

Chile Faces Decision on Extraditing 3 in Letelier Murder

By WILLIAM R. LONG
Herald Latin America Staff

SANTIAGO, Chile — Chile is waiting anxiously for a sealed package of papers from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The military government may prefer that it never comes, but it will be hand-delivered before Oct. 1 to the foreign minister. Without breaking the seal, he will pass it on to the Chilean Supreme Court.

The court then will begin proceedings in the case of retired Gen. Manuel Contreras and two other Chilean officers charged in the United States with the murder of Orlando Letelier, a prominent Marxist exile from Chile.

The outcome of the proceedings is far from certain.

THE PAPERS will request extradition of the three Chilean officers for trial in Washington, D.C., where Letelier was killed by a bomb in his car on Sept. 21, 1976.

The Supreme Court is unlikely to grant extradition. It may order a trial in Chile.

In that case, the Chilean trial probably would follow one in Washington for the same crime. Three Cuban exiles and Michael Townley, an American who worked for the Chilean secret police, were arraigned in Washington Aug. 11. Two other Cuban exiles charged in the assassination are fugitives.

Contreras is the biggest fish in the net. He was chief of the secret police, known by the acronym DINA, when Letelier was killed. According to the indictment, Contreras "ordered the assassination."

THE TWO other Chileans, Col. Pedro Espinoza and Capt. Armando

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Fernández Larios, also were DINA men. Espinoza was chief of operations and Fernández was an operative who traveled to the United States with Townley just before the assassination.

The three officers were indicted in Washington on Aug. 1. The Chilean government was not visibly shaken by the long-expected action, but the political hazards for President Augusto Pinochet in the case loom ever larger.

Some informed observers predict that whatever course the proceedings take, they ultimately will force the resignation of Pinochet or provoke a coup against him.

Others are betting that Pinochet will ride it out. The tenacious army general has held power since Sept. 11, 1973, when he led a bloody coup against the late Marxist President Salvador Allende. Letelier had been Allende's ambassador to Washington, then foreign minister and defense minister.

AMERICAN OFFICIALS obviously are convinced that evidence in the Letelier assassination against Contreras and his subordinates warrants a trial. It has been made clear that any Chilean move to get

them off the hook could result in the withdrawal of the U.S. ambassador here.

Diplomats predict that if the United States makes that move, several European governments will follow, seriously affecting trade with Chile. Pinochet's government would be critically wounded.

An open and impartial trial, on the other hand, would risk putting the regime in jeopardy:

- Chileans at all levels would be exposed to detailed and formal charges that a high and powerful official in the military regime ordered the assassination of a Chilean in the capital of the United States.

- Resentment would swell among hard-line military officers who feel that, in defending Chile against Marxist subversion, it was not only necessary but patriotic for DINA to engage in a "dirty war." Even military men who do not condone DINA's tactics would see the trial of fellow-officers for obeying orders as an assault on the Chilean military's strong tradition of discipline.

- Contreras himself, if he felt betrayed, might attempt in the trial to lay blame for the assassination on Pinochet.

miami herald

august 29, 1978

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HOWEVER, ITS also possible that the damage done to Pinochet's government by the prosecution could be undone by arguments from the defense.

Contreras' lawyer, for example, has claimed recently that Townley — who has provided evidence for use against other defendants — was an agent of the CIA. Though the lawyer may not be able to prove that assertion, it already clouds the issue in the eyes of many Chileans.

The same lawyer recently began a campaign of praise for the work of DINA.

"We non-Marxist Chileans are indebted to DINA," he contends. "Each of its men silently confronted Marxism, face to face, making reconstruction possible. The men of DINA are the forgotten battalions of this legal state of internal warfare."

If Pinochet can convince his officers that the proceedings are one more unpleasant battle DINA must fight, traditional discipline may be maintained.

AT LEAST there should be no problem in keeping Contreras, Espinoza and Fernández from being extradited. It has even been suggested that extradition of the former Chilean intelligence chief is the last thing the United States really wants.

"If that happened, a judicial precedent would be created by which other countries could request the extradition of the former director of the CIA, Richard Helms, for example, for different acts of violence that agency has carried out around the world," said the Chilean news-magazine *Que Pasa*. The magazine said that the CIA was involved in a 1970 plot to kidnap a Chilean general, who was killed in the attempt.

A 1902 extradition treaty between Chile and the United States says: "Neither of the contracting parties shall be bound to deliver up



Manuel Contreras
... may face trial

its own citizens or subjects under the stipulations of this treaty."

"**IN THE** history of this treaty, there have been numerous requests for extradition by one side and the other," says Chilean Foreign Minister Hernán Cubillos. "The precedent of one being granted has never existed because the spirit of the treaty was precisely that each country — recognizing that the other has an independent judiciary — may prosecute its own citizens.

"What is going to happen? I'll tell you, that depends exclusively on the quality of the evidence, on how good a case the Department of Justice has."

According to the treaty, evidence to justify extradition must be presented with the formal extradition request within two months after an arrest. The Chilean officers were put under house arrest Aug. 1 at U.S. request.

Since then, the Justice Department has been carefully preparing the extradition papers. Chilean lawyer Alfredo Echeverry, who has been handling the case in Chilean

courts for the United States, flew to Washington last week to help.

The 1902 treaty says that a fugitive shall not be extradited if he proves that the intent is to try him for a political offense. The Chilean Supreme Court conceivably could use that clause as grounds for releasing the three officers.

U.S. OFFICIALS, however, say that such a move might bring diplomatic reprisals.

Cubillos stresses that both Chile and the United States are obligated by the treaty "to accept whatever the judges of the Supreme Court decide."

"And here it is important to remember that our judicial system is absolutely independent," Cubillos adds. "The judges have a system of deliberation among themselves; they are not judges appointed by the military junta, they are judges who come from other periods, and we don't know what they are going to do."

(Although none of the 13 Supreme Court judges have come from outside the Chilean judiciary, several of them were appointed to the Supreme Court from other courts by the current government.)

In past proceedings involving DINA, Chile's civil courts have declared the cases out of their jurisdiction and referred them to military tribunals. Under Chilean law, military courts have jurisdiction over armed forces personnel.

An American diplomat, reluctant to predict the course of the Contreras case, speculated that the United States might not object to a military trial if it is open to observers. The diplomat emphasized that any trial will be watched closely by U.S. legal representatives for strict standards of impartiality.

One close observer said that if a military trial were held behind closed doors, it would be difficult for the United States to accept as impartial.

miami: herald

August 29, 1978

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By DAVID F. BELNAP
Los Angeles Times Service

Chile Asked to Extradite Trio

SANTIAGO, Chile —

The United States formally requested the extradition Wednesday of three former members of the Chilean secret police indicted for murder in the assassination of a Chilean Marxist exile and his American secretary in Washington.

CONTRERAS

U.S. Ambassador George W. Landau handed the extradition request to Foreign Minister Hernan Cubillos one day short of two years after a bomb exploded in the automobile of Orlando Letelier, killing him and Ronni K. Moffit.

Letelier had served as Chile's ambassador to Washington and as minister of foreign affairs and defense in the cabinet of the late President Salvador Allende, whose Marxist administration was violently overthrown by military revolution five years ago.

The United States wants to bring to trial Gen. Manuel Contreras, former secret police chief, and two of his subordinates, Col. Pedro Espinoza and Capt. Armando Fernandez. All were army officers assigned to Chile's intelligence service known by its Spanish acronym

as DINA until it was dissolved last year and replaced by another agency.

"WE EXPECT that Chilean justice will concede the extraditions requested," Landau said after delivering the petition, which included about 400 pages of supporting evidence.

The embassy received the extradition package from Washington last week. Afterward, it was reviewed by Chilean lawyer Alfredo Echeverry to assure that it conformed to Chilean legal Spanish. Echeverry has been retained by the United States to represent it in the extradition proceedings before the Chilean Supreme Court.

Contreras, Espinoza and Fernandez were indicted Aug. 1 by a Washington grand jury acting on evidence that included testimony by Michael V. Townley, 35, an American expatriate and former agent of Chile's secret police.

Townley said that he armed the fatal bomb and placed it in Letelier's automobile. The bomb was exploded by a remote device, consisting mainly of a radio call-pager, while Letelier was driving his car on a Washington street Sept. 21, 1976. Five Cuban exiles were indicted for activating the device.

TOWNLEY, WHO plea-bargained with the

Justice Department in exchange for his testimony, was arraigned in Washington in August as were three of the Cubans. Two Cubans are still at large.

Letelier was jailed here after Allende's fall. He was later exiled and deprived of his Chilean citizenship. He was a leader of exiles working in the United States against Chile's military junta.

Contreras headed DINA during the planning and execution of Letelier's assassination. Espinoza was DINA's chief of operations.

All three were detained here when the indictments were handed up. Contreras and Espinoza are under house arrest. Fernandez is held at the military hospital here.

The extradition request and supporting evidence now go to the Supreme Court, sole legal body empowered to rule on such requests under Chilean law. The procedure involves two steps.

Chief Justice Israel Borquez, acting as a judge of original jurisdiction, first hears arguments and receives briefs from both sides. He may also question the accused and any witnesses they cite in support of their cases.

Borquez's decision is automatically reviewed by a panel of other Supreme Court justices, whose ruling is final.

miami herald

september 21, 1978

3-93-48

Entire Letelier Case Handed Over to Chile In Extradition Bid

MH 9/23
3-93

By JOHN DINGES
Special to The Herald

SANTIAGO, Chile — Much of what U.S. investigators have learned about the assassination of



NEWS
ANALYSIS

leftist Chilean exile Orlando Letelier is contained in a 25-pound box of documents handed over to the Chilean government.

The documents are part of the Justice Department's case to back up a U.S. request for the extradition of retired Gen. Manuel Contreras, former head of the Chilean secret police, and two of his subordinates. All three were indicted last month on murder and conspiracy charges in the car-bomb slaying of Letelier in Washington on Sept. 21, 1976.

The bulky package of papers, elaborately encased in leather-and-wood binders with brass rivets and ribbons to prevent tampering, were described by one investigator as a "bombshell" for the Chile's military government.

THE ALREADY volatile political climate here is expected to become more tense as the Chilean court decides whether to reveal evidence in the extradition documents that is potentially damaging to the government and whether to extradite the three officers. Persons in Washington who are familiar with the case have stressed that only Chileans may make extradition documents public at this point.

If the Chilean Supreme Court follows past procedures in extradition cases, the files should be routinely made available to the public during the proceedings, which are expected to start soon.

With revelation of the evidence, the complicated international plot to assassinate Letelier would be virtually unraveled for the public before the murder trial in Washington. A federal judge recently told lawyers that the trial there would begin Jan. 8.

Sources said the evidence submitted for the extradition proceedings covers all of the U.S. case except for relatively minor details concern-



Gen. Manuel Contreras
... secret police chief

ed arrangements for Chilean support of anti-Castro activities in exchange for "hits" against Pinochet's opponents abroad.

ANOTHER SOURCE said he had been told by someone who had read the documents that they contain information about the assassination in Buenos Aires of exiled Chilean Gen. Carlos Prat in September 1974 and the unsuccessful attempt to kill outspoken Christian Democratic leader Bernardo Leighton in September 1975. That could not be verified. The sources close to the investigation were willing to say that the documents contain "new names, new pictures."

"It's important that Contreras gets brought back, but it's even more important that the facts get out," said one of the sources.

The delivery of the documents and the extradition request brought the focus of the two-year investigation back to Chile two years after the car bombing, which killed Letelier, 44, and an associate, Ronni Moffitt, 26, as they were driving to work in Washington.

LETELIER WAS an exile leader of opposition to the military junta

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ing five members of a Cuban-exile group who also were indicted in the killing. The documents are intended to build an overwhelming case for the extraditions and head off any possibility that the Chilean court might rule that the evidence was insufficient, the sources said.

"This is what you have been waiting for," said one source, adding that the evidence, although all of it is relevant to the Letelier assassination, touches on other terrorist activities in other foreign countries.

"It'll have the answers to your questions," he said when asked whether the documents will discuss an alleged "Chilean-Cuban connection," which is said to have includ-

ed opposition to the military junta led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet. The regime took power in a bloody 1973 coup against the late President Salvador Allende's Marxist-oriented government, which Letelier had served as ambassador to Washington, foreign minister and defense minister.

Contreras, being held under house arrest, headed the military government's National Directorate of Intelligence (DINA), which coordinated anti-subversive action until it was reorganized and given another name last year.

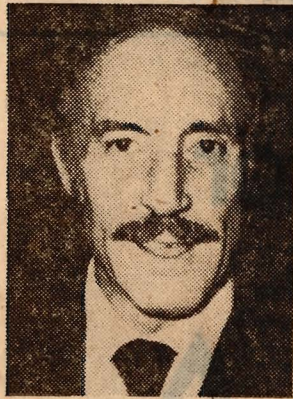
The other DINA officers named in the extradition request are Col. Pedro Espinoza and Capt. Armando Fernández. They are under arrest at an army hospital.

7/12/78
9/29/78

Chile Judge's Ruling In Extradition Case Miffs U.S. Officials

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The State Department expressed concern Thursday about a decision by a Chilean judge that could affect the outcome of U.S. efforts to extradite three Chileans wanted in the 1976 slaying of a former Chilean ambassador.

Chilean Supreme Court President Israel Borquez has ruled that the Chilean attorney who is representing the United States, Alfredo Etcheberry, may not take part in hearings on the case.



LETELIER

The three are wanted in the car-bombing assassination of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier, an outspoken critic of Chile's military junta.

Brown denied a published report that the United States was so distressed by Borquez's ruling that it considered withdrawing its extradition demand in favor of exerting strong diplomatic pressure on Chile.

Department spokesman Kenneth Brown called the decision "unprecedented in Chilean legal practice. We are naturally concerned that our interests be properly represented."

Brown added that the government is closely monitoring the proceedings in Chile and "expects that it will be handled in a manner which is fair, just and expeditious for all parties."

Last week, the administration announced it was seeking the extradition of a former head of the Chilean secret police, Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, and two associates.

Miami Herald
9/29/78

3-92-50

U.S. Denied Public Hearings in Chile On Extraditions in Letelier's Slaying

3-93 M.H. 10/6

By JOHN DINGES
Special to The Herald

SANTIAGO, Chile — The United States has lost its legal battle here for public hearings on its request to extradite three former Chilean secret police officials wanted for the assassination of Orlando Letelier.

