? Many years later, the Cuban journalist, Daniel Efraín Raimundo, recalled that just at the beginning of 1959 he was denied a visa to travel to the United States and commented: "That is how they paid their friends who had solved all the problems of the U.S. embassy in Cuba".<sup>4</sup>

Cuervo was not involved at all in the Attack of the Presidential Palace nor was he a subversive element. To see his assassination as an answer of the dictatorship for the action carried out by the Directorio Revolucionario on that March 13 is far-fetching. It is more probable that he wanted to eliminate the man who accused Batista for his submission to foreign interests, the politician who had battled against Decree 522 before Congress passed on it and who continued to fight it. And Batista was so pressed to enforce the decree that would free the hands of the telephone company that he did it before erasing the marks of combat in Palacio.

## **Still alive**

For Pelayo Cuervo Navarro the "Cuban solution" was a political one not through the revolution as demonstrated in his closing speech of the Civic Dialogue called in 1956 by Cosme de la Torriente that gathered together personalities of government and

<sup>3</sup>Service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela. In archives of the interior Ministry, Havana

<sup>4</sup>Daniel Efraín Raimundo: *Habla el coronel Orlando Piedra*. Miami, Ed. Universal, 1994. p. 62.



an opposition that, Fidel Castro qualified as “beggarly and cloudy”.

Yes, he was a politician very much loved and respected and had great popularity since the 30s when, with a maximum of votes the people elected him to the assembly that wrote the Constitutions of 1940.<sup>5</sup> That year success crowned his hopes of being elected as Senator in the Republic and maintained that seat until the dissolution of parliament after the coup of March 10, 1952. His popularity gained force during legal Cause 82 that managed to process former president Grau San Martín and officials of his government for misappropriation of 144 million pesos.

As one of the key figures of the Ortodoxo Party, from the Senate and the press he lashed out against the government (“auténtico”) of Carlos Prío and led strong campaigns against the monopolies, corruption, the loan of 50 million dollars, the increase in urban bus fares, the “Mordaza” decree (gagging decree) that violated freedom of speech and the scandalous *affaire* of the Modern Buses.<sup>6</sup>

After the coup that put Batista back in power, Cuervo tirelessly denounced corruption and government infringements, the alleged connivance of Cuban military chiefs with the Dominican Republic’s despot, Trujillo and criminal actions of the police and other repressive forces.

Any police or military chief then could have wished and viewed with pleasure his assassination; any of these chiefs could have carried out orders from the higher-ups. In an interview, Piedra told Efraín Raimundo: “Everyone” –evidently referring to military and police chiefs –“had a list of those to kill if they killed the president. That was the situation of Cuervo”.<sup>7</sup> The death of Pelayo was allegedly perpetrated either by Lieutenant colonel Irenaldo García Báez, of the Military Intelligence Service,<sup>8</sup> or Colonel Mariano Faget of the Bureau of Repression

<sup>5</sup> Enrique de la Osa: “Pelayo Cuervo Navarro”. In *Sangre y pillaje*. Havana, Ed. Pablo, 1990. p. 324.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 325.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: Op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> Carlos Manuel Rubiera: Art. cit., p. 148.

of Communist Activities<sup>9</sup> and Major General Francisco Tabernilla, head of the army chiefs of command.<sup>10</sup> The guilty person was, however, colonel Orlando Piedra Negueruela of the Bureau of Investigations of the National Police, Men under his command committed the crime in the Country Club Lake.

In the above mentioned interview that hides more of what he says, Raimundo directly asked Piedra who were responsible for killing Pelayo Cuervo and the former colonel answered: "It is believed that they were army men but no accusation can be leveled against anyone without knowing who they were"<sup>11</sup> But it appears he did know because immediately after he says that he prefers to leave that question unanswered. "The list is in the hands of a friend who, for reasons of age, may survive me and she is in charge of making it public a few years after my death".<sup>12</sup> In that interview, Piedra gives a clue on how figures of the opposition were eliminated during Batista's rule and how some times these assassinations were thwarted. He speaks of Tony Varona. "Several times Doctor Varona was picked up –detained –by the Bureau because he was disobedient. One morning President Batista called me to ask: "Do you have Doctor Varona detained? And I answered: "Yes Mr. President, doctor Varona is here. It was a time when we began to capture the plotters of the events of the Cienfuegos uprising... At five in the morning Batista called me saying: Piedra I want to rest and I know that you are not crazy. I answered him: No sir, I'm not crazy".<sup>13</sup>

Pelayo Cuervo was not so lucky. If he complied with orders "from above" in the assassination, the colonel had his own reasons to settle the score with the former parliamentarian. Shortly before January 9, 1957, Pelayo denounced to the Supreme Court, irregularities in procedures committed by Orlando Piedra and his agents dressed as civilians. But the Higher Military Court, where the issue was referred to, dismissed

<sup>9</sup> Joaquín Tasis: "¡Yo fui a Santo Domingo en el viaje del tirano!". In *Bohemia* (Havana), February 22, 1959, p. 110

<sup>10</sup> "Ramón Barquín". In *Bohemia* (Havana) February 8, 1959, p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: Op. cit., p. 51-52.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 13-14.

the charges because “there was no proof of the truth of the events denounced nor who could have done them, if it were true”.<sup>14</sup>

It has been said that Orlando Piedra was not the most bloodthirsty henchman of the Batista regime; that he cannot be compared to his colleagues, Esteban Ventura and Conrado Carratalá. This is a relative point. Piedra was an assassin, regardless of the number of victims directly linked to him.

He was responsible for the murder of Oscar Lucero, a combatant of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, who, in Holguin, participated in the preparation of the attack that ended with the life of Colonel Fermín Cowley Gallegos, head of that city’s military forces, and later, in Havana, he planned and carried out the kidnapping of the Argentine racing ace, Juan Manuel Fangio, who was invited to the car race of Formula One, known as the Great Prize of Cuba.<sup>15</sup>

Lucero was a friend of the Santiago revolutionary, Frank País and alternated with him –in what was the capital of Oriente –the presidency of the Youth Movement of the Baptist Church. He was a militant of the Ortodoxa Youth and founder, after the coup of 1952, of Acción Libertadora whose best cadres went on to form part of the Eastern Revolutionary Action with Frank. When Frank joined the ranks of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, and is made Action chief of that organization, Lucero is by his side. After the frustrated attack on the garrison of the town of Miranda he is sent to Holguín where he does a tremendous job in organizing the Movement. When the repressive forces were practically on his heels, after the attack on Cowley, it was decided that he should go the Sierra Maestra but Lucero preferred to be in the jaws of the devil that, for revolutionaries, was the Havana of those days. He became the Action chief of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement in the capital.

On May 1, 1956 he was picked up together with Emma Montenegro, in a Vedado apartment. Emma would remember later that while being taken to the Bureau of Investigation, Lucero patted her to boost her spirits, so warm and so sweet, with

<sup>14</sup> service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela.

<sup>15</sup> Emma Montenegro: “Cómo fue secuestrado Fangio”. In *Bohemia* (Havana) January 18-25, 1959, p. 76.

his beautiful eyes clouded by the sadness of one who knows his fate and accepts it proudly.<sup>16</sup>

In the Bureau Lucero was handed over to Orlando Piedra and together with Lieutenant Colonel Irenaldo García Báez, by that time second chief of Military Intelligence Service and Colonel Leopoldo Pérez Coujil, who had gone through BRAC and SIM before substituting Cowley as head of Holguín, brutally tortured him for 20 days.

The man who had all the links of Havana clandestinity said nothing in spite of the barbarous torture. That is why he is called The Martyr of Silence. It has been said that he managed to have strength to write on the walls of his cell: "I'm still alive, May 18". His body was never found,<sup>17</sup>

## Den of torture and death

In *Know your police*, memoirs of the National Police published in 1958 by the Central Direction of that body, the Bureau of Investigation was considered one of the most important because it was in charge of investigations of everything that occurred in the lives of the citizens. At that moment it had five branches: Drugs and Miscellaneous; Immigration, Homicides; Theft and the one known as *Negociado A* in charge of crimes against State Security.<sup>18</sup> Orlando Piedra converted the Bureau into a den of torture and death for Cuban revolutionaries and made the installation an impregnable fortress with its electrified wire fences.

The young revolutionary, Julio Dámaso Vázquez, was brutally tortured in the Bureau of Investigation, for, among other reasons, his alleged participation in the attack of the Presidential Palace. Men under the command of Colonel Piedra, such as Bencomo, Calzadilla —the one who arrested Lucero— and another nicknamed Hiroito first tried to convince Dámaso with

<sup>16</sup> *Ididem*, p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> William Gálvez: *Salida 19*. Havana, Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1985, pp. 358-360.

<sup>18</sup> *Conoce tu policía*, 1957-1958. Havana, Dirección Central de la Policía Nacional. S/P.

“good” manners to confess to charges made against him. He refused, and then they savagely bullwhipped him. At dawn they took him to the Plaza of the Republic —now Revolution Plaza— cocked their weapons and threatened to shoot him. They beat him up again, mostly in the genitals and one of the assassins jumped with all his weight on the right foot of the young man dislocating his foot. Later, when they returned to the Bureau Bencomo repeatedly inserted toothpicks under his nails and he was burned with lighted cigars. This martyrdom continued for three days. When they moved him to the prison in Havana, the Castillo del Príncipe, Julio Dámaso Vázquez paradoxically felt he was in heaven.<sup>19</sup>

Sergio González, known as El Curita, the legendary combatant of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, did not have the same luck. In the dungeons of the Bureau of Investigations he was tortured by Lieutenant Colonel Esteban Ventura, supervisor of the National Police and Colonel Conrado Carratalá, head of that Force. He was tortured before being machine gunned and left in a dark Havana locality.<sup>20</sup>

Often Piedra signed his name and gave his authority to blood actions. The Bureau under his command was open on innumerable occasions to the sadism of other police and military chiefs. The detainees, in a sinister exchange, were sent from one branch to another and some of the top brass requested, eventually, the services of the efficient colonel.

Some of the officers compromised in what was known as the Conspiracy of the Pure in April of 1956 were interrogated in SIM, both by the head of that branch lieutenant Colonel Antonio Blanco Rico as well as by Piedra.<sup>21</sup> When a lieutenant of the Army Air Force was arrested for refusing to bomb the city of Cienfuegos in the hands of a commando of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, SIM sent him to the Bureau of Investigations.<sup>22</sup> Jorge Agostini, former head of the Presidential Palace Secret

<sup>19</sup> Julio Dámaso Vázquez: “¡Como me burlé del Buró de investigaciones!” In *Bohemia* (Havana) February 1, 1959, p. 59.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 114.

<sup>21</sup> Testimony of José Ramón Fernández. Author’s archives

<sup>22</sup> Álvaro Prendes: *Prólogo para una batalla*. Havana, Ed. Letras Cubanas, 1988, p. 281

Service, was detained leaving the Anglo American Hospital in Vedado by agents of the Bureau in the command of Captain Juan Castellanos. This official then called Lieutenant Julio Laurent, of Naval Intelligence and handed over the arrested man. Laurent did not hesitate. In the open street he beat Agostini with the butt of his machine gun and when he was down he fired on him several times and later killed him with two shots in the head.<sup>23</sup>

Some witnesses affirmed that Piedra liked to watch the torture and beatings done in his branch. That is what happened with Pedro Monett, detained in his house on San Ignacio street, no. 202 in Old Havana where agents of the Bureau, under the command of Lieutenant Margoza, occupied several issues of *Carta Semanal*, a clandestine paper of the Popular Socialist Party (Communist).

It was already December 30, 1958 and, in the Bureau, Margoza and commander Ricardo Medina, head of Negociado A, beat him up until they tired of it. Next day they had to present him to the colonel. A black corporal, short, gray haired with a gold tooth led Monet completely naked to the office of the boss. There, in the presence of Piedra they began whipping him and burning him with a lighted cigar. Then they made him sit and while Piedra enjoyed the sight every one of them took turns using the “telephone” blow on his ears. When Monett could barely sit, the corporal who had taken him there, stood him up to dance.

Monett got out alive. There was no time for Margoza, Medina or even Piedra to kill him. It was the 31<sup>st</sup> of December and in a few hours all would be fleeing.<sup>24</sup>

## **It's all over!**

All those who knew Orlando Piedra Negueruela, with his tailored suits according to the fashion and flashy ties looked

<sup>23</sup> Enrique de la Osa: “A 20 años del asesinato de Jorge Agostini”. *Los días y los años*. Havana, Ed. Unión, 1983, pp. 153-154.

<sup>24</sup> Álvaro Prendes: *Op. cit.*, pp. 224-227.

more like a businessman than a policeman. He was elegant and good-looking with his brown eyes and hair, measuring 177 cm in height and weighing 90 kg.<sup>25</sup>

He was born in San Antonio de los Baños, south of Havana, on December 18, 1917. He worked in the streetcar company where his preference for perfumes and powder and careful attire won him the nickname of La Pomposa<sup>26</sup>, (the pompous) until, and following his father's footsteps, he joined the National Police on February 4, 1941 with number 1722 in his identity card. It was during the time of the first Batista government.<sup>27</sup>

According to what Piedra told the journalist, Raimundo, it seems that at one time he was close to colonel Antonio Brito, last boss of the armed Institute of that government and during the first day of the President Grau government. He was promoted to corporal on July 14, 1944 and on October 10 of the same year to sergeant, the very same day that Batista left the government. The new police bosses did not want him and Piedra was retired on November 21 of 1944.<sup>28</sup> The following year he left Cuba. Referring to this move he told Raimundo: "there was no guarantee for men who work".<sup>29</sup> What is true is that so-called "revolutionary" groups settled accounts with persons committed to Machado and Batista and, even former colonel Brito was killed. Also killed in 1945 were captain Antonio Hernández, former head of SIM, commander Pedro Tandrón, former inspector general of the police and former captain Rafael Díaz Joglar, one of the persons responsible for the death of Antonio Guiteras.<sup>30</sup>

Piedra goes to Mexico and almost immediately crosses the border to the United States. He becomes a dishwasher and works in construction but, one day, he comes face to face with Batista who had been elected senator in absentia and was preparing

<sup>25</sup> Service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela.

<sup>26</sup> Testimony of Rolando de la Paz. Author's archive

<sup>27</sup> Service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: Op. cit., p.183.

<sup>30</sup> Raúl Aguiar Rodríguez: *El bonchismo y el gangsterismo en Cuba*. Havana, Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 2000, pp. 93-94 y 234.

his return to the Island. He told him: “General if you need me I have my bags packed”. A few days later Batista contacted him through general Tabernilla and ordered him to wait in Havana. From that moment on Piedra became the shadow of Batista. On March 10, 1952 he would enter Columbia camp as part of his guard.<sup>31</sup>

After the coup the General rewarded one who had served him well and with a flourish reinstated the policeman with the grades of captain. With another flourish he made him commandant and again promoted him to lieutenant colonel in three successive decrees that he signs one after the other.<sup>32</sup> On May 9 he names him inspector of the Bureau of Investigations and supervisor of the secret and judiciary police. The following July 1, Piedra was colonel and on April of 1954 he takes up the post of the Bureau substituting Lieutenant Colonel Armando Suárez Suquet.<sup>33</sup> Later Batista would name him to the post of head of the Presidential Palace Secret Service.

Medals flow onto Piedra’s military jacket that he rarely wears because he always dresses in civilian clothes. He gathers all those military, naval and police awards that are medals and insignia in different colors. On April 27, 1956 he scores the big one: Batista awards him with the highest distinction the Cuban state conferred at the time, the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes National Award of Merit, with the grade of commander.<sup>34</sup>

Piedra is Batista’s golden man; the one preferred by the General among his police chiefs, the man to whom he confers his security. He is with him in public events, in his movements through the Island; he’s by his side in his trips abroad and when the President goes to his rest home in Varadero, Piedra and his men cover the route along Via Blanca. Often Batista honors him with lunch at the Palace.<sup>35</sup> The day of the attack, Piedra defied bullets to get in.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: Op. cit., pp. 31-32 y 184.

<sup>32</sup> In *Gaceta Oficial* (Havana) May 7, 1952.

<sup>33</sup> Service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> Enrique de la Osa: “Sangre en Palacio”. In *Sangre y pillaje*, p.288.



Due to his position, he has close ties with the FBI and the CIA. He checks the movements of Fidel Castro in Mexico who is intent on beginning a guerrilla war in Cuba. John Mac Maples Spiritto is the CIA agent posted in Mexico to spy on Fidel and the future *Granma* combatants. He later recalled that his station sent their information to Washington, “although there were comments that our bosses in Mexico had close ties with colonel Orlando Piedra, head of the Bureau of Investigations in Cuba and Captain Juan Castellanos, investigations director of that police institution who regularly traveled to that country in search of information on the Cuban revolutionaries”.<sup>37</sup> Spiritto also explained that, at the time, they learned of the presence there of a man known as Arturo, *El Jarocho*, a fugitive of Cuban justice who the Batista henchmen contracted to kill Fidel Castro for 10 000 dollars. Although the agent says nothing about this, Orlando Piedra must have known of the planned action.<sup>38</sup>

Because the contacts Piedra had surpassed national territorial limits, with the guile of a tropical Fouché he distributes his spies and informers. In his interview with Raimundo he brags of having warned Colonel Pilar García in time, of the attack on the Goicuría barracks, in the city of Matanzas that gave the military chief a chance to massacre the attackers.<sup>39</sup> He manages to infiltrate the *Organización Auténtica* of former President Prio and gets the information of the imminent arrival in Cuba of the Coryntia yacht expedition made up of a group of militants of that party who disembark in Holguín, where Colonel Cowley was waiting to gun them down.

The informer was also from the autentico party, Eliseo Riera Gómez, alias Ellis, and was paid 10 000 dollars by Piedra for his services through Enrique Pizzi, Cuban consul in Miami.<sup>40</sup> After these events Riera continued in the ranks of *autentismo* and spying for the Bureau of Investigations. He got involved in

<sup>37</sup> Luis Báez: “Nuestro hombre en La Habana”. In *Juventud Rebelde*. (Havana), June 9, 2002, p. 6

<sup>38</sup> *Ididem*, p.6

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: Op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>40</sup> Carlos Rivero Collado: *Los sobrinos del tío Sam*. Havana, Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1976, pp. 90-91.

local politics and managed to become an advisor for Latin American affairs for Steven Clark, metropolitan mayor of Miami. After concluding in this post, Riera continued his political and social activities in the Cuban community.<sup>41</sup>

Orlando Piedra was the architect of Operación Fuga (Operation Flight) that, during the early hours of January 1, 1959, got out of the country the most notorious assassins and thieves, including Batista. Sergeant Joaquin Tasis, of the Bureau of Investigations heard on the radio that all were to present themselves with their cars. When he arrived at the Bureau he was ordered to pick up two people in their homes. Upon his return with the two people he was told to join a caravan of about 30 cars that rapidly left for the Columbia military airport. Riding the first car was Colonel Orlando Piedra.

When they arrived at their destination, Piedra requested to be accompanied only by those “previously called”. Among these were the cream of the Batista criminals: Medina and Sarmiento, Calzadilla and Rodríguez, Magoza and Macagüero, Antolín Falcón and Mariano Faget... without counting those already inside. Incredibly some thought they were there in the airport to hold an interview with Fidel Castro, but Piedra rapidly cleared that up when, after rubbing his hands in impotence and resignation, shouted, “Men, it’s all over!”

With motor running, five planes were waiting. Piedra, with Batista and his wife, went into the first one. Operation Flight was over for him while dozens of men were hanging around in the runway, uncertain of their fate.<sup>42</sup>

## **Cutting off heads**

He arrived at the Dominican Republic with enough money to lend Esteban Ventura who didn’t have any even for eating.<sup>43</sup> He installed himself with Batista in the *Palacete Nacional*, official

<sup>41</sup> José Buajasán Marrawi and José Luis Méndez Méndez: *La República de Miami*. Havana, Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 2003, p. 187.

<sup>42</sup> Joaquín Tasis: Art. cit., pp. 56-58 and 110-111.

<sup>43</sup> *Ididem*, p. 110.

residence of government guests and later followed him to the Jaragua hotel. But he kept himself aside, quiet and thoughtful. “Silently Colonel Orlando Piedra passed the hours” in the Dominican capital, reported an officer who accompanied him in his flight.<sup>44</sup> Batista, deflated and in low spirits was no better. He seemed out of it<sup>45</sup> destroyed and isolated. The General who always confided on his luck knew that there was no turning back because “Cuba was in love with Fidel Castro”.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Trujillo was preparing his anti-Cuban plans and insisted on enrolling Batista in the adventure. Piedra seemed not to have been a part of it because early in 1959 he left for the United States.

With some difficulties he managed to enter that country. The visa giving him permission to enter was no longer binding after January 1. In his interview with Raimundo, Piedra blames Clark Anderson, former FBI head in Cuba that they refused him entry. “The friends were now enemies”, he said. But he finally managed to get in “under oath” through the good offices of two officials of the U.S. embassy in Havana and a Navy official of that country.<sup>47</sup>

On entering the United States he would fulfill the mission given him by the dictator: to collect the three million dollars in New York that Marta Fernández, the wife of Batista, would give him and then hand them over to a Dominican official in Miami. With this money Batista paid for his stay and that of his men in the Dominican Republic. Piedra delivered one million dollars and deposited the rest in a bank security box. The Cuban gangster, Policarpo Soler, then under employ of Trujillo stole the money and his action cost him his life at the hand of Trujillo henchmen, shot in the Las 40 jail. Later there would be a falling out between Trujillo and Batista. Piedra did not deliver the remaining two million. He returned them to the wife of the former head of state.<sup>48</sup>

In Miami the FBI identified him as one of the main organizers of political propaganda in favor of Batista and as someone close

<sup>44</sup> *Ididem*, p. 110.

<sup>45</sup> Luis Báez: *Los que se fueron*. Havana, Ed. José Martí, 1991. p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Ididem*, p. 67.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel Efraín Raimundo: *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> *Ididem*, p. 63.

to the former president. He worked for former senator Rolando Masferrer who, in Cuba, headed the paramilitary bands known as “los tigres” attempting to rebuild there his band of killers. With Masferrer he extorted money from Cuban small businesspersons living in that city under the pretext of collecting funds for the anti-Castro struggle, a lucrative business that, with several variations and many different bosses, continues to this day. However, relations did not last long. The colonel, who was loyal to Batista to the end, broke with Masferrer when he began to bad mouth the dictator and calling him a coward.<sup>49</sup>

Through the CIA Piedra joins Operation 40 that came under Operation Pluto in 1961 that would be an important part of the mercenary invasion of Play Giron. It would be the repressive body of the Assault Brigade 2506 that later disembarked and that would set up a beachhead in the Island.

Elements of Operation 40 acted as links between JW/WAVE, the CIA station in Florida and the terrorist groups of Cuban origin with which the company was interested in maintaining direct contacts. There were also connections with the U.S. Mafia interested in recovering its concessions in the paradise lost in Havana.<sup>50</sup>

Had the invasion succeeded, the men of Operation 40 would take over the archives of Cuban security and police, they would occupy the buildings of the main central institutions of State, specially those of the Armed Forces, the key centers of the economy and would arrest the most well known leaders as a first step in a massive purge of the population. For this purpose they would use red, green or white forms that would be filled in with the names of revolutionary militants, union and worker’s leaders, farmers and religious officials, intellectuals and others that would be eliminated immediately if they had a red form, jailed if the form color was green or pending new interrogations if their form was white.

Members of Operation 40 mostly came from the repressive Batista forces or who collaborated in Cuba with the FBI or the CIA. Manuel Artime Buesa and Orlando Piedra Negueruela were

<sup>49</sup> José Buajasán Marrawi and José Luis Méndez Méndez: Op. cit., pp. 273-274.

<sup>50</sup> *Ididem*, pp. 102-103.

designated by the U.S. government to design the tasks of the operation. The men who were part of this sinister plan never set foot on Cuban soil: seeing how the invading brigade were struck down on the sands of Playa Giron, they modified their intention of disembarking in favor of a quick retreat to Florida.<sup>51</sup>

Since, Operation 40 has gone through many changes, even in name but analysts say their official functions and basic principles remain today. Assassins, terrorists and specialists in subversion and also Mafia bonded together since 1962 and form a new Operation 40, invisible arm of the CIA broken off only in appearance and, since then, it directs terrorism actions. It goes from the assassination of Kennedy to plans of assassination of Fidel Castro.<sup>52</sup> Of course, at that time the FBI interrogated Orlando Piedra linked to the assassination in Dallas. In papers later occupied from Lee Harvey Oswald, are the name and address of the former Cuban colonel.<sup>53</sup>

On January 22, 1959, through an official telephone message, No. 327, the Direction of the National Revolutionary Police discharges Colonel Orlando Eleno Piedra Negueruela as of December 31 of the previous year for abandoning his post.<sup>54</sup> Months later, in June he was tried in absentia for the crimes of desertion and later for theft and ill treatment of prisoners. That same year charges were leveled against him for the assassination of Pelayo Cuervo Navarro and the Cuban government requested his extradition with no success. Because men like Orlando Piedra who had learned very well in Cuba to kill off his opponents —be they revolutionaries like Oscar Lucero or politicians who wanted to occupy posts legally, such as Pelayo Cuervo— continued to be useful to the government of the United States due to their experience and cold blood to kill and torture.

Orlando Eleno Piedra Negueruela died in an old person's home in Florida on July 12, 1999.

<sup>51</sup> *Ididem*, p. 102.

<sup>52</sup> Claudia Furiati: *ZR Rifle*. Havana, Ed. SI-MAR, 1999. p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> Service Sheet of Orlando Piedra Negueruela.

<sup>54</sup> *Ididem*.



The fight against terrorism is the motive of the accused and the motives must not be exposed to the Jury

Official documents of the trial against the five Cuban prisoners in United States jails. Prosecution motion limit, 2000.

*Today after three years in prison and on the verge of being sentenced as well as going through situations you are aware of, I am not going to repeat what I have already said in this letter. I am only going to use a phrase of Silvio Rodríguez in his song El Necio that means so much for us: I DIE AS I LIVED! [...].*

Fragment of a letter Fernando González Llorc wrote to Rosa Aurora when he is taken to the hole for a second time.



## **Rolando Masferrer Rojas: The “tiger” blew up in pieces**

*Amaury E. del Valle*

—We’ve got to get out of here, damn! And fast! This is getting worse every minute. If they catch us their going settle accounts with all of us.

The man looks around nervously. He shakes his gun. With bags under his eyes and thick voice that reveal a night of drinking. It is cold, but under his Stetson, he is perspiring.

—Find something. Something to drive this shit to get the hell out of here.

Seconds later, a few yards from there, Fausto Mariño wakes up in his boat, the Maria Julia, with a machine gun staring him in the face and two kicks in the stomach.

—Get up, shit head!, get on with it because you’ve got to take us north. And be quick about it if you want to save your skeleton—a man tells him while shaking a Thompson in his face.

There in the Barlovento inlet the Ola Kun II softly rolls in front of Mariño. It is an old U.S. coast guard of the Second World War bought through shady deals in the U.S. Guantanamo Naval Base and converted into the personal yacht of Rolando Masferrer Rojas.

As Mariño would tell Bohemia days later, it was difficult to get the Ola Kun II started but more from fear of a shot in the head than his true abilities as a mechanic and sailor he managed to do it.

He was the only witness of the flight. At that time in the morning, almost no one had seen the arrival of six cars with

more than 20 men who, with shrieking tires almost went into the sea. No one was able to prove the departure of the Ola Kun II due North with Masferrer and 24 of his “tigres” on board and the unlucky Mariño. Also there were no witnesses of the fall of El Negro in the sea, one of the men, his shouts asking to be picked up, of how they left him there. Or the vomiting of Masferrer partly due to the mixtures of alcohol, seasickness and fear.

Those who had put to sea in that narrow coastguard were 26 men, a number that seemed more a fortune telling number, because, precisely, they were fleeing from the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement.

Perhaps that is why no one looked out at the wharf or perhaps, also because of the machine guns and the fame of the “tigres” was too convincing to risk getting in their way. Also, it was the first of January. It was the first of January, 1959.

## **A heel-less gunman**

The testimony of Moisés Elías Vila Labrada is very revealing. His father, Santiago Villa was killed with three other persons in January of 1958. That day the “tigres” in Manzanillo and in one single day, killed more than 15 persons including a family of nine persons who were burnt in their house that the “tigres” had set fire to, including the death of three children; one was an 18 month old baby.

*It was the first of January, 1958. We had prepared nothing for New Years. The situation wasn't conducive for celebrations. On the morning, my father said: “Come-on kid, let's go find something for your mother” and put me on the horse.*

*When we reached the grocery store my uncle had in Garata that is close to Jibacoa, over there in Manzanillo. My Dad put me down and went in to say hello to some friends. Shortly he came back out and told me to wait there playing, that he would be right out and went to do some shopping.*

*Merely two minutes later, the “tigres” arrived. There were four. They went into the store. Everyone raised their arms. They told me to do it also, that if I didn’t, they would kill me. I lifted my two little hands and they began to laugh at me.*

*They machine-gunned the bottles on the shelf. Took the money in the cash register and slapped the salesclerk twice in the face. Later they got in their car. Two minutes later we heard shots. I waited for my father for two hours.*

*At last I saw him that night, at home. He was laid out on the bed. They had riddled his body with 40 bullets. We had to borrow cotton to fill in the holes. The army guarded the burial. The “tigres” went to the funeral to check out if one of my uncles appeared. There they stayed all night, drinking and joking with the soldiers.*

*My mother, sisters and me were left penniless. They became maids and I was sent to an orphanage. There was no way to maintain me and my mind was affected.*

*Yes, I was at the trial a year later when the Revolution triumphed. Not so Masferrer, he had escaped. I also sneaked in the execution by firing squad of the “tigres. I saw it all. Nothing impresses me now if at the age of nine I had to wrap my dad in a shroud.<sup>1</sup>*

When Masferrer returned to Cuba after the Spanish Civil War he was no longer the boy from Holguín born in 1918 and who was involved in student battles of the 30s. He no longer looked like the young man who had gone to the United States to enlist in the International Brigade to fight on the side of the republicans.

Something had begun to change in him and it wasn’t only his slight limp caused by a bullet in his heel during the battles in defense of Madrid. Now the flashy journalist responsible for the International Section of Hoy, the newspaper of the Popular Socialist Party, wanted more renown, more protagonism . . . more money.

<sup>1</sup> Interview of Moisés Elías Vila Labrada. Author’s archive. Grabación en archivo del autor.

José López Sánchez —an old communist recently deceased in Havana knew him at that time—, remembers that Masferrer wrote quite well but soon began to have problems. He got into subjects that were removed from the editorial line of the newspaper, started sterile discussions, gossip, divisions. He was frequently called to attention for his indiscipline, his wish to stand out.

At that time —according to López Sánchez— his interests for Stetsons, boots, and modern cowboy clothes copied from westerns.

“He never went out unarmed. He always had one or two guns on him and even in his car he had a few more because, since then, he wanted to solve every problem at gun point”.<sup>2</sup>

He was a bully always trying to impose his will. However, because his easy speech and aura of “strong man” he soon began to gather around him a series of young men and characters. Among them was the writer Carlos Montenegro. He tried to instill on all that a “revolution had to be made with bullets”, since it was the only way to win.

Finally, expelled from the party for his sectarian positions, Masferrer founded his own organization. The Socialist Revolutionary Movement that went the way of other organizations of the epoch, becoming a gang and the prior combatant for republican Spain soon became a gangster who used extortion as a means of life, under the pretext of “collecting money for the cause”.

Consequently he was involved in several cases of political blackmail and it wasn't rare to find him shooting it out with his rivals, in the streets. However, a clever man, soon got involved in power of the time, first allying himself to Ramón Grau — Cuban president between 1944 and 1948—, and later got on the wagon of Carlos Prío Socarrás —president between 1948 to March 10, 1952.

The events of Orfila Street, a famous ruckus in the city between rival gang groups found Masferrer in Confites Key, preparing an expedition against Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic, giving himself the title of “military chief”.

<sup>2</sup> Interview of José López Sánchez. Authot's archive.

This adventure, that finally failed was betrayed and the government intervened more so as a result of the fanfare given to persons such as Masferrer in an expedition, that by its definition, should be secret.

In the 1950s he joined ranks with the “auténticos”, according to the name given to the followers of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in power.

He also entered the University at the point of a gun to enlist several members for his gang. He even confronted his previous comrades, the communists, but also the “ortodoxos”, Eduardo Chibás, leader of that party, and even Fidel Castro of whom he declared to be his sworn enemy.

Forgotten his “revolution at the point of guns”, he became a rich man through the dirty businesses of extortion and forced purchase of lands from eastern farmers. Masferrer purchased—during the Prio government—a post in the House of Representatives for what was then Oriente province. He also financed his own newspaper, *Tiempo en Cuba*, directed by his brother Rodolfo and who had his offices in San Jose no. 868, Havana.

Everything seemed to indicate that his future as a “political man” began to take form when Fulgencio Batista lead a coup on March 10, 1952, that got rid of the “auténticos” from power.

## **Batista’s Cossa Nostra**

Following is an excerpt of the file of Cause 42 of 1959, of the Revolutionary Court of Santiago de Cuba against René Feria Pérez and Rolando Masferrer (in absentia), his boss, and Rilde González (in absentia) another of his right hand men for the crime of murder, treason, battery, theft and ill treatment.

“That on the third day of last June (1958) the said accused FERIA PEREZ (under orders of Rolando Masferrer) and with the others already tried named Francisco López Guadix, alias Paquito, and Eugenio Matos, presented themselves to an establishment in Avenida de Bélgica, No. 391 in that city (Santiago de Cuba) owned by the Iglesias family and proceeded to arrest the young man, Mario Iglesias Vega, and feigning friendship

put his arm on the prisoner's shoulder and, after searching him put him in the car they were driving. When the young man's mother observed what was happening and knowing full well that everyone arrested by the fearful Tigres de Masferrer were sure of a treacherous death. She tried to get into the car, but prevented from doing so by the accused and driving off, since she was still holding on, she was dragged more than forty meters without managing to free her son. Later the young Iglesias Vega appeared horribly mutilated and killed".<sup>3</sup>

The morning of March 10, 1952, the university became the center of resistance, for a few hours, of Batista's coup. Everywhere there were students, people of the population, all shouting slogans against the dictator and in favor of the Constitution.

Shortly after 8 in the morning, a group of students managed to get an interview with the overthrown president, Carlos Prío, asking him for weapons to defend the government.

—"Wait, I'll send them — was the brusque answer Prío gave. Not even a bullet was ever received. But among the groups gathered there were those who at least had weapons "to defend themselves". Masferrer was one of them. His people entrenched themselves in the University steps. They took positions. They took sniper positions and set up their machine guns as if it were the Second World War again. They made no shot.