The Chilean Supreme Court Wednesday denied a U.S. appeal against a secrecy rule imposed by the judge in charge of the extradition procedures. The judge, Supreme Court President Israel Bórquez, ruled that the U.S. extradition request, and evidence presented by the U.S. Justice Department to prove its case, required a "summary" investigation. In Chilean criminal law, that indicates a closed inquiry of indefinite duration conducted alone by the presiding judge, who personally interrogates witnesses.

THE CHILEAN military government, in a statement by Justice Minister Mónica Madariaga, announced — before the U.S. appeal was heard — its agreement with the decision to conduct the inquiry secretly. Court officials have told Chilean reporters that the extradition case is considered to be extremely complicated and could take as long as a year.

The United States has asked for extradition of retired Gen. Manuel Contreras, the former head of the Chilean secret police, and two subordinate officers, Col. Pedro Espinoza and Capt. Armando Fernández. They were indicted along with five members of a Cuban exile group on Aug. 2 by a U.S. district court on charges of conspiring to murder Letelier, an exile opponent of Chile's government, and his associate Ronni Moffitt.

Letelier was Chile's ambassador to the United States and a cabinet minister in the government of Pres-



Gen. Contreras
... ex-secret police chief

ident Salvador Allende, a Marxist deposed by a coup in September 1973. He was killed by a car bomb in Washington in September 1976.

THE SECRECY in the extradition hearings means that a bulky packet of hundreds of pages of sworn testimony, photos and other documents presented by the United States to the court will be kept from the press. The Chilean lawyer hired by the United States will be barred from some of the proceedings.

The lawyer, Alfredo Echeberry, argued in his appeal that the U.S. case will be hurt if he is kept from hearing the judge's interrogation of witnesses, and barred from cross-examining them and challenging their credibility.

A State Department spokesman said last week he had been informed that the barring of the U.S. lawyer was "unprecedented" and that the U.S. government was watching the proceedings closely.

An editorial in the newspaper El

Mercurio, a major backer of the military government, said the U.S. statement was due to ignorance of Chilean law. A Supreme Court official subsequently showed reporters a pile of about a dozen past extradition cases that he said also had a secret inquiry stage and showed that Judge Bórquez' handling of the Letelier extradition was not unprecedented.

Before the present military government came to power, however, the courts seemed to interpret the secrecy of the inquiry stage more liberally.

THE CURRENT DISPUTE over secrecy involves more than legal technicalities and interrogation procedures.

The denial of public hearings could delay for months the public unraveling of the Letelier assassination. The two-year investigation is already known to have touched several Latin American countries besides Chile and uncovered evidence on other terrorist activities involving Cuban exiles and the Chilean secret police.

The FBI considers the case solved, and sources in Washington said its best evidence is included in the documents sent to Chile. However, officials say they are forbidden by U.S. law from revealing the evidence before trial in the United States.

THE TRIAL IS scheduled to begin Jan. 8 in Washington. If, as it now appears, the extradition proceedings here are not completed before then, the defendants at the trial will include only three of the eight persons indicted for the murder. They are Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross, who are in FBI custody, and Ignacio Novo, who is free on \$25,000 bail. Two other Cuban exiles accused of the murder, José

Dionisio Suárez and Virgilio Paz, are fugitives.

In its ruling denying the U.S. appeal, the Chilean Supreme Court upheld Bórquez' contention that Echeberry has no legal right to demand participation in the proceedings until the judge declares the inquiry completed. However, the court also said that the secrecy of the inquiry "is not absolute" and "is not as strict as insinuated by the lawyer of the government of the United States."

The court said the presiding judge will hear the lawyer's request and may decide to grant him "full or partial" information about the progress of the inquiry.

Miami Herald
10/6/78

3-93-51

General Charged in Letelier Murder Has Copies of Evidence, Sources Say

3-93

10-12 H4B

By JOHN DINGES
Special To The Herald

SANTIAGO, Chile — Documents containing the U.S. evidence about the murder of Orlando Letelier and declared secret by a Chilean court reportedly have been obtained by retired Gen. Manuel Contreras, the former head of the Chilean secret police who has been indicted for the crime.

Copies of the documentary evidence to back up a U.S. request for the extradition of Contreras and two other secret police officers were seen in Contreras' hands by persons with access to Santiago's Military Hospital where the three officers are being held.

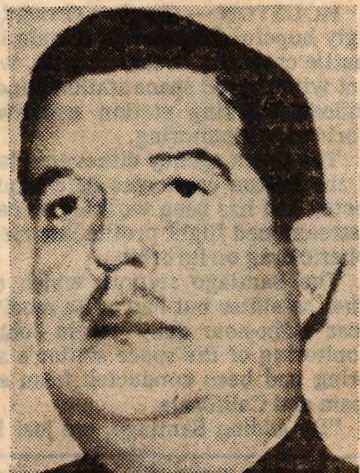
A court official said the documents are kept "under lock and key in strictest secrecy" in the office of Supreme Court Judge Israel Bórquez, who is handling the extradition proceedings. "It couldn't be. They didn't get it here," the official said.

A SOURCE who saw the documents and was able to describe their contents said Contreras and his lawyer spend much of their day poring over the papers to prepare for questioning by Bórquez.

The interrogation of the accused by the presiding judge — a step that in past extradition cases took place within hours of the defendant's arrest — has not yet been conducted by Bórquez in the three weeks since the extradition request was pre-

'Legally, at this stage, it would be impossible for the defendants to have access to the evidence accompanying the demand for extradition.'

— U. S. lawyer Alfredo Echeberry



Gen. Manuel Contreras
... preparing case?

sented to the court Sept. 21.

It was learned that three photostatic copies of at least 500 pages of the U. S. documents were seen and handled by persons close to Contreras within a week of their delivery to the Chilean foreign ministry by U.S. ambassador Walter Landau.

THE CHILEAN Supreme Court last week upheld Bórquez' ruling that the extradition proceedings would be secret, thus denying the defendants and the press immediate access to the evidence and barring

all parties, including the lawyer for the United States, from knowledge of the proceedings.

The U. S. lawyer, Alfredo Echeberry, said he had no comment on the report that Contreras had obtained the documents. But he said that "legally, at this stage, it would be impossible for the defendants to have access to the evidence accompanying the demand for extradition."

Contreras and two subordinates, Col. Pedro Espinosa and Capt. Armando Fernández were indicted by

a federal court for conspiring to murder Letelier and an associate Ronni Moffitt in a car bombing Sept. 21, 1976, while they were driving to work in Washington, D. C. Letelier, a former Chilean Ambassador to the United States, was a leader of exile opposition to the military regime of President Augusto Pinochet.

CONTRERAS WAS placed in charge of organizing Chile's vast secret police apparatus, known as DINA, to fight leftist resistance to the military government after it came to power in a September 1973 military coup that deposed Socialist President Salvador Allende. The U. S. indictment accuses Contreras, as head of the secret police, of having ordered Letelier's murder which was carried out by DINA officers and five Cuban exiles.

The United States, in appeals by Echeberry, challenged the judge's secrecy rule but lost the appeals.

A U.S. official said in Washington several weeks ago that normally the U.S. prosecutor would prefer to keep the details of his case secret from the defendants as long as possible in order to make it more difficult to fabricate alibis.

IT was felt, because of its importance, that the Letelier case should be allowed to be aired in public in Chile, even though the FBI is forbidden by U. S. law from releasing evidence before the trial, scheduled for Jan. 8 in Washington.

Miami Herald

October 12, 1978

3-93-52

Letelier Murder Suspect Puts Blame on U.S., CIA

MB 10-30

3-93

By JOHN DINGES
Special to The Herald

SANTIAGO, Chile — Retired Chilean Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, charged by the United States with the 1976 murder of Orlando Letelier, is pointing the finger of blame back to the United States and the CIA.

Contreras, former director of the Chilean secret police organization known as DINA, kept a stony silence in the face of accusations against him until last week.

On Tuesday, wearing a business suit and a smile, he strode into Santiago's supreme court building and launched his counterattack.

Surrounded by security guards, said to be men personally loyal to the ex-general, Contreras entered the chambers of supreme court president Israel Bórquez. Contreras had come to the court from Santiago's military hospital, where he is held under preventive arrest, to defend himself against still-secret FBI evidence submitted to support a U.S. request to extradite him and two DINA subordinates.

HE TOLD reporters that he is just as innocent of the Letelier murder as he is of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. He declared that Michael Townley, the American expatriate who has confessed to having arranged Letelier's assassination on DINA orders, "is an agent, but a CIA agent, not a DINA agent."

The United States has denied that Townley had anything but sporadic contacts with the CIA. Justice Department officials have said the raising of the CIA issue by Chile is a "smokescreen." Townley is cooperating with the U.S. investigation as a material witness.

Letelier, a former Chilean ambassador to the United States under the late Marxist President Salvador Allende, was a leading exile opponent of the military government that seized power from Allende in 1973. Letelier and an associate, Ronni Moffitt, died when a bomb blew up in Letelier's car as they drove along a Washington street on Sept. 21, 1976.

A CHILEAN source, who claims to be privy to the Chilean side of



Gen. Contreras

... claims innocence

the Letelier case and to much of the U.S. side, said DINA officers have testified before a Chilean army judge who is conducting a parallel secret investigation related to the case.

The testimony to Gen. Héctor Orzoco has not been made available to the U.S. investigators, the source said.

Another source, who has read the 700-page packet of testimony and evidence presented by the United States, said Townley did not directly implicate Contreras in the murder. Townley's testimony, the source reported, says he got his orders from DINA agent Armando Fernández and Col. Pedro Espinoza, former DINA chief of operations.

Fernández, however, has given testimony that he received orders from Contreras to work with Townley, the source said. He said Fernández talked to an FBI agent early this year and later answered a set of questions sent by the United States to Chile in a court-to-court investigative procedure called letters rogatory.

CONTRERAS, FERNANDEZ, Espinoza, Townley and five members of a Cuban exile group were indicted for the murder last August by a U.S. court.

The source gave this account of material contained in the U.S. dossier:

Fernández testified that Contreras

as ordered him to go to Paraguay in July 1976 to obtain false passports and visas in preparation for a two-man mission with Townley to the United States. Fernández said he was ordered by Contreras in late August to go to Washington.

Fernández has refused to tell investigators the reason for the mission to the United States, but Townley, who was Fernández' partner on the trip to Paraguay, said both missions were part of the operation to kill Letelier.

Townley testified that Fernández' mission was to obtain information about Letelier's car and route to work, and to report the information to Townley, who then carried out the bombing with the assistance of the Cuban exiles.

TOWNLEY'S TESTIMONY that he exchanged information with Fernández at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York is backed up by testimony by an employe of LAN-Chile, the Chilean airline, who said LAN-Chile offices were used for the meeting.

After returning to Chile Sept. 9, Fernández said in his testimony that he met Contreras on a street in the port city of San Antonio and reported on his mission. Fernández refused to say in his testimony what his mission was.

Townley's and Fernández' first mission to obtain false passports and visas in Paraguay was badly botched and became known inside DINA as "the Paraguay messup" (la embarrada de Paraguay).

Paraguayan Benito Guanes told the FBI that the two men were given official Paraguayan passports under false names in response to a telegraphed request from Gen. Contreras, who signed the coded message "Condor I."

Guanes said he became worried about the nature of the DINA agents' mission to the United States and, after Townley and Fernández had returned to Chile, telephoned Contreras and demanded that the passports be returned in the next diplomatic pouch.

The abortive Paraguayan mission provided the United States with pictures of Townley and Fernández, and ultimately led to their identification.

miami herald

October 30, 1978

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Judge Orders the CIA: Disavow Slaying Role

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — A federal judge asked the CIA Monday to state in writing that it had no connection to an alleged Chilean secret police plot resulting in the 1976 assassination of Chilean exile Orlando Letelier.

U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker told prosecutors to make sure the CIA's affidavit is "very clear, unambiguous, unequivocal."

Parker also directed the government to submit its evidence against three former Chilean secret police officials charged with ordering Letelier's murder.

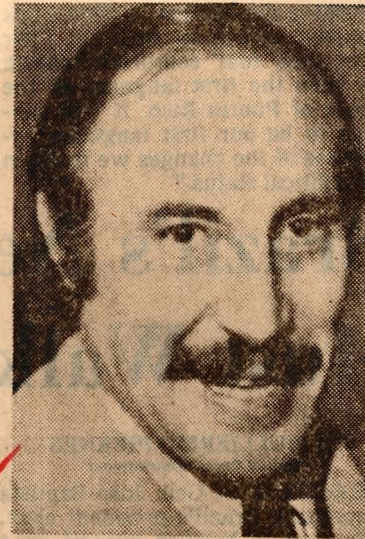
The 700-page government dossier is reported to include evidence of other political assassinations ordered by the Chilean secret police agency, DINA.

Chile's Supreme Court has yet to rule on whether former DINA chief Manuel Contreras Sepulveda and

two of his top aides should be extradited to the United States to stand trial for the Letelier murder.

Parker is proceeding toward a Jan. 8 trial for three anti-Castro Cubans charged in connection with the assassination. They include Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, accused of providing DINA with explosives for the murder, and Sampol's brother, Ignacio, accused of lying to a grand jury.

Defense lawyers have asked Parker to order the CIA to provide any files that might link it to the alleged Chilean secret police conspiracy.



Orlando Letelier
... slain in 1976

miami herald

November 7, 1978

3-93-54

Leaks in Letelier Case May Turn

By JOHN DINGES
Special to The Herald

SANTIAGO, Chile — Despite a court secrecy order, there have been leaks about U.S. documents supporting a request for the extradition of Chile's former chief of secret police, who is charged in the Washington assassination of leftist Chilean exile Orlando Letelier.

One leak this week revealed that the United States has presented evidence that Cuban exiles charged in the Letelier case came to Chile for secret police training before the 1976 slaying.

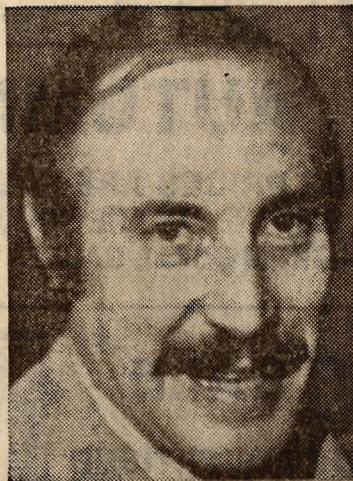
One way or another, the leaks may turn into a flood.

A CHILEAN lawyer representing the United States in the extradition proceedings has presented motions seeking a court reversal of the secrecy order. The lawyer, Alfredo Etcheberry, says he is "free" to make the U.S. documents public and may do so if the secrecy order is left standing.

"I am not bound by the secrecy ruling. I can decide to release evidence accordingly as I feel it will help our case," Etcheberry said in an interview.

Israel Bórquez, the Supreme Court's chief justice, imposed the secrecy rule Friday. Late Tuesday, the Supreme Court denied Etcheberry's motion to delay extradition proceedings while an appeal on the secrecy issue is pending. A decision on Etcheberry's appeal is expected before the end of the week.

Chilean President Augusto Pinochet steadfastly has denied involvement by his government in the murder of Letelier, a former Chilean ambassador to the United States and cabinet minister under the late President Salvador Allende, a Marxist. After Allende was overthrown in 1973, Letelier became an



Orlando Letelier
... killed in 1976

exile leader of the opposition to Pinochet.

THE UNITED States is requesting the extradition of retired Gen. Manuel Contreras, the former secret police chief, and two subordinate officers. All three have been indicted in Washington.

The U.S. extradition request is backed by hundreds of pages of documents, pictures and film, which sources say contain information that will be politically damaging to Chile's military government.

The secrecy ruling was justified by Bórquez's office as necessary to prevent a "public commotion" if the hearings were public.

The ruling would keep evidence presented by the United States from public scrutiny in the court, and bar the lawyer for the United States from hearings in which any new evidence is presented, Etcheberry said. He said the ruling also would deny him the chance to cross-examine new witnesses.



President Pinochet
... denies involvement

El Mercurio, Chile's major daily newspaper, called in an editorial Sunday for the hearings to be public.

THE SECRECY ruling was not expected and its imposition is known to have upset U.S. Embassy officials here.

Sources here and in Washington said the United States had been assured that the extradition request would be treated as a "purely judicial matter."

They said the understanding was that past extradition procedures would be followed — meaning that hearings would be public and that the voluminous U.S. evidence would be open to the press as soon as the case entered the court.

Etcheberry said he has copies of the most important parts of the U.S. case. The originals, included in a 25-pound box of evidence presented to the Chileans, have been locked

up in a safe in Bórquez's office, a court official said.

ETCHEBERRY said he "will be able to release most of the documents" he has once the three accused officers are questioned in the extradition hearings. The lawyer said he does not want to reveal his case earlier and give the officers added time to prepare rebuttals.

The documents, according to persons who have read them, contain evidence that some of the five Cuban exiles accused in the killing were in Chile a few weeks before the murder receiving training from the secret police, known then by the acronym DINA.

The key document is a confession by Michael Townley, an American expatriate who said he worked as a DINA agent in the assassination plot. Townley, who pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the assassination, is in custody in the United States.

Two of the indicted Cuban exiles are in custody, one is out on bail, and two are fugitives.

INFORMED SOURCES said the FBI has received testimony from a witness who saw one of the Cubans, Virgilio Paz, in Townley's Santiago house in July 1976, two months before the murder. Paz is a fugitive.

According to indictments returned in early August by a U.S. grand jury, the Cubans, members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, met with Townley in New Jersey in September 1976. From there they went with him to Washington, where they assembled a bomb and attached it under Letelier's car, the indictments say. They indicate that one of the Cubans detonated the bomb by remote control, killing Letelier and Ronni Moffitt, an associate who was riding with him

Sept. 28, 1978

B-93-55

Miami Herald

urn Into Flood

The U.S. extradition request is backed by hundreds of pages of documents, pictures and film, which sources say contain information that will be politically damaging to Chile's military government.

through Washington's Embassy Row.

The dispute over whether extradition proceedings here should be public is only one of several incidents that have dismayed U.S. officials, a diplomat said. He also noted that a Chilean press and television campaign began several weeks ago defending Contreras and portraying the CIA as the real culprit in the Letelier murder.

THE DIPLOMAT said he suspects that the Chilean government is behind the campaign, which he feels is an attempt to influence the court.

Rafael Otero, a commentator who appears regularly on the government-owned television channel, has said Townley was a "known" CIA agent. Otero was the Chilean Embassy's press attache in Washington when Letelier was assassinated on Sept. 21, 1976.

Contreras' defense lawyer has made similar statements linking the CIA to the slaying. Monday he announced he will attempt to have the court subpoena U.S. Ambassador George Landau to testify. Although the announcement was seen as only a ploy, since Landau is protected by diplomatic immunity, the subpoena could be used in attempts to embarrass Landau in Chile if he refuses to testify.

As ambassador to Paraguay in 1976, two months before the Letelier assassination, Landau notified U.S. intelligence that two men he suspected of being DINA agents on an illegal mission unsuccessfully had sought visas from the U.S. consulate in Asuncion.

Later it was revealed that the two men were Townley and Capt. Armando Fernández, one of the DINA officers whose extradition from Chile now is being sought.

Bishop's Tip Leads To Bodies in Mine

3-93

SANTIAGO, Chile — (AP) — A Roman Catholic bishop has directed Chilean authorities to an unrevealed number of bodies in an abandoned



CONTRERAS

mine, reportedly on the basis of the confession of a former secret police agent. Supreme Court president Israel Bórquez ordered a criminal judge to investigate after Auxiliary Bishop Enrique Alvear of Santiago presented a written report on what he saw at the mine 25 miles southwest of here.

"IT IS A serious situation. For that I made the denunciation to the court," Bishop Alvear said Tuesday.

His action stirred rumors that the bodies could be of some of the more than 600 leftists who have disappeared since the military overthrew the late Marxist President Salvador Allende in 1973. The missing, who

have not figured on lists of those killed or imprisoned, are said by their families to have been seen last in the hands of agents of the now-dissolved secret police unit known as the DINA.

Brig. Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras, who directed the DINA, is now undergoing an extradition hearing at the request of the United States, which wants to try him on charges of ordering the 1976 bomb murder in Washington of exiled Chilean Socialist Orlando Letelier.

AS IS usual in criminal cases, the court declared the mine investigation process secret and did not make public the contents of the bishop's report. The church hierarchy, the government and two lawyers who accompanied Bishop Alvear to the mine also declined to discuss the case, but parts of the story have been pieced together from various sources.

The sources said the information reached Bishop Alvear through a priest who took a confession about 10 days ago. Some of the sources said the person confessing was an ex-DINA agent who then left the country.

Miami Herald

Dec. 6, 1978

3-93-58

3-93

MH 11/11/79

Letelier Assassination Evidence Seized Illegally, Court Is Told

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The FBI illegally obtained evidence that possibly links a Cuban exile defendant to the assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, defense attorneys argued Thursday.

The contested evidence includes some parts for making a bomb similar to the one that killed Letelier on Sept. 21, 1976, as he was driving to work in downtown Washington.

It also includes a sales receipt from a New York City electronics store for the purchase of a paging device. Government prosecutors contend the device was used to detonate the bomb that had been fastened to the underside of Letelier's car.

The evidence was seized by FBI agents when they were called to a vacated office above a store in Union City, N.J., that had been leased to a Cuban exile named Carlos P. Garcia.

Federal prosecutors contend that Garcia is an alias for Alvin Ross Diaz, one of the three Cuban defendants whose trial in connection with Letelier's assassination

began here on Tuesday.

Ross and Guillermo Novo Sampol, both of Union City, have been indicted for allegedly joining with Townley — the government's key witness, who already has pleaded guilty — in carrying out the murder. It was ordered by high-level Chilean government officials, the prosecutors allege.

Novo's brother Ignacio, who lives in Miami, is charged with withholding knowledge of the assassination conspiracy from federal officials and lying to a federal grand jury.

U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker Jr. interrupted the laborious process of selecting a jury late Thursday to hear arguments on the defense motion to keep the items seized by the FBI in the Union City office from being used against the Cubans.

Parker listened to about two hours of arguments, then delayed ruling until today or possibly Monday.

Federal prosecutor Eugene Propper has contended that the items seized in the Union City office forge a crucial link in the chain of evidence tying the Cuban exiles to the assassination conspiracy.

Miami Herald
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3-93-59

Letelier Jury Selection Hindered; Prospects Familiar With Case

3-93

MH 1/11/79

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Selection of a jury to try three Cuban exiles in the assassination case of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier bogged down Wednesday as potential jurors said they knew about the event.

Of 125 persons available for jury duty, 85 said they had either read of, or heard about, the assassination by bomb that occurred more than two years ago on fashionable Embassy Row here.

Fifty-five of them told Judge Barrington Parker Jr. that their knowledge extended beyond a simple awareness of the killing, which was reported around the world.

LETELIER, a one-time member of the Marxist Chilean government of Salvatore Allende, who was overthrown in a 1973 military coup, died when a bomb attached to the chassis of his car exploded as he drove to work at the Institute for International Policy Studies.

A young assistant, Ronni K. Moffitt, also died in the explosion.

Justice Department prosecutors have alleged that the bombing was ordered by DINA, the Chilean secret police and carried out by Cuban exiles under the direction of DINA agent Michael Townley, an American expatriate.

Townley, who has pleaded guilty to a lesser charge, is the government's key witness.

Two of the three Cubans on trial are charged with assisting Townley in the bombing. They are Guillermo Novo Sampol and Alvin Ross Diaz, both of Union City, N.J.

The third, Ignacio Novo Sampol — brother of Guillermo — is charged with withholding knowledge of the assassination plot and of lying to a federal grand jury investigating Letelier's death. Ignacio Novo lives in Miami.

TWO OTHER Cuban militants and three high-ranking DINA officials in Chile also were named in the murder indictment. However, the two Cubans so far have eluded a worldwide manhunt and the three Chilean agents have not been extradited by their government.

Judge Parker spent the day Wednesday questioning each of the 55 jury panelists who professed knowledge of the crime to determine if that knowledge would prejudice their decision as jurors.

His questioning is expected to continue through today.

Only one juror was dismissed Wednesday, however, and he admitted knowing Letelier personally. He was not identified by the court.

The questioning was done in Parker's chambers without any reporters present. One participant in the proceeding said only a few of the almost three dozen questioned during the day showed an awareness of the international implications of the crime.

"IT WAS a horrible crime," the participant said. "Here a guy has his legs blown off and a young girl dies by choking to death on her own blood."

"It was sensational news. But that's about all they know of it."

Prospective jurors also are being asked if they are familiar with the

CIA's activities in Chile between 1966 and 1973. For the last three years of that period, the CIA has admitted participating in actions to undermine the Marxist administration of Allende.

A key defense strategy will be an attempt to show that Townley was a double-agent — acting for both the CIA and DINA — and carried out the assassination himself.

Townley has admitted placing the bomb, but said he was doing it on orders from the head of DINA in Chile.

That defense theory may have received a boost Wednesday. The Washington Star, quoting unnamed sources, said Townley had been cleared — but never used — by the CIA as an operative in Chile.

IN AN AFFIDAVIT filed last month, the CIA admitted that Townley had approached the agency office in Miami on three occasions, in 1970 and in 1973, offering his assistance. Those offers were not accepted, the affidavit said.

Security surrounding the trial is extraordinarily rigid. At one point late Tuesday, bomb-sniffing dogs were taken into a bathroom near Judge Parker's courtroom because guards found a sticker with the name Omega 7 on it.

Omega 7 is a secret Cuban exile terrorist group that has claimed credit for several bombings in New York and Miami, including some that have caused deaths.

The judge and prosecutor Eugene Propper also have been placed under 24-hour guard because of alleged death threats.

miami herald

January 11, 1979

3-93-60

'007' Comes to Life In a U.S. Courtroom

3-93
By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The story includes the stuff of James Bond plots more suited to a novel than a U.S. District courtroom.

There are alleged international assassination schemes, Cuban exile terrorists, remote-controlled bombs, elaborate cover stories, a "mole" (double agent) buried deep within a foreign government's secret police and — most intriguing of all — a frame-up by the CIA to divert blame from itself.

But this is no novel.

These elements and others unfolded Monday in a U.S. District Court during opening arguments in the trial of three Cuban exiles charged in connection with the bombing assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

So far only the ending, as outlined by federal prosecutor Eugene

Propper in graphic detail, remains uncontested:

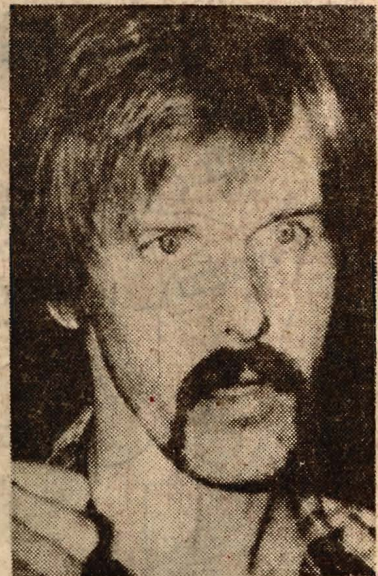
"On Sept. 21, 1976, at 9 a.m., Orlando Letelier left his home . . . to travel to his job with a young married couple," Propper intoned in a dispassionate voice.

"A bomb, which had been strapped to the floorboard of the car, was set off It was so powerful. Orlando Letelier's legs were destroyed and they were never recovered.

" . . . He died at Sheridan Circle," Propper continued. "Ronnie Moffit (a passenger in the car) suffocated . . . on her own blood."

The rest of the story, including who is responsible for what lawyers agreed was a "monstrous" crime, is in sharp dispute.

Propper and a federal grand jury allege that Letelier was assassinated by militant Cuban exiles under the direction of Michael Townley, an American expatriate who at the



Michael Townley

... on center stage

time was working for the Chilean secret police agency DINA.

Two of the defendants, Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, both of New Jersey, are charged with carrying out the as-

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January 16, 1979

3-93-61

P.1

Letelier Trial Has the Air Of a James Bond Thriller

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assassination plot. They are prominent members of the militant Cuban Nationalistic Movement, a violently anti-Communist group.