What happened to the armed resistance, the so crowed "revolution"? Who knows? Many were surprised when, three months later, a newspaper of that time, revealed the opponent embracing Batista in an historic photo taken by a reporter during a homage to the man who was "the strongman of Cuba". Masferrer was again "at the dinner". In 1954 he was elected senator for Oriente after fraudulent elections where there were more votes than those registered. This time he also took advantage to place his people: his brother Rodolfo was elected member of the House for the same province. In the meantime, the family acquired strong interests in Holguín, Manzanillo and Santiago de Cuba.

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt of Cause 42, 1959, in the Archives of State Security, MININT delegation in Santiago de Cuba.

What was the secret about this quick Batista-Masferrer alliance? There are several answers. We would have to ask the Italian Cossa Nostra and its two representatives in Havana, Santos Trafficante and Meyer Lansky.

Both used the gunman as intermediary in their business with the tyrant who received juicy concessions for exploiting the casinos in Havana, one of the most lucrative dividends of the Mafia across the U.S. border.

Perhaps a better key point could be given by Rafael Díaz Balart, father of the “golden boys” of the Miami counterrevolutionary émigrés such as the U.S. Congressman Lincoln Díaz Balart; Rafael, a powerful Florida banker; or Mario also a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Rafaelito, as he was referred to during the forties, had strong ties with Batista becoming a close and well-known political supporter. At the same time, he linked his interests in Oriente with Masferrer where both boosted their “little businesses”.

It was with this and the money supplied by Batista that the former communist organized the sadly well-known personal army in Cuba known as the “Tigres de Masferrer”. It has been calculated that this paramilitary force, precursor of similar ones in Latin America years later, is responsible for over 2 000 deaths between 1953 and 1959, many innocent persons who paid with their lives attempts of extortion or merely a thirst for blood of the killers.

To form his “tigres” especially in the eastern region —where they set up base after 1956 —, Masferrer received an exemption from Batista to release more than a dozen criminals. There were several condemned to death or to long sentences for murder, such as the case of René Feria who he personally took out of the Boniato Jail and made him one of his main henchman in Santiago de Cuba.

Also, through “botellas” — salaried public posts given without having to work — the Masferrer group obtained indirect funds from the government treasury for their upkeep.

At the same time they began to publish a newspaper, *Liber-tad*, in Santiago de Cuba, an ironic name for a tabloid that defended the dictator. This excuse for a newspaper later became well known because of large pornographic photographs on its first pages, but also for the fact that whoever appeared in its

pages accused of being against the regime, soon after appeared dead, horribly mutilated.

There are few or no witnesses to the majority of these outrages. The troop of assassins, that became strong throughout Oriente—especially in Santiago, Manzanillo and Bayamo—were very careful about leaving traces of their actions. They even “liked” to burn bodies, bury them in unknown locations or throw them into the sea so that they were never found.

By common accord with the other repressive forces of Batista the Tigres de Masferrer became a well-oiled machine for killing. In contrast to the police or the army, they didn’t even have to pass through the fiction of corrupt courts.

In Santiago de Cuba, for example they had several training camps and even their own badges, the head of a tiger, sown on the left arm of the shirt. That way they roamed the city and the countryside, especially at the base of the Sierra Maestra, eliminating, without batting an eye, any one who they thought was helping the rebels or who sympathized with them.

Testimonies of clandestine fighters during that time revealed that in almost every case anyone taken by the Masferrer bands ... was soon to be deceased. This reality moved members of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement to attack the headquarters of these paramilitary groups, first located in the locale of the Libertad newspaper that, due to hounding moved to the interior of the Moncada Garrison.

The number of repressions and indiscriminate assassinations were so many that —by the end of 1958— Santiago looked like a dead city after six in the afternoon. The mere fact of being young or walking around the street at that time was enough to appear next morning “with the mouth full of ants” thrown in any dark alley or the bushes on the edge of the highways.

Not even the Senator, protected by his parliamentary immunity or any of his henchmen had to appear in court for any crime; even if they had been called there may not have been any witnesses left to directly point the finger at Masferrer for anything.

Of the more than 2 000 persons estimated to be arrested by this paramilitary force there is almost no one left. The “tigres” didn’t leave anyone to tell the tale.



In spite of his crimes, Masferrer managed to evade the sentence decreed in Cause 42, of 1959, of the Revolutionary Court of Santiago de Cuba trying René Fera Pérez, and Rolando Masferrer (in absentia), his boss, and Rilde González (in absentia) another of his henchmen for the crimes of assassination, treason, lesions, theft and battery.

“WHEREAS: That the accused Rolando Masferrer has not presented himself, he will be tried in absentia for the following causes.

“CONSIDERING: Seen the events of Four Crimes of Assassination, foreseen and penalized in Article 12 of rule No 1 of the Rebel Army, in relation to article 121 and following Process Law of Cuba.

“SANCTION: The accused RENÉ FERIA and PÉREZ and ROLANDO MASFERRER ROJAS, as authors of Four Crimes of “Assassination” to the highest sanction of DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD”<sup>4</sup>.

### **The man wearing glasses**

In a letter sent on January 7, 1959, by former State minister, Roberto Agramonte, the extradition of Masferrer was requested of the U.S. District Prosecutor in Miami Florida, from the District Director of Immigration and Naturalization Services in Miami, Florida and custom’s administrator, Key West, Florida.

This communication refers to 17,000,000 (seventeen million dollars)

In the possession of one or more persons currently detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Services of the U.S. in Key West, Florida [...] that the Cuban government considers was illegally taken from Cuban jurisdiction by one said Rolando Masferrer Rojas, a Cuban citizen residing in that country that were illegally extracted by Masferrer. Also, this money is the property of the government of Cuba and was obtained by

<sup>4</sup> Section of the sentence of Cause 42, 1959, published in *Sierra Maestra* newspaper on April 11, 1959.

Masferrer through illegal means, through unseemly and illicit arrangements [...]. Said Masferrer is also accused of numerous assassinations [...]. The government of Cuba appreciates if institutions of the United States take measures to recover that money and return those persons to Cuba.<sup>5</sup>

However, in a report published in the Sierra Maestra newspaper in Santiago de Cuba on January 27, 1959, the real position of the government of the United States was evident:

Washington, January 26 —(UPI). U.S. Immigrations Services today granted political asylum to former Cuban senator and supporter of Batista, Rolando Masferrer.

Officials of that service informed that they had granted conditional liberty to Masferrer and two brothers, two servants and one naval officer. These persons were detained by the McAllen, Texas Immigration Service. Permitted to enter the country with the former Cuban senator, are his brothers Rodolfo and Raimundo Masferrer and the servants Rafael Águila Esteinger and Alcides E. Pérez.[...]

Former senator, Masferrer, accompanied by 26 persons, reached the coast of Key West, Florida, aboard a luxury yacht on the first, after fleeing Cuba when the Batista regime fell.

The provisional government of Cuba accused Masferrer of fleeing with 17 million dollars. However, officials of the Immigration Service declared they did not find those funds only “insignificant” amounts in the possession of the occupants of the Ola Kun II yacht.

More than a year after the request a powerful explosion shook windows several kilometers away. The people, first stunned, ran immediately to the dock where the first columns of smoke began to appear.

Keeling over starboard, La Coubre looked like an animal with its belly open, from which flames shot up. Fragments of iron and dismembered bodies were all mixed up in the rubble.

Soon more than 100 police, firemen, dockworkers, people in general trying to rescue the wounded or put out the fire. Then: the second explosion.

<sup>5</sup> En Archivo Histórico del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (MINREX) de Cuba.

The attack of the French ship, La Coubre on March 4, 1960 caused more than 100 deaths, including six French sailors and hundreds of wounded. It also deprived national defense of 44 tons of grenades, 31 of ammunition sorely needed in face of the threat of an invasion. However, in spite of public accusations and investigations, the authors were never condemned.

Shortly before the sinister action, on a cloudy day of February, in the French port of Ambers, a crewman of La Coubre, Alain Mouriat, received from an unknown man, 2 000 dollars. Those who saw the transaction only identified the man as “a certain Rolando, white, of about 40, who wore glasses”. Strange coincidence: Rolando Masferrer was then 42 year old and wore glasses for a long time.

Investigations revealed the organization of one of the cruelest terrorist sabotage in the history of Cuba. In time it became known, at the beginning of 1960, that Colonel J.C. King of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had a long talk with Masferrer in Miami.

This Batista follower assured the agent that he had obtained “vital” information from the Cuban American, Richard E. Brooks, officer of the U.S. army and engineer in mines who knew of the arrival to Cuba of ships with weapons and ammunition bought in Europe to defend the newly formed Revolution.

What role did Masferrer have in blowing up La Coubre? Perhaps it will never be known completely. What is evident is that he was a man with strong contacts with the CIA, even before his arrival in the United States, since it seems he worked for the FBI when he arrived on the shores of the United States.

However, this was not the only “exploit” of this well-known terrorist. After being detained for several days in the McAllen Detection Center in Texas, after his illegal arrival in Key West, on January 1, 1959, U.S. officials ignored the Cuban request of extradition. They ignored both the theft of 17 million dollars as well as the trail of deaths he left behind in the blood stained Island.

Perhaps that is why this hyena cub, emboldened, joined the first counterrevolutionary organization set up in the northern land, La Rosa Blanca, It wasn't a chance action. This group was

headed by, among others, the former representative of the House, Rafael Díaz Balart, his old buddy from Oriente.

As early as March 28, 1959, a conspiracy was discovered in Havana of former Masferrer followers, plotting to assassinate Fidel Castro. Their confessions revealed implications that their former boss had with a man from the FBI, Frank Sturgis and officers of the CIA.

Masferrer also participated in the attempted invasion of Cuba on June of 1959 sponsored by Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo that was aborted by Rebel Army intelligence.

This plan involved 16 planes from Santo Domingo, supposedly personally directed by Masferrer, prior to the OK from the CIA.

Shortly after, in December of 1960, The Miami Herald reported that the notorious terrorist was giving military training to 23 U.S. citizens and about 200 Cuban émigrés in a paramilitary camp located in No Name Key, property of the multi-millionaire, Howard Hughes. Nothing happened.

That is why it was logical to suppose that La Coubre was another step in his terrorist activity. A “triumph” that, according to witnesses, he celebrated with fanfare in his residence in Miami, a “little house” he bought with the stolen millions and his profits from growing extortion activities of small businessmen, his businesses in prostitution and the always fertile field of collecting money to “overthrow Castro”.

## **Safaris to Cuba**

October is usually a month of hurricanes and frequent storms in the Caribbean. Even a shrimp boat with an almost horizontal keel to navigate around the reefs and wind proof stability, can be in trouble in the rough sea.

Seasick by the rocking of the boat, fleeing from the coast guard and desperate to touch land, 27 men squeezed together as much as they could on the Sun Part, and set course to Cuba on that narrow little yacht. It was the morning of October 4, 1960.

Farmers who lived in the northern coast of Oriente, near Navas Bay were surprised to see these men armed to the teeth, some talking in English but, above all, by their combat fatigues, the first they had ever seen. That is why they called them “Los Pintos” and suspected that nothing good could come from them when there are rifles around and reported to the army the attempt to disembark.

In the shoot out with Rebel Army forces, a shot in the head left on the ground Armentino Fera Pérez, head of the group and former Masferrer “tigre”, well known for his crimes in Santiago de Cuba, Manzanillo and Sagua de Tánamo. Soon after almost all were captured including a U.S. citizen, Anthony Zarba.

A week later, surrounded and with no other choice but surrendering their weapons, the rest of the group were taken as well as three more U.S. citizens: Roberto Otis Fuller, Allen Dale Thompson and Paul Hughes.

For the first time citizens of the United States openly violated the Neutrality Act by which this northern country signed its intention of preventing the organization of any armed expedition against a foreign country with which there was no declaration of war.

In the trial of Cause 284 in the Revolutionary Court of Santiago de Cuba that counted on the presence of the U.S. consul in that city, Daniel M. Bradock, the expeditionary band acknowledge having been trained by CIA officers.

Also, they said they came to Cuba, among other reasons, because Masferrer himself assured them that “more than 5 000 insurgents” would be awaiting them to prepare the overthrow of the Revolution and that it would be a matter of days.

The story of the “thousands of insurgents against the government”, and that “victory would be a matter of days” and so many others seem to have been among the favorites of Masferrer. The call “to prepare the suitcases” in face of the nearness of the “fall” of Fidel he reported repeatedly in *Liber-tad*, a copy of the hated newspaper he had in Santiago and that he continued to publish in Miami. In that paper he made frequent calls to plant bombs, kill foreign leaders; invade Cuba with blood and fire. For this his “freedom of expression” was never bothered.

A few months after the Los Pintos fracas, a yacht, the *Aries*, entered Havana Harbor. On board were six U.S. citizens that,

amidst a great fanfare, announced their intention of joining Cuban defense in face of the invasion being planned by the United States. It was a few days before Giron and a mercenary landing was expected.

The yacht caught the attention of Security agents. First because it was a boat that had been used during the mid 1959 for those fleeing revolutionary justice in Cuba. Second because the six U.S. citizens were formerly members of the U.S. army. And third, because they were traveling to the Island after the State Department ban of travel to Cuba as part of its blockade policy.

In the meantime, amidst backslapping and protestations of friendship of the “internationalists” the agents carefully searched the boat. A newspaper clipping was the clue. In the clipping was a photo of one of the “solidarity soldiers” in his camouflage outfit and a heading that affirmed he was coming to Cuba to fight against the Revolution.

—“It seems to me you have mistaken the verb” one of the Cuban agents pointed out when confronting the report with Baker.

—“You said you were coming to defend Cuba or to invade it?” —he asked him ironically.

Alford Eugene Gibson, 31 years old, air force mechanic in North Carolina who belonged to the United States Air Force; Leonard Louis Smith, 21, chef in Chicago, who had belonged to the United States Army; George R. Beck, 24, from Massachusetts, worked in a secret atomic energy plant; Tommy L. Baker, 28, from Alabama, who had fought in the Korean War; and James R. Beane, 34, from North Carolina who had participated in the Second World War, revealed to the Revolutionary Court the incredible adventure that had brought them to Cuban shores.

Masferrer himself, taking advantage of their military experience and paying them thousands of dollars in cash, had trained them in a military camp in Florida. He sent them off with the promise that when they reached Pinar del Rio they would find “more than 5 000 insurgents” waiting for them with open arms.

Also, he told them that victory was only “a question of days”. Then they would be heroes. They could achieve whatever they wanted: grades in a new army, gambling concessions in the large casinos, supply businesses to the State.

The mercenaries, counting on their good star, loaded up with weapons, ammunition, food and uniforms as if they were going on a safari. Bad weather, fuel shortage and fear of being discovered made them throw everything they had over board.

Fearful of drifting and being caught, they decided to set course for Havana. They invented a story of being “lovers of the Revolution” and “freedom fighters” and, they confidently entered Cuban port.

If there is still doubt of the sick and murderous obsession of Masferrer, suffice it to consult recently declassified documents by the White House, more than 40 years after the assassination of United States president, John F. Kennedy, in Dallas. Those documents reveal that Masferrer met with Kennedy on February 4, 1961 and explained a mercenary invasion plan. He embroidered the exposition with ideas on attacks of public places or assassinations of the main figures of the Revolution, using explosives to cause massive deaths.

The fanaticism of Masferrer was so evident that Kennedy, somewhat concerned asked J. Edgar Hoover, FBI boss, for information on this man.

But intuition failed the President. The assassin was much more audacious than what he thought. In less than two years after the interview, during a presidential tour of Dallas, an assassin's bullet killed Kennedy. Among the names being considered during the investigation of the conspiracy —were Santos Traficante and Masferrer, as well as old buddy and former senator, supporter of Batista, Eladio del Valle.

Chauncey Holt, a CIA Mafia agent, witness of the conspiracy against Kennedy, revealed, in a book on the subject, that he was in charge, with other persons, of falsifying a series of documents. Lee Harvey Oswald who was blamed for shooting the President used some of these.

Holt also explained in his book that among the people involved in the operation were Masferrer and Del Valle, whose objective was to find some connection between the assassination and the Cuban revolutionaries to denounce the action as supported by the Island and provoke a direct military confrontation.

A few years later, in January, 1967, the United States government arrested more than 70 persons involved in an expedition to invade Haiti. These were Haitians, Cuban exiles and soldiers of fortune who wanted to take over the Caribbean nation and use it as a base of operations against Cuba. Among those arrested was Rolando Masferrer Rojas.

Investigations, however, revealed a much more scandalous truth. The core of all this was a wide network of traffic of persons set up by Masferrer and other henchmen who charged great sums, conning the Haitians who wanted to emigrate to their golden dream of the United States and, who were later abandoned in Caribbean keys.

Project Nassau, a complete scandal of the epoch, sent Masferrer behind bars for a short time. The constant services done for the CIA, the attempts to assassinate Fidel and the fact that he was one of the most well known “hard line” counterrevolutionaries made him too valuable to lose.

The “former-Tigre” soon appeared in public. The CIA shrouded a kind veil over his foul activities or his suspected ties to a budding drug trafficking. However, his “good star” would not last long. The experts against Cuba already foresaw that a change of figure in the wasted leadership of the terrorist bands in Miami and the showing off of Masferrer was beginning to be a hindrance

## **The tiger of the hyenas**

—What the hell have you gotten into!?

The shout shook Iggy and he shook down his spine to his heels and his tongue got tangled up. His hands instinctively dropped the C-4 and fuse while he tried to squirm to the other side of the car.

Two good kicks on his ribs rid him of the little air he had and the hopes of “getting off”. The stomach of Ignacio Novo



Sampoll, the “little brother” of Guillermo, loosened and not precisely from the pain of the blows.

Novo Sampoll knew it well. Going against Masferrer was a sure shot in the head or disappearing forever in the Everglades, the swamplands of Florida.

The bodyguards of the counterrevolutionary chief dragged Iggy to the offices. There they continued to kick and punch him all over. At the end, since he continued to refuse to talk, they played the “drowning man” with him.

This old method of torture the band of Masferrer learned during the repression in the days of Batista was to put a person’s head into water to the point of suffocation. When it became evident that the subject would die they pulled him out to continue interrogations. This was repeated over and over again until the victim talked or died.

Although a large bucket was not available they used the toilet in the office. There, Iggy had to savor the contents of the toilet that Masferrer used.

FBI agents, Scherrer and Carter Cornick, who investigated the assassination of former Chilean chancellor, Orlando Letier on September 21 in Washington, in which the Novo Sampoll brothers were involved, affirm that the actions occurred during the early fall of 1975.

This time, the big bullies, apparently after getting a confession out of Iggy about who had ordered putting a bomb in the car of Masferrer they stripped him and left him in an alley thinking that they had scared him for life.

Who did Ignacio Novo Sampoll betray during the hours of that “experience”? Did he learn the lesson? Was it chance that, year later, in June of 1967, Ignacio and Guillermo were sentenced by New Jersey courts to two years of conditional liberty for having explosives? How strange that Letelier’s car was blown up precisely with C-4 placed in his car? Isn’t it too much of a coincidence that Michael Townley, agent of the Chilean National Intelligence Direction (DINA) who recruited Novo for the attack on the life of Letelier, gave them C-4 for the action because “they had used it before? Was it chance that the two methods were the same? Who wanted Masferrer dead?

The former senator of the eastern provinces had a broad spectrum of enemies. From the small business people of Miami, constantly suffering extortion, his old comrades in the trafficking of Haitians, or drug business, even “personalities” of the counterrevolution that considered him a danger to their plans. There were many who wanted to see his head roll ... or explode.

Found among this group were Jorge Más Canosa and Luis Posada Carriles, and the Novo Sampoll brothers. Although most émigrés knew that the bragging of the former senator was a front for his shady dealings, slogans and promises of dealing blows against Cuba, Masferrer interfered with the plans of a “united counterrevolutionary group”.

Also, in his newspaper he slammed the idea of joining all the bands opposing the Revolution and directly attacked the main figures of the Committee of United Revolutionary Organizations (CORU), a group that would be responsible for monstrous terrorist actions such as blowing up a civilian plane in flight, in Barbados in 1976. There was no political reason for this “opposition” by the well-known scourge. He simply did not want to lose out on the piece of cake. But Masferrer made an error in his calculations.

CORU, as much as it tried to demonstrate the opposite, was a CIA creature. The Novo Sampolls and Posada Carriles also. Even Mas Canosa, by orders of the agency, used CORU, to form the Cuban American National Foundation, very much linked to the Díaz Balart, especially Lincoln.

Masferrer, former senator of the Batista dictatorship, confessed assassin of many times, the man who plotted against Kennedy, sworn enemy of Fidel and the Revolution, had become an obstacle to the hyenas of Miami, for its own gang.

On the morning of October 31, 1975, when Rolando Masferrer left his house and put the key in the ignition of his car, the Tigre was blown to bits by a C-4 bomb.

Through communications collected of the five accused, witness DEBBIE McMULLEN, investigator for the Public Defense Office presented the true reason of their activities in Miami: control and monitoring of terrorist activities against Cuba ongoing in that city.

–Operation Morena. To monitor the terrorist activities of ROBERTO MARTIN PEREZ, top official of CANF.

–Operation Paradise. In relation to plans of the National Democratic Unity Party (PUND) and CANF to burry weapons in the Bahamas that would later be collected to be used against Cuba.

–Boats in Miami river being prepared to carry explosives to Cuba and the proposal of the accused GERARDO HERNANEZ, of passing the information to the FBI through an anonymous call.

Transcript of testimony  
DEBBIE McMULLEN

*Most Cuban Americans who continue to be active against Cuba, 40 years later, are well known by United States security because they belonged to them and learned management of technical means and work methods.*

Fernando González Llorc

## **List of other well-known henchmen of the Batista dictatorship who found refuge in the United States**

### **Jesús Blanco Hernández**

Former commandant of the War Navy of the tyranny. He is mentioned a cable that the Cuban Ministry of State sent to the Washington embassy in Cuba, on January 26, 1959, requesting that the corresponding authorities in the United States, detain him provisionally based on knowledge that fugitives of revolutionary justice were in the McAllen Immigration Center, Texas. There is also a diplomatic note that the Cuban chargé d'affaires in Washington sent to the U.S. State Secretary on January 27, 1959. The US. government did not honor the request of extradition.

Information reported in the first special issues of Bohemia magazine in 1959, in the section "Gallery of Assassins" reports: "Commandant Blanco was a 'buddy' of Laurent in his crimes. In the Chorrera naval command post he offered the fort to torture those who fell in his hands. The Blanco-Laurent association delivered blood dividends. Many who were taken to la Chorrera have never been heard from again. But commandant Blanco knows. "One day he will have to answer for it."

### **Sotero Delgado Méndez**

Born in 1918. He was a sergeant of the Secret National Police and secret agent of the Presidential Palace. He joined on March 1952.

According to MINREX information: He appears mentioned in a document entitled: "Extradition procedures with the United States under the Extradition Treaty. Between 1959 and September, 1960" notes: "Cause no. 321/57. Marianao Court. Followed for the crime of murdering Dr. Pelayo Cuervo Navarro. The Petition and corresponding Place Testimonial and instructions to the Cuban ambassador In Washington were sent on May 27, 1959. The embassy sent all these documents to the U.S. Advisory Office where, also like the case of Masferrer only blocking the extradition procedures, inconceivably alleging that 'this Pelayo was involved in political issues.'

"On January 18, our government cabled its criteria of following through with the extradition demands legally and without any possibility of delay. The Miami Consulate received the order of prompting this extradition, dated March 23." In this Cause and same note on extradition the following names are listed: Orlando Piedra Negueruela, Mariano Faget Díaz and Rafael M. A. Gutiérrez Martínez, henchmen who fled Cuba. The United States government did not honor the request of extradition of these assassins.

## **Mariano Faget Díaz**

Former commandant, head of BRAC and man of FBI confidence in Cuba.

MINREX Information: Mentioned in the document entitled: "Extradition procedures with the United States in relation to the Extradition Treaty, dated April 6, 1904, between January 1959 and September 1960" that points out: "Cause no. 321/57, Marianao Court, presented for the assassination of Dr. Pelayo Cuervo Navarro. The Petition and corresponding Place Testimonial and instructions to the Cuban ambassador In Washington were delivered in May 27, 1959".

## **Armentino Feria Pérez**

A henchman who fled Cuba and later joined counterrevolutionary activities against Cuba.

He appears mentioned in the diplomatic note of January 12, 1959 sent by the Cuban State Ministry to the U.S. embassy, as one of the persons who arrived in the United States and who had committed different and very serious common crimes that competent courts should rule on and requests U.S. authorities to detain him until the extradition demand is honored. The U.S. government did not answer.

Former member of the Masferrer “Tigres”, well known for its series of assassinations in Manzanillo, Sagua de Tánamo and Santiago de Cuba. He fled Cuba after the triumph of the Revolution. On October 4, 1960 in charge of 25 men, including 4 U.S. citizens infiltrated the country through Bahía de Navas in Baracoa, in the east, to form an insurgent front in the mountains. Armentino was killed in the action and the rest of the group were captured and sentenced by the revolutionary courts.

## **Pilar Danilo García García**

On June 10, 1952, he was promoted to colonel. On March 20, 1958 he was named head of the national police. On August 10, 1958 he was promoted to brigade General of the Army. On April 26, 1957 cause 10-957 in TSJG was presented against him for the crime of “murder,” paragraph 28, O.E. 44 s.c. EME.

AP reported from Miami on April 1, 1959 that U.S. Immigration and Naturalization authorities have considered the request of remaining in the United States by several persons of the overthrown Batista dictatorship, including Pilar García.

Information in the first special numbers of Bohemia magazine in 1959, in its section “Gallery of Assassins,” it points out that he had the name of a woman but a soul of a murderer. He was retired and returned to Army rank to inflict dishonor to his uniform. In Matanzas he wrote pages of terror and implanted what he called “the García method,” that was plainly and simply

shooting in the back. Placed in the headquarters of the national police he terrorized Havana and, during the failed national general strike he gave orders that shook his own men. “Don’t ask me anything...” “K”, “K” he kept repeating that meant they had to kill prisoners captured by the police.

## **Julio Stelio Laurent Rodríguez**

Enlisted in the general command as an ensign.

Information in the first special issues of Bohemia in 1959, in the section “Gallery of Assassins”. At the foot of his photograph it reads: “Officer of Navy Intelligence. Among his many victims is captain Jorge Agostini. It would take pages to list all his victims. Sent for operations in Oriente (eastern province) he killed defenseless prisoners and sowed terror and death. At the end, he took victims to his center of operations La Chorrera Castle”. He tortured and killed Lidia Doce and Clodomira Acosta Ferrals.

MINREX Information: He is mentioned in the diplomatic notes that Cuban State Ministry delivered to the U.S. government on January 9, 1959 requesting his detention as well as for Rolando Masferrer until extradition could be formalized, regarding their crimes in Cuba.

Laurent is also mentioned in cables of January 26, 1959 by the Cuban State Ministry to the Washington embassy that states: “request the corresponding United States authorities to provisionally detain the fugitives from justice held in the McAllen Immigration Center in Texas, that includes S. Laurent Rodriguez.

Also mentioned in a diplomatic note of October 21, 1959 sent by the State Ministry to the U.S. embassy which states: “the request for extradition of the Cuban citizen, Julio Stelio Laurent Rodriguez, accused of crimes of murder including legal documents and their translation.

## **Raimundo Masferrer Rojas**

Raimundo was the brother of assassin Rolando Masferrer and member of his corps of criminals.



MINREX Information: He is mentioned in the diplomatic note of January 12, 1959 sent by the Cuban State Ministry to the U.S. embassy, as one of the individuals who arrived in the United States and who committed different serious common crimes that should be put before the courts and request U.S. authorities to detain him until the demand for extradition can be presented.

### **Andres Paseiro Cervantes**

Born in Moron, Camaguey. Brother-in-law of Rolando Masferrer and member of “los Tigres.” He was a candidate for representatives of the Cuban Union Party that was simply a ploy of Masferrer to have an unconditional representative. He has a brother named Alfredo Paseiro, man of confidence of Masferrer, both members of the “tigres” who fled Cuba with him.

He is mentioned in the diplomatic note of January 12, 1959 sent by the Cuban State Ministry to the U.S. embassy as one of the individuals who arrived in the United States and who committed different and serious common crimes. The note also requests U.S. authorities to detain him until the extradition demand is processed.

### **Oscar T. Pedraja Padrón**

Former commandant of the Batista army. He ordered the assassination of the Saíz Montes de Oca brothers in Pinar del Rio.

### **José Eleuterio Pedraza Cabrera**

Date in the army personal file. Born on April 18, 1903 in Esperanza, Santa Clara, Las Villas. He enrolled in the army on May 9, 1919. On December 4, 1939 he was promoted to head the army, a post he resigned on February 3, 1941.

He left the country in December 31, 1958. He immediately joined dictator Trujillo in his activities against Cuba. He was

head of the Trujillo Conspiracy. Later he planned to blow up an oil tanker in Havana Bay, send planes to burn sugar cane crops and planned the bombing what was the Shell refinery in Guanabacoa.

Information in the first special issues of Bohemia magazine in 1959 in the section “Gallery of Assassins”, that reports: “He belonged to September 4. On March 10 he was out of uniform enjoying the millions robbed from the public treasury. He had lands, houses, and cattle. But in his ranches in Villa Clara JEP continued to be a despot who didn’t release his whip; he oppressed and mistreated the campesinos. Towards the end of the regime he killed ten for the death of a son and killed everyone he found in his way. When the scattering began, he dressed his military uniform and applied his methods of horror and death [...]”

He is mentioned in the MINREX document entitled: “Extradition procedures with the United States, between January 1959 and September 1950” that notes: The Ministry, learning of the entry of Pedraza to the United States, although with not much hope, could ask for his extradition and sent a letter to the current District Attorney of the Supreme Court requesting a rapid action of the Courts to honor the causes of denunciations to send it to the corresponding Petition and Place Testimonial. The District Attorney answers he is acting according to our Ministry request in Cause no. 3821/59, Instruction 4 in which Pedraza appears accused of crimes of Ayestaran. In March 19 the ministry instructs our embassy in Washington to request U.S. authorities to provisionally detain Pedraza until an extradition demand is presented.”

## **Orlando Eleno Piedra Negueruela**

Born on December 18, 1917 in San Antonio de los Baños, La Habana. On February 4, 1941 he enrolled as a security guard in the national police and on November 21, 1944 he was discharged. It seems that his return to the police occurred in 1952. On May 7, that same year, he was promoted to captain by Presidential Decree no.1072. That same day, with decree numbers 1073 and 1074 he is promoted to commandant and

lieutenant colonel. On May 9 he is assigned as inspector of the Bureau of Investigations.

### **Pedro Humberto Reyes Bellos**

A henchman who fled Cuba, he signed up for the mercenary invasion. Information revealed in *History of an aggression*, p.43, August 1962, Venceremos publishing house he is “accused of many assassinations and torture committed in Las Tunas, Oriente. He was sentenced to 30 years in jail”.

### **Antonio Peón Rojas Masferrer**

He is the cousin of Rolando Masferrer, head of the “tigres” in Las Tunas. MINREX information: He is mentioned in the diplomatic note of January 20, 1959 to the U.S. embassy “as one of the fugitives from revolutionary justice in Cuba accused of different and serious common crimes, as seen by competent courts. He was held in the United States where he had arrived. Request was made to keep him detained until extradition procedures could be made according to the Treaty of Extradition in force between Cuba and the United States and to be preventively arrested until that time.” The U.S. government never honored the extradition request.

### **José María Salas Cañizares**

Former colonel. He was posted in Holguín together with another assassin, Ugalde Carillo. He was in Santiago de Cuba when Frank País was killed. Information of the first special issues of *Bohemia* magazine in 1959, in the section “Gallery of Assassins” notes that: Like Tabernilla, Salas Cañizares won stars and command posts for his brothers. In this manner José María Salas Cañizares became lieutenant colonel of the army. But he did not need the protective cloak of his general brother. He had the soul of a killer and under the Batista regime, these were the

ones promoted. He committed his largest crimes in Santiago de Cuba where he was named military supervisor. There he beat, tortured, killed [...]"

### **Merob Sosa García**

Born on December 1, 1920. Former commandant of the Batista Army

According to declassified information of the United States government he was one of the henchmen who testified against the Revolution in a U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security in 1959.

He was a leader of the counterrevolutionary organization, La Rosa Blanca with Díaz Balart. He gathered around him the majority of the fugitives and assassins of the Batista dictatorship.

### **Carlos M. Tabernilla Palmero**

Former colonel, aviation pilot, head of the Air Force. He was one of the henchmen who testified against the Revolution in the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security during the mid 1959.

In the United States he was a member of the counterrevolutionary organization, Brothers to the Rescue that has participated in the fleets along the Cuban coasts.

In the first special issues of Bohemia magazine in 1959, in the section "Gallery of Assassins", it states: "Son of 'old Pancho' he became head of the Air Force of the army. One as head, another in tanks, another in the Air Force; the Tabernillas distributed posts in the army as if it were a family affair. And CTP, obedient of the criminal orders of Batista bombed campesinos in the Sierra who lost their lives and possessions. He also sent them to release fly leaves with messages of death over defenseless cities; over Cienfuegos that rose up; over Santa Clara that they couldn't hold on to. They, the Tabernillas as the Salas Cañizares are all war criminals."

## **Manuel Antonio Bartolomé Ugalde Carrillo**

Date from his personal file in the Army. Born on June 13, 1919 in Rodas, Las Villas. He enters the army on September 3, 1941 as a soldier. Former head of SIM.

In the United States he maintained strong ties with terrorist organizations in actions against Cuba. In the first special issues of Bohemia magazine in 1959, the section “Gallery of Assassins” notes: “He was one of the most notorious assassins of the regime. His passage along the prison of the Isle of Pines and different military commands was known for that: because he planted death and torture there [...]”.



## **Andrés Nazario Sargén: “There will be deeds of blood”**

Pedro de la Hoz

### **Rat’s nest**

The central office of Alpha 66 in Miami is not what it seems. It’s décor offers the false impression that deals with the resentment of what could have been and was not. Busts of José Martí and Antonio Maceo and a faded Cuban flag seemed to rekindle feelings of patriotism. A map of the island exhibits the tattoos of an obsession: liberated zones, landing points, vindictive operations. On the walls, photos of the living and dead, of celebrations and funerals.

A few steps from this modest office on Flager Street is the Plaza of Cubanism. Dominos are played nearby; the large chip is thrown down with a sigh. Tamales, buñuelos (cassava fritters), Pilon coffee, cigars rolled in Santo Domingo, guayaberas and two tone shoes. Comments on the last tirade of Pérez Roura and the next one by María Elvira Salazar. With romance print a poster announces elections to head the country and competes with a mass for the liberation of Cuba that will be held in the Caridad shrine.