The third defendant, Ignacio Novo Sampol of Miami, is charged with lying to a federal grand jury about his knowledge of the crime and with helping the other defendants elude capture. He is the brother of Guillermo.

The government's key witness is Townley, 35, who has pleaded guilty to planting the bomb and directing the Cuban exiles in the plot. Townley also claims that he is a DINA agent.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY Paul Goldberger told the jury of seven women and five men Monday that the assassination was conceived and carried out by the CIA as part of a plan to silence critics of the Chilean military regime.

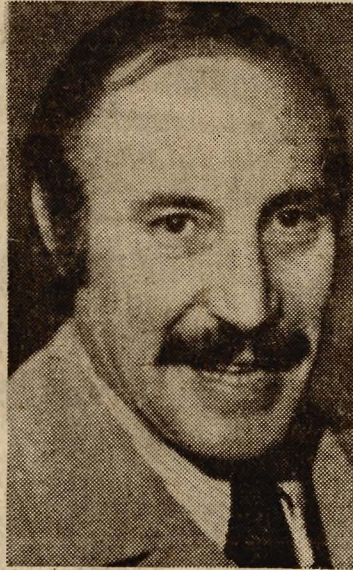
"We will show that Orlando Letelier was a documented enemy of the CIA," Goldberger said.

Goldberger, in outlining the defense strategy, said Townley was a "contract agent for the CIA" who used his position in the Chilean DINA as a cover.

Indeed, Goldberger suggested that Townley was a "CIA mole," a double agent placed to "burrow" deeply into another country's intelligence network and provide information on its activities.

Goldberger argued that the CIA ordered Townley to kill Letelier because the slaying would be blamed on either the Chilean government or the Cuban exiles he enlisted in the alleged plot.

"The horrible thought that the CIA is responsible may be hard to live with," Goldberger told the jury. "But that's what we will show."



Orlando Letelier
... he was assassinated

assignment to kill Letelier, but that they knew him under an alias as a DINA agent.

"We will prove that these are not assassins who hide in the dark to kill people," Goldberger said. But, he added, their anti-Castro political beliefs made them the ideal "scape-goats" in the schemes.

THE PROSECUTION'S opening statement amounted to a scenario that contained an almost equal amount of intrigue.

Propper said he would provide evidence linking the Cuban Nationalistic Movement (CNM) to the Chilean secret police in at least one other attempted act of international terrorism.

He said the evidence would also show that the radical group — of which the defendants were members — sought in return to be recognized by Chile as the Cuban gov-

they arrived after the meeting of Chilean exiles had ended, Propper said.

Although the prosecutors have made it clear that Townley will be their key witness, Propper said that an unnamed Cuban exile informant had provided supporting information.

Paz told the informant that he, Ross, Guillermo Novo and another fugitive defendant, Jose Dionisio Suarez, had participated in the assassination, Propper said.

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HE CITED the CIA's role in overthrowing the Marxist government of Salvador Allende — of which Letelier was a cabinet member — as evidence of the agency's interest in that Latin American nation. Goldberger contended that the CIA "buried" Townley to protect the military government from new subversion.

Letelier, an exile who had been instrumental in focusing world attention on the military junta's human-rights violations, was such a threat, Goldberger said.

The list of defense witnesses includes former CIA director Richard Helms, who oversaw the agency's activities in Chile in the early 1970s. Testimony will also be heard from three active CIA officials who have admitted Townley had once been "cleared" for use in Chile.

Goldberger and co-defense counsel Lawrence Dubin told the jurors that the three Cuban defendants were ignorant of Townley's alleged

organization by Chile as the Cuban government-in-exile.

Propper said that in early 1975, DINA sent Townley to Mexico to disrupt a meeting of Chilean exiles. Townley was told to contact CNM members in the United States and get their help on the mission, Propper said.

IN MIAMI, Townley contacted CNM founder Felipe Rivero, he said, who in turn referred him to Guillermo Novo, the CNM leader in New Jersey.

Propper said that Novo assigned Virgilio Paz Romero of Union City, N.J., to help Townley on the mission. Paz has also been indicted but remains a fugitive.

The purpose of that mission, Propper continued, was the kidnaping of former Chilean Socialist Party leader Carlos Altamirano.

Propper said Novo and others provided Townley with explosives to kill some of the exile leaders.

But the mission failed because

MH 1/17/79

Letelier Had Role in Cutting Aid to Chile, McGovern Says

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Sen. George McGovern (D., S.D.) testified Tuesday that assassinated Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier persuaded him to lead a 1975 Senate move that ended direct foreign aid to the Chilean military junta.

McGovern said he met Letelier at a Washington dinner party that year. He said that Letelier, living as an exile in Washington, convinced him that Gen. Augusto Pinochet's regime was guilty of massive human-rights violations.

As a result, McGovern said, he supported amendments to the foreign and military assistance bill that ended military aid to Chile and sharply restricted U.S. participation in international programs that benefitted Chile.

He also said that Letelier's role in bringing this about was widely known in the Senate.

McGOVERN'S TESTIMONY came on the second day of the trial of three Cuban exiles charged in connection with Letelier's death.

A former Chilean foreign minister, Letelier died Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb on his auto exploded along Embassy Row. A co-worker, Ronnie K. Moffitt, also was killed.

Alvin Ross Díaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, both of New Jersey, are charged with carrying out the assassination plot as members of the radical Cuban Nationalist Movement.

The third defendant is Ignacio Novo Sampol of Miami, brother of Guillermo. He is charged with helping the other defendants elude capture and with lying to a federal grand jury.

Two other Cuban militants and three high-ranking Chilean secret police officials have also been indicted.

The Cubans are fugitives. Chile has refused to grant extradition so that the agents could be tried.

THE INDICTMENT alleges that the director of the Chilean secret police — DINA — ordered Letelier killed because he had become an effective critic of the military junta that overthrew Marxist Salvador Allende. The overthrow sent Letelier into exile.

The assassination was allegedly carried out under the direction of Michael V. Townley, a DINA agent and U.S. expatriate. Townley has pleaded guilty and will be the prosecution's key witness.

Defense attorneys have said, however, that they will prove that Townley was a double agent planted inside DINA by the CIA. They also contend that the CIA ordered Letelier killed in such a way that the Cuban Nationalist Movement and the Chilean DINA would be blamed.

McGOVERN'S testimony was intended to support the prosecution's theory that Letelier's death was ordered by Chilean authorities because his criticism was having a measurable economic impact there.

That theory received additional support from a member of the Dutch parliament, Relus ter Beek. He testified that Letelier had been primarily responsible for a movement within Holland that stopped a Dutch company from investing \$60 million in Chile.

He said Chile cited Letelier's role in stopping the investment when it revoked his citizenship 11 days before he was killed.

The deputy director of the Venezuelan Intelligence Service testified that defendant Guillermo Novo and two other militants had traveled through Venezuela en route to Chile in December 1974. That testimony supported the prosecution's contention that the defendants had had links with the Chilean junta before the killings.

Miami Herald

January 17, 1979

3-93-62

'My Mission Was to Murder Letelier,' Says Chilean Agent

3-93

MH 1/19/79

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

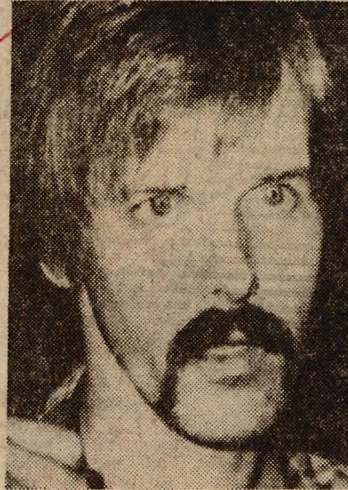
WASHINGTON — "My mission," Michael Vernon Townley said casually in answer to a prosecutor's questions, "was the elimination ... the assassination ... the killing of Orlando Letelier."

"My orders were to make the death appear to be an accident, or a suicide, to make it as innocuous as possible."

That courtroom testimony Thursday seemed particularly strange, coming from a man so clean-cut and soft-spoken that he appeared more like a church deacon than an assassin.

But assassin he is. For on Sept. 21, 1976, by his own admission, he planted the bomb that killed Letelier, the former Chilean ambassador to the United States during the regime of Salvadore Allende.

LETELIER, WHO was living here in forced exile after Allende was overthrown, and Mrs. Ronni Moffitt, a young assistant, died when the remote-controlled bomb strapped to the floorboard of Letelier's Chevelle exploded as they drove to work along Embassy Row.



Michael Townley
... star witness

A third passenger, Ronni's husband Michael, survived the blast. But, in a dazed state, he was found by onlookers running from the wreckage screaming, "The fascists have done this to us."

Townley, 36, in a deferential tone and with unflappable calm, spent almost four hours Thursday ex-

plaining to a U.S. District Court jury how he carried out his assignment to "eliminate" Letelier.

Townley already has pleaded guilty. He is the government's key witness in the case against his alleged Cuban exile accomplices.

Most of his testimony had been outlined previously by prosecutors, but he did provide some fresh details Thursday in telling his story publicly for the first time.

HE SAID he directed the plot as an agent for DINA, the Chilean secret police, and was assisted by members of the militant Cuban Nationalist Movement.

Two of the Cuban defendants, Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo, both of Union City, N.J., are charged, along with two others who remain fugitives, with helping Townley carry out the murder.

The third defendant, Ignacio Novo of Miami, allegedly lied to a federal grand jury investigating the assassination and assisted the other Cuban militants in eluding capture. He is Guillermo Novo's brother.

Townley's three superiors in

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pg-1

Townley: Diplomat's Death Was Result of a Conspiracy

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DINA who conceived the mission also are charged in the murder. However, they have not been extradited to the United States.

THE THREE Cuban defendants focused an icy stare on Townley throughout his testimony and, at one point, hurled insults at him during a break in the proceedings.

With the jury absent from the courtroom after Judge Barrington Parker Jr. called attorneys to his private chambers, the three Cubans hissed epithets at Townley, who was sitting next to a U.S. marshal only a few feet away.

In venomous Spanish, they called him a "whore," a "bastard" a "son of a whore" and — despite their pleas of not guilty in the assassination — a "traitor."

A young Cuban woman in the courtroom also called to Townley, "Someone should cut out your tongue."

The three defendants claim that Townley actually is a CIA double-agent who used DINA as a cover for his activities. Defense attorneys also contend that the CIA orchestrated the murder and then framed the Cuban exiles.

TOWNLEY ADMITTED Thursday that he had volunteered for CIA duty in 1970, but never was contacted after being interviewed in Miami by a CIA agent. He said he telephoned the CIA's Miami office twice more in late 1973, but again wasn't used.

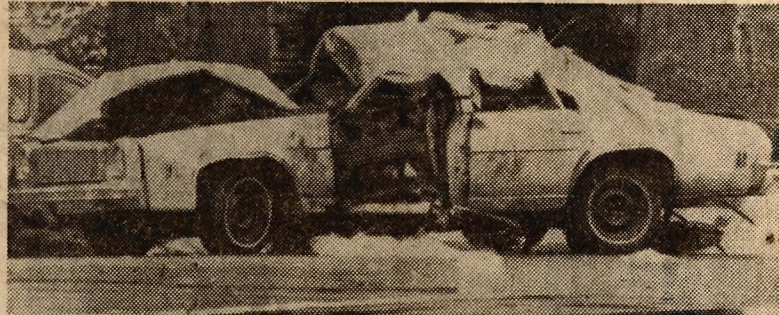
When Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper asked him if he ever had worked for the CIA, Townley replied in a strong voice: "No sir, I have not."

He said he was drawn into intelligence work as the result of his hobby — electronics — and his anti-Communist political beliefs during Allende's Marxist regime.

When Allende shut down the Chilean radio stations in 1972, Townley set up a mobile station that moved around Santiago, the capital city, broadcasting anti-government information.

After Allende was overthrown in a bloody military coup in 1973 — a coup that eventually forced Letelier into exile here — Townley said he

... "superficial friends" with



— Associated Press

Bomb Ripped Orlando Letelier's Car in 1976 ... he and associate died in Washington blast

ment, and discussed his assignment in "very general terms." In the end, Townley testified, he decided against enlisting any Miami-area Cubans in the plot because "most of them turned out to be very talkative."

Rivero referred him to Guillermo Novo in New Jersey, Townley said. Townley said he knew that Novo had gone to Chile in 1974 with Orlando Bosch, a Cuban terrorist, and Jose Dionisio Suarez, also of New Jersey. The two had wanted Chile to recognize the Cuban Nationalist Movement as the Cuban government in exile.

Townley said he persuaded Novo that he was a legitimate DINA member. Novo, Townley said, then gave him explosives and assigned Virgil Paz Romero to help.

The plot failed because Townley and Paz arrived in Mexico City one day after the Chilean exile meeting ended, Townley said. But the mission succeeded in cementing a relationship between DINA and the Cuban Nationalist Movement, especially its New Jersey leaders, Guillermo Novo and Paz.

TOWNLEY SAID that in early 1976 Paz traveled to Chile and attended the DINA training school. While there, Paz stayed with Townley and his family in suburban Santiago.

The orders to assassinate Letelier, who had become an international spokesman against the military junta, came late in the summer of 1976, Townley said.

Initially, the murder was to be carried out only by Townley and another DINA agent, he said. But after some initial plans went afoul and DINA officials began to fear

bomb went off, Townley said he flew first to New Jersey the next morning and, after meeting with Novo, flew to Miami that night to visit his parents in Boca Raton. The date was Sept. 19.

He directed Paz and Suarez to carry out the murder by activating the remote-controlled bomb as Letelier drove through "an extremely unpopulated park" near his home so nobody else would be injured.

"They were told not to do it if anyone else was in the car," Townley added.

On Sept. 21, the mission was accomplished. "I heard on the news that something had happened in Washington," he said.

But neither of his instructions was followed. The bomb exploded in a highly populated area, and there were two other passengers in the car.

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became
the intelligence officer assigned by
the Allende government to close
Townley's broadcasting station.

IN LATE 1974, Townley said that Col. Pedro Espinoza recruited him into DINA, where his American background and knowledge of electronics could be useful to the intelligence service.

Townley said his first mission came a month later. He was sent to Miami under an alias to buy electronic-surveillance equipment for DINA. He purchased the equipment at Audio Intelligence Devices Inc., near Fort Lauderdale, and returned to Santiago.

Then, in early 1975, Townley said he was called by DINA director Manuel Contreras and assigned to "eliminate" two Chilean exiles critical of the military junta.

This was Townley's first connection with the Cuban Nationalist Movement. Townley said his orders were to disrupt a meeting of Chilean exiles in Mexico City and "eliminate" Carlos Altamirano and Volodia Teitelbaum, both leading anti-junta leftists.

DINA, Townley said, told him to get help from Cuban exiles he had met during the four years, 1967-71, he lived in Miami.

HE SAID he traveled to Miami and contacted Felipe Rivero, founder of the Cuban Nationalist Move-

they might be linked to a killing, alternative plan was developed, Townley said. Cuban exiles would be used to assassinate Letelier.

Townley said that when he flew to New Jersey and outlined the plan to Novo and others in the exile group, "They complained that they were on the small end of the funnel," a Spanish expression meaning roughly that they were being asked to accept the responsibility of a large country.

But he said Novo reluctantly agreed to participate on the condition that Townley be actively involved and that DINA agree to support the Cuban exile movement.

TOWNLEY SAID the decision to kill Letelier with a bomb was made Sept. 18 during a breakfast at a McDonald's in Washington.

With him were Paz and Suarez, who drove here from New Jersey on orders from Novo, Townley said. Together they built the bomb — with parts purchased at local Radio Shack stores and a Sears, Roebuck store — and drove to Letelier's suburban home about midnight, he said.

Townley said he personally crawled beneath the car and attached the bomb to the chassis beneath the driver's seat.

Because his orders called for him to be out of Washington when the

searched Miami for
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22-EP-2

Letelier's Assassin Involved In Other Deaths, Court Told

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — American expatriate Michael V. Townley, who has admitted directing the bombing assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, may have orchestrated similar political murders in Buenos Aires and Rome, according to allegations raised Friday.

Defense attorneys for three Cuban exiles, on trial here in connection with Letelier's 1976 murder, raised Townley's possible involvement in two other assassinations. The allegation was made during legal arguments over how far defense attorneys could delve into Townley's past while cross-examining his testimony.

The jury was not present when the allegation was made.

Townley, a soft-spoken native of Waterloo, Iowa, who became a contract assassin for the dreaded Chilean intelligence service DINA, outlined in spine-chilling detail Thursday how he allegedly directed Cuban-American militants in the plot against Letelier.

Letelier and Mrs. Ronni K. Moffitt, an assistant, died Sept. 21, 1976, when a remote-controlled bomb strapped to the floorboard of Letelier's car exploded as

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January 20, 1979

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(P. 1)

Judge Bars Evidence On Townley's Other Missions for DINA

▶ FROM PAGE 1A

they drove along Embassy Row here.

Letelier was a Chilean ambassador to the United States under Marxist Chilean President Salvador Allende. He had lived in exile here after Allende was overthrown by a military junta in 1973 and had become a leading world critic of the junta's human rights policies.

Townley testified Thursday that he directed the Letelier assassination, under orders from DINA, and was assisted by the militant Cuban Nationalist Movement.

In return for his testimony, Townley has been allowed to plead guilty to a lesser charge of conspiracy to murder a foreign official. He will be eligible for parole in less than four years.

Attorneys for the three Cuban defendants — brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol and Alvin Ross Diaz — attacked the plea-bargaining arrangement.

ATTORNEY PAUL Goldberger told Judge Barrington Parker that the arrangement enabled Townley to escape prosecution for other assassination activities in foreign countries that he may be linked to.

The judge asked Goldberger what purpose such information would serve in the case. Goldberger replied that it could show Townley's method of operation as a DINA agent.

"Don't we have a right to show that Mr. Townley was in the busi-

ness of killing people even before he met the Cuban [defendants]?" he asked.

Goldberger said passport records and "hearsay" evidence indicate that Townley may have been involved in a 1974 political assassination in Buenos Aires and a 1975 assassination in Rome.

Chief federal prosecutor Lawrence Barcella conceded that passport records show that Townley was in both countries either on or shortly before those assassinations.

IN BUENOS AIRES, another Chilean exile, Gen. Carlos Prats, and his wife Sofia were killed when a bomb in their car exploded.

Like Letelier, Prats had been a high-ranking official in the Allende government and had been a critic of the military junta. That murder has never been solved.

A year later, in Rome, former Chilean vice president Bernardo Leighton and his wife were machine-gunned as they walked along a street. Although Leighton survived, he remains paralyzed. His wife, Anita, died in the attack.

Goldberger cited hearsay evidence that Townley made five trips to Rome prior to the murder.

Prosecutors Barcella and Eugene Propper conceded there is some evidence to link Townley to the crimes. But they argued that it is irrelevant to the Letelier case.

"**THE GOVERNMENT** of the U.S. has no jurisdiction outside [the country]," Barcella said. "It would do no good for us to question him about other activities. We can't order him to [testify]."

Defense attorney Lawrence Dubin countered that if the activities couldn't be brought to the attention of jurors, they would get only "half the picture" of Townley.

"What is the government afraid of?" he asked Judge Parker.

Parker, however, agreed with the prosecution. In an oral ruling that will bar the defense from asking Townley about other DINA missions, Parker said the jury had heard enough to form a judgment about Townley's character and credibility.

"There is enough to show that Mr. Townley is not the person you'd want to sit next to at a Sunday worship service," the judge said.

IN A RELATED development, defense attorney Goldberger told the judge he would produce an unnamed defense witness to testify that Townley was known to him as a CIA agent as recently as 1976.

The defense has alleged that Townley was, in fact, a CIA double agent within DINA. That theory holds that he assassinated Letelier on CIA orders, and then framed the Cuban defendants and DINA.

Townley denied in his testimony Thursday that he ever worked for the CIA. The CIA also has denied such an association.

Goldberger refused to name the alleged CIA witness. He said the witness was "very much concerned about security. He's been with the company [CIA] for years."

He hinted, however, that the contact between Townley and the CIA agent was made in Miami in early 1976 while Townley was preparing for a mission against Chilean exiles in Mexico.

Judge Parker indicated he would require some "hard" evidence to back up Goldberger's claim before he would allow him to question Townley about CIA connections.

The trial is to resume Wednesday.

Miami Herald

January 20, 1979

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A Killer From Middle America

3-43

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Michael Vernon Townley looks every bit as middle American and wholesome as anyone Waterloo, Iowa, ever produced.



He is tall, lanky and friendly, even to hostile defense attorneys. His polite "yes, sir" to every affirmative question comes in a soft-spoken deferential tone that would make any mother's heart swell with pride.

But the actions which Townley admits to in his gentle way can raise chills on a listener's neck. This product of Waterloo, Iowa, and one-time resident of Miami is a contract killer, as cold and calculating as almost any figure in the pages of a John LeCarre spy novel.

Townley, now 36 years old, is, in short, a living contradiction.

FOR THE past two days, he has held spell-

bound a U.S. District Court jury and a packed courtroom of reporters and spectators with his description of his exploits as a sometime-assassin for the Chilean secret police agency, DINA.

He has admitted plotting to "eliminate" former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier with a "device" that he constructed. The "device" was a remote-controlled bomb that exploded with such force beneath the driver's seat of Letelier's car that his legs never were recovered.

Townley recounted calmly how he built the bomb — combining his lifelong hobbies of electronics and radio-transmitting — and left militant Cuban exiles to detonate it in downtown Washington.

If there was any remorse in his heart, he didn't let it show. But he did tell the jurors minutes before that he initially had declined to participate in the assassination.

THE REASON: "My wife wasn't feeling well. She was going to have an operation." Also, he added, he might have missed his son's birthday.

The son of a Ford Motor Co. executive, Townley came to Chile at the age of 14 after attending schools in Iowa, New Jersey and Miami.

He quickly adapted, becoming proficient in Spanish.

At the age of 19 — when his parents left for the United States — he stayed behind to marry a politically active woman a decade older than he was. He returned briefly to the United States and worked for AAMCO Transmissions in Dade County. But he and his wife missed Chile.

In 1971, after four unhappy years in Miami, they returned and quickly got involved in political activities against then-President Salvador Allende, a Marxist.

By day, Townley ran an auto-repair shop. But, at night, he operated a clandestine, anti-Allende radio station which he built himself.

FATEFULLY, the government official assigned to stop the broadcasts came to admire Townley's ability to elude capture. After Allende was overthrown, that official — DINA Col. Pedro Espinosa — offered Townley a job as an electronics expert.

"I took the job because things weren't going too well in my business at that time, anyway," Townley testified.

That, as they say, is the beginning of the story.

3-93-65

miami herald

January 20, 1979

Did Townley Read About The Jackal?

3-93
By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Admitted political assassin Michael V. Townley described Monday how easy it is for an intelligence agent — or anyone with \$12 — to establish an alias.

Townley used the name Kenneth Enyart to travel on a U.S. passport between Chile, where he lived and worked for the Chilean police agency DINA, and several foreign countries in which he performed covert missions.

Enyart, however, is a real person although Townley doesn't know where he is — or even if he is alive. All Townley knows about him is that he is white, has the same color eyes and was born about the same time. There is no Kenneth Enyart in the Miami telephone directory.

TOWNLEY DIDN'T SAY if he had read Frederick Forsyth's best-selling novel *Day of the Jackal*. If he had, he would have known that it's important to make certain that your alias is dead when you pull this caper.

In Forsyth's book, the Jackal, a professional international assassin, goes to an English country graveyard and searches for a headstone of a little boy. By finding one, he insures that, when he applies for a passport with a phony name, the alias will not already have a passport, thus foiling the scheme.

Having found the name of a dead boy born about the same time as he, the Jackal obtains a birth certificate for the boy, then applies for a passport using that birth certificate as proof of name and British citizenship.

TOWNLEY PICKED UP the name Kenneth Enyart in Miami while planning an assassination in Mexico. He said he subsequently used the alias when coming to the United States to carry out the murder of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

Townley said that he went to the Dade County Courthouse and read through birth records until he came upon the name of someone whose birthdate was similar to his own. The name he found was Kenneth P. Enyart.

He asked for a photocopy of Enyart's birth certificate, took it to the passport office, paid \$12 and was in business. Apparently Enyart does not already have a passport — and Townley pulled it off without visiting a graveyard.

Townley: No Qualms Over Killing

FROM PAGE 1A

three militant Cuban exiles who allegedly played roles in the assassination. They are Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol, brothers, and Alvin Ross Diaz.

ASKED MONDAY by defense attorney Paul Goldberger if he had "any regrets" about killing Letelier, Townley replied simply, "Specifically, no sir."



Letelier

bomb strapped to the car only if Letelier was alone.

He also said he directed that the bomb be detonated in an unpopulated park area so that no innocent passers-by would be injured. Neither directive was followed. The explosion occurred on Embassy Row, within sight of the Chilean Embassy.

Sources close to the case have said that Townley's cooperation with the prosecution stems in part from his remorse over killing Moffitt.

MEANWHILE, chief defense attorney Goldberger, in an effort to discredit Townley's testimony before the jury, bore in on the plea-bargained arrangement he had worked out with prosecutors in exchange for his cooperation.

That agreement enables Townley to plead guilty to a single count of conspiracy to kill a foreign official and receive a sentence of between 40 months and 10 years.

Goldberger especially was caustic about a provision that allows Townley to keep silent about other DINA missions that may have included assassination of Chilean exiles in Rome and Buenos Aires.

Townley, after invoking the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination to avoid testifying about other DINA assignments, said that he remains under an oath of secrecy to Chile.

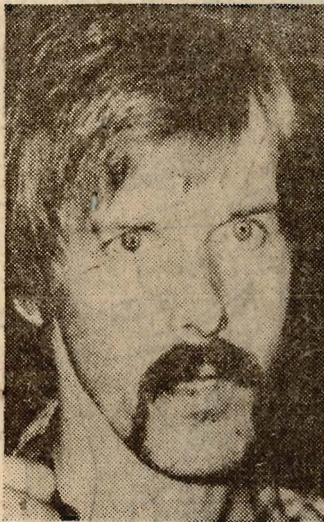
The Chilean government officially has released him from his secrecy vows to testify in connection with the Letelier trial only.

"I do wish to return to Chile, to what I consider my homeland," Townley said in declining to answer any question that might subject him to prosecution there.

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Michael Townley
... 'a soldier'

He Was an Enemy

Townley: No Regrets In Death of Letelier

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — In polite, expressionless tones, Michael V. Townley, the American expatriate turned Chilean secret agent, testified Monday that he had no moral qualms about directing the killing of leftist diplomat Orlando Letelier.

Under a sometimes sharp cross-examination of his testimony in U.S. District Court, Townley, 36, likened his mission to assassinate Letelier to a wartime order.

"I would consider him (Letelier) an enemy," Townley said.

"He was a soldier of his cause and I was a soldier of mine. I received an order and I carried it out as best as I could," he said.

Townley's testimony came as the trial of three

Cuban-Americans also charged in connection with Letelier's death, entered its third week.

Letelier was the Chilean ambassador to the United States under the late Marxist President Salvador Allende. He died Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb strapped beneath his car exploded in a Washington neighborhood.

Letelier had lived in exile in Washington after a military junta overthrew the Allende regime.

Ronnie K. Moffitt, 25, Letelier's assistant, also died in that explosion.

Townley already has pleaded guilty in return for a lesser sentence.

In two days of startling testimony last week, Townley, a soft-voiced, clean-cut Waterloo, Iowa, native, said he carried out the killing at the direction of the Chilean secret police agency, DINA, which wanted Letelier's criticism of the junta silenced.

He is the government's key witness against the

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miami herald

January 23, 1979

Ignacio Novo Admits Truth Of Charges in Letelier Case

MH 2/6/79

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — In a taped radio interview with a Dutch newsman, Ignacio Novo Sampol admitted the accuracy of the charges against him in connection with the Orlando Letelier assassination trial, a federal judge was told Monday.

The admission, made Friday and broadcast over National Public Radio this weekend, became part of the federal court record Monday as the trial of Novo and two other Cuban exiles entered its fourth week.