A writer for the digital version of Encuentro magazine looks on the headquarters of Alpha 66 anxious to earn his food with a chronicle about the scene. A salary paid from the chest of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), from USAID or

the Cuban Hispanic Foundation, in addition to the wishes of the editors, lends his prose to draw a patina that hides the true colors of what has been cooked up for years. He almost feels sorrow for these “middle aged soldiers with stick rifles that amuses passing tourists” at the door of the office. Anyone could believe that Alpha 66 is only a “piece of Cuban nostalgia and a piece of Miami folklore”.

This is helped by descriptions of the “old people behind the desk” who serve a bit of coffee and dress army fatigues with conviction. A bit of epic story is not a bad scene: “They are — the reporter writes— the last Cubans who took up arms against Fidel Castro. Real life museum pieces, live relics of a time that believed in armed struggle”.<sup>1</sup>

The stage is set and so Alpha 66, according to sad readings, is a dead and heroic past.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Alpha 66 can be found in the Directory of the so-called “hard-line” organizations, active in subversion of a legitimate government in the island sharing space and breathing the same air of the Cuban American National Foundation, the Council for a Free Cuba, Independent and Democratic Cuba, Commandos L, Marti Commandos MRD, Omega —renamed as the National Cuban Commission— Patriotic Cuban Summit, Ex Club and other species of the same genus.

Heading the organization is a man who is the epitome of hatred and delirium of what many call the Miami anti Castro Industry, and with reason. Medium height, feline movements, and aquiline nose in the middle of a face of sharp angles. The years haven't harmed the anatomy of one who has enjoyed the excesses of a pleasurable life. Behind the heavy gold plated eyeglasses, restless and fierce eyes that denote impatience. His fiery discourse is fed with the fuel of demagoguery. He calculates and recycles subjects of the electoral machinery of old neo-colonial times of the republic.

His name is Andrés Nazario Sargén (at times written Sargent). He is the capo of Alpha 66 and assuredly he has nothing to do

<sup>1</sup> Néstor Díaz de Villegas: “Con la fe en las armas”, *Encuentro en la Red*. June 10, 2003. [www.cubaencuentro.com](http://www.cubaencuentro.com).



with folklore, or nostalgia and much less with the profile of a combatant who faces and defends ideals.

He is simply and clearly a terrorist.

## **A bandit is born**

The wheeling and dealings of Nazario began many years ago. Born in the central region of the island, his file of banditry —let us call things by their name— was accredited in the former Las Villas province throughout the year before the fall of the Batista dictatorship.

With solid ties to the old policy of the rural large land owners who played at sharing out of benefits on the electoral roulette, the March 10, 1952 takeover left him out of the ruling circle.

His brother Aurelio Nazario Sargén had been a representative of the House for the Cuban Partido del Pueblo (Ortodoxo). He had hopes of getting a seat in the elections that never took place because of the military coup of 1952. In the region of Zaza del Medio, in the current province of Sancti Spiritus, Nazario Sargén enjoyed the influence garnered through those political relationships.

For these men, opposing Batista, as for many others, did not imply a decisive confrontation against crime, corruption and submission but a favorable opportunity to achieve a piece of political power, the bigger the better.

With these incentives, Andrés Nazario rose up in the Escambray Mountains in 1958, at a time when the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro was in the Sierra Maestra and was the main insurreccional focus and whose principle actions was liberation.

The “elite” of the Nazario Sargén forces, the Second Escambray Front behaved in a very peculiar manner. It was led by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo who hoped to set up a form of feudal State under arms, waiting for the war masters who were the cupola of the front to be installed in the country.

They introduced division in the revolutionary ranks, managed the region under large land holding concepts and committed outrages that are not forgotten.

Inhabitants of the mountains gave a name to these personages: beef eaters (comevacas). A just title for a way of life that was a far cry from rebel ethics.

Without having to wage neither combat nor any insurrectional merit, Nazario Sargén named himself commandant. Also commandants were his gang of political buddies, Conrado Rodríguez, Jesús Carreras, a voracious bully and the U.S. citizen, William Morgan.

The guerrilla drive and morale of the columns of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement headed by Comandante Victor Bordón and the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, headed by Faure Chomon disturbed these “leaders” of the Second Front.

Conning and using force, they managed to reach a pact with the Bordón forces through a cover up of false revolutionary unity that aimed to annul the rebel force and disarm its brave men.

The arrival of the Ciro Redondo Invasion Column 8, lead by Ernesto Che Guevara, placed things in their proper place in the Escambray mountains that was in a state of unrest due to the devious second front.

Nazario knew it well. It was not chance that he allied himself to Carreras in writing the disgraceful proclamation that that the column found on their arrival: “Entrance is forbidden to any person who does not belong to the Second Front in its occupied territory. The first will be a warning and if repeated that person will be expelled or exterminated.” Then they sent a letter to Che calling on him to declare what was his position in the Escambray mountains and if the 26<sup>th</sup> of July movement had an agreement with the Popular Socialist Party (communist).

A combatant of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, Julio Chaviano, told a journalist, José Antonio Fulgueiras, in the book, The name of my ideas, that when he went by a camp of the Second Front, he was invited to lunch: “I observed a good number of jeeps and said to myself: How good is the war up here. It was a sumptuous lunch. Fried pork, yellow rice, plantains, and at the end a good coffee and cigars. Menoyo called me apart and began to talk of aggressions of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, of how he had tried unsuccessfully to meet with Che, that they were people of the Directorate and how these people had fooled Bordon. That Che was blind. It

looks like he wants a confrontation between brothers. A lot of garbage".<sup>2</sup>

In the preparation by the revolutionary forces for the decisive campaign in Las Villas and the final victory of the dictatorship, the Second Front was excluded.

On January one, 1959, Nazario went down the Escambray and made his entrance in Cienfuegos. With rounded letters and thick strokes he signed autographs. He was like a commandant of an operetta. Deep inside he toyed with the idea of taking advantage of his guerrilla style that he would garner privileges.

He did not know that the Cuba that was born that day was radically different of yesteryear.

## **Under the cloak of the CIA**

Since the very beginning in 1959, Andrés Nazario Sargén conspired against the victorious Revolution.

The proclamation of the Agrarian Reform Law in May 17 that year was the spark for the decision. Handing over lands to landless campesinos and an end to large land holdings was not in the plans of this man who defended the old status quo.

Relations between the large landowners and the old political classes compromised some and others in early projects of subversion.

Those who knew Nazario Sargén at that time heard him talk of what he considered insane: —“They are fighting with the Americans; they are digging their own graves.”

William Morgan had Nazario up to date on how the United States would not stand by in face of the transformations of social and economic structures that the Island began with revolutionary power.

He knew that the CIA station attached to the United States embassy in Havana had contacts with elements opposed to the course of the Revolution and that the confrontation they sparked did not include a public debate but the use of violence, attacks and sabotage.

<sup>2</sup> José Antonio Fulgueiras: *El nombre de mis ideas*. Ed. Deportes, Havana, 2002, p. 78.

The CIA knew perfectly well who Nazario was, and not only through Morgan, one of its most active elements of the center in the Island. It had placed a U.S. official, John Spirito, in the Second Front since the time in the mountains.

After doing time for his counterrevolutionary activities, Spirito, in an interview by journalist Luis Báez, confessed that he was sent to the Second Front by the CIA to “set up a right wing shock force to counter the left wing tendencies of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement and the Revolutionary Directorate that operated in that region; Morgan was already working in that direction”.<sup>3</sup>

One of the favorite activities of Nazario that first year of the Revolution in power was to block the Agrarian policy. Both in his feudal lands in the plains to the south of Sancti Spiritus as well as in the mountains where he vacationed during the war; he torpedoed the organization of cooperatives and spread the ghost about credit facilities for the coffee growers.

“There was a campesino meeting in October 1959 where people like Nazario planted the seeds of discord,” recalled the veteran journalist who was the editorial chief of the Cienfuegos daily, Roberto González Quesada.

“I’ll never forget” — the journalist recalls—, “Nazario released a rumor that the old communists would annul the Agrarian Reform Law of giving land to those who worked them because communism eliminated private property. That there were immediate plans to apply that measure and that the best way to counter that was cutting at the roots all relations with the authorities and not cooperating with the combatants of the Rebel Army.”

Many of those combatants, in an unprecedented expression of civil duty had joined what was known as Zones of Agricultural Development (ZDA) and built housing and schools.

“Nazario — González recalls —lashed out against the ZDA saying that it was the beginning of dispossession that was being prepared to break up the campesino family. He insisted that there were naïve persons who got taken in with that diatribe of verbal terrorism, but the majority rejected the slander of Nazario.”

<sup>3</sup> Luis Báez: *El mérito es vivir*. Ed. La Bungavilia, Barcelona, 2002, pp. 75-76.

In addition to his old boss, Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, Nazario maintained conspiratorial contacts with Manolo Ray, minister of the first cabinet of the Revolutionary Government.

By the end of 1959, the direction of the Second Front openly committed itself to counterrevolutionary violence, supported by the CIA. Its general staff took active part in operation Red Heart, described by Spirito as an attempt to “search for all kinds of information, boost discontents, set up ties with counterrevolutionary elements, support and finance bandit bands in the Escambray and make geographic and socio-political studies of the different regions of Las Villas province for future infiltrations.”

However, if it meant that they should take up arms, Nazario and the majority of the self-proclaimed officials of the Second Front, they displayed no vocation. Dirty work in the mountains—killing teachers and campesinos, robbing and terrorizing the population—that was work for others.

In a display of sincerity, that is how he spoke of it many years later in an interview granted to the Páginas Cubanas publication in Miami: “Things were getting difficult and we made a decision when they arrested William Morgan and Jesús Cabrera, two commandants of the Escambray Second Front. Then, we were reaching Key West on January 26, 1961 at three in the afternoon. So, we had everything prepared and left in two small yachts. Thirteen members of the organization: four commandants, I was one, and Lázaro Asencio, Menoyo, and Armando Fleitas.”

The United States received us with open arms.

## **The first letter of terror**

Alpha 66 was born in Puerto Rico in 1962. Nazario was not one of its founders. Roberto Vale was one of the founders, a delinquent who had left the country aboard a boat skippered by Tony Cuesta with 250 000 dollars stolen from the Fomento Bank in Las Villas province; Antonio Veciana, recruited by the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro during an event where the leader of the Revolution was to appear, in the northern terrace of the

Presidential Palace and Cuesta, himself, who would have a long list of terrorist actions both in Alpha 66 as well as in Comandos L after a split over protagonism.

Since the Second Front had lost credibility in the anti-Castro industry in Florida its chiefs rapidly joined Alpha 66, sponsored by the CIA. Nazario seconded the fusion and placed his best demagoguery to present the organization as a form of “final solution” for the future of the Island.

On October 8, 1962 a heavy blast of gunshot destroyed the façade of the locality occupied by the Section of Ports and Airports of the Department of State Security in Isabela de Sagua. Nicolás Salado (alias Colo), Publio Ruiz, Julio Cruz and Zenén Castillo were the authors. They had traveled from Miami to Cay Williams in the Bahamas. In a fast gunboat they crossed to the northern coast of Cuba.

On December 4, fishermen in Juan Francisco beach near Caibarién, commending their toil to Santa Barbara heard the explosion of a grenade and whistling of bullets from automatic weapons near the coast. The 17-foot boat piloted by Colo, this time in the company of Cecilio Vázquez, José Casanovas and Ramón Quesada, took off due North.

In the distribution of tasks assigned by the CIA to each counterrevolutionary organization based in the United States, Alpha 66 was in charge of sea piracy.

The renewed actions of kill and flee on March 17, 1963, this time was against the Soviet ship, Lvov, docked at the port of Isabela. One of the shots hit the chimney and another destroyed one of the ship’s ventilation shafts.

Days later, on March 26, another Soviet ship, the Baku, was victim of another attack. This time the damage was greater. They not only bombed and machine gunned it with 30 and 50 millimeter shells but sabotaged it with 70 pounds of explosives that ripped open a four by half meter gash along the flotation line.

Veciana and Nazario bragged of the cowardly attack in a public event that gathered dozens of fierce buddies. They made statements to the press. Nazario shouted more than Veciana when he showed a flag and several rifles, allegedly captured from “the Russian scoundrels who help the Castro’s communist

militias.” The flag had been bought in a Miami shop and the weapons were property of Alpha 66.

Cuba denounced the U.S. government for this vandalism and Moscow officially protested to Washington for its complicity with the terrorists. The Kennedy administration, fearful of an international scandal and annoyed by the frenzied propaganda of his protégées who even had the effrontery of getting several pages in Life Magazine, pulled in his dirty laundry: He ordered the FBI to pull the ears of the Alpha chiefs. “They held us for a few hours —Cuesta, of direct responsibility later declares —and the next day we were out. They only confiscated heavy weapons. Weeks later, and by different ways, we had the weapons again”.<sup>4</sup>

### **Earning points at a distance**

Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo was captured in Cuba in January of 1965 trying to infiltrate with a band under the vain illusion of finding popular support for his actions. This was a hard blow for Alpha 66 ...and a good opportunity for Andrés Nazario Sargén who, bold as brass, took over the organization for about three years.

Nazario needed to gain points in relation to his subordinates and the United States government. That is why he thought of one of the darkest episodes of Alpha 66: the Julio César Ramírez affair.

He wanted and needed a martyr, someone to show off like a banner. For this purpose he prepared a false insurrectional expedition.

On January 7, 1970, a group of men departed from southern Florida in two fast boats to Cuban coasts. Heading the action was an individual that had become the criminal right hand man of Nazario: Vicente Méndez, Guajiro Méndez or Cente as he was also called.

The inhabitants of Cuatro Vientos and Cordobanal remembered him from the days of the Second Front in the mountains in the central region of the country, because of his fierce manners and raging rudeness.

<sup>4</sup> Luis Báez: Op. cit., p. 116.

Like many of his buddies in the Escambray, he gained his captain stripes due to his servility towards the self proclaimed commandants and his capacity to plant fear in the civilian population.

Among the members of the group was Julio César Ramírez. He was suspected to be an agent of Cuban Intelligence. In face of repeated failures not only of actions planned by his organization but others that wanted to benefit from the counterrevolution in Miami, Nazario saw G-2 officers even in his soup.

Approaching the Guantanamo coast, Vicente Méndez and his henchmen faked the sinking of the boat to drown Ramírez also known as el Bayamés. The other boat with another of Nazario's henchman picked up the Méndez group.

All immediately received assistance from U.S. personnel in the Guantanamo Naval Base. Five days later they were in the United States where they said that Ramírez had drowned trying to reach the coasts of the island to renew the fight for freedom.

Nazario spoke of the heroism of the Bayamés and shouted his constant battle cry: "The hour of Castro is near." The only near hours, in truth had been those of Ramírez whose luck, known later, became vox populi in the lying counterrevolutionary habitats of Miami. His demise was decided before hand by the higher ups of Alpha 66.

What Guajiro Méndez could not suspect was that his life also was soon to end. He had become wrapped up in the idea that the Cuban Revolution had to cease to exist as soon as possible and Nazario sent him off to another adventure.

He thought that those months of 1970 were the right time to plant terror and disorientation among the inhabitants of that eastern region of the Island. He counted on the fact that the Revolutionary Armed Forces were partially demobilized due to the enormous efforts of the nation in the sugar cane crop, the largest of Cuban history.

On April 16, at the head of 12 men armed with modern automatic rifles, Méndez infiltrated along Punto Silencio, a few kilometers from Maisí, near the mouth of the Yumurí river.

Soon, coast guard troops detected the landing and confronted them. The bandits were followed and surrounded.



On April 18, Vicente Méndez died of bullet wounds. Two other members of the band were wounded and captured. The rest of the group fled but could not reach the mountains. The last was captured on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Lieutenant Ramón Guerra Montano, soldier Luis de la Rosa Collamo, and the militiamen José Antonio Sánchez Marzo, Ovidio Hernández Matos and Evedino Marzo lost their lives defending the homeland.

These victims meant nothing to Nazario. In his terrorist mentality, the best communist he told his friends was a dead communist.

Vicente Méndez, the same as Bayamés, became a stepping-stone for his conceit and profit as the head man in Alpha 66.

## **Kidnapping and frustration**

On Wednesday, May 12, 1970 Cuba awoke upset by full front-page headlines in Granma that read: “Two fishing boats sunk and crew kidnapped by agents of imperialism.”

Eleven peaceful fishermen had left Caibarién on May 2 aboard the vessels Plataforma I and Plataforma IV. They were doing their fishing in international waters in the gulf current when two fast boats coming from the north approached the first.

Pirates of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attackers, with rifles and guns drawn, boarded the fishing vessel and ordered the crew to abandon it. They immediately followed to Plataforma IV and pointed at the crew. A man who held a package of 10 sticks of dynamite, tied together, boarded the first boat.

Plataforma IV was forced to sail to the Bahamas keys. A few minutes later the fishermen heard an explosion and they could see a column of fire that came from sabotaged Plataforma I that soon sunk.

Around four in the afternoon they reached Frances Cay, an island the fishermen did not know. They pushed them out on land. “We are Alpha 66 and you are our prisoners. Whoever moves or tries anything can consider himself dead,” one of the kidnappers shouted.

The Plataforma IV was loaded with explosives. They wanted to sink it rapidly in front of the fishermen to let them know what tragic future was in store for them. The boat flew sky high.

The kidnapers moved the 11 fishermen to Andros Key, also under Bahamas jurisdiction. They were forced ashore to face inhospitable conditions, left them with a little canned food and some bottles of drinking water: gnats took over the night and the cold had no pity for the men who were lightly clad.

After 72 hours when their provisions were spent, a boat appeared in the beach. Dressed in a spick and span campaign uniform, Andrés Nazario Sargén descended and harangued the men: at one point he urged them to give up their homeland and join the anticommunist hordes; another time he threatened them for serving the Castro regime. There were insinuations that the Cuban government had abandoned them to their lot. Accompanying Nazario were press of the Miami counterrevolution who were to dress the cowardly action in bright lights and splendor.

The old gang boss hid that he was about to lose his punch. The mobilization of the Cuban people and the scandal that involved the administration of President Richard Nixon — caught red-handed for sheltering terrorist actions under the cloak of the CIA— frustrated the plans of Alpha 66. In front of what was once the United States embassy in Havana 200 000 Cubans protested for 80 uninterrupted hours demanding the liberation of their compatriots and on May 19 another half a million received them after being finally rescued. It was no secret for anyone how the U.S. government that, at the beginning wanted to wash its hands of the matter, knew full well who were responsible for the kidnapping and who was behind it.

As a symbol of the unbending resistance of the humble fishermen from Caibarién, on the day of their liberation, one showed the people the Cuban flag of the sunken vessels that he had hidden to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Alpha 66 bandits. “This —he exclaimed —they could never and will never kidnap.”

## **Saint Nazario**

Although, after this episode with the fishermen, Alpha 66 was no longer the main cards of the CIA to overthrow the revolution,

the rabble-rouser continued planning terrorist actions and living off his belligerence.

This he carried like a badge in Miami. When an example of a con man in the dirty war against the Revolution, the name of Nazario is one of the first mentioned. Master in the art of passing the hat, of organizing collections, of inventing raffles, all announcing the imminent fall of Castroism. There have been others like him but none better. A Cuban American lawyer, ideologically at the opposite pole of the Cuban revolutionary project but with a realistic view of what has been happening in Miami since 1959 to date, offered this information requesting anonymity: "Among thieves and crooks there had to be a saint: San Nazario. My father believed his promises and gave him several checks. When my father died he came to me, but I always avoided him. He can't catch me with his stories. He is an unscrupulous and dangerous thug."

For the CIA he wasn't expendable material. It is not by chance that he got involved in the sinister net he wove during the official visit of Fidel Castro to the Chile of the United Front.

Nazario himself bragged in an interview given to the journalists Hernán Ospina Calvo, from Colombia, and Katlijn Declercq, from Belgium for their book *Dissidents or mercenaries?* (1998): "The closest we were to killing Fidel was in Chile during 1972. We prepared a gun in a camera and registered one of our men as a journalist. But when the time came he didn't shoot, he preferred to get out. The problem is that to kill Castro is to die and a lot of courage is needed."<sup>5</sup>

There are other assassination attempts by Alpha 66 documented. On July 4, 1981 five members of the organization infiltrated through the Risco Alto region in Matanzas. Heading the group was one of the "commandants" known as Alquizar. Their purpose was to kill the leader of the Cuban Revolution during the 26<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in Bayamo, capital of Granma province.

Two years later, on May 7 1983 two more infiltrators were captured. This time near the Bersagua channel in Encrucijada,

<sup>5</sup> H. Ospina y K. Declercq: *¿Disidentes o mercenarios?*, Ed. Abril, Havana, 1999, p. 134.

Villa Clara. Luis Yáñez Águila and Rogelio Abréu Azcuy, who had an extensive criminal history and who had left for the United States during the Mariel emigration confessed that their main mission was to kill Fidel. In their possession they found high power weapons and Alpha 66 propaganda.

One of those in charge of following Nazario's criminal orders was Armando Valdés Mercadé, second chief in charge of Alpha 66 Naval Operations.

I knew — Valdés explained— of the “infiltration plans of Cuba from the United States to kill leaders and attack the national economy. I participated in intimidating persons who travel to our country and in military training in Miami [...]. I was part of the crew of the so-called Victoria command, in charge of shooting up tourist installations in Varadero and leaving explosives along the coast, with subversive propaganda.”

“The United States Coast Guard —he pointed out— was well aware of it. When we prepared to leave they inspected us and, although the weapons we had on board were in view, they merely asked if we were going to kill Castro. On our return they gave us a 20 dollar fine for not having gone through customs.”

The witness revealed the complicity of the US agencies with Miami terrorism:

“I was visited by an FBI agent —he said— who tried to recruit me to work for Alpha 66 and explained that they were fully aware of all the operations against Cuba but wanted another form of confirmation from me. Alpha 66 had a radio plant that, at the beginning, transmitted from their offices and later, when they were fined for interfering with local stations, they placed it in a van transmitting from different points in the Florida keys. They used the plant to send messages to influence Cuban citizens to commit acts of terrorism and sabotage against the economy. One of their programs explained how to make home made bombs and how sabotage could be done”.<sup>6</sup>

The so-called Victoria command was never successful in its operations. Armando Valdés was, in fact an agent of Cuban Security infiltrated in the high command of Alpha 66. Below is his testimony in the trial hearing of the Lawsuit against the United States of the Cuban people in 2000.

<sup>6</sup> *Granma*, June 10, 2000. Havana, p. 3.

## **Tourists in the cross hairs**

The fall of the Berlin wall, the rebirth of capitalism in the eastern European countries and collapse of the Soviet Union unleashed elation in the Miami Mafia terrorists.

Nazario infused his harangues with new energy. “The final hour of Castro has come. He just needs the final push.”

He again threw his dice of terror on the table. Objective: the Cuban tourism industry that, during the 90s first became one of the pillars of resistance and then recovery of the economy of an island Washington wanted to stifle.

Three times, with merely a few months apart, the Alpha 66 gang left U.S. territory due south to the northern coast of Cuba to machine gun tourism installations.

The dates were February 6, October 6, 1994 and May 20, 1995 against the same targets: the new recently built hotels in Cayo Coco in the north of Ciego de Avila.

Previously, since 1991, several reports of Miami radio stations informed that Alpha 66 was intensifying its recruitment of mercenaries.

Fidel continued to be Nazario’s obsession that was also an obsession of the Cuban American National Foundation gang, the powerful Mafia lobby that, since Reagan, had a monopoly on the counterrevolutionary industry of southern Florida.

The organic bond between Nazario and Roberto Martín Pérez was not a mere coincidence. Martín Pérez was head of the CANF paramilitary branch and is who gave Nazario thousands of dollars to support the attempt to assassinate the Cuban President during the VII Ibero American Summit of Heads of State in the Venezuelan island of Margarita.

A vessel was captured on April 26, 2001, attempting to infiltrate the northern coast of Cuba. Its crew were Ihosvani Suris de la Torre, 27 years of age; Máximo Pradera Valdés, 57, y Santiago Padrón Quintero, 52, all U.S. residents. They had four Rumanian AK 47 rifles, a long range M-3 rifle with telescopic lens and silencer, three pistols, ammunition and several wads of dollars. During the investigation they confessed being members of Alpha 66 and Comando F4. In Miami Nazario declared that two were active members of his group.

At the time there was an incident in Havana that, once again, confirmed the low moral caliber and terrorist affiliation of Nazario and the Alpha 66 gang: The Mexican ambassador to Cuba began to receive threatening letters.

During an operation of State Security in February 17, 2001, the author of the anonymous letters was arrested: Elizardo Sampedro. He declared being a member of Alpha 66 in Havana and of following instructions of Antonio Tang Báez one of Nazario's acolytes in Canada.

## **Due south and conclusion**

The Rumbo Sur (Due South) camp in Miami trains violence and organization to commit crimes. This has been Nazario's will. Surrounded by wire fences and in addition to the barracks, the terrain has a military training polygon, informed for years by U.S. and European television reporters, demonstrates a feverish military activity.

Nazario and Alpha 66 do not hide. The FBI, CIA and the rest of the U.S. intelligence community and local authorities know that sabotages, attacks and other terrorist actions against Cuba are hatched in Rumbo Sur.

In the book by journalists Ospina and Declercq, the impunity of Nazario was demonstrated when they questioned him in the following terms: "You have trained near Miami with real weapons, real ammunition, campaign fatigues. In other words you count on the complicity of Washington." Quoting Nazario he answered: "But this is legal! We act according to U.S. law".<sup>7</sup>

This protection is demonstrated in the evident manner on how this somebody and his collaborators act. They were allowed to march in Veteran's Day showing off their weapons and declaring the terrorism purposes to the mass media.

Unbelievable, but true, they have not lacked the support of some academic institution like Miami University that, in Kouber Center, held the forum of the so-called International Society of

<sup>7</sup> H. Ospina and K. Declercq: Op. cit., p. 135.

Human Rights. A press document circulated in the forum acknowledged: “the performance of personalities and institutions that were standard bearers (of the counterrevolution) are the cases of Radio Martí, of the Diario Las Américas and El Nuevo Herald, of the journalist and Miami commissioner Tomás Regalado; the brothers Calixto Campos, Roberto Bismark, René L. Díaz, Dr. Wilfredo Ventura; congressman, Rafael Díaz Balart; writer Carlos Alberto Montaner, “the constant combatant” Andrés Nazario Sargent [quotes are ours], editor Ángel de Fana, professor Moravia Capó, and the deceased Jorge Mas Canosa and Conrado Rodríguez”.

Nazario died in Miami on October 6, 2004. His obituary in El Nuevo Herald, naturally, considered his death a loss of an “anti-Castro fighter” whose life was completely given to the Cuban cause” according to the words of the former political prisoner, terrorist and founder of Alpha 66 as well as successor of Nazario, Ernesto Díaz Rodríguez. Only a shameless press can publish the following opinion of Díaz about Nazario: “He was one of the most honest and unselfish persons I have ever met and qualified his terrorist activities as an example of “patriotic intransigence, opposed to all forms of dialogue or understanding with the Castro regime.”<sup>8</sup>

In May 2004, in a web page of his group, Nazario wrote: “Alpha 66 does not rest.” To completely understand Nazario’s philosophy of work, here are his own words reported by AP on September 8, 1997, concerning the placing of bombs in Havana hotels. These were planned by terrorist Luis Posada Carrilles and cost the life of a young Italian tourist. While international public opinion condemned the actions, Alpha 66 boss rubbed his hands: “This is just the beginning. There will be more blood events”.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Wilfredo Cancio Isla: “Andrés Nazario Sargén, luchador anticastrista, muere en Miami”, in *El Nuevo Herald*, Miami, October 8, 2004, p.12.

<sup>9</sup> Lázaro Valdés: “Entrevista con Nazario Sargén, jefe de Alpha 66”, [www.semanarioafondo.com](http://www.semanarioafondo.com).





Much before the U.S. terrorist, Timothy Mc Veigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, terrorists of Cuban origin based in the United States efficiently used dynamite, C-4 and other lethal explosives.

*The only alternative is to count on men who —for love of a just cause— would be willing to fulfill, voluntarily, this honorable duty against terrorism. Warn about the danger of aggression.*

Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez

## **Orlando Bosch Ávila: He has hundreds of deaths on his conscience**

*José Antonio Fulgueiras*

Orlando Bosch, like a homicidal hunter brought down and deprived Angelina Valdés of her son who only preached love and tenderness in the heavens.

She received the unbelievable news on the afternoon of October 6, 1976. The person bringing the information knew that she was not going to believe that her Angel would fall like that into the sea because she knew that he could even land on the palm of her hand. Then, with sadness reflected in his face he explained to her:

—Angelina, your mockingbird has been killed in the air.

And Angelina cried inconsolably the loss of her pampered son, that of her daughter-in-law, Marlene González, stewardess in the crew and that of Wilfredo Pérez, captain of the ship and neighborhood friend. And she cried with the other 70 persons who two miles from the Barbados airport disappeared in a skeptical sea after the plane was blown up in flight.

Injustice trembled days later with the vibrant words of Fidel and the indignant tears of the people. Cuba again suffered a terrorist attack encouraged by imperialism. The shameless names of Orlando Bosch, Freddy Lugo, Hernán Ricardo and Luis Posada Carriles spread by word of mouth. However, there was no justice for the criminals. And they have not been called to account for killing 73 defenseless pigeons in the air.

For nine years Angelina has lost control of her legs and speech. In a wheelchair, at 93 years of age, in the little terrace at

the back of the house, links mornings with dusk. Her daughter, Adita, says that in her delirium she looks up at the sky and begins to mumble: Ángel Tomás, come, Ángel Tomás.

This house was always full of joy, above all when the pilot arrived from Havana with his wife and his fun and games.

—He always liked to fool around with mother. When he was a little boy he would hide the shoes in the house and when mother opened the refrigerator she would find them there. She would scold him and he acted as if he knew nothing about it.

—He took her out on the plane several times —Adita says and then explains further— he took her from Cienfuegos to Havana.

—He loved his wife. He was not due to go on this flight since he had just arrived from Spain. But Marlene's birthday was coming up and he asked his friend Wilfredo if he could go as copilot in the flight to be together —she recalls and adds— Felo and he loved each other very much because they grew up together here in Ranchuelo and went to study their career together.

The mother only looks up at the sky and at the lemon tree that already has its lemons. She watched it since the blooms gave way to green and small fruit. The wind sometimes turns into criminal gusts and shakes the branches sending clusters to the floor. Her life was also ripped up when they downed her son outrageously. Like the fruit on the ground she is drying up and losing the color of hope.

No one has the right to harbor a criminal like Orlando Bush, and shroud a family and honest people in mourning.

Seventy five year old Pablo Pérez lives nearby and deplors the death of his nephew, Wilfredo.

—His mother, América was left alone and lives alone. Since the crime she is a living dead woman —he says behind his thick glasses.

Ángel Tomás Rodríguez Valdés and Wilfredo Pérez Pérez were born in Ranchuelo, Villa Clara.

—Ranchuelo is pleased they were born here —says Pedro Pablo.

Angelina no longer watches the television. However, she sharpens here hearing these days when she hears the excited voice of Angel Tomás in the TV broadcast, in the final minutes of the tragic event and, desperately calls to his friend:

—Get close to the water, Felo, get close to the water!

Paradoxically Orlando Bosch Avila was born on August 18, 1926 in the same municipality of Ranchuelo, in the town of San Juan de los Yeras. He is the intellectual author of blowing up a Cuban DC-8 Airlines civilian plane.

Other biographies give the date as 1922 when he was born to inflict evil in the world. Four years more or less is unimportant for any human being. Not for him, capable of ordering or placing more than 100 homicidal bombs in less than 18 months.

The people of San Juan were glad to see him go. “Weeds can grow in any garden but everyone is pleased if the wind rips them off,” explains a veteran campesino who knew him since childhood.

Marta López who saw him born affirms that the boy’s greatest pleasures were crushing butterflies between his hands, drowning lizards in water pails or flying a paper plane to land in the kitchen fire. The child laughed joyously watching the plane slowly turn to ashes.

Neighbors gave him the nickname of Piro, perhaps in premonition of pyromania, a pathological tendency to cause fires and burn innocent persons.

When he went to live in Santa Clara a campesino poet of his generation improvised this verse that is still remembered today:

*And because you are like you are  
Half worm and vampire  
The best thing you have done, Piro  
Was to make yourself scarce.*

Later he studied medicine in Havana and, surprisingly, he became a pediatrician, this predator of flora and fauna.

Héctor Martínez, 57 years of age, goes along the streets of Santa Clara in his wheelchair and when someone stops him he answers an unsolicited question:

—I am an invalid since childhood because of the terrorist Orlando Bosch. And he tells his sad story:

—I was born with crooked legs but I was able to walk. In 1958 when I was 10 I was sent to the Santa Clara hospital because of vomiting and fever. When they were going to send me home, Doctor Bosch offered to operate my feet.

—My father told him: “Look doctor, I can’t operate my son now because I earn very little.”

—This is on us; we are not going to charge a cent —he explained.

Feeling confidence in his words my father agreed. But the operation was false. He tried to straighten my feet with plaster casts because the anesthesia he was given for the operation he used for other wealthy friends.

That plaster affected my bone marrow and left me a total invalid.

On January 1 of 1959 when the Revolution triumphed and Santa Clara was liberated by the troops of Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara, one of his men who was a friend of my father went to my home and saw me crawling in the floor with the feet still in plaster.

Then he asked my old man —Marino, what have they done to your son? —And my father told him the story. When the combatant heard that he told my father to fetch a knife and removed the plaster cast that I had on my feet for nine months.

Then he promised:

—“When we get to Havana I am going to call for him” —and that is what happened. I was put in the San Rafael clinic in Marianao and they operated on my feet. I learned to move with difficulty but the damage was already done and I was never able to walk again. I studied and began to work here since 1970 in the provincial radio station CMHW where I have been for 25 years until I retired on medical referral.

—I don’t know what I would do if I saw Orlando Bosch standing in front of me. Thanks to the Revolution and socialism I am alive and struggling. I am happy in my land and walk with the feet of my human values.”

Orlando Bosch claims to have collaborated with the revolutionary forces that tried to overthrow Batista. And it is true but his total affiliation was with the Escambray Second Front lead by the traitor Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo and also formed by a herd of shit eaters feeding on treachery, disunions and felonies in the massif Escambray Mountains.

There, in that troop he visited and admired “guerrillas” such as the future terrorists Nazario Sargén and William Morgan who came from repressing communists in the United States and later

embraced and broke bread with parricides such as Jesús Carreras, Luis Vargas and Armando Fleites.

Bosch mockingly claimed to be a great friend of Comandante en Jefe, Fidel Castro. He said it everywhere he went and some even believed him. But on January 6, 1959 the Victory Caravan with Fidel at the head stopped in a chalet at the entrance of Santa Clara. Enrique Oltuski, coordinator of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement in Las Villas tells this story:

“We were talking when one of the guards approached and said:

—”There is some one outside called Bosch who insist on coming in.

—”Who? —Fidel asked— Bosch?

—Yes —I answered— Orlando Bosch is a doctor who says he was your friend in the University and collaborated with the movement.