Novo, a Miami used car dealer, is charged with lying to a federal grand jury investigating the Letelier assassination and with helping other alleged conspirators to escape arrest. He is not charged with participation in the murder.

NOVO HAD TOLD the grand jury he did not know anyone connected with the Chilean intelligence agency, DINA, nor anyone who had been in Chile.

His negative replies had contradicted the testimony of the government's key witness, Michael V. Townley, an American expatriate turned DINA agent.

Townley told the jury that he went to Miami and contacted Novo after planting the bomb that killed Letelier as the former ambassador drove to work in Washington, where he lived in exile.

Townley said he met Novo at the Sheehan Bulck agency Sept. 21, 1976, the day of Letelier's death, and told him what he had done. Townley also said that Novo drove him to the airport, where he caught a flight to Chile.

UNTIL NOW, federal prosecutors had been unable to verify Townley's version of the meetings independently.

But in a radio interview with Dutch newsman Jan Joost Teunissen, Novo volunteered that he had met Townley in 1975 — a year before the murder — during one of Townley's visits to Miami.

More important, he admitted he was introduced to Townley by another militant Cuban, Virgilio Paz — a fugitive in the Letelier murder — as an "emissary of the Chilean government."

That admission contradicted his sworn denial to the grand jury that he knew anybody who had been in

In a rambling interview with Dutch newsman Jan Joost Teunissen, Ignacio Novo inadvertently verified the testimony of government witness Michael Townley — while trying to refute Townley's accounts — and Novo implicated himself in helping the alleged conspirators to escape.

Chile in the two years before his testimony.

A copy of the interview was made available to prosecutors over the weekend. The government also held reporter Teunissen available to testify Monday but decided against calling him as a government witness. They informed Judge Barrington Parker Jr. and defense attorneys Monday of the interview.

IN ONE PORTION of the rambling interview — largely devoted to calling Townley a liar and a CIA plant — Novo inadvertently verified Townley's account of his movements when he went to Miami after planting the bomb, leaving two Cubans behind to detonate it.

Townley testified that he called Novo on the morning of Sept. 21, 1976, and was told by him that "something has happened in Washington," a reference to the bombing. Townley also said he met Novo for a late lunch during which the assassination plot was discussed.

Novo told the interviewer he was called by Townley between 11 and 11:30 a.m.

"He said he was passing through the city and that he was out of money and needed transportation. So I invited him to lunch that day. We went out to lunch at about 2:30 in the afternoon," Novo said to the interviewer.

ALTHOUGH prosecutors tentatively have decided against playing the tape for jurors, defense attorneys were furious about Novo's statements.

One member of the defense team said angrily that the prosecution case against Novo was extremely weak until he implicated himself.

Another muttered to a newsman that he had "a jackass for a client."

The seven-woman, five-man jury has been sequestered since the trial's opening day and therefore has neither read nor heard media reports concerning the case.

INDEED, most of the activity Monday went on outside the jury's

hearing. The prosecution and defense continued arguments about allowing the testimony of two jailhouse informants who allegedly heard the two other defendants, Alvin Ross and Guillermo Novo, make incriminating admissions while they were awaiting trial. Ross and Guillermo are charged with conspiracy to murder Letelier.

One informant, Sherman Kaminsky, 50, told the judge last week out of the jury's presence that Ross had admitted taking part in several Cuban Nationalist Movement bombings.

The second informant, Greek immigrant gun-dealer Antonio Polytarides, is expected to testify today that Guillermo Novo told him that he wanted to buy weapons from him.

miami herald
February 6, 1979

3-93-76

Chronology of the Letelier Assassination Case

3-93

A chronology of events in the Orlando Letelier assassination case:

Sept. 21, 1976 — A car bomb kills Letelier and an associate, Ronni Moffitt, at Sheridan Circle as they drive to work through Washington's Embassy Row.

Oct. 17, 1976 — A Venezuelan newspaper reports that two unnamed Cuban exile brothers living in the United States have been implicated in the Letelier assassination. The information came from other Cuban exiles being questioned about the Oct. 6 terrorist bombing of a Cuban airliner off Barbados, the newspaper El Nacional said.

Jan. 15, 1977 — Three Cuban exile veterans of the Bay of Pigs, Miami residents, are summoned to testify before a federal grand jury in Washington investigating the Letelier assassination. At least a dozen more Cuban exiles are called later to testify.

April 20, 1977 — José Dionisio Suárez, an anti-Castro exile living in Elizabeth, N.J., is jailed for refusing to testify before the Letelier grand jury. He was released after a year in jail.

March 5, 1978 — The Santiago newspaper El Mercurio identifies a mystery figure sought in the assassination as Michael Vernon Townley, an American expatriate living in Chile.

March 21, 1978 — Chilean Gen. Manuel Contreras, former chief of secret police, resigns from the army.

March 29, 1978 — A Chilean military judge questions Townley behind closed doors in Santiago.

April 8, 1978 — Townley is expelled by Chilean authorities, who deliver him into the custody of two FBI agents assigned to bring him back to the United States for questioning in the Letelier case.

April 10, 1978 — A U.S. District Court Judge in Washington orders Townley to be held without bond as a material witness.



TOWNLEY



CONTRERAS

May 17, 1978 — Ross Díaz is charged with conspiracy to murder Letelier.

May 18, 1978 — The Justice Department formally charges Guillermo Novo Sampol with conspiracy in the Letelier assassination.

June 23, 1978 — U.S. Ambassador George Landau is recalled from Chile "for consultations" as a sign of Washington's displeasure over a lack of Chilean cooperation in the Letelier murder investigation. Landau returned to his post after nine days.

Aug. 1, 1978 — The Letelier grand jury in Washington indicts the five Cuban exiles previously charged and three former officials of the Chilean secret police, DINA. The indictment says Gen. Contreras, former head of the DINA, "initiated the action . . . and ordered the assassination" of Letelier. Contreras and the two other officers indicted, Lt. Col. Pedro Espinoza and

Capt. Armando Fernández Larios, are reported to be under house arrest in Chile.

Aug. 11, 1978 — In a plea-bargaining arrangement, Townley pleads guilty to conspiracy to assassinate Letelier. In return for a reduced sentence of 10 years in prison, Townley agrees to testify against the others. He will be eligible for parole after serving one-

third of the sentence.

Sept. 20, 1978 — The United States formally requests that Chile extradite the three former DINA officers, Contreras, Espinoza and Fernández Larios. The Chilean supreme court has not ruled on the request.

Jan. 9, 1979 — The Washington trial of Ross Díaz and the Novo Sampols begins.

at the time of the slaying.

May 2, 1978 — Townley's Chilean wife, Mariana Callejas, reports in Chile that he has told U.S. investigators who his accomplices were in the assassination.

May 5, 1978 — Ignacio Novo Sampol is arrested on charges of conspiring to murder Letelier, and ordered held on \$200,000 bond. José Dionisio Suárez and Virgilio Paz, Cuban exile residents of New Jersey, are also charged with conspiracy. (They remain at large.)

Miami Herald
February 15, 1979

and Guillermo Novo Sampol arrested in Miami on charges not related to the assassination. April 16, 1978 — Townley apparently fearing betrayal by Ross Díaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, begins telling FBI agents details of the assassination plot. April 26, 1978 — The government charges Townley with conspiracy in the assassination, and a federal magistrate orders him held without bond. Government prosecutors announce that they are "prepared to prove that . . . Townley was a government agent, acting on behalf of the government of Chile."



Orlando Letelier
... killed in 1976

3-93-80

Case Against 3 Cubans In Letelier Case Weakens

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

3-93

1-30

WASHINGTON — The case against three Cubans on trial here in connection with Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier's assassination developed cracks Monday that later may be exploited by defense attorneys.

As the trial entered its third week, one prosecution witness admitted that in previous testimony he had incorrectly identified one of the defendants, Alvin Ross Diaz, as a man who had rented an apartment from him in Union City, N.J.

The FBI, in searching that apartment last year, found several bomb parts and documents that the prosecution said connected Alvin Ross to the Letelier assassination.

The apartment was leased to Carlos P. Garcia, according to the lease agreement. Prosecutors Eugene Propper and Lawrence Barcella alleged in a preliminary hearing Jan. 11 that Garcia was an alias used by

Ross.

They buttressed that assertion by calling landlord Luis Vega to testify at a hearing in which defense attorneys tried to have the seized items ruled inadmissible in the trial.

After three attempts, Vega tentatively identified Ross — who was seated at the defense table — as the man who rented the apartment. But when Vega appeared to testify at the trial, defense attorneys produced a man they called "the real" Carlos P. Garcia. Vega, without hesitation, agreed that man was the one he knew as Garcia.

Ross is charged, along with Guillermo Novo and two fugitives, with conspiring to assassinate Letelier under the direction of confessed Chilean secret agent Michael V. Townley.

A third defendant, Ignacio Novo, is charged with lying to a grand jury and helping the other conspirators elude capture.

Miami Herald
1/30/79

3-93-69



Alvin Ross Diaz

3-93 ... told informer?
MH 2/13/79

'Confession' Is Alleged in Letelier Case

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement admitted to a cellmate his group's involvement in the 1976 assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier, the cellmate — now a government informant — testified Friday.

A second prison informant told U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker Jr. that another Cuban, Alvin Ross Diaz of Union City, N.J., told him that the Cuban Nationalist Movement also had plans to blow up Soviet ships in U.S. ports using booby-trapped remote-controlled motorboats. Ross also is on trial here in connection with Letelier's murder.

JUDGE PARKER ordered that the testimony of both informants against Guillermo Novo Sampol, the movement leader, and Ross be given out of the jury's presence so he could determine if the conversations would be legally admissible in the case.

Three Cubans, Ross, Novo and his brother Ignacio Novo Sampol, are charged in connection with Letelier's 1976 death in a car bombing on Embassy Row in downtown Washington.

Defense attorneys Paul Goldberger and Lawrence Dubin argued that the two informants might have illegally coerced — or even made up — the incriminating admissions from the defendants in order to get

light treatment for their own crimes.

If Parker agrees that the alleged confessions weren't volunteered by the two Cubans, the jury will not be allowed to hear the informants. Parker is expected to rule Monday.

The testimony of Novo's cellmate, convicted weapons dealer Antonio Polytarides, 33, could be especially helpful to prosecutors because it ties Novo directly to the Letelier killing.

POLYTARIDES TOLD the judge that he had been placed in the Metropolitan Corrections Center in New York City as a federal informant. His assignment, he said, was to try to arrange weapons sales to other prisoners, then pass the information along to the U.S. Secret Service.

Polytarides said he came into contact with Guillermo Novo — who was held in the same jail from May 1978 until the trial — through a Cuban drug dealer named Luis Sotomayer.

Sotomayer had asked to buy 10 sub-machineguns, five for his gang and five for the Cuban Nationalist Movement, Polytarides said. He added that when he asked Sotomayer what the Cuban Nationalist Movement was, Sotomayer replied that it was the group that was "responsible for the Letelier bombing."

A few weeks later, Polytarides said he met Novo in their cellblock. "I said, 'I know you,'" Polytarides told the judge. "Sotomayer told me your group arranged for the Letelier bombing."

"He [Novo] said, 'Yes, our group is responsible,'" Polytarides said.

Miami Herald

3-93-70 2/13/79

Letelier Defendants Told All in Jail, Cellmates Say as Prosecution Closes

3-93
By **TOM FIEDLER**
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — After 16 days of testimony, 26 witnesses and nearly 150 exhibits, federal prosecutors Tuesday concluded their case against three Cuban exiles in the 1976 car bombing death of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

The government's case ended with strong testimony from two informants who allegedly heard jailhouse admissions implicating two of the defendants — Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol — in Letelier's death.

The most dramatic testimony came from informant Sherman Kaminsky, 50. An admitted extortionist whose record belies his avuncular appearance, Kaminsky shared a cellblock with Ross throughout most of 1978.

In a series of conversations, which Kaminsky passed on to the FBI, Ross admitted his role in plotting and carrying out Letelier's death in the car bombing, Kaminsky said.

THE ADMISSIONS appeared to bolster the government's claim that Letelier's assassination was ordered by the Chilean intelligence agency, DINA, and carried out by the Cuban Nationalist Movement under the direction of DINA agent Michael Townley.

"Mr. Ross told me that he was in-

involved in the murder of Orlando Letelier, together with the generals in Chile," Kaminsky said Tuesday.

He added that Ross named DINA chief Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda and Townley as the men behind the plot.

Ross's alleged admission concurs with testimony given early in the trial by Townley, an American expatriate who has become the prosecution's key witness.

EARLIER, a second informant talked about a cellblock conversation. Convicted weapons dealer Antonio Polytarides told jurors that defendant Guillermo Novo — the leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement — told him that he'd been "betrayed by some persons in my case, but we'll pay them back."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper said the conversation referred to Townley's agreement to cooperate with the FBI.

The informants and Ross and Novo were held in the Metropolitan Corrections Center in New York last year at the time of the conversations.

Ross and Novo are charged with conspiring to kill Letelier, the former Chilean ambassador to the United States who was living here in exile.

The third defendant, Ignacio Novo Sampol, Guillermo's brother, is charged with attempting to cover

up the others' participation in the killing and with lying to a grand jury. Ignacio Novo is from Miami.

LETELIER DIED Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb strapped beneath his car exploded as he drove to work along Embassy Row. A young co-worker, Ronni Moffitt, 25, also died.

DINA agent Townley admitted making and placing the bomb with help from the Cuban Nationalist Movement. He testified that Letelier was targeted for the assassination because he had become an effective critic of the Chilean military junta that overthrew the Salvador Allende Marxist government. Letelier was a member of Allende's government.

Kaminsky's testimony quoting Ross supported that account.

The confessed extortionist said Ross befriended him after learning that Kaminsky had been a member of the Haganah, the Zionist forerunner of the Israeli army.

Kaminsky said Ross told him that the Cuban movement had plans to set up a military arm modeled after the Haganah.

IN SUBSEQUENT conversations, which Kaminsky said Ross always initiated, Ross talked about his admiration for the Chilean junta because it had toppled a Marxist government. Ross also said the Chilean junta had agreed to provide "safe

territory" and training facilities for movement members in their fight against Fidel Castro, Kaminsky said.

Kaminsky said he first heard Townley's name mentioned when Ross spoke of the individual he referred to as a rat, an informer.

"I subsequently found out he was referring to Townley," Kaminsky said.

ROSS LATER detailed his contacts with Townley and admitted that he had provided parts of the bomb used to kill the former ambassador, Kaminsky said.

Defense attorney Lawrence Dubin, in cross-examination, attempted to bring out Kaminsky's long criminal record as an extortionist. But he was often cut short by prosecution objections sustained by Judge Barrington Parker Jr.

Dubin succeeded in showing, however, that Kaminsky's cooperation with the government resulted in part from a deal he'd made. That deal called for prosecutors to recommend that Kaminsky be paroled in two extortion cases to which he already has pleaded guilty.

Miami Herald
2/7/79

3-93-11

Accuser Townley Is a Liar, Defense Tells Letelier Jury

3-93
By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Condensing five weeks of often sensational testimony, defense and prosecution attorneys marshaled their final arguments Monday for the trial of three defendants in the assassination case of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

The defense, representing three Cuban exiles charged in connection with Letelier's 1976 death in a downtown Washington car-bombing, attached the credibility of the government's key witness, American expatriate Michael V. Townley, calling him a "perversion" and a "liar."

Prosecutors attempted to weave scattered bits of trial evidence into a single fabric designed to corroborate Townley's testimony detailing an international conspiracy to murder a political enemy, Letelier.

"What we have here," said prosecutor Lawrence Barcella, referring to those persons indicted for the murder, "is eight men who combined and conspired ... to bring terrorism to the streets of Washington, D.C."

ONLY THREE of the eight were in the courtroom — Cuban exiles Guillermo Novo Sampol, his brother Ignacio, and Alvin Ross Diaz.

Two other anti-Castro activists, Virgilio Paz and José Dionisio Suarez, remain fugitives. And three Chilean officials who allegedly masterminded the murder plot as agents of DINA, the Chilean secret police have not been returned to the United States for trial.



Michael V. Townley
... his testimony is key

The case against the three defendants is expected to go to the jury today after the prosecution has an opportunity to answer defense attacks on the evidence and on Townley.

Townley, a 36-year-old onetime Miami auto mechanic turned DINA assassin, has pleaded guilty to directing the murder plot.

IN FIVE DAYS as a witness, Townley testified that he came to the United States on orders from DINA, enlisted the Cuban exiles in the murder plan, assembled the bomb and attached it to Letelier's car, and then left Paz and Suarez to

detonate it.

Prosecutors also attempted to show that the Cuban Nationalist Movement — and Guillermo Novo, one of its leaders — had maintained close ties to Chile's military government because of its strongly anti-Communist views.

These ties enabled DINA to get Cuban exile help in killing Letelier, a former member of Chilean President Salvador Allende's Marxist government and an outspoken critic of the military junta that deposed Allende, Barcella argued.

DEFENSE ATTORNEYS Paul Goldberger and Lawrence Dubin, in four hours of sometimes emotional appeals to the jury, attacked that theory as implausible because, they said, it was based on Townley's testimony.

"When a foundation is made of mush and garbage," Goldberger said, "you can't build anything on top of it."

"The government's case is built on Michael V. Townley," he said.

Both defense attorneys characterized Townley as capable either of cold-blooded killing or of "bald-faced" lying under orders.

They also suggested — although not as strongly as in their opening statements five weeks ago — that the CIA was Townley's real boss and that the Cuban defendants were hapless victims of a frame-up.

"A man who would kill without remorse, without regret; a man who would kill human beings as if they were bugs," asked Goldberger, "and is this a man worthy of belief?"

Hot Weather Thwarted More Killings, Informant Testifies at Letelier Trial

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — An FBI informant testified Wednesday that one of three Cuban exiles on trial in connection with Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier's death told him the assassins also had plans for three other murders.

But, informant Ricardo Canette said, those plans were disrupted or postponed because "the climate in the South was too inhospitable, too hot."

He said he didn't know the names of the alleged "targets," but was told one of the three was a news reporter.

Canette, also Cuban-born, is a surprise government witness in the case against Alvin Ross Diaz, Ignacio Novo Sampol and his brother, Guillermo Novo Sampol. The three are members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement.

CANETTE TESTIFIED that he learned of the alleged plan to kill three others during a conversation with defendant Ross in July 1977.

Canette, an admitted forger, apparently had



ROSS DIAZ

won Ross' confidence because he had provided both Ross and Ignacio Novo with false identity cards. Those papers later would be used by the defendants in an attempt to elude capture, according to the indictment.

Canette said Ross boasted to him that he had made the bomb that killed the former Chilean ambassador to the United States as Letelier drove to work in Washington on Sept. 21, 1976. Letelier lived here in exile.

But Canette said Ross denied planting the bomb, saying that had been done by two "brigade members" and a "fair-haired man."

The two "brigade members" apparently are fugitive co-conspirators Jose Dionisio Suarez and Virgilio Paz. The "fair-haired" person is apparently Michael V. Townley, the government's key witness, who has admitted directing the assassination on orders from the Chilean secret police agency DINA.

CANETTE, in cross-examination by defense attorney Lawrence Dubbin, said Ross told him of the three other targets while boasting about the militant Cuban group's activities.

Ross said the plans had to be altered because of the Letelier assassination and because "the climate in the South was too hot," Canette said.

In a side comment, Canette also said that after he reported this conversation to the FBI,

agents asked that he submit to a lie-detector test. He said he agreed.

Judge Barrington Parker Jr. quickly instructed the jury to disregard that comment, which apparently was inadmissible, in his view.

During most of the day, Canette was subjected to a sharp cross-examination by defense attorney Dubbin, who questioned Canette about his lengthy record as a forger and con man, in an attempt to discredit his testimony.

Dubbin also tried, with only small success, to catch Canette in minor discrepancies by comparing his testimony in the case with statements given by him previously to the FBI or the grand jury.

HIS TESTIMONY is crucial to the government's case because it independently bolsters many of the details brought out last week by Townley, the confessed DINA agent.

Canette told the jury Tuesday that fugitive Paz — in Ross' presence — admitted to him that "We did it [killed Letelier]. We know it. They know it. But let them prove it." Ross nodded in assent, Canette said.

Canette also said Ross once complained to him that if Chile didn't help him elude federal agents, he could "lay this into the hands of Manuel Contreras."

Contreras was the head of DINA and the man who allegedly ordered Letelier's death.

Miami Herald

February 1, 1979

3-93-75

Chilean affair: a vicious circle

3-93

The bizarre, ugly scenario has two parts:

The United States helped create the repressive Chilean government of Augusto Pinochet, but exactly how that happened probably will never be known.

And, evidence is mounting that the Pinochet regime arranged for a political assassination in the United States. Yet it appears three close associates of Pinochet indicted for that crime will not be tried.

The plot behind the assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier and his aide, Ronni Moffitt, has thickened to the point that it now includes, directly, military strongman Pinochet.

According to George W. Landau, U.S. ambassador to Chile, Pinochet personally intervened to obtain false passports for two of the Chilean secret police agents indicted in the September 1976 car-bomb murder of Letelier in Washington, D.C. Landau reportedly was told of Pinochet's intervention by an aide to Alfredo Stroessner, right-wing president of Paraguay, through whom Pinochet sought the passports, which were obtained but not used.

But the two Chilean agents, who eventually traveled to the United States on official Chilean passports under aliases, are accused of recruiting Cuban exiles to carry out the bombing. One of those agents, Michael Townley, an American working for Chilean intelligence, has admitted his role in the assassination and has testified in the trial against the Cubans which is now going on in Washington.

Also indicted by a U.S. grand jury are Chilean Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, former head of the Chilean intelligence agency, and two other Chilean officials. The U.S. Justice Department wants the three men extradited to face trial. But the Chilean foreign minister said there was little chance of that. So, there is also little chance that those who ordered the murder of Letelier ever will be brought to justice.

The odd twist in all of this is that the Pinochet regime exists largely because of U.S. efforts to undercut Chile's economy and bring about the overthrow of Salvador Allende, the former Marxist president of Chile for whom Letelier worked.

If this country created a monster in Pinochet, it may never know just how. Strangely, the same U.S. Justice Department seeking to extradite the suspected masterminds of the Letelier murder also has dropped perjury charges against a former executive of the International Telephone and Telegraph Co. in order to avoid disclosures of American intelligence activities in Latin America — particularly those activities involving Chile and Allende.

The ITT executive accused of perjury, Robert Berrellez, according to a Justice Department source, had in his possession "highly sensitive" information about CIA operations. The U.S. government prosecutor, John Kotelly, in moving to dismiss the charges, said that because "of national security we cannot proceed" in the case.

National security is rapidly becoming a matter of definition. Who writes the definition? Certainly not the American people. How can they feel secure when a foreign dictator, partially created by their own country, very possibly sent his killers into the United States to commit murder and get away with it? How can they feel secure when they don't know, and can't find out, what their own intelligence agencies are doing?

Miami News
February 12, 1979

3-93-77

Letelier Murder Case Is Sent to the Jury

3-93

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The case against three militant Cubans charged in connection with the bombing assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier went to the jury late Tuesday, nearly five weeks after the trial began.

The jury of seven women and five men retired to deliberate at 3:30 p.m. after hearing final rebuttal arguments from federal prosecutors and a 2½-hour instruction from U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker Jr.

Two hours later, the jury sent a note to Parker asking for several exhibits. Among them were prosecution charts detailing the chain of evidence against the defendants and copies of plea agreements made by the government with three informants in return for the testimony.

The judge dismissed the jurors for the night shortly before 7 p.m. He asked them to return at 9 a.m.

THE THREE anti-Castro Cubans — Ignacio and Guillermo Novo Sampol, brothers, and Alvin Ross Diaz — are among eight persons named in the indictment for taking part in the assassination or carrying out a coverup.

Letelier, former Chilean ambas-

sador to the United States, had become a critic of the Chilean regime that seized power in a military coup. He and a young co-worker, Ronni Moffitt, died Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb exploded beneath Letelier's car.

According to prosecution testimony, the Chilean secret police agency DINA sent its American-born agent, Michael Townley, to assassinate Letelier with help from the militant Cuban Nationalist Movement.

TOWNLEY, a one-time Miami auto mechanic, has pleaded guilty and admitted building the bomb that blew up Letelier's car. He was the prosecution's key witness against his alleged Cuban accomplices.

The defense, meanwhile, has contended that the three Cubans were scapegoats framed by Townley.

Two of the three — Guillermo Novo and Ross — are charged with five counts of murder or conspiracy to murder.

Although neither was with Townley when the bomb exploded, Parker told the jury that, under conspiracy law, their alleged participation in the plot makes them fully liable. Each murder count carries a maximum sentence of life in prison.



Letelier's Widow

... outside courthouse

IGNACIO NOVO, who lives in Miami, is charged only with participation in a coverup. He allegedly made two false statements to a grand jury investigating the murders and also is charged with failure to report his knowledge of the crime to authorities.

Each misstatement carries a penalty of up to five years in jail. The so-called "misprison" allegation — withholding knowledge of a felony — carries a maximum three-year sentence.

Guillermo Novo is also charged with two counts of lying to a grand jury.

Townley has pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to murder a foreign official. He could have been sentenced to life in prison. But in return for his testimony, he was sentenced to three to 10 years.

miami: Herald

February 14, 1979

3-93-78

Background Sketches of Convicted Men

3-93

Alvin Ross Diaz, 46, is a Bay of Pigs veteran and a member of the Cuban Nationalist Movement — a militant exile group. He and his friend Guillermo Novo Sampol were arrested April 14, 1978, in Miami on charges not related to the Letelier case. According to federal authorities, Ross Diaz and Novo Sampol were trying to flee the country — financed through the sale of narcotics — when they were arrested.



ROSS-DIAZ

Diaz also has been charged in connection with a bombing in Union City, N.J., involving a company that was sending medical supplies to Cuba via Canada. Also, Ross Diaz once refused to testify before a grand jury in Washington in connection with the Letelier case.

Guillermo Novo Sampol, 39, is a former chemist who was expelled from the American Chemists Association in 1968 after his conviction for possession of explosives. He was the leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement for the New York-New Jersey area.

According to federal sources, he traveled in Chile in 1975 to visit Cuban exile leader Orlando Bosch.

He is the brother of Ignacio Novo Sampol.

Ignacio Novo Sampol, 40, was a founder of the Cuban Nationalist Movement in 1959. Over the years, he has been arrested in connection with numerous terrorist acts against Cuban installations, but he successfully overturned his only conviction.

Neither he nor his brother Guillermo is an exile from the Fidel Castro government; they came to the United States in 1954. Ignacio lived in Miami for more than three years, working as a salesman.

Miami Herald
February 15, 1979

3-93-79

Chronology of the Letelier Assassination Case

3-93

A chronology of events in the Orlando Letelier assassination case:

Sept. 21, 1976 — A car bomb kills Letelier and an associate, Ronni Moffitt, at Sheridan Circle as they drive to work through Washington's Embassy Row.

Oct. 17, 1976 — A Venezuelan newspaper reports that two unnamed Cuban exile brothers living in the United States have been implicated in the Letelier assassination. The information came from other Cuban exiles being questioned about the Oct. 6 terrorist bombing of a Cuban airliner off Barbados, the newspaper El Nacional said.

Jan. 15, 1977 — Three Cuban exile veterans of the Bay of Pigs, Miami residents, are summoned to testify before a federal grand jury in Washington investigating the Letelier assassination. At least a dozen more Cuban exiles are called later to testify.

April 20, 1977 — José Dionisio Suárez, an anti-Castro exile living in Elizabeth, N.J., is jailed for refusing to testify before the Letelier grand jury. He was released after a year in jail.

March 5, 1978 — The Santiago newspaper El Mercurio identifies a mystery figure sought in the assassination as Michael Vernon Townley, an American expatriate living in Chile.

March 21, 1978 — Chilean Gen. Manuel Contreras, former chief of secret police, resigns from the army.

March 29, 1978 — A Chilean military judge questions Townley behind closed doors in Santiago.

April 8, 1978 — Townley is expelled by Chilean authorities, who deliver him into the custody of two FBI agents assigned to bring him back to the United States for questioning in the Letelier case.