—“That’s not true; he is no friend of mine; he is a gangster and wheeler and dealer when he was a student leader in the University. Get rid of him.”

Seeing himself exposed, this cretin with the face of a rabid pig began to conspire against the newborn Revolution. He strongly opposed sentencing of the criminal of war pilots who bombed Cuban cities during the war of liberation and caused hundreds of human victims.

Then he did an about face and headed to the furious and brutal north and joined the bandits in the Escambray headed by assassins such as Sinesio Walsh and Porfirio Ramírez. Although he only slept around in the camps he self proclaimed himself as one of the top men. He killed a militiaman and stealing a boat arrived triumphantly in the United States with his brother. The man who as a child was a predator later became the greatest terrorists intent on attacking Cuba in over 40 years.

The campesino poet from San Juan when he heard that Bosch had sought refuge in the United States improvised the following verse:

*He arrived there, one who does  
Not agree with homeland and humanity*

*And the Statue of Liberty  
He will paint with shit*

The poet made no mistake. In a few months Orlando Bosch smeared U.S. soil with feces and indecency and went all in for terrorist attacks, for killing persons and destroying objects in and outside of United States territory.

This predator of dreams joined the CIA in 1960 and was quickly taught techniques for assassinations, explosives and other terrorist acts against Cuban interests and nations who traded with the Island. By the wave of a magic wand he was named representative of the Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperación Revolucionaria (MIRR- Insurreccional Movement of Revolutionary Recovery).

To substantiate his post he carried out aerial attacks against civilian targets in urban centers in Cuba such as the Havana Oil refinery, the Chemical Plant of Matanzas and in his city of Santa Clara. He also committed pirate attacks against foreign ships en route to Cuba.

Hundreds of innocent people were felled by that devastating wave of the new massive exterminator, a kind of puppet that hung from the strings of imperialism. But, when the master was accused he momentarily let go of the strings and the puppet with a rabid pig face stumbling around a bit until he managed to latch on again.

In January 17, 1963, he assumed responsibility for dropping NAPALM and live phosphorus against the Niagara central in Pinar del Rio when he told the press in Miami: "If we had the resources Cuba would burn from one end to the other end."

On June 11, 1965, The Miami News published his experience as a terrorist in the past three years as head of MIRR. An article listed the terrorist attacks launched for three years by Orlando Bosch from United States territory as head of that mercenary organization. It also reported that Bosch and five of his men were arrested in Zellwood, Orlando, Tampa, trying to export 18 aerial bombs, without license, from U.S. territory.

The charges were leveled due to violations of federal law that prohibits exporting war material without a license. It was also proved that those arrested intended to bomb the refinery



in Havana. Also occupied were two 50 caliber machine guns, hand machine guns, 230 grenades and 300 pounds of explosives. During the trial Bosch told the press that members of his organization on its route had sabotaged the Cuban ship, Aracelio Iglesias, across the Panama Canal.

World public opinion expected a just and exemplary sentence that would put a halt to the criminal impetus of the predator, but it all ended in a farce with a fine of 7 000 dollars for the group who refused to pay it. Meanwhile, Orlando Bosch closed two files he had pending before Miami courts for similar actions.

During the 60s another newspaper, The Boston Globe, estimated that Bosch was in the same category of the Iraq organization, Abu Nidal, that had participated in the massacre of 900 persons and whose main target was the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Israel.

But Bosch was another kind of rabid dog, let loose and not vaccinated who freely walked the streets of Miami and infected all he found in his wake and smelled of honorable Cuban, regardless the origin of the person.

At the time, in his Miami den, he met Encel Salas, infiltrated agent of Cuban State Security and who acted as military head of ALPHA 66.

—The minute I saw him I had the impression that I was in front of brazen person and a delinquent. He looked like the worse kind of person.

—Aurelio Nazario Sargén presented him to me —He is a CIA agent who does work for us, for ALPHA 66 —he told me. I shook hands with him and he emphasized—: You can count on me for the riskiest and most difficult tasks, I am not afraid of giving my life to see my homeland free.

When he left, Andrés Nazario Sargén, the brother of Aurelio and Carlos Penin commented: Do you know what we call him?

I thought they would have called him the lion or panther, but with an ironic smile they said:

—Here everyone knows him as spider captain —and then explained.

—He went on a mission to Cuba bragging all around and, all of a sudden, there he was in a Bahamas key.

—He told the others to go ahead that he would stay guarding

the rearguard —he ordered the others who, of course, seeing their cowardly boss; they did an about face in the sea and soon returned without having touched Cuban shores.

I saw him again in the home of Saúl González with a group of counterrevolutionaries who celebrated, before hand, a sabotage they were going to carry out in Cuba. I also celebrated: their certain failure for I immediately informed of it and we were able to abort their attack.

His own people spoke poorly of him and considered him an opportunist and a liar who assumed actions he had never done and was simply a coward hidden behind the façade of a bully.

The U.S. journalist, Jay Tallin, said more about him when he wrote:

The success of Bosch has a simple explanation, he fashions himself like a Chicago gangster. If you don't pay he puts a bomb in your office. It's as simple as that ... Bosch is an extortionist, not a patriot. In Miami he is just involved in criminal activities.

Although having been sentenced to long prison terms several times, strangely he leaves the prisons in a short time. This cloak imperialism places on him encouraged him to attack Cuban merchant ships.

Consequently he ordered, prepared and participated in sabotages of the cargo ships Granwood Coma, Lancastrian Prince, Caribbean Venture, flying the British flag, the Spanish ship Coromoto, Polish one Polianca and the Japanese merchant ships Asaka Maru, Mikagesan Maru, among others. He did this so openly that, in 1998, the U.S. Grand Jury had no other choice but to find him guilty and author of terrorist acts against these merchant ships.

He was also accused of signing threatening letters to the press and of carrying out 40 terrorist acts in the Miami area during that year.

For these actions he received an 18 year sentence under five different charges; but on December 15, 1972 he was already out after spending a mere four years in prison.

While on parole he decided to leave the United States in 1974, because he was wanted by the FBI for the murder of another terrorist leader. He violated his parole, settled in the Dominican Republic and organized a coalition that unleashed

a wave of terrorist acts and crimes in seven countries of the continent as well as in Spain and France, and affected trade interests of many countries.

All of a sudden he was in Chile attracted by the howl of the other terrorist wolf, Augusto Pinochet. From his new lair he participated in the attack against General Carlos Pratt, former Defense Minister of the Salvador Allende government. According to his own statements it was the ambassador of the Chilean dictatorship who traveled with him from the Dominican Republic to Santiago de Chile where "I was a guest of the government with all considerations."

He got involved in the Plan Condor, a strategy designed to eliminate anything that seemed "subversive." It was headed by General Augusto Pinochet and involved the governments of the southern cone and was sponsored by Nobel Peace laureate and former U.S. state secretary, Henry Kissinger.

Using the Plan Condor, Bosch planned and did kidnappings, assassinations and disappearance of two Cuban diplomats working in Buenos Aires on August 9, 1976. It was a crime considered by some in Miami as "operation bold", while power divisions and conflicts among the Cuban terrorist groups based in the United States increased. The FBI and CIA found them difficult to control.

Consequently CIA director, George Bush called on Lawrence Sternfiel to group the most belligerent into the Command of United Revolutionary Organizations, CORU. The meeting took place again in the Dominican Republic. Orlando Bosch who was present was named the one in charge. Terrorist activities intensified.

In Washington, on September 21, 1976, a powerful bomb blew up the car with the former Chilean minister of the Salvador Allende government, Orlando Letelier. And there was the hand of Bosch.

A hearing in the Senate on May of 1976 before the sub committee to demonstrate how internal security was administered, authorities of the Florida Security Department appeared. Present were authorities of the Criminal, Terrorism and Security Organizations.

In one of its parts the document reports: "Some groups of Cubans allegedly involved in terrorist acts against the Cuban

government are simply delinquents who feed on funds of the Cuban population and keep the funds they collect.”

Now as head of CORU, this homicidal maniac was intent on destroying airplanes. His first action was against the Cuban Airlines line in Barbados and later against Air Panama in Colombia.

His “most outstanding action” was committed on October 6, 1976 and is known as the crime of Barbados.

In face of the cruelty, nerves betrayed the two material authors. Because of errors committed it was simple to identify, the following day, the two Venezuelan citizens in Trinidad and Tobago. A short time later the planners Orlando Bosch Ávila and Luis Posada Carriles were picked up in Caracas.

Learning of the atrocious action the San Juan poet improvised his third verse:

*Homicide with a flair,  
A real predator  
What flies with love  
He kills in the air.*

The process carried out against the four guilty persons was eventful due to a succession of appeals of the defense. It became an open legal battle between judges and defense lawyers, pressures applied, rarified and politicized ambience. As a result the process passed to military jurisdiction. The judge following the civil trial had to drop it because of death threats. Elio García, president of the Martial Court did not succumb and his son was killed.

The complicity of the CIA lay in wait on the judges. More suspicion was evident when the United States government decided not to give a single phrase of information to the brief on Posada or Bosch. Even a detailed testimony from the Barbadian taxi driver who took the Venezuelans from the airport to the embassy was denied. The same occurred with another taxi driver who took them back to the U.S. embassy at the end of the day.

In February of 1967, Orlando Bosch was released from the Venezuelan prison for “lack of proof”. Although he pleaded not guilty for the bombing of the plane, he never sued for the

years spent in jail. He preferred to return illegally to the United States where he was quickly picked up for violating parole. The following months the office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) received bomb threats for having declared him an “undesirable foreigner”. It was then decided to deport him. In spite of U.S. political pressure 31 countries refused to accept him. The request made by Cuba to extradite him to his country of origin to face charges for the crimes committed was ignored.

Even U.S. legal authorities define him as a real terrorist. The following report speaks for itself:

*U.S. Justice Department*

*Office of the General Attorney*

*General Adjunct*

*Washington D.C. 20530*

**ALIEN NUMBER:** A28851 622 A28851 622

*Re:*

*ORLANDO BOSCH-ÁVILA,  
APPLICANT*

*Inadmissible procedure  
due to article 235,  
paragraph c before  
the interim Assistant  
General Attorney.*

*Decision of the Interim Assistant General Attorney*

#### *INTRODUCTION*

*In fulfillment of my duties as Interim Assistant General Attorney I have re-examined the decision of May 19, 1989 of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regarding the requests made by Orlando Bosch—Ávila to be admitted in the United States and receive asylum. For this new evaluation the decisions of the Regional Commissioner and INS Commissioner presented by Bosch to the Regional Commissioner to impugn the inadmissibility and request an audience regarding his request of asylum as well as confidential and non-confidential information on Bosch.*

*For more than 20 years Bosch has resolutely and with perseverance advocated acts of terrorist violence. He has*

*threatened and done acts of terrorist violence against many objectives, including United States friendly nations and high officials of these nations. Repeatedly he has expressed and demonstrated his wish to cause injury and death indiscriminately. His acts have been those of a terrorist who does not respect the law nor human decency who threatens acts of violence that he does without any consideration of the identities of the victims.*

*The United States cannot tolerate the inherent lack of humanity of terrorism as a means of solving controversies. To give in to those who resort to force simply means to encourage more terrorists. We must consider terrorism as a universal evil even when directed against those who do provoke our political sympathies. As eloquently stated in the U.S. District Court regarding this case” “the evils of terrorism are no less in function of who participate in these acts or their reason”. Emergency Petition of Writ of Habeas Corpus in U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida [Miami], Orlando Bosch Avila vs. Perry Rivkind, District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service. See also “Asunto de Rivero Díaz, 12 & DEc. 475 (BIA, 1967)”.*

*Proof to deny entry*

*[...] Information in archives clearly and unequivocally demonstrate that Bosh, personally, has promoted, encouraged, organized acts of terrorism violence in this country and in others and has participated in them [...]*

#### CONFIDENTIAL

*[...] INFORMATION THAT INDICATED THAT THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB ON OCTOBER 6, 1976 IN A CUBAN AIRLINES FLIGHT HAD BEEN AN OPERATION OF CORU DIRECTED BY BOSCH.*

#### CONCLUSION

*For reasons above mentioned, on the day and date, IT IS ORDERED by the present the non-admission of Orlando Bosch-Ávila and his deportation from the United States.*

*IT IS ORDERED also the rejection of his request for asylum and suspension of deportation according to disposition 8U:S:C 1158 y 1253 h, respectively.*

*January 23, 1989*

*Interim Assistant General Attorney, [signed] Joe D. Whitley*

However, on July 19, 1990 Bosch was released on orders of the United States president against recommendations of the FBI and decision of the Department of Justice based on confidential CIA documents for his expulsion; the very same documents that were denied the Venezuelan authorities years before.

Bosch had written to the INS head in Miami, justifying the attack” “The fact that innocent persons had found death in this action is reprehensible, obeys realities and hypothetical laws of war”.

Currently Orlando Bosch Avil a lives in a luxurious house in Florida. In the afternoons he goes for a walk and feels something pulling on his back. They are bodies, Sir, he confessed to his private psychologist. The Cuban American National Foundation has placed a red halo over his head, painted with the blood of his victims and the rabid pig faced predator walks with satisfaction along the streets of Miami.

The San Juan poet dedicated his last verse:

*He cannot talk of his exploits,  
Nor sleep tranquilly  
He who has hundreds of deaths  
Glued to his eyelashes.*





December 16, 1995. Two persons attempting to infiltrate Cuba for terrorist purposes were arrested in the United States. Although weapons and explosive were occupied, **U.S. authorities set them free.**

January 23, 1996. U.S. authorities intercepted a vessel with three armed terrorists on board when they were on route to Cuba. That same day the **FBI released them.**

November 1996. Channel 23 of Miami television broadcast a live interview of Luis Posada Carrilles and Orlando Bosch. They emphasized their intention to continue their terrorist activities against Cuba.

*[...] we have dedicated our lives to fight against terrorism, to prevent such atrocious act; we have tried to save the lives of innocent human beings not only in Cuba but also in the United States. Today we are in this court room for sentencing precisely for preventing acts such as these. This sentence cannot be more ironic and unjust!*

Ramón Labañino Salazar

## **Guillermo Novo Sampoll: I am not a terrorist!<sup>1</sup>**

*Manuel Hevia Frasquierei*

### **Mr. Bill, an honest furniture salesman**

***Miami, February 1995***

It was during the last days of February. In a small apartment at 2326 South West, 9 Street in Miami, two men carefully prepared hand luggage with articles of terror that they would later bury in a beautiful coastal site In Covarrubias beach near the Punta Mastelero lighthouse in Puerto Padre Bay, in the eastern province of Las Tunas. The two looked at each other in silence. The sweating hands of Santos Armando carefully checked each object. “Twelve electric detonators should be more than enough” —he thought packing the 25 meter detonating wire, the plastic Cosmo Quartz clocks, a global positioning equipment (GPS) and a bulky parcel of low voltage batteries, transformers, adhesive tape, wire clippers and other complementary articles to prepare bombs plus 2 Baikal-Makarov 9mm pistols and their ammunition. This small arsenal only lacked the explosive mass. Mr. Bill promised to deliver it later in a safe place.

José Enríquez Ramírez Oro and Santos Armando Martínez Rueda were childhood neighbors in a humble hamlet of the

<sup>1</sup> This was the shout of Guillermo Novo Sampoll during the preliminary Audience that lead to his arraignment for planning th assassinate President Fidel Castro Ruz during his visit to Panama on November, 2000, *La Prensa Web*, septiembre 6, 2003.

old Delicias sugar mill in Puerto Padre from where they left illegally a little less than a year before aboard a stolen vessel named Luzmey. Since their arrival in Miami, these “refugees” were no different from others, also became cannon fodder for the anti-Cuban Mafia in exchange for promises and money. Guillermo Novo Sampol recruited them personally to infiltrate Cuba. Ramírez Oro described him as a medium height person, white, in his 60s, graying hair cut short parted to the left who wanted to be called Guille or Mister Bill. “That afternoon —he recalls— he told me that everything was well prepared and even proposed to send me to a Central American country for special training...” Weeks later, after a quick training period in urban combat, explosives, intelligence and personal attacks in different parts of Florida, the new commando of the Cuban American Veterans Association (CAVA) was ready. This organization was a front for a secret paramilitary group of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). It was not chance that Guillermo Novo Sampol and Arnaldo Monzón Plasencia —who usually wore sports shirts with the CANF logo embroidered— supplied the money and logistics assured for the operation, including the necessary explosives to unleash a wave of attacks against Cuban tourist installations.

In the early hours of February 27, 1995 Ramírez Oro and Martínez Rueda left the apartment separately. The first visited the Ali-Bar Furniture store —on 3101 NW, 27<sup>th</sup> Ave., Miami, Florida— owned by Novo Sampol. There he picked up a light blue landing raft with a small outboard motor. An hour later the two went to the private home of Novo where they received a smaller auxiliary raft. Novo Sampol gave Martínez Rueda a mobile phone<sup>2</sup> for telephone contact during their future mission in Cuba. Days before this ringleader had given them a Global Position System (GPS). Santos Armando would use this equipment to mark tourist installations as sabotage targets in the country. That afternoon two fast rafts with two 200-horse power outboard motors sailed down the narrow canal of the Miami River towards deeper waters. Visibly nervous, Santos

<sup>2</sup> Cellstar By Nec No.0317111543 celular telephone Guillermo Novo gave to Martínez Rueda maintain contact from Cuba during the second phase of th operation.

Armando and Martínez Rueda were on board. At the same time yacht a property of CANF, took José Enrique Ramírez Oro gripping the bag with light terrorist artifacts. Several armed men who he met for the first time accompanied him. Another vessel intercepted them later in international waters and in few minutes moved to the yacht a plastic tank with 22,12 kg of C-4 plastic explosive classified as high potency breaker for military purposes that would be used against tourist installations in Cuba.<sup>3</sup>

The first stage of the operation took place two days later under cover of the darkness of night. The raft approached the beach silently. The infiltrators advanced a short distance along the sand to mangroves. A short while later they walked to a point near the Puerto Padre lighthouse where Santos Armando buried the explosives and weapons while Ramírez Oro guarded the nearby area with his night vision goggles. Before dawn, the terrorists left Cuban waters towards the point agreed upon with the yacht crew and returned to Miami completely unmolested by U.S. authorities. The two mercenaries again returned to Cuban soil a few days later with false documents through the José Martí International Airport for the purpose of implanting chaos and terror. They appeared to be simple tourists. A few days later they were arrested.<sup>4</sup>

This story is not taken from any film of adventure. It describes an authentic subversive operation carefully organized in Miami during the first quarter of 1995 against a neighboring country by terrorists well known to the CIA and FBI due to their long history of crime. For Guillermo Novo Sampol it was just another action at the service of the anti-Cuban Mafia. But let's leave the U.S. authorities to accredit this story through the declassified operative documents.

<sup>3</sup> These explosives were occupied by Cuban authorities days later.

<sup>4</sup> Declarations of Santos Armando Martínez Rueda and José Enrique Ramírez Oro to the Instruction of State Security after their arrest on March 20, 1995 in Havana.

## **Neo-fascism or Cuban nationalist movement (CNM)**

### ***New York, 1959***

Since 1959 the criminal trajectory of Guillermo Novo Sampol is an eloquent expression of the dirty war waged against our nation. With less than 20 years of age, this orphan of medium height and insignificant appearance who had lived in the Havana barrio of Cerro emigrated in 1954 to the United States with his three brothers. On November 10, 1959, with his brother Ignacio, he joined the ranks of a new fascist type organization founded in New York called the Cuban Nationalist Movement.<sup>5</sup> For many years Guillermo was one of the main ringleaders in New Jersey. The FBI later qualified the CNM as “[...] a rightwing organization that claimed responsibility for acts of violence in the United States and Canada during the mid 60s [...]”. This declassified document identifies the CNM as one of the five groups that joined together on June 11, 1975 to form the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organizations (CORU) «an anti-Castro terrorist umbrella organization» under the direction of Orlando Bosch.<sup>6</sup>

The emigration of Cuban origin during these early years fulfilled an important task in counterrevolutionary strategies that became formally approved as part of the covert actions program of the administration of President D. Eisenhower in March of 1960. It incorporated many like Guillermo Novo Sampol for the dirty war organized against Cuba. These groups were the source of the first terrorist bands created in Miami and New York or that latter formed the future mercenary brigade that began training in Central America and Florida directed by the CIA. In 1961 he dedicated himself entirely in the ranks of the CNM to the new business of counterrevolution. Pickets, disruptions, propaganda actions, provocations or threats against anything that could be considered contrary to the aggressive and isolation

<sup>5</sup> Declassified FBI report, September 11, 1976.

<sup>6</sup> William H. Webster, Director . United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Miami, Florida. Declassified report, August 16, 1978

policy against Cuba. Vandalism and terror against countries or persons in or outside of the United States that maintained trade ties of any type with the Island.

## **The Maria Teresa crime**

### ***Montreal, August 1964***

On August 10 of that year the Cuban merchant ship, *Maria Teresa*, was berthed in pier number 10 in the port of Montreal, Canada. The ship was loaded with food for children and powdered milk en route to Cuba. A violent explosion shook the ship. Considerable material losses. Danger of death for Cuban and Portuguese sailors who were loading the ship. The event shook everyone and revealed the new threat of terrorism born in its own entrails. Canadian authorities demanded an answer to that sinister action and the FBI was forced to keep a watchful eye on Guillermo Novo, one of the ringleaders of the neo-fascist CNM. Six weeks later the FBI interviews Novo in Newark. He denied complicity in the event. But with strong proof pressures continued and the FBI interrogated Novo again months later —on June 17 and August 13, 1965— in which he continued to deny any responsibility in the action.<sup>7</sup> Terrorist actions against Cuba were intense in 1964. Cuban ships, small coastal villages had suffered eight pirate attacks with gunboats. The merchant ship, *Manuel Ascunce Domenech*, was sabotaged and one of its crew killed. The Spanish ship, *Sierra de Aranzazu*, was attacked a few miles from Cuban shores and the Spanish captain and two crewmembers were killed. These terrorist actions all came from bases in U.S. territory or under its control in third countries in the area. Operations were planned in Florida under the direction and support of the CIA.

<sup>7</sup> Declassified FBI report. Summary report of Newark NK 105-19876-3, pp. 13, 17 y 18, respectively.

## **Terror against truths**

### ***New York, December 1964***

Guillermo Novo was tried accused of planning an attack of the UN building on December 11, 1964<sup>8</sup> while Commandant Ernesto Guevara was to speak in the General Assembly. At the time a group of counterrevolutionaries conspired with the CNM concentrated in front of the tall glass and cement building on part of the East River coast to stage a new provocation against Cuba. At 12:10, midday, an explosion was heard and was followed by a 7-meter water column from the river, a short distance from the shore. Later a military mortar<sup>9</sup> was found on the opposite shore with an electronic shooting mechanism. Journalist Mario Kuchilán, from his column “3 Tiempos” in the *Revolución* newspaper, ironically wrote of the action: “[...] Outside a mercenary shot a CIA mortar in the East River that spouted a 21 foot column of water but did not wet the building [...]” In the midst of this environment of aggression, Guillermo Novo who admitted his participation, was arrested on December 23, 1964. In spite of the seriousness of this action and its unforeseeable consequences had the building received an impact, the charges were dropped justifying this violation of justice because the arrested persons declared without the presence of a lawyer.

## **Expert in explosives**

### ***Montreal, Quebec, 1967***

On March 11, 1967 an explosion shook the foundations and shattered glass in doors and windows in the Ruby Foo hotel in

<sup>8</sup> NK 2-111 FBI declassified report. Clasification: secret. 23–24. memorandum Newark 174-792, April 24, 1968

<sup>9</sup> *Revista Bohemia* magazine, December 4, 1964, year 56, number 49, pp. 60 and 61. The article mentions a mortar while the FBI report mentions a bazooka.



Montreal while groups of persons fled down the stairs in panic to the lobby. A few days later, Guillermo Novo, with lowered eyes, hypocritically denied to a federal official any responsibility with the action.<sup>10</sup> This behavior of the FBI was not casual. A few months later, on June 29, 1967, Novo Sampol and other terrorists were arrested in New Jersey when they transported high power plastic explosives. After a rigged trial and although sentenced from one to three years, it was suspended for 2 years of parole and a fine. Novo was already considered one of the most active members of the CNM, directly involved in the violent activities of this organization.<sup>11</sup>

In the morning of October 15, 1967, in a quiet San Miguel neighborhood of the Metropolitan Boulevard in Quebec, Canada, a strong explosion was heard in one of the floors of the Trade Commercial Building. The action affected four floors with offices for trade and administrative activities and panicked hundreds of workers and neighbors. In the police reconstruction of the event it was established that terrorists of Cuban origin had arrived early, went up the elevator to the eighth floor. The ringleader was named Juan José Mas Sarda and drove a white Vaillant Plymouth with a New Jersey license. His mission was to place an explosive charge of 3 blocks of Pentolite and 2 packs of live phosphorus in one of the floors occupied by Cuban Commercial delegation offices. Later comments by Guillermo Novo to an FBI undercover agent corroborated that the terrorist command had made a mistake since the Cuban offices were on the twelfth floor.

According to a report of the federal agencies, days before the explosion the Novo brothers left in their car during the early morning going to a farm in the outskirts of New Jersey, property of one of the command members who received money for expenses for the transportation operation and stay in Canada, as well as a large explosive charge and live phosphorus to make bombs and incendiary devices that would be used against the Cuban offices in Quebec and the Cuban Pavilion in Expo-67

<sup>10</sup> Declassified FBI report. To: Director FBI, (2-2003) from: SAC Newark (2-114) (P), October 14 1969. Interviewed on April 7, 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Declassified FBI report. NK 2-111. SA William J. Davis. SA John F. Mc. Kenna, April 25, 1968.

in Montreal. This last attack was directed against Cuban staff of the pavilion but it was later suspended.<sup>12</sup> Later Guillermo Novo commented to an FBI official that “the explosions had been triggered by friends of his organization [...]” to avoid his own responsibility. Some time after, a report by special agent William J. Davis verified that the Novo Sampol brothers had planned and financed the attack. The same document mentions that the CNM —of which Guillermo Novo was second in command at the time— had claimed responsibility for the bombs and destruction of property in several countries to protest “against the communist government of Prime Minister Fidel Castro”.<sup>13</sup>

## **The FBI tolerates and the Mafia pays**

### ***Washington-New York, 1968***

On a cold morning of February 21 panic and surprise gripped diplomatic officials who were in the large salon of the Soviet Union embassy in Washington when a bomb exploded in the building. Six days later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the same month, special agent William J. Davis questioned Guillermo Novo who claimed no responsibility with the event, denying, as usual, any implication.<sup>14</sup> On April 24 he was again visited this time for bombs that exploded days before in the Mexican consulate and in a Spanish tourism agency in New York. The scene repeated itself. Guillermo Novo complained to special agent in Newark, William J. Davis and denied any complicity.<sup>15</sup> But the FBI was

<sup>12</sup> Declassified FBI report to the FBI director from SAC Newark (2-111), September 17, 1968.

<sup>13</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of William Davis, November 20, 1968. Office Newark, New Jersey, Field Office File 105-19876, Title: Guillermo Novo Sampol.

<sup>14</sup> Declassified FBI report. William J. Davis, Newark, June 10, 1968, file Newark 105-19876-132, p. 9, file of the Bureau, 105-164011. Interview of February 27, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of William J. Davis, Newark, June 10,

well aware of public declarations weeks before by Novo to the Spanish language New York newspaper, *La Prensa*. In those declarations he said that the CNM had cells in Mexico, Canada and Europe, that from embassies to merchant ships and with or without the help of other countries, the CNM would continue taking war to every corner of the world until Cuba was liberated or they died in the intent.<sup>16</sup>

U.S. authorities had no doubt about the participation of Guillermo Novo in repeated attacks in its own territory. During the early months of 1968 he and his brother Ignacio and other terrorists of Cuban origin were registered in the Rabel Rouser Index (Subversive Control) as “Militant anti-Castro terrorist group.”<sup>17</sup>

In spite of this background, Guillermo Novo Sampol, just like a Mafia capo, freely continued with his criminal adventures along the New Jersey streets unmolested. Researcher José Luis Méndez comments that Ignacio Novo had established ties with the Gambino family<sup>18</sup> of the New York Mafia to use members of Omega 7 and others such as Pedro Remón Rodríguez and Pedro Palmero,<sup>19</sup> as hired assassins for settling scores for the Mafia. Carlos Dominici was the contact between the crime syndicate and the Novo brothers.<sup>20</sup>

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1968, file Newark 105-19876-132, p. 9, Bureau file 105-164011.

Interview of April 24, 1968.

<sup>16</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of Francis J. O’Brien, April 30, 1968. Office N. York. File Office 97-4149. Title: MNC.

<sup>17</sup> Declassified FBI report.. Sac, Miami. January 18, 1968. Director, FBI (97-4194) «Active militantterrorist»

<sup>18</sup> Gambino is one of the five families of organized crime in New York city. Its first boss was Salvatore D’Aguila, killed in Brooklyn in 1928.

<sup>19</sup> Hired assassines of the anti-Cuban Mafia in New York. Pedro Remón was in prison in Panamá, with Guillermo Novo, Gaspar Jiménez Escobedo and Luis Posada Carriles for the attempted assassination of Comandante en Jefe in the Ibero American Summit in 2000, held in that country.

<sup>20</sup> José Luis Méndez Méndez: Researcher and writer. «Secretos para las memorias de Guillermo Novo Sampol». April 23, 2004. Web site: Cuba-Debate.

## **Political assassinations are not excluded**

### ***New York, 1968***

Few events demonstrate the evident degree of impunity that some of these individuals enjoyed and the level of conspiracy and permissibility of U.S. authorities. A declassified document of May 19, 1968 reports about the conspiracy meeting of the CNM that counted with the active participation of the Novo brothers. In one of these meetings usually held in bars, restaurants or public locals, an FBI informer communicated comments made regarding the best methods to be used to kill the ambassador of the Cuban mission to the U.N, comrade Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada. They studied the possible use of a 30-60 rifle with scope that could be purchased by an unidentified individual in New Jersey for \$120.00.<sup>21</sup>

Two months later, in an interview with special FBI agents on July 8 and 9, 1968, Novo declared that the CNM was not involved in any assassination plan against members of the Cuban mission to the United Nations. However, other declassified documents prove that this criminal had been warned by the FBI previously and more than once about his suspicious stalking of members of the Cuban mission to the United Nations. Other declassified documents of a later date corroborate the continued plans of assassination of diplomatic representation in New York.

### **Impunity as prize!**

### ***Estados Unidos, 1968***

On November of that year the FBI had knowledge of two new offices of the CNM that had opened up in New Jersey, operations center of the Sampol brothers that demonstrated an evident

<sup>21</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of William J. Davis, May 11, 1968. Field Office File 105-16324, Bureau File 97-4194, Title: Cuban Nationalist Movement, Character: Internal Security Cuba, Registration Act Cuba, Neutrality Matters Cuba.

strengthening and economic capacity. All kinds of social activities were frequent. Parties, caravans, tombolas, cocktail parties. Everything was permitted to collect funds for a “good cause”. Threats and extortion were applied against Cuban émigrés opposed to these practices of terror.

A declassified document describes the following activities: Meeting at the Joseph House on 215 Lafayette Street, Newark, New Jersey, on June 25, 1968. Attending were 50 persons. Guillermo Novo criticized the United States for its lack of support of Cuban organizations.<sup>22</sup> Meeting in the Audobon, Higher Manhattan, on November 24, 1968. Attending were 95 persons. Guillermo Novo lashed out in an improvised speech calling for action against Cuba. An FBI agent in the public reported that 26 CNM militants appeared in complete uniform.<sup>23</sup>

Terrorist actions on United States soil against persons and economic companies that had relations with Cuba in the northern nation multiplied. The FBI itself acknowledged explosions of more than 69 bombs in 1968. The increased danger reached by the Novo brothers was reported in a memorandum to the U.S. Secret Service on January 31, 1969 considering that the subject of terrorist Guillermo Novo already fell into the category of “Protection of the U.S. President”. That document gave the following warning: “Precautions: It has been informed that the person is known to have transported plastic explosives on his person; approach should be handled with care”.<sup>24</sup> In spite of being on parole, Guillermo Novo had two pistols registered to his name: A 32 caliber Harrington and Richardson revolver, series 81828 and a 38 caliber automatic Beretta, series 909000.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Declassified FBI report. United States Department of Justice. January 31, 1969. Secret, p.9.

<sup>23</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of William J. Davis. January 31, 1969. Office: Newark, New Jersey. File of the field office: 105-19876. Bureau file: 105-164011. Title: Guillermo Novo Sampol. Character: internal security —Cuba. Law of Registration— Cuba. Neutrality matters — Cuba.

<sup>24</sup> Ídem, p. 3 y 4. To the Secret Service, copies to the Newark Immigration and Naturalization Service and for the New York INS.

<sup>25</sup> Declassified FBI report. Report of William J. Davis. January 31, 1969. Newark New Jersey Office. File field office: 105-19876 Bureau file: 105-

On September of 1973 Guillermo Novo was arrested and tried for violation of the act of “neutrality” of the United States for his proven acts of terrorism against the Cuban consulate in Montreal and the office of the Trade Commission, both in Canada; also against other Cuban interests abroad. On July 24 the CNM exploded a bomb placed on the fourteenth floor of the Martin Luther King Center Building in New York. But, according to another declassified document dated January 1974 the three-year sentence was suspended to six months and later to five years of conditional freedom.<sup>26</sup> History repeats itself. Guillermo Novo continued to act with impunity and no authority in the United States did anything to stop it.

## **Condor and CIA executioners**

### ***Miami-New Jersey-Santiago de Chile, Septiembre 1973***

September 11 was a date that humanity indignantly repudiated the fascist coup in Chile and the crime against its legitimate president, Salvador Allende. But that night, in the streets of Miami, a handful of fascists of Cuban origin cheered their support of August Pinochet as the new strategic ally against revolutionary Cuba. Soon Chile became a center of torture and persecution and a sanctuary for criminals and terrorists that, of course, included the capos of the anti-Cuban Mafia.

The Chilean fascist junta ordered the Direction of National Intelligence (DINA) to offer the necessary help to the terrorists based in the northern country who had offered their services to eliminate opponents of Pinochet who had been forced to flee. Criminals like Orlando Bosch, Virgilio Paz, Luis Posada Carri-

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164011 Title: Guillermo Novo Sampol. Internal Security, Cuba; Law of Registration, Cuba; Neutrality Matters, Cuba.. Section 4. Parole condition of the subject in Hudson country, New Jersey court, p. 7 y 8 . (Traducción del inglés.)

<sup>26</sup> Declassified FBI report. United States Department of Justice. January 25, 1974. Guillermo Novo Sampol. Nota a mano: 105-164011, p. 1. — Memorandum to Director FBI from SAC, Newark (105-16824.) May 16, 1974.

les, the brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol and Gaspar Jiménez Escobedo, among others, actively participated in these actions as executioners, advisors and suppliers of explosives and logistic support in what became known as Operation Condor. The anti-Cuban terrorists based in the U.S., found new space for the sorry criminal trade against Cuba.

The insertion of Cuban terrorists in Operation Condor favored their relations with the military dictatorships in Latin America, particularly with the Argentine regime. At present the justice department of that country investigates the ties of the CNM organizations and the Novo brothers with the Chilean DINA in the assassination of Carlos Prats and his wife on September 30, 1974 in Buenos Aires.<sup>27</sup> The Argentine intelligence service and DINA organized a brutal machine for kidnapping and political assassinations supported by fascist paramilitary groups in which Ignacio and Guillermo Novo are mentioned.<sup>28</sup>

Declassified reports dated December 17, 1974, confirm that the Chilean Junta offered military training to Cuban American exiles and supplied passports to Orlando Bosch to aid him in his terrorist operations in the area.<sup>29</sup> Another document dated

<sup>27</sup> Argentine attorney general, Jorge Álvarez Berlanda, stated on June 27, 2000, that DINA participation in the assassination of Carlos Prats and his wife in 1974 in Buenos Aires, was established. On this occasion he indicated that the investigation being done seeks to prove participation of the Cuban Nationalist Movement through the Novo brothers.. *El Mostrador*. CL Argentina. Internet.

<sup>28</sup> Head of the DINA secret network in Argentina was Enrique Arancibia Clavel. His first mission was to watch the Chileans who sought refuge in this country after the military coup on September of 1973. Hand written letters were found in his personal file years later on the detention and disappearance of hundreds of Chileans and association with Argentine repressive institutions to hide remains, kill dissidents in Europe and to set up a mechanism of kidnapping and death that counted with the participation of the Italian group, Avanguardia Nacionalista, of Stephano Delle Ciale and the anti-Castro Cuban group, CERO, of the Novo brothers. (Mónica González, Santiago. Clarín Digital former CIA agent tells of the conspiracy, Wednesday, May 10, 2000)

<sup>29</sup> Allard Jean Guy: *Granma Internacional*. "Posada y sus cómplices, activos colaboradores de la policia fascista de Pinochet", 2003.

April 29, 1986 reports a meeting of dictator Pinochet with groups of the anti-Cuban Mafia on March 17, 1975 in which he offered economic help conditioned to their unifying the different groups and promised to mediate in their favor with the military dictatorships of Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>30</sup>

According to the FBI<sup>31</sup> terrorist Guillermo Novo traveled to Chile in December of 1974 with a false passport supplied by the Chilean government to meet with Orlando Bosch who the document describes as a Cuban exiled terrorist and federal fugitive. Other U.S. sources evaluated an alleged pact signed between Guillermo Novo and Orlando Bosch to carry out terrorist actions with the support in money and logistics of the Military Junta. In 1977, the FBI corroborated this support pointing to one of its sources that the CNM had necessary explosive material and weapons and ammunition supplied by DINA.

Since the months of June and August of 1975, the FBI was aware of clandestine meetings that DINA official, Héctor Durán, cultural attaché of the Chilean consulate in Miami, had, on a regular basis, with terrorist groups on U.S. soil. In these contacts where Guillermo Novo participated assassinations, provocations and bombings were planned against Cuban interests in the world. The FBI agent's report informed: "[...] The Chilean government will offer this group all possible diplomatic protection that would include asylum in Chilean embassies if one of its members risked being arrested. He said that the common objective was the destruction of the Fidel Castro regime [...]"<sup>32</sup>

In the report (105-1742) of August 1975 by special agent Robert James Dwyer on "anti-Castro activities in Miami" also

<sup>30</sup> Allard Jean Guy: *Granma Internacional*. "Posada y sus cómplices, activos colaboradores de la policia fascista de Pinochet", 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Declassified report. June 21, 1994. Memorandum Director, FBI. SAC, Newark (185-29) Date May 2, 1975. Re WFO report of Thomas F. Dowd dated 3/25/75. Declassified report 8/3/99. Anti-Castro Activities. New York, January 13, 1975. Bufile 109-584. Nyfile 105-35253.

<sup>32</sup> Declassified FBI report. (October 25, 1996 to April 8, 1999). To Director FBI (135-283782) from Miami. (135-22921) June 6, 1975, CONFIDENTIAL. Attention: Intelligence Div. Héctor Durán, is - CUBA.



listed the secret contacts of Chilean intelligence services with [...] Cuban exiles to form groups of action [...]”. However we have no proof demonstrating efforts of U.S. authorities to prevent these criminal actions hatched in their own territory and in presence of covert agents. Some time later events demonstrated the involvement of the CIA in the criminal actions of CONDOR.

In November of 1975 the FBI found out about a meeting called in Chile that would occur in two months, from January 13 to 18 of 1976 where Orlando Bosch would participate as well as other “anti-Castro leaders and groups of action”. This document revealed the “concern” of Guillermo Novo because he would need permission from his Parole officer, in relation to his status of conditional freedom. Declassified document years later revealed the hypocrisy of this concern since Guillermo Novo, although upset by these seemingly legal limitations, participated in many criminal activities completely unmolested in and outside the country.

## **The CORU-CNM criminal alliance**

### ***New York, February 1975***

A dark café located in the intersection of Bergeline and 46 Street, West, New York, was the scene of close police surveillance in the afternoon, February 3, 1975. The place was a site of a meeting of terrorist groups and the Novo Sampol brothers were identified. The subject discussed was frequent in these cases, dealing with previous and future bombings. A secret FBI source noted that this group might have been responsible for a recent explosion in a Venezuelan building in New York. Nonetheless, the Novo brothers were not molested.

Months later, on August 6, 1976, a counterrevolutionary ringleader based in Miami and who had differences with the Novo brothers, accused the CNM group in New Jersey as responsible for recent bombings in New York. At that time the

CNM faction in New Jersey headed by Guillermo Novo had become a part of Orlando Bosch Avila's CORU.<sup>33</sup>

## **The crimes of Condor**

### ***New York, July 1976***

Future plans of violence against Cuban diplomatic representatives in the world were latent during those years but gained particular relevance in 1976. An FBI agent reported on July 15, 1976 that, due to surveillance of CNM members, including Guillermo Novo and José Dionisio Suárez, he learned of a tentative plan to assassinate the Cuban representative, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, who was living in York Avenue between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> streets in New York.<sup>34</sup> This plan was not an isolated event.

Nine days later, on July 24, Cuban technician D'Artaignan Díaz was killed by a terrorist command with the integration of Gaspar Jiménez Escobedo who had tried to kidnap the Cuban consul in Mérida, Yucatán. Only three months before a bomb killed Adriana Corcho and Efrén Monteagudo in the Cuban embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. During 1976 Cuban diplomatic representations in "Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Guyana, Peru, Canada and Spain were also targets of criminal terrorist actions by counterrevolutionary groups. In October another atrocious crime was committed in Barbados. Operation Condor went all out against Cuba.

### **Buenos Aires, August 1976**

Two young Cuban officials left the embassy in Argentina, at about five in the afternoon, across its rail fence and walked along

<sup>33</sup> Declassified FBI report. NM 105-1742, p. 6 y 7. Original documents sent to the JFK National Security Archives, ARCA. August 2, 1996. (Orlando Bosch Ávila)

<sup>34</sup> Declassified FBI report. United States Department of Justice. Newark, New Jersey, August 26, 1976. Confidential.

the beautiful tree lined Virrey del Pino bordered by modern buildings, towards the next corner, crossing Arribeños street to a bus stop in front of Belgrano park. Everything happened in a matter of seconds: tires screeched, surprise, armed men, intimidation and violence. Cejas and Galañena defended themselves courageously but they were beaten, controlled and thrown into one of the vehicles that sped away down a side street with tires screeching. It was August 9, 1976. Later they were killed and disappeared. Our people indignantly remember that crime and still call for justice. Scenes like those had become a daily occurrence in Argentine cities during the military dictatorship. Thousands of men and women in Latin America were tortured and disappeared during those years.<sup>35</sup>

During an interview in Santiago de Chile with the Argentine federal judge, María Servini de Cubria, on December 22, 1999, the accused, Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, former DINA chief, arrested at the time as intellectual author of the assassination of Orlando Letelier, voluntarily declared that the U.S. citizen, Michael Townley, CIA agent, and Guillermo Novo flew from Chile to Argentina on August 11, 1976 and there tortured two Cuban diplomats, returning to Chile the following day. A month before Guillermo Novo Sampol had written to Augusto Pinochet: “wishing you good health so that you can continue guiding the Chilean people and answering to the interests of the Chilean nation as you have done up to now”.

## **Novo and the CIA: recount, extortion and subversion**

### ***Chile-Argentina, June 1976***

The strong ties of Guillermo Novo with CIA agent, Michael Townley and DINA during those years also cover operations of kidnapping and extortion for lucrative purposes. On October

<sup>35</sup> Jesús Cejas Arias and Crescencio Galañena Hernández were 22 and 26 years old, respectively, when they were disappeared. They were young men noted for their merits and revolutionary virtues, of a humble and working family. They were working as diplomats in the Cuban embassy in Argentina, since 1975.

20, 1981, Townley revealed to the FBI a kidnapping plan regarding a high level executive that was scheduled to occur in Buenos Aires, Argentina, during 1976 in which the Cuban Nationalist Movement played a major role. Guillermo Novo visited Santiago de Chile either on June or July of 1976. He agreed to commit the CNM to participate in the kidnapping of the president of a German bank in Buenos Aires. According to Townley, the State Intelligence Service (SIDE), one of the Argentine intelligence services, had revealed that the young secretary of the executive was a source and used information she supplied to plan the kidnapping and obtain a ransom.

Townley declared that SIDE members considered that killing the banker's chauffeur who was used to waiting for his boss in the hotel where he had intimate relations with the secretary. Novo Sampol supplied 5 000 dollars from CNM that were handed over to SIDE in Argentina for operation costs. He recalled that Novo Sampol traveled to Chile in a Braniff International Airways plane and returned to the United States via Lan Chile using his real name. However, arrangements had been to prevent registration in the Chilean International Police during his trips to and from Chile and also prevent documenting this trip. Novo Sampol agreed to speed up the kidnapping and send two unidentified Cubans of CNM to set up the necessary contacts in Europe to receive the banker once moved secretly from Argentina.

After returning to the United States, Novo Sampol sent Townley a paper reserve to print pamphlets in the name of the Grupo Rojo, a non existent Argentine Marxist organization that was falsely created by SIDE to involve it in the kidnapping. The Grupo Rojo pamphlets were printed in Chile and sent to Argentina where they were distributed in the cities of Mendoza and Córdoba in connection of bombs supplied by SIDE. The purpose of the Grupo Rojo pamphlets was to create the impression and assume responsibility for the bombs exploded in those cities. The kidnapping would be paid in diamonds but SIDE delayed in carrying it out and, in the end, it never occurred.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Rojas DataBank: The Robinson Rojas Archive. FBI report Directorate of Nacional Intelligence DINIA Archivos. Internet.

## **The assassination of Orlando Letelier**

### ***Washington, September 1976***

A few weeks after the disappearance of the two Cuban diplomats, former Foreign Minister of the Salvador Allende government, Orlando Letelier and his U.S. assistant, Ronnie Moffit, were assassinated in Washington on September 21, 1975 by the same criminals who had plotted under the very noses of the FBI in conspiracy with the CIA. What had happened? That same month, September, DINA had instructed Michael Vernon Townley<sup>37</sup>, organizer and intellectual author of the crime to travel to the United States “to obtain the help of Cuban exiles of the Cuban Nationalist Movement to kill Orlando Letelier”. According to a declassified document Townley said he had met with CNM on September 12, 1976. Guillermo Novo Sampol answered that they would assume the mission and that same week he handed over explosives.

The assassination of Letelier was a joint operation between the Chilean fascists and anti-Cuban Mafia, organized by a man with alleged direct ties to the CIA. Townley confessed, years later, that the “Cubans” had acted through “ideals” in exchange of support of the Junta.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Request for withdrawal of parliamentary privileges of Augusto Pinochet. Buenos Aires, December 7, 2001. Nizkor Team: The referred report concludes that in conversations with FBI agent, Robert Scherrer, the following points are highlighted: “[...] Townley had contacts with the Cubans during the years of 1970 and 1973 and with Guillermo Novo and José Dionisio Suárez at the end of 1974 and that these individuals had travelled to Argentina and Chile”.

<sup>38</sup> Request for withdrawal of parliamentary privileges of Augusto Pinochet: Buenos Aires, December 7, 2001. Nizkor Team: Michael Townley. “[...] referring to the attack on Letelier he received verbal orders directly from General Contreras, Director of DINA, and Brigadier Espinoza, and that his mission consisted in liquidating this politician however possible because he was a dangerous man since he wanted to form a government in exile. For this mission he traveled to Washington, and contacted Capitán Fernández Larios who gave him documents with the movements of Letelier, and then contacted the anti-Castro Cubans. Among them were Dionisio Suárez and the Novo brothers with whom he worked for

This assassination of Orlando Letelier forced U.S. authorities to arrest and try the ringleaders of CNM. At first Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross were sentenced to life imprisonment. They appealed the sentence and on June 1981 Novo's sentence was reduced to four and a half years because of political considerations and shady dealings. Soon after they were out through connivance of the anti-Cuban Mafia authorities of the country that later unleashed their hatred on five Cubans for the mere crime of fighting terrorism.

**“[...] victims are inevitable”**

### **United States, 1980s**

During the decade he joined the most vicious terrorist groups such as Cuban Power and Omega 7. At the time a journalist questioned him: “During the explosions persons of different political leanings died, old people, children and women. How can you justify this?” Novo shook his shoulders and without lowering his eyes answered: —“Very easy. We have declared war on communism and victims are inevitable [...]”

Guillermo Novo joined the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) closing ranks with other mercenaries with whom he had shared his criminal career for three decades. There, his only space was that of thug and bodyguard of Jorge Mas Canosa who he had faithfully served up to that time. On November 27, 1990, The New York Times criticized CANF for having incorporated the Novo brothers in its propaganda commission. The newspaper wrote that “[...] although Mas Canosa tried to clarify that he had no responsibility in the 17 threats of death against Cubans living in Miami who were in favor of dialogues with the Island his words would sound more authentic if its foundation refused association with elements implied in

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this operation. Once the bomb was placed under the seat of Letelier's car, he left for Miami. There was no payment for this attack because it was done for ideals since the Cubans were offered refuge and an intelligence course in the Chilean army for the help given [...]»

the indignant acts of terror perpetrated against Letelier that also caused the death of his secretary Ronny Moffit, a U.S. citizen”.<sup>39</sup> That reasoning of The New York Times was not considered important to the “chairman” who owed many favors to the brothers. The incorporation of Novo to CANF strengthened, even more, its terrorist capabilities as a neo-fascist organization of the extreme right wing.

## **A license to kill**

### **United States, 1990s**

When CANF secretly organized its so-called Security Commission in 1992, on U.S. soil (in fact a clandestine paramilitary group in charge of its “dirty” work) Guillermo Novo was the most prominent hired assassin. While CANF promoted laws against Cuba and boosted isolation campaigns, bought politicians, judges and police in the United States and penetrated cultural and scientific organizations, its secret organization planned terrorist commands to act from Central America and supplied large sums to terrorist groups based in Miami to send assassins, explosives and send armed infiltrations to Cuba between the years of 1993 and 2001. His skill in the art of killing through the back won him space in some of the assassination plans against President Fidel Castro organized by CANF. The CIA mentioned his name in one of the failed attempts in the Dominican Republic. On September of 1997, FBI special agent, Luis Rodríguez, linked him to a possible operation of purchasing control remote airplanes that, once loaded with explosives would be flown against Cuban installations.

This was not the first time he used similar methods of horror. In 1967, during the international Expo-67 in Montreal, Canada, the FBI learned of the intentions of the Novo Sampol brother to use a small-scale remote control plane loaded with 3 pounds of explosives to crash into the building of the Cuban pavilion.

<sup>39</sup> Nicanor León Cotayo: “¿Qué es la Fundación Nacional Cubano Americana?”, *Granma*, Cuba, January 15, 2000.

His most recent action took him to Panama in November 2000, as a member of the criminal command that included Luis Posada Carriles, Pedro Remón Rodríguez and Gaspar Jiménez Escobedo, financed by CANF to try to kill the Cuban president. The proposed assassination had been carefully prepared. Two days before the beginning of the Ibero American Summit of Heads of State, with a passport in his name and before the eyes of U.S. authorities, Guillermo Novo easily flew from Miami, where he had lived during the past four decades, to Costa Rica where he continued flight to Panama on the same day, without his veteran FBI controllers in SAC Newark or even the CIA doing anything to prevent the macabre trip.

Why didn't the FBI detain him as it did in June 29, 1967 in New Jersey when he was moving explosives and planning the assassination of Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz if he decided to attend the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg, Canada, on June of that year, according to an FBI document dated October 6, 1976 declassified later?

Four years after the intent of assassination, the head of state of that country at the time, unconditional ally of the Miami Mafia and through the shady dealings of the U.S. administration declared a pardon of Novo Sampol and his accomplices. Once again, Mr. Bill walks the streets of Miami unmolested.

For over 40 years Guillermo Novo Sampol has been an instrument of the criminal aggressions of the United States administration against a small nation. It is a live example of an unbridled hatred of a people and its revolution that only aspire to live in peace. The U.S. government is responsible for the crimes of this terrorist.



The Court is called upon to exercise the witness right to claim the Fifth Amendment to prevent revelation of terrorism activities against Cuba.

Official documents of the trial.  
District Attorney's motion.  
March 20, 2001.

*How many more lives of human beings must be lost  
before the FBI truly fulfills its duties and arrests the  
real criminals and terrorists of its own people in the  
United States?  
Is it that the “fight against terrorism” is pure rhetoric?*

RAMÓN LABAÑINO SALAZAR

## **Pedro Crispín Remón Rodríguez: hired assassin of the black mask**

*Manuel Hevia Frasquierei*

This is not a horror story. Not even a police chronicle. It is testimony by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) of a criminal doing time in a U.S. federal prison for assassination and other acts of terror. His accomplice, Pedro Remón Rodríguez, is luckier. For the past weeks he has been seen strolling along the Hialeah Gardens avenue in Miami, near his home, after receiving full pardon together with Posada Carilles, Guillermo Novo and Gaspar Jiménez of former Panamanian president, Mireya Moscoso, in spite of their crimes against humanity. Let's leave the U.S. FBI to inform of the true nature of this criminal.

### **To kill a Cuban ambassador**

Detectives Robert Brandt and Larry E. Black<sup>1</sup> exchanged looks while terrorist of Cuban origin Eduardo Arocena<sup>2</sup> calmly narrated the details of a plan to kill the Cuban ambassador to the UN at the time, Raúl Roa Kourí, organized for many long months as part of an operation of the anti-Cuban terrorist group,

<sup>1</sup> Robert Brandt and Larry E. Black: *Newark*, 25 September 1982, New Jersey, 28 September 1982, Miami Florida. Interview. File NY 185-1009 (sub-c).

<sup>2</sup> Eduardo Arocena. Main ringleader of the terrorist Omega 7 tried by a United States federal court and sentenced to long penalties for his criminal actions in this territory.

Omega 7. “[...] The plan to assassinate Roa relied on a round the clock surveillance for about six months [...] Arocena and Pedro Remón [...] were keeping watch from a location on 81<sup>st</sup> Street and Madison Avenue at 9:30 am on March 25, 1980 [...] They saw when the driver bumped against a car and they immediately knew that the bomb had fallen from the car [...]” — minutes before Pedro Remón had placed a bomb with a magnetic device under the gas tank of the ambassador’s car.

Arrocena declared: “[...] there was a moment when the bomb was on the pavement and Roa and the driver were close by” —however, he said “[...] there were many children about, too close to detonate the mechanism” [...] “that he had the trigger with Remón watching the two [...]. He did not detonate it because of the children. However, Pedro Remón emphatically insisted that he should explode the bomb and he refused and immediately cancelled the operation [...].”

According to information collected by the FBI, Ramón Saúl Sánchez,<sup>3</sup> a friend of Remón, had constructed the bomb. “[...] The device placed in Roa’s car was in fact a device that Arocena, Remón and others had placed in New York in a plan to assassinate Fidel Castro during his visit to New York. The mission was aborted and later used in the planned attack on Roa [...].”

Pedro Crispín Remón Rodríguez was born in Cuba on September 13, 1944. Since the revolutionary triumph, at an early age, he joined terrorist groups in the country until he left clandestinely in a vessel in 1963 settling in northern New Jersey and later moving to Miami, in the United States.

In that country he and Ramón Saúl Sánchez, at the time the main hit men of the terrorist Omega 7, organized the terrorist organization, Abdala considered by the FBI as the most active group in United States soil.

<sup>3</sup> Militant of the terrorist groups Abdala y Omega 7 and current head of Democratic Movement.

## The crime of Eulalio José Negrín

On November 25, 1979, Pedro Remón killed the Cuban émigré, Eulalio José Negrín near his home in New Jersey and in presence of his 12-year-old son.<sup>4</sup> Negrín was working to lift the blockade of Cuba. Eduardo Arocena accused Remón of being responsible for the assassination.<sup>5</sup>

“[...] In relation to the murder of José Negrín, Arocena knew and ordered the operation [...]. Pedro Remón and Andrés García told him that the operation had been accomplished and that Remón had pulled the trigger [...]. The Mac-10 submachine pistol was the same weapon used to kill Félix García<sup>6</sup> later [...]. Arocena handed over the Mac-10 to Pedro Remón [...]. Pedro Remón was commander of an Omega cell in New Jersey [...]. Referring to the murder of José Negrín, and assassination of Félix García, Arocena declared that Pedro Remón always used a mask or covered his face when he was the one to fire [...]”.

The use of a black mask became a peculiar trademark of that assassin during the execution of his crimes. Another declassified report of the U.S. government noted that the mistress of Remón in New Jersey, named Nellie Monzón, declared to the FBI that both had strayed in the Meadowlands Hilton hotel in 1979 and that while he was taking a bath: “[...] she searched his briefcase and found some sort of submachine pistol and a black mask with yellow and red borders [...]”<sup>7</sup>

This woman told the FBI that when Eulalio Negrín was killed it was widely commented in the Cuban American community and most people were horrified that he was killed in front of his son and that when talking about this to Pedro Remón he said that his son was not supposed to be there.

<sup>4</sup> Pedro Remón was identified by the FBI in 1982 as author of several threats against Eulalio José Negrín, before his assassination

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 1

<sup>6</sup> Félix García Rodríguez, Cuban diplomat in the UN killed on September 11, 1980.

<sup>7</sup> Special Agent James R. Lyons/saw. Telephone interview, New York, File. 185-1009, October 1 1982

After that crime, on December 7, 1979 he placed a bomb in the Cuban mission to the United Nations and three days later in the USSR mission to the UN.

### **The assassination of Cuban diplomats: the death of Félix García Rodríguez**

The testimony of Eduardo Arocena to the FBI eloquently demonstrated the impunity of these terrorist groups of Cuban origin in that country. These declarations demonstrate the dangerousness of these actions and the complicity of the authorities in such horrendous actions that nothing was done to prevent or thwart them.

The report of the Federal Bureau of Investigations<sup>8</sup> based on the interrogations of the criminal, Arocena, points out that “[...] the plot to kill Félix García, Cuban attaché to the Cuban mission to the United Nations required a fifty day surveillance of the Cuban mission in New York, by Arocena and members of the Pedro Remón cell. The original plan was to kill four persons of the Cuban mission. Arocena, Remón, Andrés García<sup>9</sup> and Eduardo Losada Fernández<sup>10</sup> were all implicated in the surveillance and assassination [...]”.

“[...] These individuals kept watch of four Cuban diplomats on September 11, 1980; however, they lost the surveillance [...]. They watched Félix García as he left the mission [...] the assassination took place at approximately 6:30 pm of September 11, 1980 [...]. Arocena was not at the scene when the trigger was pulled, however he was told that Pedro Remón was the one who fired [...]. Pedro Remón called the news agencies in New York claiming responsibility for the assassination on behalf of Omega 7 [...]”.

On September 9 1985, a federal court charged Pedro Remón accused of participation in the killing of Félix García, Eulalio

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 1

<sup>9</sup> Andrés García. Member of the terrorist Omega 7 in New Jersey.

<sup>10</sup> Eduardo Losada. Member of the terrorist Omega 7 in New Jersey.

José Negrín and other terrorist actions. Through a deal with the prosecutor in 1986 he was sentenced to several years in prison and freed later for health reasons and without paying for the crimes committed.

Pedro Remón continued in that country with his terrorist career against Cuba and during the 90s without being molested. He appears on the scene again in a Central American country, in May of 2000 participating in a plot to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro that would take him to Panama on November of that year. The story is well known.

The United States government did nothing to prevent that assassination attempt in the X Ibero American Summit of Heads of State by criminals such as Luis Posada, Pedro Remón, Gaspar Jiménez and Guillermo Novo Sampol who have enjoyed its protection for several decades. And at the epitome of absurdity, once pardoned for his crime he was leniently and proudly received with the other three on US soil as a sad evocation of the parable of the prodigal son who returned home.

Once again the hired assassin of the black mask was free through the connivance of the empire and the Miami terrorist Mafia.





Cuban terrorist organizations based in the United States have woven a large history of threats, bombings, aggressions and assassinations against those who express opinions that differ or question the most extremist line.

*I firmly believe that you can be a Catholic and be a good person; you can be a Jew and be a good person; you can be a capitalist, Muslim or communist and be a good person; but there is no way that a terrorist can be a good person. You must be sick to be a terrorist and to believe that there is no such thing as a good terrorist.*

René González Schwerert

## **Luis Zúñiga Rey: “He’s our son of a bitch...”**

*Luis Báez*

During the 60<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva —2004— the United States delegation included, as an official member, the terrorist of Cuban origin Luis Manuel de la Caridad Zúñiga Rey. Years before this honor had corresponded to the Nicaraguan government.

*Who is this man that U.S. authorities are sponsoring? Where did he come from? What is his background?*

Zúñiga was born on June 3, 1947, in Havana and lived in 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, number 8220, between 82 and 84 in Playa municipality. On September 17, 1962 he presented his request for a passport to leave the country. He is an accountant by profession but has never worked as such. He never worked while in Cuba. He has a hair transplant that he has dyed black. By character he is hysterical and affected. He does exercises on a daily basis from five to six in the afternoon. He is known as a charlatan. He has a U.S. passport with the number 046492851 that is valid until October 25, 2011.

He was arrested on June 30, 1966 for being involved in plans to attack a unit of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and released two months later.

On May 25, 1970, he was again arrested in Playa Los Bajos, in the municipality of Gibara in Holguín province where he was stranded on a homemade vessel with other counterrevolutionaries attempting to leave the country illegally. At the time he was sentenced to two years in prison. In prison he joined the terrorist organization Alpha 66.

In 1972 he escaped a prison hospital in Villa Clara and later managed to enter the U.S. Guantanamo Naval Base and left for the United States from there where he was recruited by the CIA and trained in espionage and terrorism.

In the United States he joined different terrorist organizations making plans to infiltrate our country and ex-filtrate different persons of his same kind that were unsuccessful until August 31, 1974, in which he set route from Key West to Cuba entering in the Piedra Alta region in Santa Cruz del Norte in a Formula vessel supplied by the CIA.

On board were three terrorists. One disembarked with a racing bicycle to move around by road and contact the persons he had to pick up. During his search he was arrested while waiting aboard the vessel with the other person involved. Zúñiga was arrested two days later in Guanabo beach by a coast guard land unit of the War Navy.

On board the following weapons were seized: an M-1 and AR-15 rifles, two fragmentation grenades, a 22 caliber pistol and a large amount of ammunition, a commando knife and a cartridge belt with canteen.

He was sentenced to 30 years, file 228/75. Of these he served 14 and was released in 1988. On November 30 of the same year he definitely left for the United States.

Some of the prisoners who shared jail with Zúñiga said he maintained close ties with a prisoner called Pototo who became his right-hand man.

In Florida Zúñiga joined the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) that gave him the post of vice president of the Continental Peace Association (ASOPASCO) headquartered in Spain but with an office in Miami. For several years his personal address in the United States was 2390 NW, 35 Street, Miami, Fla. 3312.

As a militant of CANF he began to play an active role in his activities against Cuba. He is noted at this time as a promoter of internal dissidence in the country maintaining frequent contacts with those he wanted to recruit.

In 1991 he joined the CANF terrorist groups that were being developed and, paradoxically, while unfurling violent plans he was part of a group that promoted human rights.

He supplied, incorporated and contacted nationals who traveled to the United States and who he tried to direct to carry out sabotage against Cuban economic targets, mostly thermoelectric plants, port terminals and oil refineries.

In June of 1991 he recruited Cuban citizen Alberto Félix Contreras Ruiz giving him the alias of Agent number 4 and told him to carry out sabotage against urban transportations, water sprinkler systems and energy plants.

Between 1992 and 1994 Zúñiga was the main contact with Percy Francisco Alvarado Godoy, giving him cell phones and portable GPS global positioning system receptors, forged convertible currency and other resources instructing him to carry out several terrorist and paramilitary actions on Cuban soil.

The actions were frustrated because Alvarado Godoy, a Guatemalan writer, was in fact agent Fraile of Cuban State Security, who still recalls the initial contact with Zúñiga:

“I still remember him standing in front of me that night of November of 1993 when he explained the sinister plans of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) based in Miami, to plant powerful bombs in the Havana Hotel Nacional and in a famous restaurant in the city. He was not in the least concerned of the consequences of his proposal. Do it, he said, and you will be well paid!”

Agent Fraile continues recalling:

“He then told me, face to face, that it had to be violent and cold-blooded, shrewd and ruthless, to overthrow Fidel and the Revolution. A supply of arms and explosives had to be organized for my alleged cell whose intentions were to place bombs in hotels and sites visited by tourists in Havana. They would also give me, he insisted, eight capsules of live phosphorus to burn movie theaters and others theaters filled with innocent Cubans. Those nights of November and December of 1993 he showed no sign of pity only irrational hatred and thirst for vengeance.”

In 1993 Zúñiga was one of the organizers of the Cuban National Front (CNF), the armed branch of CANF, whose main purpose was to prepare plans against President Fidel Castro and set up camps of Cuban émigrés in Florida, training to “infiltrate” the Island.

During 1993 Zúñiga recruited the Cuban, Olfiris Pérez Cabrera, in the United States giving him instructions for poisoning cattle, vandalize cars that transported foreigners and sabotage with explosives hotel and recreation installations in the capital, including Tropicana cabaret, offering to pay him 20 000 dollars. He was supplied these means in Florida.

That same year, 1993, Zúñiga together with Alfredo Domingo Otero —at that time head of CANF operations— prepared to recruit Cubans visiting the United States who, on their return to the Island, would commit terrorist actions.

During the 70s Otero was captain of the mother ship, *Rex*, belonging to the CIA. The mission of the ship was to transport weapons and introduce and pick up agents in Cuban territory.

One of these cases of recruitment was the Cuban Ramón de la Caridad Inda Ramos, who was instructed to burn cane fields and locate important economic objectives using a GPS device —Global Position System— to sabotage them. Among the plans was the supply of the necessary explosives through the coasts. They also gave him means to decipher messages, a GPS device and money in cash.

Cuba State Security detected these actions between the years of 1990 and 2000 and new attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro were prevented.

In the preparation of most of these attack plans, Zúñiga Rey was an active participant with the complicity of all the administrations that passed through the White House in the past decades.

The homicide of the Head of the Revolution —more than 600 plans have been thwarted— has been a constant interest of the United States since the guerrilla war in the Sierra Maestra. Through their agents the principal U.S. authorities have employed Cuban exiles and Mafia elements recruited by the CIA to eliminate Fidel through devious means that have been prevented by the vigilance of the people.

According to reports obtained by Cuban Intelligence, CANF leaders have defined the Ibero American Summits as a favorable situation to try to assassinate Fidel.

According to testimonies of infiltrators detained in Cuba, CANF offered money to two unidentified Cuban mercenaries

to travel to Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1991. They gave up the idea because they did not have sufficient guarantees of escaping with their lives.

In 1992, a clandestine terrorist structure called, CANF Security Commission or “paramilitary group” in charge of preparing and carrying out this type of actions and intending to cover up participation of the deceased Jorge Mas Canosa. The group went through many bosses such as Alberto Hernández, Luis Zúñiga Rey, Horacio García, Roberto Martín Pérez and Francisco José Hernández, CANF president. Also participating in these activities were Guillermo Novo Sampoll — known as Mr. Bill, furniture storeowner— his brother Ignacio and Luis Posada Carriles.

That same year when the Cuban Orestes Hernández, living in Miami, was detained he revealed that Mas Canosa had discussed a plan to eliminate Fidel Castro during his visit to Spain for the Ibero American Summit.

In 1993, the CANF terrorist group adopted the name of Cuban National Front, initially headed by Zúñiga and began actions as armed branch of the foundation although it was not known publicly as such.

During the IV Ibero American Summit of 1994 in Colombia, terrorists financed by CANF traveled to that country with plans to assassinate President Fidel Castro. That same year another plan was prepared, with the same objective, when the Cuban leader traveled to South Africa sending members of the organization to study the operative situation.

In 1995 Cuban State Security obtained information about a trip to Buenos Aires of terrorist Roberto Martín Pérez together with other members of the Security Commission to organize an attack on the Cuban leader during the V Ibero American Summit.

During the VI Summit held in Santiago de Chile in 1996 the presence of terrorist and CIA agent, Félix Rodríguez was detected.

In July of 1998 when Fidel visited the Dominican Republic, plans to assassinate him were put into motion. One was aborted when Cuban Intelligence was aware of a planning meeting called by Luis Posada Carriles in Guatemala and included participation of Enrique Bassas, Ramón Font and Luis Orlando Rodríguez.

Arnaldo Monzón Plasencia high official of CANF and strongly linked to Zúñiga was responsible for funding the plan.

Monzón lives in New Jersey where he owns a chain of women's clothing stores, Arnold Stores, located in 3515 Bergerline Ave., Union City.

For these actions Posada Carriles had the support of another old terrorist, Frank Castro, involved in 1976 in the DINA attempted attack on former Chilean chancellor, Orlando Letelier residing in the Dominican Republic.

Cuban intelligence detected repeated trips of Roberto Martín Pérez, member of the CANF paramilitary commandos in Santo Domingo under the cover of tobacco business, to recruit other direct participants. At the same time the Army of Internal Resistance prepared its own plan to assassinate Fidel that would include the return to the Dominican Republic of a commando that would infiltrate over the Haitian border.

The plan designed to assassinate Fidel during the VI Summit in Margarita Island, Venezuela, on October of 1997 was aborted when United States coast guards captured the La Esperanza in Puerto Rican waters. The boat was the property of José Antonio Llama, member of the Executive Board of CANF. The four travelers detained had, in their possession, two Barrett caliber 50 semiautomatic assault rifles and seven boxes of ammunition. They admitted that they planned to assassinate Fidel and expected to use those weapons for the purpose because of their top grade precision and power to perforate armored cars.

The most recent attempt to assassinate Fidel was disrupted in Panama City during the X Ibero American Summit. The plan consisted of planting explosive devises under dais on which Castro would address the students of the University of Panama and was revealed during the second day of discussion of the presidents when agents of Cuban Security detected the presence of Luis Posada Carriles and Guillermo Novo Sampoll in a hotel in the city.

A search by the Panamanian police discovered two Cuban terrorists the moment they were preparing the explosive device. Posada and Novo are accused in Havana for many attacks on Cuban citizens and interests, including the blowing up in flight of a Cubana plane.



Zúñiga was aware of all these actions many of which counted on his participation in the direction and organization.

Cuba tourism structure became a priority for the Miami terrorists since 1997 when they exploded 600 grams of C-4 in the bathroom of the Hotel Meliá-Cohiba discotheque in Havana. Days later another explosive device was found in a flowerpot in that same hotel. The author of those two attacks was the Salvadoran, Francisco Chávez Abarca.

On September 4, 1997 a bomb placed in the Copacabana hotel cost the life of a young Italian tourist, Fabio Di Celmo.

That same day bombs exploded in Havana tourism centers: Hotels Tritón and Chateau and in the restaurant, Bodeguita del Medio. Seven persons were wounded. Accused of these actions Salvadoran Ernesto Cruz León was arrested and admitted his responsibility in the attacks.

The arrests in Cuba of other mercenaries, Salvadorans and Guatemalans, throughout 1998 confirmed that Posada Carriles was the coordinator of the different offices set up in Central America to recruit persons for terrorist attacks in Cuban soil.

In 1994 attacks began against tourism installations. Hotels Guitart-Cayo Coco and Meliá Varadero were repeated targets of these attacks.

In March 20, 1995, authorities of the José Martí International Airport arrested Santos Armando Martínez Rueda and Jorge Enrique Ramírez implicated in terrorist actions. Both of Cuban origin and living in Miami placed an explosive charge of 1,38 kg of C-4 with a watch mechanism, a 9 volt battery and number 8 electrical detonator in a Varadero hotel that was discovered and deactivated by State Security specialized forces.

Both entered the country as alleged tourists with false Costa Rican passports obtained in Florida and residence cards in the United States under the names of William Ortega Calderón and Rafael Antonio Oreamudo Blanco. To guarantee the action and complying with indications of Zúñiga they had infiltrated the country previously in Puerto Padre, Las Tunas and buried a plastic bucket with the C-4 explosive of U.S. origin.

In the interrogations, Martínez Rueda declared having made a study of Revolution Plaza to place an explosive charge there and in other central areas of Havana, including hotels. During

his declarations he mentioned Arnaldo Monzón a Cuban citizen, official of CANF as the one who supplied funds for the actions.

Martínez Rueda declared that around the month of February 1995, Angel Bonet, with the direct participation of the Cubans Guillermo Novo Sampoll and Arnaldo Monzón and at different times, gave them logistic and financial support needed for illegal incursion into Cuban coasts as well as for a later trip to Cuba by air.

At the same time, the detainees kept Novo Sampoll and Zúñiga informed by the cell phone previously received, of the results of their stay in Cuba.

Zúñiga directed the Human Rights in Cuba Foundation until 2001 when he leaves CANF to join the Council for Liberation of Cuba (CLC), a counterrevolutionary organization that promotes violence as a means of struggle against Cuba.

The CLC is formally introduced on October 10, 2001 and announces membership that includes 25 former directors of CANF where Zúñiga is one of the chief officials and was in charge of the public presentation of a new terrorist group that is to the right of the extremist organization that promote violence to eliminate the Cuban Revolution.

In addition to Zúñiga, among the founders of CLC are Pepe Hernández successor of Jorge Mas Canosa in the direction of the FNC, Feliciano Foyo, Horacio García Sr., Elpidio Núñez, Diego Suárez, Herminio Orizondo, Fernando Rojas and Ninoska Pérez Castrellón. The headquarters of the organization was located in the SW of the county, in a building on the corner of Eighth Street and 27 Avenue.

The creation of CLC did not mean a division of the CANF terrorist groups. The split appeared on the surface but the paramilitary, clandestine, hidden branch remained intact in the new organization that is promoted by Roger Noriega, an ultra conservative who represented Washington in the Organization of American States and who was then the Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs.

Under the support of Noriega, the CLC created a lobby organization, the US-Cuba Democracy Action Policy Committee whose main “ambassador” to the White House is Florida governor, Jeb Bush.

According to the *Diario de las Américas* published in Florida, on December 22, 2003 and in the Biltmore hotel in Miami, Jeb, brother of President Bush, participated in the launching of the lobby that intends to gain influence in the Capital and help the reelection of the president.

“We need to help the president obtain a majority in Congress so he doesn’t have to veto agreements on issues relating to Cuba, said business woman Remedios Díaz Oliver to a select audience that included former Housing Secretary Mel Martínez who was part of the Commission for Democracy created by Bush last year to boost covert action in the Island and control the “transition to democracy” in a post-Castro era.

Other participants were Adolfo Franco of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) who assured he was in contact with the “internal dissidence” and uses as means of penetration Radio and Television Martí, the subversive stations financed by the United States government and Republican congresspersons for Florida: Ileana Ros Lehtinen, Mario Díaz-Balart and Lincoln Díaz-Balart. This congressman declared to channel 41 in Miami “Cuba needs the assassination of Castro”. In other words, the assassination of the Cuban president.

Within this context, Governor Bush and Noriega were central figures in a dinner offered on January 30, 2004 with the attendance of 1 000 personalities of the Florida anti-Castro Mafia. The event was held to promote the image of CLC and collect funds for the reelection of Bush.

Zúñiga maintains very critical positions towards the government of Bill Clinton for the signing of Migratory Agreements with Cuba in 1995 and was one of the most active within CANF to prevent the return of Elian to his father in Cuba.

He also maintains a strong friendship with terrorist Nelsy Ignacio Castro Matos who heads the organization Party of the People, and with Otto Reich one of the representatives of Miami Mafia interests in the Bush government.

From 1999 to 2001, the corrupt former president Arnaldo Alemán who had strong ties with Jorge Mas Canosa added Zúñiga to the Nicaraguan delegation that participated in Geneva in the debates of the Human Rights Commission.

“Zúñiga has no moral qualities to participate as Nicaraguan representative to this high forum of the United Nations on the defense of human rights”, declared Vilma Núñez de Escorcia, president of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH).

Cuban chancellor, Felipe Pérez Roque denounced the presence of Zúñiga Rey in the 60 Conference of the Human Rights Commission as member of the United States delegation.

He affirmed that it was an insult for those who struggle honestly against terrorism to have in the guise of member of a delegation a person with a large and well-known criminal record as informed by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Enrique Bernal Ballester, presented, precisely, in Geneva in 1999.

The head of Cuban diplomacy pointed out: “that the complacent and electoral attitude of the United States government is incomprehensible, with the images still fresh of the terrorist attack in Madrid last March 11 that cost the lives of about 200 persons”.

Kevin E. Mosley, U.S. ambassador to the UN was quick to justify the presence of Zúñiga in that international forum. Finding it hard to hide his nervousness and lack of conviction he said: “We are proud to have him in our delegation. He is a distinguished Cuban American activist of human rights”.

Veteran diplomats were recalled of the words pronounced by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt when asked his opinion of Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle: “He is a son of a bitch but is our son of a bitch”.

“Jorge controlled everything”, Posada said.  
“When I needed money he said he would send me \$5 000, \$10 000 and \$15 000 and he did send it.”  
Posada calculated that through the years Mas had sent him more than \$200 000.

“He never said it was money from the foundation”, he said laughingly. “The money arrived with a message: This is for the church”.

*The New York Times* quoted Posada saying that Mas Canosa had given him money for several of his terrorist activities and, in the papers version, he was linked to a wave of bombings in Cuba last summer.

RUI FERREIRA, *El Nuevo Herald*

*Let the prosecutors know that the only blood that could be in these hands is that of my fallen or cowardly assassinated compatriots in countless aggressions and terrorist actions perpetrated against my country by persons who walk freely along the streets of this city [Miami].*

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo

## **Ramón Saúl Sánchez Rizo: “Peace-lover” and “Democrat” who has spent 40 years planting bombs... ?**

*Lazaro Barredo*

Ramón Saúl Sánchez Rizo could not restrain his rage or control it. Regulars at the Cubanaleco Club watched him leave in a fury that night after a heated exchange with Andrés Nazario Sargén and José Basulto.

It wasn't the first time that they had met there. They liked the place. For Ramón Saúl, old Nazario Sargén was a pillar of strength who had helped him a lot at the beginning of his counterrevolutionary career. In Miami, he was one of the founders – and later the chief – of the Alpha 66 counterrevolutionary organization. He organized plots and directed subversive, paramilitary and terrorist actions against the Republic of Cuba that included several failed attempts at infiltrations and uprisings in Cuban territory, as well as attempts on the life of Fidel Castro, including one when the Cuban leader visited the Republic of Chile.

Old Nazario was a “bicho” as Cubans refer to wise guys. Everyone knew that, although he instigated all those actions, Andrés Nazario Sargén never directly participated in them, but was accused on a few occasions of using such actions to line his own pocket with funds collected from the Cuban émigré community.

José Basulto came a close second in Ramón Saúl's esteem. “When I grow up I want to be like you,” he joked, but deep down inside that was the truth. José Basulto was a member of the 2506 Brigade and a CIA agent. After participating in the

Bay of Pigs invasion he kept up his counterrevolutionary activities, making long forays of the Cuban coast to attack Cuban targets. For example, in 1962, utilizing a speedboat from Miami, he machine-gunned a Havana hotel for tourists. In early 1990, under the auspices of the Miami terrorist mafia, he created Brothers to the Rescue, an allegedly humanitarian organization, which he used to boycott the migratory agreements and foment a conflict between the governments of the United States and Cuba. The backing that he obtained from the U.S. administration itself when, at the urging of Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, President Bush authorized the handing over U.S. Air Force Cessna planes. Brothers to the Rescue constantly incited incidents against the Republic of Cuba, among them violations of Cuban airspace on more than 30 occasions, and sometimes flying low over the city, dropping leaflets and other objects on Havana, up until the provocation that resulted in the downing of two light aircraft in Cuban airspace on February 24, 1996.

When Ramón Saúl left the Cubanaleco Club and reached 8<sup>th</sup> St. he jumped into his car and was seen to turn onto 74th Avenue at top speed. Nobody imagined that he was at the point of having an epileptic crisis.

A few blocks later, he stopped the car. He was shocked and had reason to be. The conversation that old Sargén and he had had with Basulto had alarmed both of them. The lawyers of Castro's spies were trying to turn the tables by subpoenaing various individuals in Miami and blame the exile community for a series of incidents presenting the Castro regime as a victim.

What had happened to Rodolfo Frómata was unheard of. The lawyers had dug up his past. Frómata acknowledged that he was the head of the terrorist Comando 4 organization. Of Cuban origin and resident in Miami, he had illegally entered the United States via the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo in 1968. The following year he was recruited by Alpha 66 and by June had gone to Miami with seven other terrorists. On a 45-day course at Los Indios camp he was trained in the use of weapons, explosives and irregular warfare. In 1981, under Alpha 66 instructions, he traveled to Cuba on the pretext of a visit to his family in Guantánamo, but in fact to organize acts of terrorism.



There he was detained on charges of subversive activities. In 1994 he left Alpha 66 and founded the Comandos F-4 terrorist organization. The FBI arrested him again at the point of purchasing four anti-air Stinger rocket launchers and other weapons. He stood trial and was sentenced to 41 months' imprisonment. He was released on parole and continued his involvement with Comandos F-4 without being further disturbed by U.S. authorities. During his trial he testified to a plot to assassinate President Fidel Castro.

José Basulto had also had a hard time and the lawyers were continuing their investigations. A lot of things were going to come out, and the U.S. government had sent out a very clear warning: have recourse to the Fifth Amendment, don't face a jury, because if you talk the DA will prosecute you.

Sánchez Rizo's situation was more complicated due to the "limbo" of his immigration status due to charges pending in the U.S. courts and any revelation of his past would be very embarrassing. It would erode the new image he had built for himself with the Movimiento Democracia and the fleets.

Yes, he reasoned, those actions would have to be neutralized; never mind a trial but go to talk with **The Herald** people to stop the Castroists getting away with it. The newspaper's March 28 edition reported Sánchez Rizo's call to other exile bosses to refuse to testify and thus avoid a jury trial.

Why was this "peace-lover" in such a panic?

Ramón Saúl had undoubtedly benefited from the metamorphosis that the Reagan administration had forced on the counterrevolutionary movement in the United States in 1980, when Cuban terrorists and CIA agents were converted into politicians in the new Miami-Dade county.

These days Sánchez Rizo was always in a suit and always armed "just in case." His "pacifist" activities consisted of fundraising for the Movimiento Democracia via events and collecting donations on Saturdays and Sundays at the 87<sup>th</sup> Ave and 24<sup>th</sup> Street stop lights with Movimiento Democracia placards.

He enjoyed this new invention of the flotilla, an ideal way of causing an incident and seeing if those Yankee fuckers finally decided to finish off Castro, and for the weary contributors the

war on communism it was more acceptable these days to “pass around the hat.”

Moreover, this new activity set him up as a leader and made him an important person in the community, although the old veterans’ wives laughed at Ramoncito, as all the old Miami mafia bosses called him.

Ramón Saúl Sánchez was the “dauphin” of the terrorist war and the spoiled kid of the capos of the main anti-Castro groups, and even the U.S. justice system.

He was born in Colón in Matanzas province, Cuba in 1954, the year after the assault on the Moncada Garrison, and left for Miami in 1967, where he was accepted “on his word.” At that time Miami was then alive with actions against Fidel Castro and Ramoncito rapidly found work in that crusade, and in fact had lived off it since his emigration to the United States.

In 1970 he joined the first two terrorist organizations he belonged to: the Cuban National Liberation Front (FLNC) and Alpha 66, which he headed until the death of his associate Andrés Nazario Sargén, when he began his criminal adventures. He was responsible for organizing 20-plus attacks on Cuban vessels and diplomatic missions. His first act of terrorism, that very same year, was to sink the fishing vessels *Plataforma I* and *IV* off the Bahamas coast, wounding two fishermen. He also masterminded kidnappings in Venezuela, Mexico and the United States.

He was arrested for the first time at an Alpha 66 camp for possession of combat weapons, but went before a complacent judge who merely gave him 12 months’ conditional liberty.

His delusions of grandeur took him to the leadership of the first terrorist group, *Jóvenes de la Estrella*. Its actions included a bomb planted in Miami International Airport on October 17, 1975, or the barbaric attack in September 1978, when four U.S. citizens were killed when their light aircraft was blown up en route to Cuba.

“Ramoncito” wanted more action, which is why he joined CORU, given that he was in close contact with its boss, Orlando Bosch Avila.

For Ramoncito, that was the peak of his career, as if he had gone through university. Orlando Bosch, of Cuban origin, lives

in Miami. An insurgent in the Escambray mountains in central Cuba, he was recruited and trained by the CIA.

Alongside Luis Posada Carriles he is considered one of the most dangerous terrorists in Miami and probably in the hemisphere in terms of bombing attacks and formed the so-called Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperación Revolucionaria (MIRR).

Bosch recently boasted on a Miami TV program of being sentenced to just four years for machine-gunning a Polish cargo vessel docked in Miami. He masterminded the sabotage of a Cubana de Aviation DC-8 that killed 73 people. He controls a terrorist network that operates under different names and whose members go in for attacks and sabotage.

According to an investigation by the Permanent Commission of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Assassinations, the CIA recruited Bosch in 1960. He founded CORU to engage in acts of terrorism against Cuba in Costa Rica, Panama, Jamaica and Mexico. From 1961-1968 he took part in more than 30 acts of sabotage and violence in the United States, Puerto Rico, Panama and Cuba. The U.S. district attorney said of him: Bosch is an inadmissible foreigner because there is reason to believe that he attempted to enter the United States to engage in activities prejudicial to the public interest that would endanger the welfare and security of the United States via espionage, sabotage, public disturbances or any other subversive activity against national security. Moves on his behalf by Miami mafia terrorists, primarily Congress members Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Jorge Mas Canosa, then president of the Cuban-American National Foundation, he was released in early 1990 by President George Bush (Sr.)

In 1979 the FBI identified Ramón Sánchez Rizo as the second-in-command of that group.

CORU carried out more than 90 terrorist attacks on Cuban facilities in several countries, including within the United States. The most monstrous was the sabotage of a civilian Cuban aircraft off the coast of Barbados.

During the late 70s Sánchez Rizo also trained counterrevolutionaries in a Nicaraguan camp in actions against Cuban merchant vessels. He was part of the team that killed

Carlos Muñiz Varela in Puerto Rico and a member of the group that attacked the Cuban Interests Section in Washington in 1979, and attempted to assassinate the Cuban ambassador to the UN, Raúl Roa Kourí.

During the early 1980s, “Ramoncito” decided to play tough and founded and directed the Organization for the Liberation of Cuba, which sowed terror up until 1984. During that period he also joined the Omega-7 as an explosives expert.

A number of declassified FBI documents noted his dangerousness. For example, one report states that in December 1980, a few hours after a bomb exploded outside the Cuban consulate in Montreal, Pedro Crispín Remón Hernández and Ramón Saúl Dánchez Rizo were picked up on the Canadian-U.S. border as suspects of the attack.

Remón Hernández was an active member of Omega-7, planting explosive devices and engaging in attacks in the United States, two of which killed Félix García, a Cuban diplomat at the UN, and Cuban émigré Eulalio José Negrin in New Jersey. He became a CIA agent in 1962 and planned a wide range of attacks with other terrorist groups in Miami. He was arrested by the FBI in 1982, accused of transporting explosives and planting a bomb in the car of Raúl Roa Kourí, head of the Cuban mission to the UN, in an attempt to kill him. He also confessed to planting a device in the Cuban mission to the UN on December 7, 1979; another one on Dec 11 in the former Soviet mission to the UN. He later planted a third device in the Soviet Airlines Office. He was an active participant in attempts on the life of President Fidel Castro and was arrested in Panama during the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, during plans for another assassination attempt against the Cuban leader at the University there.

An FBI report dated September 25, 1982, covers another attempted attack on the Cuban ambassador to the UN with a car bomb. It states that Ramón Saul Sánchez prepared a remote-control device with the help of Arosena (Eduardo Arosena, the Omega-7 capo, well known in the 70s for markedly violent acts of terrorism in U.S. territory). Arosena was considered Public Enemy No 1 by the FBI. During his trial in the New York Federal Court, Arosena admitted introducing hemorrhagic dengue

into Cuba on CIA instructions. The disease led to the death of 158 people, including 101 children.

The FBI considered Omega-7 the most dangerous terrorist organization in the United States. It was responsible for many dynamite attacks on the accredited missions to the UN in New York of a number of countries, and other public facilities in the United States. Examples include the TWA offices, Madison Square Garden and the port of New York, and a large number of murders.

In 1984 Ramoncito was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for failing to appear before a grand jury in New York to give information on Omega-7 activities. He was released in 1986, two years before completing his term.

A number of experts agree that the intensification of acts of terrorism in the late 70s and early 80s made some of these individuals of Cuban origin a threat to national security. In the mid-80s the neoconservatives who voted Ronald Reagan into the White House set about creating for the U.S. society a new and acceptable image of the Cuban émigré community, so closely linked to terrorism.

When Ramoncito was released, he was put on hold for a time. He tried working as a storekeeper and even as a truck driver, but he wasn't cut out for that.

The collapse of the Socialist bloc served as a stimulus to revive counterrevolutionary actions against Cuba. It prompted renewed violence and terrorism and, within the mafia itself, modified the idea of reforming groups in the rural part of the island to boost subversion against the revolutionary process.

"Ramoncito" tried to return to his old ways; first by joining his old faction, the Organization for the Liberation of Cuba; then forming his own group, the Cuban National Commission; and finally ending up under the umbrella of traitor Hubert Matos, in Cuba Independiente y Democrática (CID), an organization that was receiving large sums from the United States. Within the CID he headed the overblown Naval Actions Group, drawing in terrorists prepared to take part in acts of violence against Cuba.

In turn, were it not for the money that the Americans gave Hubert Matos, Ramón Saúl would not have gotten involved with that old and tightfisted opportunist who became wealthy

on account of his anti-Castroism. A traitor to the Revolution, after being released from prison on the island, he founded the CID. According to several sources, the group was sponsored by the CIA and was one of the first organizations to consider the strategy of proselytism in Latin America and to seek the overthrow of the revolutionary government via a military coup. Its purpose was mainly propagandist, and Matos' personality has been a constant source within and outside of the organization.

"Ramoncito's" great opportunity to emerge as a leader in the Miami Cuban-American community came during disturbances that arose in the wake of the migratory agreements signed between Cuba and the United States on May 1, 1995. He was arrested on May 2 but immediately released, even though the FBI was well aware that he was harboring a considerable stockpile of weapons.

His role in the disturbances gave him the publicity to form the Movimiento Democracia in July of that year. He claimed that it was not ruled by any political platform, but received substantial funds from the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF), the Bacardí family and other well-known representatives of reactionary power in Miami.

Thus, on July 13, he organized the first flotilla with the veiled interest of creating a conflict by constantly violating Cuban territorial waters and airspace. It has been clearly demonstrated that Sánchez Rizo and José Basulto are sworn enemies of the migratory agreements and have worked on sabotaging them. Both Movimiento Democracia and Hermanos al Rescate have concentrated their efforts on provoking tension between the U.S. government and Cuba, promoting acts of terrorism and constantly calling for acts of disobedience by the Cuban community in Miami.

On September 2 that year, Ramón Saúl organized another flotilla in which one of the boats sank, accidentally killing one person.

In November 1995 he was arrested for interrupting the activities of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington. On that occasion the U.S. authorities sent him for psychological tests.

He was one of the ringleaders of the Miami mafia involved in the kidnapping of the Cuban child Elián González, who

invented a series of lives and illegal actions in violation of all international measures to keep the child apart from his father and his homeland.

In conjunction with other ultra-rightwing anti-Cuban organizations in Miami, he planned and promoted acts of civil disobedience to prevent compliance with the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) decision to restore the child to his father.

In August 2000, Sánchez Rizo appeared before a judge on charges of unlawful gathering, contempt and obstruction of a highway after disturbances in Miami caused by the fanatic opponents of Elián's return. Nonetheless, nothing happened to the instigator.

One month earlier, Ramón Saúl was arrested by the U.S. Coastguard for violating the 12-mile limit and entering Cuban waters in open contempt of a presidential order but was immediately released again, although on this occasion his boat was confiscated.

One year later, in July 2001, he was re-arrested for the repeated violation of a U.S. presidential decree. But it was not until September of that year that he appeared in court for repeatedly violating Cuban territorial waters.

The mafia brotherhood sprung to his defense. Ramón Saúl himself headed a radio marathon to collect funds to support the defense of the arch-criminal Luis Posada Carriles and the other three terrorists imprisoned in Panama.

Luis Posada Carriles was another of the old gang whom Ramoncito had always admired. "He's always consistent when it's time to bomb the communists," he told friends while collecting funds.

Posada Carriles was born in Cuba in 1926. Initially linked to the military during the Batista dictatorship, after the triumph of the Revolution he was recruited by the CIA in Havana in the early 60s. His initial conspiracies against the Cuban government failed and he decided to appeal for asylum in the Argentine embassy in February 1961. He left rapidly for Miami where the CIA incorporated him into the Bay of Pigs mercenary brigade. After the failed invasion he was trained in sabotage and military tactics in U.S. army installations, primarily at Fort Benning, where

he reached the grade of Captain of the Rangers. His classmates there included Mas Canosa, who became one of his closest friends. From 1961-1963 he was involved in CIA infiltrations of Cuba. In 1964 he joined the RECE with Mas Canosa and engaged in several acts of terrorism on Cuban and Soviet vessels docked in third countries or in international waters.

He also took part in a number of attempts on the life of President Fidel Castro and in 30-plus armed or violent actions against Cubans or Cuban properties. Throughout that period he was a member of or linked to the Alpha 66, Brigada 2506, Junta Revolucionaria en el exilio, Movimiento 30 de Noviembre and Commando L terrorist organizations, while maintaining close personal and political ties with Félix Rodríguez and Jorge Mas Canosa, regardless of the organizations to which he belonged. In 1969, on CIA orders, he joined the DISIP, the Venezuelan Intelligence Service as a liaison between that agency and the CIA, later becoming chief of operations. At the same time he opened up a private detective agency in Caracas that served both to boost his income and as a CIA front in the area. When the CORU terrorist group formed in the early 70s he secretly joined it, prompted by his old buddies Orlando Bosch and Mas Canosa, and masterminded and participated in the sabotage of a Cubana Aviation plane off the coast of Barbados in 1976. With concrete evidence of his participation, he was detained by the Venezuelan police and his detective agency was closed down. However, pressure was utilized to draw out the legal proceedings until finally, his friends Jorge Mas Canosa and Félix Rodríguez Mendogoitia sprung him from the Venezuelan maximum security prison and helped him move into the CIA structure in Central America to back the Contras in Nicaragua. For that purpose he set up a base in Ilopango in El Salvador under the alias of Ramón Medina. He also participated in operations in Guatemala under the name of Juan José Rivas and joined the Central American cartel involved in trafficking weapons and drugs. In the 90s he organized a number of mercenaries for a series of bombings of Havana hotels, and was arrested in Panama during the 10th Ibero-American Summit, while preparing to assassinate President Fidel Castro. After lengthy legal proceedings and while his sentence was under



appeal, he was pardoned by Mireya Moscoso, then the Panamanian president.

Ramón Saúl Sánchez organized the campaign to release Posada Carriles, convinced that he too would get support and protection from other notorious terrorist organizations like the Cuban-American National Foundation and Agenda Cuba, which were arranging Posada's defense.

Finally, in spite of charges filed against him for violating Cuban territorial waters on several occasions, on May 15, 2002 a Miami jury found Ramón Raúl Sánchez not guilty and absolved him.

After spending a few months without working and living off the Movimiento Democracia, his father-in-law persuaded him to work, at least temporarily, in his store for orthopedic and Alicia fashion shoes, not too heavily, given that Ramón Saúl had problems with one arm after an accident on one of his adventures.

However, comments in Miami circles were that Ramoncito was a lucky guy, given that a close friend, Cecilia, who shares his ideas, had taken him under her wing. Other sources say that while he has kept up his maritime activities, taking advantage of any opportunity to show off before the TV cameras, he is still closely linked to Alpha 66 and one of his close buddies, terrorist Calixto Campos Corona.

On September 23, 2003, Ramón Saúl Sánchez was taken before the courts on charges of illegally residing in the United States, given that he did not have citizenship or permanent residence. According to anti-terrorist legislation, immigration regulations include the deporting of foreigners who have been jailed for serious offenses.

That arrogant character felt nervous in the wake of the events of September 11 and decided to normalize his situation. He had lived with incredible impunity in the United States for close to 40 years. But on the day he appeared before the immigration authorities, so did his bulky file and, as a colleague noted, he was sadly surprised to find himself under arrest.

However, aware of the *carte blanche* held by Cubans who serve the "cause," Ramoncito wasn't too worried. His detention was a brief affair; possibly it was even good publicity. The only

action taken was to formally call him back to court; but this had happened so many times, that the only thing to be sorry about was the waste of time.

Effectively, a few weeks later a federal court accepted his right to remain in the United States.

He left the courthouse with his usual arrogance and making defiant gestures. Nothing can go above the principle of always having the Cuban exiles to hand because, as someone in the inner circle of the ultra-right in Washington once said, they are “an effective screw” in favor of the aggressive foreign policy of the president in relation to Cuba.

Terrorists, but our terrorists.  
Where can terrorists find safe ports?  
If you are that kind of Cuban exile, right here.

Kirk Nielsen  
*Miami New Times*, December 20, 2001.

*Sincerely, I trust that some day Cuba will not need people like me who voluntarily and for love of their country and their people come to this country to fight against terrorism.*

Fernando González Llorit

## **Something more about the terrorist Ramón Saúl Sánchez Rizo**

*René González Schwerert*

To: Editorial Capitán San Luis

December 16, 2004

“Year of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution”

When I met Ramón Saúl Sánchez early in 1995, he was notorious in the political environment of Miami through a rather particular kind of pacifism born under no less particular and obscure circumstances.

The city was in crisis. The migratory agreements had been signed in May allowing safe emigration for twenty thousand Cubans a year. The ghetto exploded. Those who, a few days before, had defended the rights of Cubans to sacrifice their lives in flimsy rafts to reach the promised land, now rebelled when the promised land opened up its doors, allowing immigration without risking their lives.

As alleged defenders of rafters’ right to “freedom” they suddenly fiercely opposed those to reach “freedom” comfortably on board a plane like any rational person would do under inexplicable circumstances; that, however, is a subject for a sociologist.

In the midst of this chaos, of traffic jams and other protest demonstrations due to the signing of migratory agreements, Ramoncito —to his friends— reappeared in public life from his confinement in prison serving time for refusing to testify regarding the crimes he had been involved in —including the assassination

of Cuban diplomats—, as member of the Abdala and Omega 7 terrorist organizations.

While in those protests and street disturbances he felt inspired in a particular kind of pacifism, to which I referred before. In fact what made it this special was the purpose: to create an international incident between Cuba and the United States that could escalate to an armed confrontation. That was what gave rise to the much trumpeted “fleets”, merely illegal incursions violating Cuban waters in vessels flying U.S. flags, hypocritically demanding and alleging the right to return that still, in 2004 is denied by the U.S. government and where many do not complain about the measure. (This too would be a subject for another essay).

The propaganda success of the first fleet—in July 1995—increased the popularity of Ramoncito in a ghetto of few heroes, preventing him from accepting the responsibility for the resounding failures of the ones that followed in September and November of that same year. That was how we met, months later, gathered around a map and planning another ambitious failure: a simultaneous provocation in three different points of Cuba, with a landing included.

One of the points chosen for the landing targets was in the Nipe Bay region and, while identifying possible contingency points, the finger of Ramon Saúl stopped at the symbol of a sunken ship, not far from Guincho Key, to the north of Ciego de Avila. Coming out of his habitual reserve—which he now probably regrets—he laughingly confessed: “We sunk that ship”.

Then we heard him describe how, during the seventies, as part of an assault group, they boarded the ship at night and then set the crew adrift on a boat and sett the ship on fire to make it sink.

During that time a tall and gray haired man made an occasional visit to that pacifist oasis of the Democracy movement offices. Ramon said he was “a true patriot, of the good ones” who, “for tactical reasons”, should not have links with the pacifist group. The Maestro—as Ramoncito also called him— came and went until I stopped seeing him for a time when I was arrested.

The next time I saw him was in a photograph among the group in Miami that would form a support commission in favor of Luis Posada Carriles and the other terrorists arrested in Panama. Reynold Rodríguez —the Maestro according to Ramón Saúl Sánchez— was one of them.

On September 11, 2001 the United States of America —or America as they like to call themselves— discovered terrorism (Or lost their innocence, as a brought up idiot who renders service to some imperial media that coined the phrase).

It seemed that an indiscriminate wave of domestic repression that followed would not leave a terrorist at large in America. After all, thousands of innocents disappeared from public view for more trivial reasons, such as their ethnic origin.

That is why there was a knock on the door of Ramón Saúl and his terrorist history put him in conflict with the Patriot Act. We soon learned that he could run the same fate that the U.S. president had reserved for those who practiced terrorism —in other words people like Ramoncito— and the news dispatches reported that he would face a process to condition his stay in America— simply in the imperial one.

It was too much to ask, believing that the U.S. government would take to court its own terrorist like any other terrorist, would be like accepting the ridiculous story of their lost innocence.

Ramón Saúl Sánchez stays as his Maestro Reynold, Posada and so many more. Terrorism against Cuba will continue to be a well-guarded secret by any “free press” that respects itself. Our victims will not have existed, as the innocent victims in Iraq and Palestine buried by a criminal indifference.

Cuba, however, will not be gone like any another victim. And the morale of our people will swallow up any action attempted by the suicidal empire and, in that final adventure its terrorist will sing a swan song with the empire that gave them birth and gave rise to the abominable crime against humanity that is terrorism.

René González Sehwerert  
Federal Correctional Institution  
Edgefield, South Carolina.

16 de diciembre del 2004.

"Año del 45 Aniversario del Triunfo de la Revolución"

Cuando conocí a Ramón Saúl Sánchez, a principios de 1995, este ganaba notoriedad en el ambiente político de Miami a través de una variante de pacifismo algo sui géneris, nacida en no menos sui géneris e inexplicables circunstancias.

La ciudad estaba en crisis. En el mes de mayo se habían firmado los acuerdos migratorios que permitirían la emigración, de manera segura, a veinte mil cubanos cada año. El ghetto explotó. Quienes hasta unos días antes defendían el derecho de los cubanos en la isla a jugarse la vida en frágiles balsas para alcanzar la tierra prometida, se rebelaban ahora cuando la tierra prometida se abría a los de allá, permitiéndoles la inmigración sin arriesgar sus vidas.

Cómo los supuestos defensores del derecho de los balseros a la "libertad", se convirtieron repentinamente en fieros opositores a que sus defendidos alcanzaran la susodicha "libertad" cómodamente, en un avión, es lo que haría, para cualquier persona racional, inexplicables las circunstancias; pero eso es tema para otro ensayo de pespuntos sociológicos.

El caso es que en medio del caos, de los embotellamientos de autopistas y otras manifestaciones de protesta generadas por los acuerdos migratorios, Ramoncito -para sus amigos- resucitó a la vida pública tras un retiro en prisión, donde había cumplido condena por negarse a testificar en relación a los crímenes en que había tomado parte -incluyendo el asesinato de diplomáticos cubanos-, como miembro de las organizaciones Abdala y Omega 7.

En aquellas protestas y disturbios callejeros se inspiró al método del pacifismo sui géneris a que me refería antes; pero lo que lo hacía sui géneris era en realidad el propósito: crear un incidente internacional entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos que luego pudiera escalar en una confrontación armada. De ahí surgieron las cacareadas "flotillas": meras irrupciones ilegales en Cuba, en embarcaciones con matrícula norteamericana, reclamando un hipócrita y pretendido derecho al retorno que todavía, en el 2004, es negado por el gobierno norteamericano sin que sean muchos los que se quejen. (Esto sería también tema de otro ensayo)

El éxito propagandístico de la primera flotilla -efectuada en julio de 1995- elevó la popularidad de Ramoncito en un ghetto escaso de héroes, impidiéndole aceptar el estrepitoso fracaso de las que le siguieron en septiembre y noviembre del mismo año. Fue así que nos vimos, meses después, reunidos alrededor de un mapa mientras planificábamos otro ambicioso fracaso: una provocación simultánea por tres puntos distintos de Cuba, en esta ocasión con desembarco incluido.

Uno de los puntos de desembarco estaría localizado en los alrededores de Nipe, y mientras identificábamos en la carta los posibles puntos de contingencia el dedo de Ramón Saúl se detuvo en el símbolo de un barco hundido, no lejos de Cayo Guincho, al norte de Ciego de Avila. Rompiendo su habitual reserva -lo que ahora supongo lamentará- confesó algo divertido:

- Ese barco fue el que hundimos nosotros.

A continuación le escuchamos describir como en los años setenta, como parte de un grupo de asalto, tomaron el barco en la noche y, dejando a los tripulantes en un bote a la deriva, le prendieron fuego para hacerlo zozobrar.

De aquellos tiempos era visita ocasional, en aquel oasis del pacifismo que eran las oficinas del Movimiento Democracia, un señor alto y canoso, algo sobre los cincuenta, de quien Ramón decía que era "un patriota de verdad, de los buenos" a quien "por razones tácticas" no convenía vincular mucho al grupo pacifista. El maestro -como también le llamaba Ramoncito- fue figura que fue y vino hasta que dejé de verlo, al menos por un tiempo, cuando me arrestaron.



La próxima vez que le vi fue en una fotografía, a propósito del grupo de Miami que formaría la comisión de apoyo en favor de Luis Posada Carriles y los otros tres terroristas procesados en Panamá. Reynold Rodríguez -El Maestro, según Ramón Saúl Sánchez- era uno de aquellos.

El 11 de septiembre del 2001 los Estados Unidos de América -o América, así a secas, como les gusta llamarse a sí mismos- descubrieron el terrorismo. (O perdieron su inocencia, al decir del idiota ilustrado al servicio de algún medio imperial que acuñó la frase).


Parecería que en la ola indiscriminada de represión doméstica que siguió no quedaría terrorista suelto en América. Después de todo miles de inocentes fueron desaparecidos de la vista pública por razones mucho más triviales, tales como su origen étnico.

Fue así que la ley tocó a la puerta de Ramón Saúl, y sus antecedentes terroristas le colocaron en conflicto con el Acta Patriótica. Pronto supimos que podría correr la suerte que según el presidente al país tenía reservada a quienes se dedicaban al terrorismo -o sea, a personas como Ramoncito- y los cables nos dijeron que sería sometido a un proceso del que dependería su estancia en América -la imperial, así a secas.

Demasiado pedir. Creer que el gobierno norteamericano trataría a sus **terroristas** como unos terroristas cualesquiera sería como creerse el cuento cursi de la pérdida inocencia.

Ramón Saúl Sánchez se queda; como se quedan su maestro Reynold, Posada y tantos más. El terrorismo contra Cuba seguirá siendo un secreto bien guardado por cualquier "prensa libre" que se respete. Nuestras víctimas no habrán existido, tal y como ahora mismo desaparecen diariamente, enterradas por una indiferencia criminal, las víctimas inocentes en Iraq o en Palestina.

Pero no desaparecerá, como una víctima más, Cuba. Al imperio suicida que lo intente se lo tragará la moral de nuestro pueblo y en esa, su aventura final, entonarán el canto del cisne, junto al imperio que los parió, sus terroristas y el abominable crimen contra la humanidad que es el terrorismo.

  
René González Behwerdt  
Federal Correctional Institution  
Edgefield, South Carolina



In the case of the five, the trial was held in a completely hostile city for the accused (Miami) where it was impossible to have a fair and impartial process that was demonstrated previously by the lawyers for the defense who presented a motion for change of venue that was rejected.

*We will continue to appeal to the love of truth of the people of the United States with all the patience, faith and courage accused of the crime of being worthy.*

RENÉ GONZÁLEZ SEHEWERERT

## **Leonel Macías González: Treason in the channel. Death in the 50-34**

*Ileana García*

*Shots broke the silence. Only a few seconds had passed. The man fell in the sea and was lost in a whirlwind while the channel bed wrapped around him...*

—Come on lieutenant! The voice of the captain of the small vessel surprised him. He was looking out at the intense blue of the bay waters. He was thinking of many things, of how many mysteries the sea hides, of his children. He was young, 38 years old, but he felt that he didn't have enough time.

He nimbly jumped on to the vessel and sat at the stern to look out onto the landscape. Far away, the Mariel port. It would be a short trip, about 20 minutes, to the dock in playa La Boca, a normal trip of auxiliary transportation of Military Base 43-59 of the navy. He exchanged greetings with the crew, Osmany, Yahazimell and Arnel. It was the last trip of the three a day...

*The waters seemed darker and the divers repeatedly went under. The search continued unsuccessfully.*

Lieutenant Roberto Aguilar Reyes sat at the stern; he was the chief and responsible for guarding the vessel. He heard the crew and three civilian workers joking and he concentrated on his mission, calm and quiet. They reached La Boca beach and the travelers disembarked. In a few minutes it would head back.

Roberto waited patiently with a soft smile. He recalled his children, Liudmila, the oldest, 13 years old, Daney who was 10

and Deusnelly —Piky—, who was nine and who he often took to his Base. They called him Pipa and his family called him Bebo.

It was Monday, August eight. There was no trip to Camagüey on these holidays because Georgina, his mother, was staying with him, his wife Daysi and the children. Had Daysi received the message to buy the return trip for his mother? When he left the house on Saturday, they called him from the base and he forgot to remind her.

When Georgina saw on television the funeral rights of young Lamothe Caballero,<sup>1</sup> she said moved:

—Look Bebo, look at that poor mother!

—Don't fear; you should be proud of your children— he answered.

The time came to return to the base. Ferrocemento launch 50-34 was ready since 5:30 in the afternoon.

—Lieutenant!—, a young recruit called out—. Please I need to go on this trip; I was on holiday and need to deliver a doctor's certificate.

Roberto knew him and gave him permission to board. It was Leonel, a young man who was at the base for several months. He would be the only passenger this time.

*More than 30 hours of exploration had passed. Day and night. In the tug anxiety tightened time while he listened to the sound of the waves beating softly against the vessel...*

The tug cast off La Boca. The crew was near the bow. The Lieutenant sat calmly at the stern. Soon he would be back at the base with his comrades. In front of Lazarete, Leonel approached the crew.

—Look, I've brought you pizza— and suddenly took out a weapon. Surprised the crew saw the man turn around, lift the weapon and coldly fire upon the Lieutenant who barely had time to get to his gun that he had in his belt in back.

—And you, if you do not want to follow him to the bottom of the bay. Keep quiet and head for the dock of La arenera! I don't

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Lamothe Caballero, young combatant of MININT vilely assassinated on August 4, 1994.

mind killing another one! —the assassin yelled threatening the unarmed crew with his gun.

They reached the dock of la arenera. The kidnapper had the young men lie face down on deck. The tug was boarded by 26 persons including several children and proceeded to leave the bay.

—And these shit faces don't want to leave! —Macías said, placing the gun barrel to the head of one of the crew.

—You don't have to kill them!—, a woman said in a quavering voice. At about 60 meters from the coast the criminal ordered Osmany, Yahasimell and Arnel to jump into the water...

—They're following us!—, yelled one of the accomplices of the kidnapper when he saw the Cuban Coast Guard who called on them to halt. There was great nervousness on board.

—This does not stop until it reaches Miami, dammit! —Macias threatened. He couldn't stop thinking of his arrival in the United States. He was sure of one thing and that was the reception.

—These Americans are sure to put our picture in the papers. And live the life, dammit!

Because of the refusal of the kidnappers to stop the boat and to prevent further loss of life at sea, the Cuban Coast Guard stopped following it at a point, 23-16 north and longitude 82-36 west, course 010... The Coast Guard in Miami was informed.

The notice transmitted by the Cuban authorities was decisive in the rescue. After many hours at sea, desperation and terror occupied every space, the boat was taking in water.

—There's a boat, a boat!— Crying, fear and shouts, were heard amidst the confusing sounds of the sea.

—We're saved, dammit! Long live the Americans!— Macías González shouted.

Coast Guard Courageous rescued the group as the pirated vessel sank. The illegal immigrants, accomplices of this vandalic act, horrified saw how the sea swallowed the 50-34.

*The officer allegedly killed by the kidnappers aboard a Cuban ship is alive..." the U.S. Coast Guard reported... "Our information revealed that no one died, the person allegedly*

*assassinated was on board, assured officer Steve Banks of the coast guard.”*

*The United States government has no proof to confirm that the kidnappers of a navy vessel killed an officer and threw others over board, informed Michael Mc Curry, spokesman of the State Department...”Despite the request of Havana based on the fact that the refugees are delinquents and should be tried, the United States has not intention, for the time being, of returning them to Cuba...”*

Roberto was killed on August 8, 1995. Searching for his body continued until the 10<sup>th</sup> along the channel. At about 11 in the morning one of the divers surfaced: —We found him!

The minutes that followed were horrifying. We were in tug number 5. We looked at each other. The knot of the tragedy stuck in our throat. A brief and intense movement in the water and suddenly the deformed and swollen body in decomposition suddenly appeared.

After more than 40 hours in the water, there was the body of Roberto with his navy pullover. That man, even dead, was able to break the cynical lies of the Americans and defend the honor of his country.

The news of the navy lieutenant reached his humble home. Dozens of neighbors grouped around the micro brigade building of the Silvio Caro barrio in Cabañas. It was difficult to get to the door. Georgina was standing there. When we saw her she brought to mind Mariana Grajales, not only because her amazing physical similarity but also because of her integrity and courage. She was not crying. She held back her pain. —“I want no tears here! — she strongly proclaimed.

—My son was doing his duty. I am proud of him. These assassins will not be able to destroy the Revolution— she said slowly making each word a sentence.

She was surrounded by her family, the children, Roberto’s wife, friends and comrades of the navy lieutenant who was decorated post mortem by the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba with the Order of Valor, Antonio Maceo.



The Cubans paid tribute to him in Mariel and his remains were buried in Camagüey. Raúl Castro, General of the Army accompanied the family. The image of the Minister of FAR and Georgina, saluting militarily while the ceremony was fixed in the mind...

## **The masks of lies**

On August 11, Fidel appeared before the television cameras. Speaking of the facts he said:

“[...] The body only appeared at 11 in the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>. But what did they do in the meantime? They began spreading their versions and information to the world, lies, falsities, trying to hide the events and cover for the person responsible and the accomplices of that assassin [...]

“[...] The situation would be difficult if the body did not appear, really difficult because the only testimony were those three seamen and the legend now going around that he was the one who kidnapped the vessel and the other was a soldier who had only been doing his military service for merely four to five months while this man who is assassinated had many years in the navy, had a beautiful history and a commendable history [...].

“[...] on the fourth they kill Lamothe and four days later they killed Aguilar [...] This occurred in less than a week and can give an idea what level of stimulus and impunity of these elements who have done these crimes [...]

“[...] You need a sense of absolute impunity to do this and, of course, after they see what they do with them in Florida. Everything has been like that and no one has been punished for many, many years while they kidnap ships, hijack planes, commit crimes; they have done everything and not one single penalty, not even one!

[...] This is a man (Aguilar) who has many merits, very quiet, very modest, very revolutionary and has fallen in the line of duty [...].”

## **Diplomatic note**

Republic of Cuba  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

To the Honorable Embassy of Switzerland  
United States of America Interest Section  
Havana

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs attentively greets the Honorable Embassy of Switzerland, United States of America Interest Section regarding the kidnapping of ferrocement 5034 of the Revolutionary Navy in Mariel Bay on August 8, 1994 and during which navy lieutenant Roberto Aguilar Reyes was assassinated is pleased to deliver the file on the events prepared by the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces that encloses the following documents:

File No. 1:

- Summary report of the events
- Preliminary report
- File of the general characteristics of the officer assassinated.
- File of the assassin.
- Messages exchanged between the Miami Coast Guard Service and the Coast Guard of Cuba.
- Official resolution opening the file.
- Act of the visual inspection of the place of events.
- Act of reconstruction of the events.
- Act of discovery of the body.
- Act of inspection of the body.

File No. 2:

- Testimonial procedures and others on the events, circumstances, act of occupation of properties, etc.

File No. 3

- Photo tables:

Finding of the body.

Finding, removal and autopsy.

Autopsy

Finger printing expert

– Nautical map of the Mariel Bay with illustrations of the development of events.

– Video.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes the opportunity to reiterate its consideration to the Honorable Embassy of Switzerland, United States of America Interest Section.

Havana, August 16, 1994.

Macías was interrogated by U.S. authorities. —It’s a lie! I didn’t kill anyone! It’s a dirty lie of the communists! I swear that no one died in this trip to freedom. I am the only navy official who came on the boat and here I am! Ask the others and tell Castro to show the body. If there was a death, where’s the body? I am innocent.

The Miami press repeated the claims: “It was one of the tensest moments between Washington and Cuba. On Tuesday night the U.S. Coast Guard detained, at sea, 26 passengers on board a Cuban boat allegedly hijacked. The Cuban government accuses one of the hijackers of assassinating the captain of the boat, a navy lieutenant. U.S. authorities aboard the coast guard *Courageous* were interviewing the refugees and no decision has yet been made regarding their fate...”

When the body of Roberto Aguilar Reyes appeared, the assassin had to change his story.

—Dammit! They found the son of a bitch!— he told himself.

He was in the federal detention center and decided to write a letter to Mr. Arturo Cobo, head of the Cuban Transit Home.

The letter began: “I have committed no crime. I acted in self-defense and place my confidence in American laws for which I risked my life, I am a Cuban who wants to live in freedom. If I am returned to Cuba, Castro will execute me. I prefer to live in a United States jail where I can sleep and awake in peace...”

## **A decade later**

In the Silvia Caro barrio, the secondary school is named after Roberto where they care for his place of honor. Daysi, his wife, cares for the photographs and personal object of the martyr one of which are the epaulettes of the navy lieutenant.

Piky is doing his military service in the same naval base of his father's. Deusney is studying medicine and Liudmila has two children.

The lieutenant's mother, Georgina, continues to live in Camagüey with her other children —Norberto and Omar (soldiers) and Xiomara —, suffering his heartrending absence every minute of the day.

Glenda Cordero Aguilar, a beautiful five-year-old girl tells us: —“My grandfather was killed by a bad man to steal a boat...”

## **Another criminal walks the streets of Miami**

Macías wasn't worried of having to go to trial. “Everything is OK; the Americans aren't going to fail me. No way!,” he repeated although he had a little doubt about that “issue” of the lieutenant. “After all they don't care if there was a death or who killed him. In the end it is just one communist less. I am just another who escaped from communist hell and had the courage to shoot it out to come to this land of liberty.”

A few days after the assassination of Aguilar in 1994 when the impact of the crime still disturbed Cuba, the news came that Leonel Macías was released in the United States. The press published his smiling and ecstatic face walking the streets of Miami. The Cuban people were indignant about the affront.

Macías got ready to “live well”. For several days he felt the hero of the moment. The anti-Castroists of the so-called Cuban exile received him warmly. They toasted his courage and he laughed “at those dogs who wanted to fuck me”. He enjoyed

his strolls around the city, along Eighth Street and submerged himself in the Miami environment...

The festivities around him of the first days began to slacken. Years passed. “Only I know what I have had to know to survive”, he has told his friends often but not mentioning that dark act of piracy in Mariel. “That is dead and buried.”

In whole a decade Macías has not been disturbed by the authorities. He walks free and calmly along the palm trees of sunny Miami and one of his last feats has been selling towels he steals from his work.

The assassin was not wrong about one thing: the Americans did not fail him and he sleeps and awakens in peace —like he wanted— in a land of freedom, democracy and justice.



Ships have run the same fate and those who have killed to obtain their purposes have not been tried nor sentenced and enjoy freedom in the United States Why do they leave? Because they are absolutely certain of their impunity. They are totally sure of their impunity and privileges and the advantages offered by the Law of Cuban Adjustment is a powerful stimulus to terrorism.

*Terrorism against Cuba will continue to be a well kept secret by any “free press” that respects itself. Our victims may not have existed...*

René González Schwerert



## **Rodolfo Frómeta: Frómeta and F-4: a genetic cross of terrorism**

*Joel García*

The morning of July 2, 1994 was cool in Miami. It was ideal to close a thousand dollar business. It was faster than expected, but what did it matter; everything was possible in this country. Even buying weapons from someone in Miami Beach who on May 7 presented himself as a U.S. Armed Forces sergeant. No introduction was necessary:

—I am Rodolfo Frómeta, commander in chief of Comandos F-4 organization fighting for the freedom of Cuba —his arrogance was notable— and I have been told that you can sell us heavy weapons to achieve the dream of seeing a free, democratic and sovereign Cuba.

The alleged official, Reymon López avoided so much wordiness and went to the point..

—What do you want? I have everything and at a low price because they are leftovers from the Gulf War, he kindly commented.

Frómeta stroked his triangular beard, examined each proposal and let loose with a barrage of requests:

—Four Stinger missiles (RPM-antiaircraft), anti-tank rockets (M72 Lightweight), grenade launchers (Weapons MK-1940) and C-4 explosives.

—It's a deal.

Reymon will let him know when to pick them up and payment will be in cash: 15 000 dollars. This is the sum previously agreed upon that Reymon would make at noon on June 2, 1994.

After Frómata and one of the most veteran terrorist of Alpha 66, Fausto Marimón, received instruction on how to use that arsenal, the first part of the transaction was paid for, 5 000 dollars. The rest would be forthcoming when the equipment was tested. They had just loaded a van they had rented for the purpose, when a group of armed FBI agents entered into action. All had been prepared intelligently and with caution. It was one of the many federal operations in which Reymon acted as an undercover agent on the illegal purchase of forbidden weapons.

But the most terrible, conspiratorial and cynical story was about to unfold for Frómata and his organization. The government offered him a year of house arrest if he pleaded guilty and left Comandos F-4. Several merchants in Miami were even ready to pay for conditional freedom demanded by the defense. Among justification of other well-known terrorists, prosecutor Wilfredo Fernández passed sentence: 41 months in prison. For many it was truly a reduction because soon Frómata was out and on September of 1997 benefiting from temporary freedom under the condition of not leaving Miami and not to go roaming about with armed persons.

But this is only part of a chapter of someone who had no scruples to announce to national and international public opinion that he wanted the powerful Stinger missiles to shoot down commercial flights over the coast of the Island and, of course, helicopters and airplanes where the Cuban president was traveling. He intended to blow up bridges or cars in which Fidel Castro traveled and even supported attacks against all localities or activities that generated foreign currency in the country by clandestine units of Comandos F-4.

## **Alpha 66, first step of impunity in terror**

Cayo Vizcaino. February 7, 1994. The bustle of men around a modern boat called the attention of customs officers and the coast guard. A surprise search of the boat ruined an attempt at infiltration of Cuba by Alpha 66 of three men with sinister bac-

kground, Rogelio Abréu Azcuy, Fausto Maribán and Rodolfo Frómeta Caballero.

Confiscation of military supplies surpassed calculations of the authorities: 50 firearms, 26 000 bullets, assault rifles, pistols, uniforms and the never lacking thousands of dollars.

—“We had a problem with our motor”— he barefacedly explained to the customs officials. The following day the press supplied more evident proof of the impunity of these kinds of terrorist incidents: A photo of the commando after interrogations leaving to go home, as if nothing had happened, just a small confiscation and a misunderstanding.

It was a repeat of three months before. Almost the same protagonists, in similar scenarios and with identical arrogance, freely preparing terrorist actions against Cuba. In one week, October 19 and 23 of 1993 they were picked up twice in Maraton Key. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, 15 miles south of the key stocked with machine guns, AK 47 rifles, mini Rugger 14 rifles, maps of the Island and ammunition, in another attempt of infiltration. Four days later, in the same place, with a larger arsenal that, according to Frómeta was totally returned to Alpha 66 when they demonstrated the legal purchase of these weapons. The order of this terrorism was given before hand: free and ready for new ideas.

That was the understanding of this typical man of ambition, deception and lies to found, in April of 1994, one of the most infamous aggressive terrorist organizations based in the United States: Comandos F-4. Separated from the repugnant and dangerous Alpha 66 and specially from its central figure, Nazario Sargén, “because he only talks and doesn’t act, he lets men down and does politics with each infiltratio, living off it”; Frómeta holds the same military grade to which he was ascended during the early 80s by Nazario and Silverio Rodríguez, another personage with a long history in Alpha 66, although now extolled with an inadmissible grade: commander in chief.

Years before, Silverio called Frómeta to ask for four thousand dollars to buy weapons —M-16 rifles and, specially, machine guns— that they would take to New Jersey from Miami. Frómeta later declared to Cuban authorities that it was just a “hit” to rip him off and fill Sargén’s coffers because the weapons never existed.

The very nature of the man is laughable, crude and criminal. F-4 is a term that comes from genetics related to crossing hybrid animals although, in this case, it is a fearsome cross of terrorism between real chiefs and members of the group that calmly walk the streets of the United States and other countries of the region—there are members in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador that they admit to—, and the ghost cells in Cuba whose objective is to obtain a superior race—fascist doctrine par excellence—and a political-social change...peaceful? ...in the Island.

### **An infiltration without sparks**

Any day will do but Frómeta believed that October 10, 1981 had been chosen for him to enter history. A grotesque clique that, for more than 40 years, had turned to million dollar profits actions of sabotage, terror and war against Cuba, called him to Miami. The trip from New Jersey of the alleged factory operator in a bottling company meant a complete return to a special mission of Alpha 66, from which he had left with no explanation, five years before, after completing military training in one of its camps.

But Frómeta, a practicing catholic, believed in the atrocities that had to be done to change the situation in Cuba—they included attacks, infiltrations, sabotages—discussed in meetings with the Junta Patriótica during the early part of 1981 where he was directly linked to CIA officials and listened once to the thanks to that organization by Guillermo Novo Sampoll for the 250 thousand dollar bail paid when he was arrested for the death of Chilean chancellor, Orlando Letelier.

Naming him second in military command of Alpha 66 was followed by a trip to Cuba on a Monday, October 11. The excuse was classical at the time; another visitor of the Cuban community living in the United States who would meet with his family in the be loved Guantánamo where he was born on August 3, 1945.

—“Take care of yourself because you are going to set off a spark and, don’t forget, I’ll follow” — he was proudly told by one of the machiavellian counterrevolutionary organization, Orestes Rafael González, better known as El Guajiro.

And Frómeta didn’t even have time to light a match although he managed to recruit five people in 13 days, including some relatives, to begin poisoning cattle, sabotage cane and fruit fields and, also place bombs in local transportation. He also had to collect all kinds of military and political information as possible. Of course, all this in exchange for promises of a lot of money, “a lot of money” for your “daring collaboration”.

For Frómeta his community visit came to an end in the afternoon of October 23 with the proof of his subversive activity. He didn’t even offer resistance to the officials who held him in the ninth police station in the Cuban capital. He himself welcomed El Guajiro, without cigarettes who was in a Cuban prison, arrested on December 2 in the José Martí International airport. Then began another incredible story, shaded by mystery, lies and threats in our jails to which he was sent for 20 years on April of 1962.

## **Prison and U.S. support**

—“Get up Frómeta, time to take some sun”— the slanted eyes looked with scorn at lieutenant Misber Betancourt accustomed to handling them since Frómeta was placed under his guard in 1986 in the fourth floor of building 2, northern area of the eastern prison after doing three years in the La Caña prison. His pullover with the letter P in back was dirty and the white shorts no longer remembered their original color. — “You have to respect me and stand at attention because I am a commandant” — he said with his usual calm at the door of the collective cell. It was said repeatedly, at all times and only to make the lieutenant roar with laughter.

Leader of the well known prisoners, he did not lose time bragging his intentions of getting out of there, return to the Island and get rid of Castro’s communists. They all have to be killed and we are going to start with this one, rabidly pointing to

Betancourt. Perhaps the medium sized crucifix with an identifiable saint promoted the talks with El Biblico, a quiet man but who had a following among the prisoners through the religious cults he practiced. However, his real purpose centered on plans for hunger strikes, demanding more communication with the outside and more contacts with persons willing to “free Cuba”.

His stupid comments with his eastern accent followed one upon another. He wanted to shine through his exploits in Alpha 66 but ended up being wordy that was sometimes confusing for his listeners, among them the brothers Cardo, Daniel and Jorge Luis and the repugnant Angelito participants in setting fire to the Levantán nursery in 1980. He never spoke of his family but did not reject visits that he used to make up lies and slander about the treatment he received there that were amplified hours and days later by U.S. radio stations, specially Radio Martí.

He often refused his diet for the ulcer he had. The daily environment was also strained through his rudeness and aggressions when he was told to cut his hair and shave. He protested about anything he did not like and made direct provocations —personal offenses included— to make Betancourt lose his temper and hit him, something that never happened because of the professionalism of his guard.

—“Don’t worry, there is a bigger file open for you in Miami that is larger than the one you have in the Ministry. My people will get me out of here and then I’ll come to kill you”— he said one night that he didn’t sleep as if studying how to escape.

And the doors opened for Frómeta through the only means open to these personages. A note from the United States Interest Section in Havana to the Cuban Foreign Affairs Ministry dated November 30, 1989 that requested outright “the cooperation of the Ministry to interview the prisoners listed below with officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. All these persons appear in a list supplied by New York Cardenal, John O’Connor to Cuban authorities in 1988 [...]

Of course Frómeta was in the list of 36 names together with the Cardo brothers and his buddy in future terrorist actions of Alpha 66, Rogelio Abréu Azcuy. On April 12, 1991, and before leaving his transit house in San Rafael, like a pretty lucky guy, he fixed his bushy mustache and tried to settle his hair pushing

to grow. It was the second and final departure from the Island it, thanks to identical sponsors who 23 years ago had accepted him after jumping over the fence of the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo for no political reason whatever. He spent only one day there before being sent to Miami to an Alpha 66 training camp during 1969 called Los Indios to learn the preparation of weapons, explosives and irregular warfare. The training lasted 45 days but was valid for all through his life.

### **A clear obsession: assassinate Fidel Castro**

The most opportunist and controversial radio stations in Florida awoke on Tuesday, March 27 2001 with unusual declarations. Nazario Sargén, boss of Alpha 66 calling on all the heads of the anti-Castro groups to swallow their tongues in the trial against five young Cuban men, arrested since 1998 accused of espionage. —“We must plead the fifth amendment and that way we won’t be forced to testify [...]”—, he insisted repeatedly while in the Court, District Attorney Caroline Heck Miller did her part sending a law memo referring to the amendment about the witnesses called by the defense. Incredible. The State intentionally mixed up the papers. From watchdog of legality to promoter of silence and injustice.

There is someone in the midst of all this excitement that has only changed his clothes. He is more interested in his publicity than to his right of an amendment that would take too long to understand and that was claimed by the first witnesses in the morning. His usual camouflage uniform that he wore to the court was probably shed in a bathroom dustbin and a black suit and tie took its place but cannot hide his scheming aspect. He is now in front of René, Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio and Fernando.

—My name is Rodolfo Frómeta Caballero and I work driving a bus for an old people’s home— he assures with brazen calm.

The interrogation and proofs of the defense reveal the circus, lying and aberrant environment of this so-called commander in chief.

—Is Comandos F-4 a legal organization?

—Yes

—And why is one of your members dressed in military uniform? —asks lawyer Joaquín, showing him a photograph.

—Some use them because our group has civilian and military departments. We are also preparing for when Castro attacks the United States since when I was in the army in Cuba they would tell us that one day ...—, and he lets loose with more nonsensical justification about what is obvious: hoarding weapons for infiltrations, training camps, abundant funds without legal backing and what is most sinister, total freedom in U.S. streets.

There is more. The face of the mulatto tightens in each thrust of truth. He strokes his triangular beard and rests back in the witness stand as if preparing to continue lying.

—What explanation can you give about the web site of your organization where you publish photographs of burnt cars in Cuba and sell bonds for up to 100 dollars to cover the costs of these actions by the clandestine cells of Comando F-4? — The lawyer kept on the pressure.

—We are peaceful people and what they do is taken as propaganda by Fidel Castro.

—Did you intend to send weapons to someone in Cuba for the assassination of Fidel Castro?

—That was not an assassination attempt, it was an attempt to do justice against a person who has caused the death of thousands upon thousands of Cubans— he confessed in clear contradiction to the pacifism of the obsessed Frómeta.

The defense of two of those five young men described the cheating of Frómeta, the prosecutors, judges the closer they got to demonstrating the real guilty persons of terrorism.

René wrote: “In the meantime, Caroline Heck Miller claims that this kind of terrorists will be judged in heaven and Mr. Frómeta, after buying a couple of anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank weapons and some explosives, is considered a good father, a good citizen and a good person who perhaps may require a year of house arrest ordered by the District Attorney of southern Florida. That, your Honor, according to what I know is called hypocrisy and is, also, criminal”.



For his part, Fernando unraveled the plot to the end. “I thought that the Prosecution would come today to request a sentence of one year of probation. After all, that was what the Prosecution offered Mr. Frómata for buying, from an undercover government agent, a Stinger missile, C-4 explosives, grenades and other weapons. It does not seem to matter that Mr. Frómata confessed to that same agent, his terrorist intentions and the murderous and unscrupulous use he would give those materials”.

—Frómata may step down — the judge ordered. He picked up his uniform in the bathroom and the greetings outside approved his behavior. He had won the honor he needed for more terror with the burlesque declaration of being joint chief of a pacifist group with the name of a genetic cross of cows, F-4.

### **Not only Cuba, Venezuela also**

The sea was a clear mirror. The boat never shut off its two motors, not even when it approached the coast. Dressed in dark green, Santiago Padrón and Máximo Madreras were the first out carrying their backpacks and holding the weapons up high. Iosvanis Suris grasped the hand of Rafael Torres Mena in a sign of victory and said good-bye with the agreed upon phrase: Everything is under our control. One of the threesome of Comando F-4 infiltrators had just entered the Island from Villa Clara only a week after his boss, Rodolfo Frómata declared the improbability of these actions in the court action against five young Cuban men in Miami. The 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2001, had just been born and another terrorist revenge.

Confident over the virtual success of the operation, Torres Mena placed a telephone call to Suris, head of the pirate team, for precise orders. The mission was to place bombs in the Tropicana nightclub. Too late for orders to a troop a few hours before touching Cuban shores. The events could not be celebrated but definitely proven once again, like what had occurred in June of 1999 with another fresh rank and file members of F-4. Vladimir Morris Urquiza, was captured minutes before transporting several persons to the United States at a price

of thousands of dollars and their brand-new team, made up, at the moment, by young rafters who emigrated during the migratory crisis of the summer of 1994.

And Frómeta, evasive and ambitious of power sends off his troop for new plans, publicized in the Miami mass media as great events that would topple Castro and now, also, the government of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. In a press conference offered on September 4, 2004 at the official headquarters of Comando F-4 he revealed horrifying news. Luis García Morales, retired captain of the Venezuelan National Guard and special guest invited by Frómeta, gave the exclusive.

—We've made an alliance with this group of Cuban exiles in our struggle to overthrow Chávez —applause from the followers and a greater reverence by the host— if necessary I myself will go to Venezuela either by sea or by land —more applause and photographs.

Representing the Venezuelan Patriotic Junta, García Morales explained that from now on the group would coordinate different actions with its Miami terrorist counterpart and named another objective of this alliance that was the alliance of contingency units to train in the F-4 camps for a quick rescue operation in Venezuela once a civilian and military crisis of the entire people is unleashed. Still pending for public opinion was how they would fund these actions although a journalist reminded his colleagues that a new credit card would be issued for southern Florida to maintain groups linked to terrorism that could be the salvation for all.

### **Atrocious terrorism species continues to act**

The truth of such a degree of criminality and terrorism by Frómeta and F-4 relies on their impunity. Since his return to the U.S. avenues in 1997 he continues to visit and consult his old friends including Roberto Martín Pérez previously responsible for terrorist activities of the Cuban American National Foundation and of the most repulsive torturers of the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship; as well as Ninoska Lucrecia Pérez-Castellón, daughter of another murderer and Guillermo Novo Sampoll,

assassin of Chilean leader, Orlando Letelier. For years he has boasted his “friendship” of Lincoln Díaz-Balart, Cuban American congressman who avoids mentioning this friendship in his constant violent speeches against Cuba.

There is still much to tell of the many inventions, bravado and horrible stories about Frómeta and Comandos F-4. There are no words that we can use about his thick file of actions. His repulsive actions will always be watched and be in the cross hairs. Men of this abominable species of terrorist will never understand the grandness and bravery of the Cuban Revolution to defend itself and win and much less will they understand the immortal life in peace all humanity calls for.



No State can legitimately allow or authorize their territory to be used or allow their territory to constitute and protect organizations designed to carry out activities that are an act of hostility against another country or government. The Special Rapporteur must affirm that while the material authors of attacks have not been strongly sentenced, neither have those who recruited them, trained them, hired them, supplied them with material means and explosives, gave them documents and paid them. These are out free enjoying full impunity in their base country and perhaps are guiltier than the materials authors of a continued crime. Those are the organizations that acted on that country's behalf.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the use  
of mercenaries  
Of the UN Human Rights Commission  
during a visit to Cuba  
from Septiembre 12 to 17, 1999.

*My dearest daughters:*

*[...].*

*Now you can understand why your papa cannot be with you more nor live the many happy and joyful moments that fathers have with their children [...].*

Part of a letter Ramón Labañino Salazar wrote to his daughters.

**Luis Posada Carriles**  
**The devil breeds them and the devil unites**  
**them. The one who was missing:**

*Juan Carlos Rodríguez Cruz*

—BE CAREFUL!

The plane blasted dered at 12:23 local time.

The dry blow in the cabin told the pilot that the door had been violently opened.

Next to him, the copilot also heard the explosion when the door opened and turned to look along the aisle of the passenger cabin. He saw enough to freeze the blood in his veins. Then he had no doubt: the expansive wave of a powerful explosion had blown up the lock on the door. Seconds later he pressed the microphone button. After that communications with the control tower would be taped.

—iSeawell! iSeawell... CU-455...! —The operator on duty opened the key

—CU-455... Seawell.

—We have an explosion and we are going down immediately! We have fire on board!

—CU-455, will you return?

There's no answer from the plane.

The operator understood that the captain would evaluate the damages and then give an answer. If it was positive, it would be a sign that something very serious was happening in the Cubana 455 flight that had taken off from the airport eight minutes ago. Something that could not be controlled by the crew.

The explosion aboard a Cubana de Aviacion plane had been a devastating explosion, horrific.

The fuselage in the area of the explosion burst open. The interior of the plane lost pressure and the air inside escaped. Uncontrollable, the force of suction pulled everything out: handbags, trays, refreshment bottles, cans of juice and beer, glasses, candy, arms, legs, entrails of those who had been caught by the explosion.

Automatically the compartments of the air masks opened above the seats freeing the oxygen masks, linked to a short plastic tube connected to the central deposit.

All of a sudden the suction was reduced but the fire begun on center front spread, with something that was even more deadly: the smoke.

Studying the remains of the plane, according to investigations by experts in criminology indicated that the bomb had exploded under seat number 27 where a nine-year-old Guyanese girl was sitting. Her body was one of the 15 recovered. The explosion ripped her right leg and the expansive wave was so great that the safety belt was driven into her body as if it had been a sharp knife. Her long, black straight hair that must have been the pride of her parents became a burnt discolored mesh of black wire. The remains of her aunt and grandmother, sitting beside her were a mass of flesh and bones when they rose up to the surface.

—iOK, Seawell, CU-455, we ask immediately, immediately runway! —The control tower heard the excited voice of the copilot.

—CU-455 authorized to land. —Immediately the order of total emergency was given.

Inside the control cabin of Cubana 455 the pilots had their nerves on end. Three minutes and thirty-one seconds separated from the shout: “Be careful!”

The pilot Wilfredo Pérez was fighting the controls against the vibrations and shaking of the plane. These convulsions and sudden depressurization confirmed him that the explosion had broken a hole in the fuselage and seriously damaged the structure



in some point with the following danger that the hole could expand. For this reason he was forced to make a strong turn and descend to a lesser velocity than indicated in these cases. If he forced the plane it would disintegrate in mid air.

—Out landing gear! Flaps in position zero!

This order was not registered in the tower because the microphone was closed but the experts of the airline have no doubt that the order had logically been given and because people in the beach saw the landing gear. The copilot obeyed. He knew what his chief was trying to do. The air pressure on the wheels would speed up the descent. This maneuver is known by pilots as dirtying the plane.

Wilfredo fought to bring the plane down rapidly for another reason: he knew that the oxygen delivered automatically to the masks contributed to spread the flames. The oxygen valves automatically opened when the plane reached heights between 10 500 and 14 000 feet and closed at a height of 8 000. For this reason, assuredly, he constantly checked the altimeter. Until that altitude was not reached oxygen would continue to feed the flames that, he understood, had reached the passenger cabins because of their screams.

During those four minutes and forty seconds that passed from the moment of the explosion to hitting water almost all the passengers had died of asphyxia or were carbonized. In truth very few were able to use the oxygen masks. The soot, found later in the recovered bodies, had incrustated doors, partitions, seats and, although the escape exhausts had opened to the exterior, these were insufficient to decontaminate the air. When wood, cotton, paper, plastic, materials used for the furniture inside the cabin of the passengers and others articles such as cushions, cane of the back of the seats, wool of the seats when decomposed by heat, spread toxic gases: carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, fluoride acid, chloride acid and nitrogen dioxide.

The inhalation of these toxic gases, combined, results even more lethal than when breathed separately and penetrating the brain causing a horrible and instant death.

Packed tight in that steel coffin, the passengers who survived the shrapnels of the bomb, would have fought desperately to breathe a small small amount of pure air, which, although scarce, penetrated into the plane through the hole opening and and the breathing-valves of low altitude.

At the control tower at Seawell, the operator on duty, in an attempt to calm the dramatic tension in the cockpit, pressed the microphone and said:

—CU-455 we have total emergency and we are leaving the mikes open.

He didn't know that the terrorists, to guarantee the destruction of the plane during the flight, had placed a second bomb in one of the toilettes at the back. And exploded, cutting the control cables of the tail the moment the pilot prepared a sea landing in front of a beach they could see.

Seconds before the explosion of the second bomb and because the uncontrolled advance of the flames the copilot, strongly clutching the microphone and as if suspecting the final outcome and convinced that of the explosion was an action of terrorists, left proof of the crime:

—We are burning intensely!

This message was not received in the Seawell control tower because the plane was flying at very low altitude and therefore could not be taped by the airport equipment. It was, however, registered by pilots of another plane, the Cariwest DQ-650 that had been sent off course by orders of the controller to fly over the Cubana plane at greater height and aid, in whatever way possible, the disintegrated plane. But the end of the tragedy was imminent.

When the tail cables were ripped off, the plane lost control, the nose rose up to the sky. The copilot, frightened as one who foresees a violent death looked at the captain who held controls that did nothing, thought that the sudden rise was a maneuver shouted:

—That's worse, Felo! Stick to the water, Felo! Stick to the water!

In a yacht sailing the warm and sunny waters of the Caribbean, tourists gathered on the stern attracted by the strange

flight of that plane that was spewing smoke from a wing and tail. They saw it raise its nose upwards, be still for a moment suspended in the air. Then it veered right and plummeted into the ocean.

—Cubana, this is Cariwest 650. Can we give you some help?—  
Silence.

—Cubana, this is Cariwest 650. Can we give you some help?—  
Again silence.

The yacht approached. Floating in the water were remains of human flesh. Also floating were remains of the plane and baggage: a red cap with a silver plane on its visor, baby clothing (the 22 year old fencer, Nancy Uranga, was two months pregnant), a fencing mask, seat cushions, several extinguishers that were later found to be empty demonstrating attempts to put out the fire aboard that hell, oxygen canisters, handbags, all identical, belonging to the juvenile fencing team. A sword, projected from one of them, as it were a cross.

On October 6, 1976 a Cubana DC-8 airlines plane, CU-455 arrived at the international airport of Seawell, Barbados. It was 11:21 am. Fifty-four minutes later it took off to Jamaica. At 12:23, eight minutes after take off an explosion shook the plane that burst into fire and after five dramatic minutes it plummeted into the sea sinking in the ocean in view of tourists who were enjoying the warm beaches.

There were no survivors. Seventy three deaths that included the Cuban young fencing team that, hours before, had won the Central American Championship in Caracas; fifteen young adolescents returning home with their gold medals adorning their chests and ten other members of the sports team: trainers, a doctor, masseur, sword master, federation officials In addition there were six Guyanese high school students who had obtained scholarships to study medicine in Cuba. There was a Guyanese nine-year-old girl traveling with her aunt and grandmother. The crew was returning home.

In Cuba the tragedy caused stupor, concern, a feeling of horror and as proof of the disaster started to appear, a suffocating

indignation. For several days an unending line of people lined up silently to pay their respects to the eight persons in coffins, the only ones recovered. A solemn act in a central plaza of the city, an incredible number of persons gathered; one million indignant persons and for three weeks the telephones of the Cubana de Aviacion offices didn't stop ringing. They were calls of condolence for the family of the victims; most of the corpses were never recovered. The father of one of the fencers refused to accept the news and stayed at the airport for a week waiting for the arrival of his daughter. "Some may say he went mad" — a journalist confessed— "but in truth I would like to go mad to believe in my fantasy. Then I'll see her get off the plane."

Two mercenary terrorists were detained and confessed: Hernán Ricardo Lozano and Freddy Lugo who received prison sentences of 20 years. One of the intellectual authors of the action, Orlando Bosch Avila, in the report by the interim Assistant Attorney General, Joel D. Whitey, after his deportation order from the United States and i quote a part of the report:

"FOR 30 YEARS BOSCH HAS RESOLUTELY AND WITH PERSEVERENCE PROMOTED ACTS OF TERRORIST VIOLENCE"... "INFORMATION THAT INDICATED THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB ON OCTOBER 6, 1976 IN A CUBAN AIRLINE PLANE HAD BEEN AN OPERATION OF CORU, DRECTED BY BOSCH" was admitted to the United States by decision of the then president, George Bush and since then lives in Miami. He sometimes appear on television and meets the press justifying insolently the terrorism against a Cubana plane. One of the persons who campaigned to allow him admittance to the U.S. was the congresswoman of Cuban origin, Ileana Ros Lehtinen. The newspaper El Nuevo Herald printed in a front-page headline on April 1sc, 1989: "ROS KEEPS ALIVE CAMPAIGN FOR BOSCH. State senator Ileana Ros Lehtinen announced Friday that she would extend the campaign in favor of the freedom of the Cuban physician and anti-Castro activist, Orlando Bosch".

There is no doubt: the devil breeds them and unites them.

The other intellectual author and with maximum responsibility for the terrorist action against the Cubana de Aviacion plane, Luis Posada Carriles was immediately arrested after declarations of one of the material authors, Hernán Ricardo, who confessed to the police of Trinidad and Tobago that he worked for Posada. On Sunday, October 17th, 1976, eleven days after the atrocious crime Hernán requested to talk to Dennis Elliot Randwar, assistant commissioner of the Trinidad and Tobago police, who had interrogated him since his arrest: “he continued and told me that if I used my police mentality it would be clear who had placed the bomb. I told him that I thought I knew who had committed the crime. He doubted for some moments and then: repeated that, in the greatest confidence, he and Lugo had placed the bomb. He requested a sheet of paper and, in his own hand described the steps they had to follow before placing the bomb in the plane and how to detonate a plastic bomb. This document is marked D.R.12. On the other side of the document he drew a diagram of the bomb and detonator”.<sup>1</sup>

It was Hernán Ricardo who communicated to Luis Posada Carriles that the passenger plane had blown up: “How many calls did citizen Hernán Ricardo make from Barbados, whom did he call and what did he say? “He made several calls and one of the calls made to his girlfriend he told her to call Luis and say THE BUS WITH THE DOGS FELL...”<sup>2</sup>

Hernán Ricardo Lozana worked in the Commercial and Industrial Investigation Agency, that belonged to Luis Posada Carriles, a front for his terrorist actions. Regarding the relations between both and the subordination of Hernán to Posada, a simple affirmation is enough in his book *Los caminos del guerrero*, page 210: “I had complete confidence in Hernán Ricardo.” In other declarations to the police in Trinidad and Tobago, Hernán confessed that he was paid \$25 000 for the job. He

<sup>1</sup> Taken from official documents of the trial. Author’s notes

<sup>2</sup> Declaration of Freddy Lugo, taken from official documents of the trial. Author’s note.

received \$16 000 and Lugo received \$8 000 adding that \$1 000 were used to cover costs.

Posada Carriles has had no qualms to publicly comment his opinion of the crime against a passenger plane that exploded in mid flight with passengers aboard. In an interview granted to The Miami Herald on November 10th, 1991 the journalist asked him about the sabotage of the Cubana plane. Posada answered: "THE SABOTAGE WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE BLOW EVER MADE AGAINST CASTRO."

Only cowardice, vile actions and marked disdain for human life, particularly that of other human beings, can generate expressions such as this about the horrendous crime. Undoubtedly the devil bred Posada Carriles even though he comes from a respectable family. His attraction for violence and abuse are well known by some inhabitants of Cienfuegos where the assassin was born and brought up. At 15, posted in the roof of his house, he would shoot the neighbor's cat with a 22-caliber rifle.

Once, always from the roof, he killed a neighbor's parrot that was swinging in the house's hallway. Another time a driver of a garbage driver cart asked young Luis, who was walking around with his 22-caliber rifle —And does that thing kill? — After answering in the affirmative the boy stood in front of the mule shot and killed it.

The father of Luis Faustino Posada Carriles had to pay an 80 peso fine for the "prank" of the evil boy.

With the passing of time Posada Carriles chose not to act directly. It was less risky to hire mercenaries like Hernán Ricardo and Freddy Lugo. After all, it would be paid by the Miami based Cuban American Mafia.

During the early afternoon hours, on September 4th, 1997 when tourists began to roam around the halls of the hotels in which they were staying, a terrorist of Salvadoran nationality, Ernesto Cruz León who had entered the country days before on an alleged tourism trip, hid in a toilette, and activated a bomb

placing it later in an ashtray of a restroom of one of the bars of Copacabana hotel immediately leaving. He walked to the Chateu-Miramar about 500 meters away; in a restroom he activated another bomb and sat in an armchair in the lobby. There were people to his right and in front who saw him sit down. He placed a bag at the foot of some furniture; got up and left the hotel. He then took 10 to 15 minutes to walk to the Triton hotel and repeated the same operation in a restroom where he activated a C-4 bomb and set it to explode nine minutes later. In the lobby, he sat in another armchair. A few seconds later a 12 year old boy sat right in front of him while two little girls snuggled in a nearby chair; in spite of the presence of these children, Cruz León decided to place the bomb right there but, unexpectedly, the boy looked straight at him and seemed to study him from top to bottom. The nerves of Cruz León, he later confessed, tensed while he watched time tick by, twelve twenty three and twelve twenty five. Suddenly the young woman called the boy and he turned his head moving his stare for a moment giving Cruz León the opportunity to place the bomb on the floor behind the chair. He got up and left the hotel rapidly; he took a taxi and told the driver to take him to the Floridita restaurant, to misinform about his presence. Then he walked to the world famous and bohemian restaurant La Bodeguita del Medio where he placed a fourth bomb. The taxi had only moved a short distance when the explosion of the first bomb placed in Copacabana was heard. It was 12:29 and a few meters ahead the second bomb exploded at 12:31 in the Chateu-Miramar and a minute later the one he placed in the Triton hotel. Cruz León asked the driver: What are those explosions? The taxi driver accustomed to a hospitable and peaceful city answered: —They must be dynamiting some rocks to build another hotel.<sup>3</sup>

The bombs had caused damages in the three hotels, panic among the people, eleven wounded and one death, the young

<sup>3</sup> (Taken from the reconstruction of events made by the terrorist Ernesto Cruz León).

Italian tourist, Fabio di Celmo who was at the bar in the Copacabana hotel. A metal shard had severed his aorta killing him a few seconds later. The full maxim of terrorism was fulfilled: SERIES OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE TO TERRORIZE AND KILL.

The 12-year-old boy was a Spanish tourist traveling to Cuba with his sister. As soon as Cruz León left the hotel the boy discovered the hidden bag, told his sister and nearby workers, who gave the warning, evacuating the area where, a short while ago, a group of school children had entered. Seconds later the bomb exploded. The e-fit profile made by the Spanish boy led to the fast and efficient actions by authorities of the Cuban Ministry of the Interior. Hours later the terrorist was arrested. Cruz León had been hired on orders from Luis Posada Carriles who supplied the explosives.

The following summer, July 12, 1998, Posada Carriles gave an interview to the journalists Ann Louise Bardach and Larry Rother of the influential The New York Times on condition that no photographs be taken nor his whereabouts revealed, a *sine qua non* of every terrorist.

It seems that those who had paid him for years were ignoring Posada. And Posada knew too much. Evidently, with these revelations he was sending out a warning. It's true that he did not hide his terrorist activities in the interview and spoke extensively of his ties to the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and its president, Jorge Mas Canosa. Posada assured The New York Times that CANF leader, Jorge Mas Canosa "controlled everything" referring to payment sent to finance his activities.

"When I needed money I would say, send me \$5 000, \$10 000, \$15 000 and he would send it."

Posada calculated that, through the years, Mas had sent him \$200 000.

—"He never said it was the foundation's money," —he laughed. "The money was received with a message that read: this is for the church". The New York Times quoted Posada saying that Mas Canosa had given him money for several terrorist activities and the paper linked him to the wave of bombings in Cuba last summer.



In the same interview he told the journalist who had taught him the craft” THE CIA TAUGHT US EVERYTHING, HOW TO USE EXPLOSIVES, HOW TO KILL, HOW TO MAKE BOMBS. A version of the interview appeared in the Miami newspaper, *El Nuevo Herald*.

Posada Carriles had become the most publicized terrorist in the Western Hemisphere. A short time later he appeared before the television cameras in an exclusive interview that he gladly accepted on the condition that his whereabouts were not exposed and that his face were not clearly seen on screen. His statements leave no doubt about his status as terrorist that he seems proud of.

Journalist María Elvira Salazar of the Polos Opuestos program in CBS Tele Noticias, on August 2nd. 1998 asked him:

Journalist: —You were the intellectual author of these explosions, yes or no?

Posada: —Don’t say yes or no, intellectual author.

Journalist: —You were the one who thought them up, who organized them and sent people to place them.

Posada: —I take full responsibility for any terrorist action inside Cuban territory against the regime of Havana.

In another moment of the interview:

Journalist: —You allegedly told The New York Times that the 25-year-old Salvadoran under arrest in Cuba, at present, worked for you.

Posada: —Raúl Cruz León was hired by a person who works for me. I never had contact with him. He fulfilled his task for money.

On November 17th 2000, the most noted terrorist in the hemisphere was again news. This time in the words of President Fidel Castro Ruz attending the X Ibero American Summit of Heads of State in Panama. That afternoon, after being welcomed at the airport by Mireya Moscoso and greeting the Panamanian people, and in front of more than thirty national and international press media gathered in the César Park Hotel, Fidel denounced a terrorist plan in that nation’s territory:

“On arriving at this historical Latin American nation of Panama, I wish to greet its patriotic and courageous people that are today the legitimate owners of the canal administered better than by those who previously owned it. On behalf of Cuba that, as well as all people of the world who benefit from its services, I say thank you.

“I have come like the other Latin American Heads of State to participate in the X Summit with a spirit to cooperate to the success of the meeting for the welfare of our people and, very specially, for the interests and prestige of Panama.

“But, however, I must comply with my duty of informing that, as other times when I travel to these summits, terrorist elements, organized, financed and directed from the United States by the Cuban American National Foundation that is an instrument of imperialism and the extreme right wing of that country, have been sent to Panama to eliminate me physically. They are already in this city and have introduced weapons and explosives.

“I denounce it on my arrival here and not before traveling so that no one imagine that any kind of danger or threat will intimidate the representation of Cuba.

“As for the security of our delegation I have no concern at all. It was warned, has experience and is a veteran in battling ambushes, treacherous plans and other aggressions of the empire and its allies. But, participating in this meeting are many delegations and Heads of State and Government and, although Panamanian authorities have worked with great care to guarantee the safety of all, we know that terrorist elements plan to shoot or set off explosions where they consider useful for their purposes, not caring about which vehicles will transport heads of the delegation, where they meet for any programmed activity.

“The boss of these elements whom the Cuban American National Foundation ordered this mission is the infamous Luis Posada Carriles, a coward and totally unscrupulous person, author of the explosion of a Cubana de Aviacion plane on taking off from Barbados with 73 passengers on board on October 6 1976 using Venezuelan mercenaries.

“Escaping from a Venezuelan prison on August of 1985 he actively participated in supplying weapons for the dirty war

against Nicaragua, an operation led by the White House that gave rise to the Iran Gate scandal.”

“He has been responsible for terrorist actions against Havana hotel using mercenaries from El Salvador and Guatemala.”

“During the IV Summit held in Cartagena de Indias, on June 14th and 15th 1994 he was on the point of shooting us when we visited the old city in a caravan of horse drawn carriages organized by the hosts. Gabriel García Márquez was next to me in the tour. I would have had the honor of dying with such a splendid writer.” Further on Fidel added with precision: “Posada Carriles arrived in Panama on November 5th with false papers and no disguise. He has accomplices in whom he has complete confidence, relying on them. Due to the criminal records previously mentioned, it became necessary to publicly make this accusation [...]”

Two hours and minutes later, the head of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Technical Legal Police of Panama, Jesús Escala Vázquez receives information to verify that Franco Rodríguez Mena, really Luis Posada Carriles, is registered in the Coral Suite hotel. The information is exact. Outside in the street the two other terrorists Novo Sampoll and Pedro Crispín Remón were arrested. Gaspar Jiménez Escobedo was arrested in a hotel room. The three had records of assassination not only in the archives of Cuban State Security but also in the FBI files. Shortly after, Novo Sampoll accompanied one of the detectives to the room pointed out.

—We’ve got to get out of here because the police are there, —Posada Carriles exclaimed from inside his room when he heard the door open thinking his buddy in criminal activities was alone. Shortly after, in the trunk of a car – which the driver declared he worked for Posada Carriles, were found explosives in such amount the Paranymph of the University of Panama, where Fidel would deliver a speech to an enthusiastic multitude, mainly young students, would be blasted, provoking the death of hundred of them as a result of a terrorist action, without precedence in the history of that nation. Just like the terrorist action four years ago agent a passenger plane off the coast of Barbados, that caused the death of its 73 passengers.

And Posada Carriles would repeat what he told the journalist María Elvira Salazar, in the television interview: he would sleep like a baby.

During the first days of April 2005, news spread that terrorist Luis Posada Carriles was in Miami. Obviously the Mafia of that city intended to make it a *fait accompli* and his alleged asylum somewhat ignored by international public opinion. There was no doubt: terrorist Luis Posada Carriles was in Miami without being bothered by any authority. This is not strange in this city that a sharp U.S. journalist wrote: WHERE CAN TERRORISTS FIND A SAFE HAVEN? IF YOU ARE THE KIND OF CUBAN EXILES, RIGHT HERE<sup>4</sup>.

The government of the United States he was there, that he had entered aboard a ship named the Santrina, that he lived in a luxurious house on the outskirts of the city or in another one, according to the circumstances. The other criminal, Orlando Bosch Avila has said before television cameras that they had talked over the phone. Posada's lawyer assured that he had officially requested political asylum for his clients. Every one knows and boasts about it. Fidel has denounced him every day. But the government is silence. One of the authorities that is in charge of preventing the arrival of terrorists to United States territory is Mr. Hector Pesquera; the same person who in 1998 had detained, in a spectacular operation, five young Cubans who are in prison today for precisely fighting terrorism. Pesquera was then head of the FBI in Miami. On the behavior of this United States government official, journalist Ann Louise Bardach relates his first steps after taking up the post to head the FBI in that convulsed city: "The hopes of police agents and officials were soon smashed. Pesquera, they said, began to fraternize with key members of the exile direction [...]"

Pesquera —an agent said— soon made a sharp turn to the right and all investigations on terrorism were abandoned". Currently Pesquera is director in charge of security in Miami ports and airports of the Department of Homeland Security that controls ports and airports in Miami. The most infamous

<sup>4</sup> (Kirk Nielsen, Miami New Times, Dec 20. 2001).

terrorist in the Western Hemisphere, Posada Carriles entered Miami on board a fishing ship arriving at one of those ports. In the end the U.S. government and Miami Mafia had no choice but to reveal his presence making a show of arresting the accused. Hear this, for “illegal entrance to the United States”.

Obvious in this work, the prison escape of Posada Carriles, his appearance later in a Central American military base serving the White House and Department of State in a covert and illegal operation scandalously known in the United States as Iran-contras. I won't mention the torture of detainees while working with the Venezuelan police a period in his life that he explained was “with no holds barred”, neither his lessons in the infamous School of the Americas of the United States Army where he became an expert in explosives, nor the numerous investigations on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in which the name of Posada Carriles appears repeatedly and, more recently the documentary film, *Second Look*, by the Dutch Win Dankbaar that reports that one of the persons detained that day identified Luis Posada Carriles in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, precisely when shots were fired that killed the President of the United States. Neither those that link him to the father of the present president when he served in the CIA.

I have preferred to limit myself to criminal and terrorist actions that are indisputable, that he himself has highlighted and shared with others who give him shelter with the complicity of a government that has proclaimed a merciless struggle against terrorism. Why is it silent? Why do they avoid the thorny issue? What does Posada know about the present tenants of the White House? Any solution to the headache, either dis appearing the number one terrorist or hiding him secretly, defying laws and justice as occurred with another terrorist, Orlando Bosch to end up keeping him home, what remains clear to everyone are two things: the policy of the current administration of the United States, regarding the subject of terrorism, has a double standard. And if the Devil has bred them as these monsters of nature, MIAMI UNITES THEM.



## **A kind of epilogue**

*René González Sehwerert*

Excerpts of a letter written by René González Sehwerert in which he describes aspects of the U.S. legal system from the experience he lived through during the trial he was subjected to in Miami with 4 other Cubans for the crime of protecting his homeland from terrorists who, from there, and with total impunity, carry out criminal actions against Cuba.

“[...] When our trial was about to begin, one of our defense lawyers warned us of the possibility that FBI agents would lie on the witness stand. They may think it is the most patriotic thing our lawyer told us. Although we knew the atmosphere of Miami, we refused to believe it until the truth opened our eyes.

“Another lawyer summarized it in a simple phrase: When a prosecution witness swears on the witness stand, he receives a license to lie.

[...]

“During our trial we came to believe that the prosecutors would have an office to prepare traps and manipulate the system. I could not imagine how many volumes the government lawyers have prepared to minutely study the details of what has only taken me three pages to describe...and much more.

[...]

The prosecutors carefully prepared their witnesses to lie with the same impunity they themselves do. Some years ago the brother of Ethel Rosenberg, David Greenglass, admitted that they had forced him to lie to involve his own sister in the case

and send her to the electric chair. In our own case, the sea of lies was ignored by justice. Outstanding was the voice of one of the pilots of Hermanos al Rescate in which a witness was called to identify the voice of one of the pilots of Hermanos al Rescate that, according to the rest of the evidence. It was impossible that he could have spoken those words at that time because.... HE WAS ALREADY DEAD!

“The barefaced explanation of the prosecutor in face of this outrage: Well your Honor, the jury is free to believe the version it wants.

[...]

Another example comes to mind in our case: the prosecutors wanted to blame me for the authorship of a letter that I simply had not written and according to FBI laboratory tests of the impression of my computer print out did not correspond to the one of the letter. Well then, the prosecutor stopped his arguments and said it didn't matter, that I had written the letter on my computer and among all our computers occupied, mine was the only one that could have done it.

‘The worse was that during the trial no one had taken the trouble to present evidence of our kind of computers. The issue simply had not been approached in the entire trial and the only thing they had was the FBI expert's report denying that our computer was the source of the letter.

“But that did not matter. The prosecutor simply stood in front of the jury and sent this message: ‘The evidence of the FBI says one thing but I say something else’. The man was absolutely sure that only his word would annul the FBI expert's report.

[...]

Our lawyers did a clean job; they behaved like gentlemen and felt good defending a case like lawyers and human beings.

“I wouldn't reject the possibility that in some cases, when working with very rich clients and great interests at stake, some defense lawyers could also behave like criminals. In cases where the interest of lawyers and prosecutors agree when faced by Miami terrorists corrupting the marrow of the legal system it is to supposed to uphold that defense lawyers in court feel the same impunity as prosecutors, knowing full well that no one will call them to account for dishonest behavior and for lying to the judge.



[...]

Cuba!

And we are speaking of double standard. How to forget Cuba? The use of the U.S. legal system as another weapon against the Cuban Revolution would require another chapter and would have a place of honor in the annals of infamy of. Some cases that I recall are:

– The case of Leonel Macías. The individual who after assassinating a Cuban navy officer was released of charges by judge Lawrence King claiming that there was no proof.

– “The assassins of Orlando Letelier: A six year sentence for being involved in blowing up the car killing two persons.

– “The case of Rodolfo Frómeta. The prosecution asked for only one year of house arrest for the crime of terrorism.

“Remember what I said before that prosecutors know how lose a case? Here are two examples:

– “The hijacking of a plane in mid flight to Tampa. Three individuals put a knife on the neck of the pilot of a small tourism plane that had to make a sea landing west of Tampa for lack of fuel. The lawyer of the hijackers, Ralph Fernández – a mobster who had been a prosecutor – interrogated the victim about the presence of a Cuban diplomat who logically went with him to reveal to the jury the alleged vigilance by the General Directorate of State Security through the diplomat. No prosecutor eager to win a case would accept this line of questioning.

– “The case of Margarita Island. Three mercenaries of the Cuban American National Foundation were intercepted by the Coast Guard on route to Margarita Island where they would try to assassinate Fidel during an Ibero American Summit. Obviously the line of defense was the old hackneyed story that they were looking for a deserter from the Cuban delegation and how could they explain the presence of three terrorists in Panama with several pounds of explosives.

But, how to explain the presence on the boat of high power rifles designed to kill at long distances? The story was that they were to defend themselves because the Cuban government was in the habit of sinking unarmed civilian boats. As support they called as witness the person who had stolen a tug on March 13, who gave his version of how they were sunken by Cuban tor-

pedo boats. A prosecutor who wanted to win his case would have immediately objected to such an irrelevant testimony.

“I think I have made my point. A separate chapter that I just want to mention in passing is how the system has been used to rob Cuba of every penny in U.S. banks.

“1. Why am I innocent?

Because no country should punish the sons of another people for the same reasons that would make their sons heroes.

“2. Why do I consider our presence necessary in a place such as Miami?

“Cuba must be saved from the kinds of persons who are destroying Miami.

[...]

“The kinds of people who dedicate their lives to terrorism against Cuba are a species in extinction, fortunately a minority voice, that only represents itself, assuming a representation that no one has given them; with their economic power and dirty tricks learned from the CIA and applied in the local politics of Miami.

“Regardless of their disguise, they are nothing. They are too calculating to be fanatics. They are too resentful to be Christians. They are too cowardly to be considered patriots. They are too comfortable to be combatants. They are too hateful to be intelligent. They are too selfish to be democratic. They are too *plattists* to be Cubans.

“They are pathetic parasites hanging on the tail of an elephant that they believe is the head and refuse to accept that the elephant only remembers it has a tail when it needs to whack flies.

“3. Why such a sick mentality?

Everything begins with *plattism*\*. These people grew up despising their own nation in favor of the Lone Ranger, Superman and all those comics that methodically taught them that whoever turns on the Americans is destined to defeat. No film shows a group of bearded men there and, to top it all off, Latinos and guajiros who can oppose, multiplied in its people, the battering of the northern giant.

“So they joined the sure winner also bonded to a community of economic interests affected by the early revolutionary measures. Americans were not going to stand by to lose Cuba and recovering it, they would get their part.

“What follows is a recycling of that initial hatred, multiplied by each failure and lost hope. Then, they found out that the hatred could be turned into dollars if worked well. It provided riches that later became votes.

“Votes become local political posts that, at the same time, end up in fraudulent contracts where tax money is divvied up and later used to feed hatred in the media, taking the nostalgic old people to vote to perpetuate the cycle. Four decades of this practice has ended up in a sick mentality.

#### 4. What credibility does Miami have?

If credibility had any weight in U.S. policy, Juan Miguel González, father of Elián, would have been acclaimed president upon his arrival in Washington. In any case Bush would not be the White House tenant under any pattern of credibility he tried to apply.

“The attitude of the majority of the average U.S. citizen is expressed in the ballots; a total apathy towards politics. This phenomenon is greater in Miami where politics is even more discredited.

“In my opinion, this is more than a failure of the system, it is part of its design. While there are more disenchanting people or up in the clouds, the higher election abstention, the fewer potential electors to manipulate.

“That way everything is reduced in the case of Miami to convince enough old people that the Town counselor will overthrow Fidel and allow them to return to that paradise that they only remember what is shown on television.

“Most Cubans —without mentioning other nationalities— know that this politicking terrorist social stratum is chock full of bandits but they chose abstention not wanting to complicate their lives.

“There are a group of Cubans who are taking sides against all of this but they are still a minority to oppose the machinery unleashed to support the establishment.



René González Schwerert



## Condemned for fighting terrorism



**Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez,**  
Sentenced to life imprisonment plus 10 years



**Fernando González Llord,**  
Sentenced to 19 years in prison



**Gerardo Hernández Nordelo,**  
Sentenced to two counts of life in prison  
plus 5 years.



**Ramón Labañino Salazar,**  
Sentenced to life imprisonment plus 18 years



**René González Schwerert,**  
Sentenced to 15 years in prison

*Our heroes will have to be freed. The terrible injustice committed against them will be known by the whole world. Millions of books transmit the truth and the message of Cuba. Sooner or later our comrades will return! Whatever it costs and wherever they are [...].*

*I have only one thing to say: THEY WILL RETURN.*

FIDEL CASTRO RUZ

## About the authors



**Gerardo Hernández Nordelo** (Havana, 1935) He did university studies in the «Raúl Roa García» Higher Institute of International Relations. He is a young intellectual with a great sense of humor observed in his artistic talent such as caricatures. He has an extraordinarily creative imagination.

In 1982 he began collaborating in press publications such as *Palante* newspaper. He participated in the Chispa Joven contests organized by this paper and the Young Communist Union receiving several prizes and mentions.

In 1985 he is one of the founders of the Juan David Workshop and later «Aspirina» in the *Tribuna de La Habana* newspaper.

He also created the personage in the Pepino cartoon published in Muñe of the Pablo de la Torriente publishing house.

He participated in many collective exhibition and other similar events. He worked in literary humor and worked in scenic arts.

During the mid 90s he left to fulfill missions in the United States and fight terrorism. On Septiembre 12, 1998 he is arrested

by FBI agents and two years later is tried and the verdict is two life sentences plus 15 years. His defense is a great work of literary courage.

In 2002 he is jailed in United States prisons under very adverse conditions for the only crime of defending his country and ours in the fight against terrorism and save human lives. He collaborated in the edition of his book *Love and Humor can succeed*.

Gerardo continues to work in humor and, through his drawings, sends messages of love and patriotism that, with his exemplary dignity of a young intellectual, won him the condition of Hero of the Republic of Cuba.



**Heriberto Rosabal Espinosa** (Veguitas, Granma, 1957). Graduate of Journalism in Havana University (1985). Since 1977 he has worked in the following publications: *Moncada y Transportes*; the newspapers *Tribuna de La Habana* and *Juventud Rebelde*. In the latter he is information chief and editorial deputy director. In his work as reporter he has covered official and State visits of Fidel Castro to several countries.

He has published in almost all national press media and in some foreign papers. He has received awards and mentions in national contests of journalism such as the 26<sup>th</sup> of July of the Cuban Journalism Union.

He has been editor of the *Cuban El Economista*, *Opciones*, (of *Juventud Rebelde*) and *dot cu*, an information and communications monthly of this same publishing house and of the Informatics and Communications Ministry.

Currently he is the vice director of the *Granma* daily, official organ of the Central Committee of the Party.



**Mercedes Alonso Romero** (Cárdenas, 1954). Graduate of Journalism in Havana University. Since 1985 she has specialized in historical journalism in different national media. She has an historical program in Radio Progreso. Currently she works in the Culture and History Department of *Bohemia*. She has published *Reencuentro* 1985 in collaboration with Rafael Rodríguez; *Los momentos finales de Antonio Maceo*, Costa Rica, 1996; *Los Malagones*, 1996; and *Oda a la luz*, Choral text for the *Symphony of the Third World*, 2000.



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**René González Schwerert** (Chicago, Estados Unidos, 1956). He moved to Cuba in October of 1961. The first years of the Revolution decisively marked his political development.



At the end of the 90s he goes to the United States, settling in Miami. He manages to infiltrate the ranks of Miami counterrevolution and becomes pilot for Hermanos al Rescate. On September 12, 1998 he is arrested by the FBI and two years later is sentenced to 15 years in prison.

During six years of harsh imprisonment, René has shown himself to be a mature writer. He made a diary in the form of a letter to his wife with scenes of the trial against them noting minutely all the incidents and analyzing each step of the prosecution, the jury and judge, leaving a testimony full of Cuban style wit that does not weaken the depth of his political thesis. His plea speech in the trial, like that of his comrades, is an oratory that put the Miami worms on the witness stand of the accused.

Author of several news articles, numerous messages of different events, poems where his love for his family is a song of revolution and hope. He has a broad work in letters to his wife when he was in prison in Miami and to his two daughters, Irmita and Ivette that are in the diary.

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