April 10, 1978 — A U.S. District Court Judge in Washington orders Townley to be held without bond as a material witness.

April 14, 1978 — Alvin Ross Díaz



TOWNLEY



CONTRERAS

at the time of the slaying.

May 2, 1978 — Townley's Chilean wife, Mariana Callejas, reports in Chile that he has told U.S. investigators who his accomplices were in the assassination.

May 5, 1978 — Ignacio Novo Sampol is arrested on charges of conspiring to murder Letelier, and ordered held on \$200,000 bond. José Dionisio Suárez and Virgilio Paz, Cuban exile residents of New Jersey, are also charged with conspiracy. (They remain at large.)

May 17, 1978 — Ross Díaz is charged with conspiracy to murder Letelier.

May 18, 1978 — The Justice Department formally charges Guillermo Novo Sampol with conspiracy in the Letelier assassination.

June 23, 1978 — U.S. Ambassador George Landau is recalled from Chile "for consultations" as a sign of Washington's displeasure over a lack of Chilean cooperation in the Letelier murder investigation. Landau returned to his post after nine days.

Aug. 1, 1978 — The Letelier grand jury in Washington indicts the five Cuban exiles previously charged and three former officials of the Chilean secret police, DINA. The indictment says Gen. Contreras, former head of the DINA, "initiated the action ... and ordered the assassination" of Letelier. Contreras and the two other officers indicted, Lt. Col. Pedro Espinoza and

Capt. Armando Fernández Larios, are reported to be under house arrest in Chile.

Aug. 11, 1978 — In a plea-bargaining arrangement, Townley pleads guilty to conspiracy to assassinate Letelier. In return for a reduced sentence of 10 years in prison, Townley agrees to testify against the others. He will be eligible for parole after serving one-

third of the sentence.

Sept. 20, 1978 — The United States formally requests that Chile extradite the three former DINA officers, Contreras, Espinoza and Fernández Larios. The Chilean supreme court has not ruled on the request.

Jan. 9, 1979 — The Washington trial of Ross Díaz and the Novo Sampols begins.

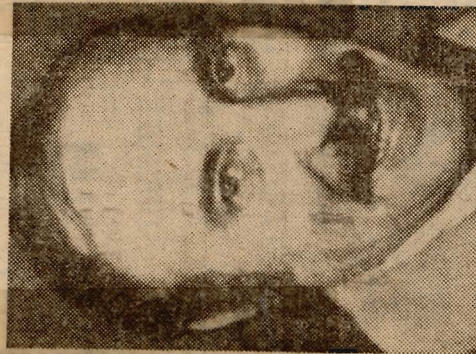
Miami Herald
February 15, 1979

3-93-80

and Guillermo Novo Sampol arrested in Miami on charges not related to the assassination.

April 16, 1978 — Townley, apparently fearing betrayal by Ross Díaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, begins telling FBI agents details of the assassination plot.

April 26, 1978 — The government charges Townley with conspiracy in the assassination, and a federal magistrate orders him held without bond. Government prosecutors announce that they are "prepared to prove that ... Townley was a government agent, acting on behalf of the government of Chile"



Orlando Letelier
... killed in 1976

3-93

1/26
MFB

2 Fugitives Twice Elude Authorities

Authorities twice narrowly have missed catching the two fugitive Cuban exiles charged in connection with the car bombing assassination of Orlando Letelier, official sources reported Wednesday.

The sources said the two, Virgilio Paz Romero and José Dionisio Suárez Esquivel, eluded would-be captors first in Miami and later in Ecuador. Law enforcement officials are also said to have missed Suarez in San Jose, Calif., where his former wife lives.

Dates and details for the near-misses were not given. The two fugitives, apparently traveling together, are now said to be probably somewhere in Mexico, living among the Cuban exile community there.

The FBI has offered a reward of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest of either Suárez or Paz.

Suárez was jailed in April 1977 for refusing to testify before a federal grand jury in Washington investigating the Letelier killing. He was released a year later. The grand jury indicted him, Paz and six others Aug. 1, 1978.

The FBI says Suárez electronically triggered the bomb that killed Letelier and Ronni Moffitt.

Paz' fingerprints were found on a bottle of potassium permanganate, a chemical used in explosives that investigators discovered in the Union City, N. J., office of Alvin Ross Díaz. Ross Díaz was one of three men convicted Wednesday.

Like Ross Díaz, Paz and Suárez belonged to the Cuban Nationalist Movement, a militant anti-Castro exile organization.

Suárez, 40, is known in militant circles as *Charco de Sangre* — Puddle of Blood. As a youth, he fought with Castro's guerrillas in the mountains of Oriente Province. After the 1959 Castro takeover, Suárez broke with Castro and was jailed in Havana's La Cabaña. He escaped and fled to the United States, where he lived in Union City.

Paz, 27, also lived in Union City, where he worked as a used car salesman. He is known to have received training in espionage from Chilean agents and the FBI has described him as "extremely dangerous."

Miami Herald
February 15, 1979

3-93-81

5 sought in Letelier case as three stand convicted

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government, successful in convicting two Cubans of assassinating former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier, is trying to get custody of five others charged with the car-bomb murder.

"The case is not over yet," U.S. Attorney Earl Silbert said yesterday after the guilty verdicts were announced.

The federal court jury also convicted a third anti-Castro Cuban of lying to a grand jury and covering up the plot to kill Letelier. Ronni Moffitt, a co-worker of Letelier, also died in the blast.

Silbert said the government is pressing its search for two fugitive members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement and pursuing its request for the extradition of three former Chilean secret agents.

Family members and friends sobbed loudly as the jury foreman announced the verdict on each count against Guillermo Novo Sampol, his brother Ignacio and Alvin Ross Diaz.

Guillermo Novo and Ross, who face possible life terms when sentenced later, displayed no emotion. Each was convicted on five counts in connection with the slayings themselves. Guillermo Novo also was convicted on two counts of lying to a grand jury in connection with the case.

Ignacio Novo faces up to 13 years in prison — five years each on two counts of lying to a grand jury and

three years on a charge of covering up the murder plot.

"They are innocent. We're going to appeal. We're going to win," Ignacio Novo's wife, Sylvia, said after the defendants were led away.

Letelier's widow, Isabel, said she hoped others involved would be brought to justice so there would be "no more tragedies, no more assassinations, no more repression." She has taken over much of her husband's role criticizing alleged human rights violations in Chile.

Letelier, ambassador to the United States from 1971-73, was killed Sept. 21, 1976, when a remote-control bomb ripped through his car on Washington's Embassy Row.

Government witnesses told jurors Chile's secret police agency, formerly called DINA, initiated the plot to kill Letelier and convinced the militant Cuban Nationalist Movement to help.

Former DINA director Juan Manuel Contreras Sepulveda is one of three named in this country's extradition request, now before Chile's Supreme Court.

The star government witness was Michael Townley, a former Chilean secret agent who pleaded guilty to planting the Letelier bomb. In return for his testimony, U.S. authorities agreed to recommend his parole after the minimum time of a 40-month to 10-year sentence. He could have received a life term if convicted of murder.

Security was tight during the trial because of threats to Judge Barrington Parker and prosecutor Eugene Propper.

miami News

February 15, 1979

3-93-82

3-93

Letelier Jury Convicts 3 Cubans

By TOM FIEDLER
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Three militant anti-Castro Cubans were convicted Wednesday for their part in an international conspiracy resulting in the murder of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

Letelier, a staunch opponent of the military regime in Chile, died Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb ripped through his car as he drove along Embassy Row, a fashionable Washington area.

An air of tension pervaded the heavily guarded courtroom at 4 p.m. when the defendants were summoned to hear the verdict. The leader of the three, Guillermo Novo Sampol, apparently sensed the outcome.

Virtually surrounded by grim-faced U.S. marshals, Novo turned and called across the room to his wife in Spanish: "It's certain they will cut our throats."

The seven women and five men on the jury, having deliberated a total of eight hours, filed into the courtroom without even a glance at the defense table.

"Have you reached a verdict," asked Judge Barrington Parker Jr.

"Yes," said the male foreman, "on all 15 counts." (For security reasons, jurors' names were not revealed).

"How do you find on count one, conspiracy to murder a foreign official?" asked the clerk.

"Guilty," replied the foreman, his voice an expressionless monotone. At that, eight Cuban women — including the wives, family and friends of the defendants — cried out and broke into loud sobs.

The sobbing grew uncontrolled as the clerk read through the 14 remaining counts, and the foreman said "guilty" after each one.

Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol were pronounced guilty of five counts of murder arising from Letelier's death and that of his young associate, Ronni K. Moffitt. She was a passenger when the car exploded.

The third defendant, Guillermo's brother Ignacio, of Miami, was convicted of taking part in a coverup by lying to a grand jury and failing to report knowledge of the crime to authorities.

Each murder count carries a sentence of 20 years to life in prison. Ignacio Novo Sampol's conviction carries a maximum sentence of 10 years for lying to the grand jury and three years for not reporting the crime.

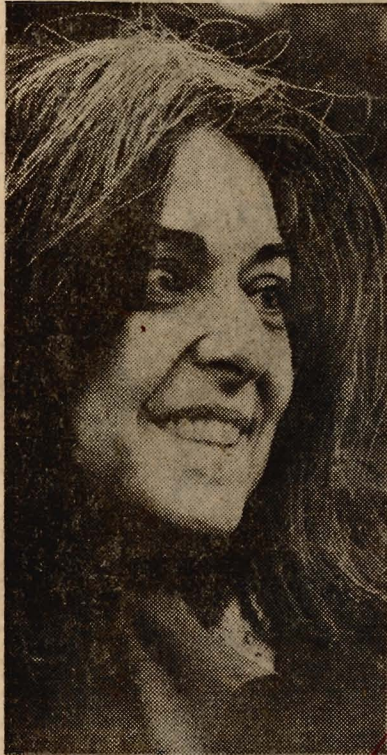
The defendants — separated from spectators by a cordon of 14 U.S. marshals — remained stoic through each "guilty" pronouncement.

But as they were led from the courtroom later, Ignacio Novo Sampol, his eyes brimming with tears, raised his fist in a defiant gesture and called "Viva



— Associated Press

Distraught Relatives Leave Court
... sister Anna Pleyva Novo, left, Lucy Ross, daughter



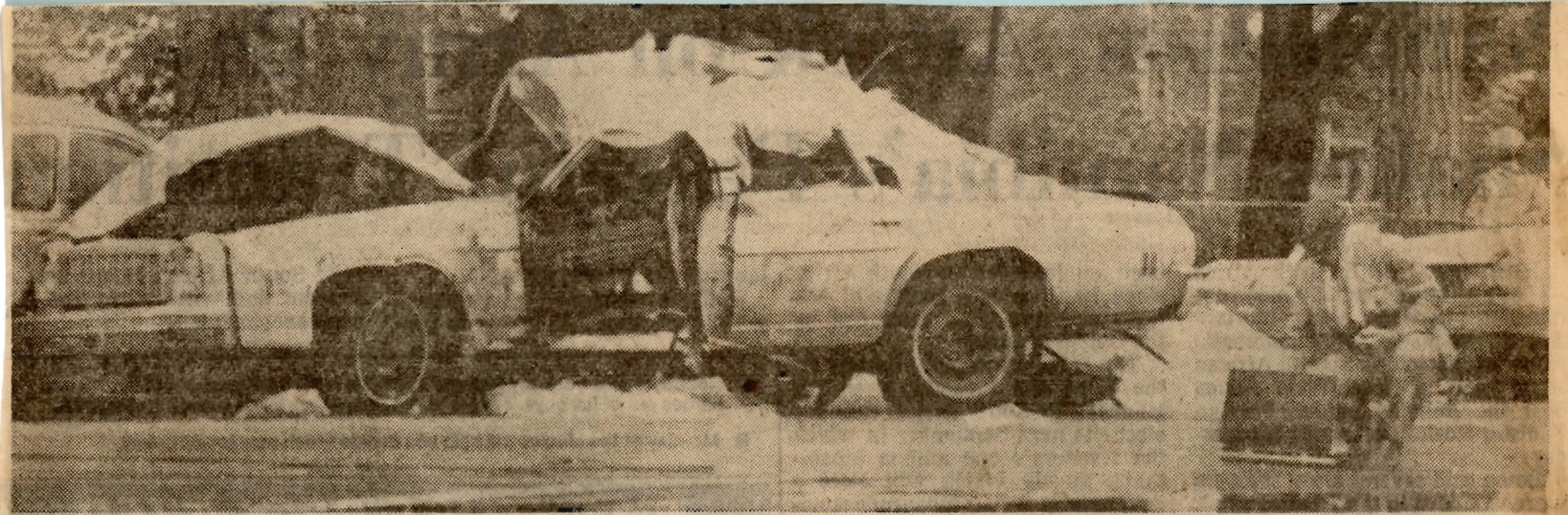
— Associated Press

Mrs. Isabel Letelier
... after the verdict

Turn to Page 20A Col. 1

Miami Herald

February 15, 1979



— Associated Press

The Car In Which Orlando Letelier Was Murdered With a Bomb in 1976

... blast in Washington killed one other person and injured another

Three Defendants Are Found Guilty In Connection With Letelier Murder

FROM PAGE 1A

Cuba."

Ross Diaz echoed the cry. Then Guillermo wrapped his arm around his brother and the two walked quickly out the side door.

Defense attorneys Paul Goldberger, Lawrence Dubin and Oscar Suarez indicated that they would file an appeal.

The verdict could have serious repercussions for U.S.-Chile relations, which already have been strained by the trial. The plot to kill Letelier, according to dramatic testimony during the five-week trial, was instigated by DINA, the Chilean military government's secret police arm, to silence Letelier's criticism of the military junta.

FBI sources said later that the convictions also could cripple the

The car bombing touched off an international investigation reaching the highest levels of the Chilean junta. A U.S. grand jury indicted three Chilean military officers connected with DINA.

The three — Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, Armando Fernández Larías and Pedro Espinoza — have not been extradited despite repeated state department requests.

The murder also triggered an intense investigation into the Cuban-exile terrorist movement and its relations with DINA.

THE FBI got its biggest break in the case when the United States — using the threat of severing relations with Chile — was granted permission to extradite American expatriate Michael V. Townley and bring him to the United States for questioning.

Townley, a 26-year-old former

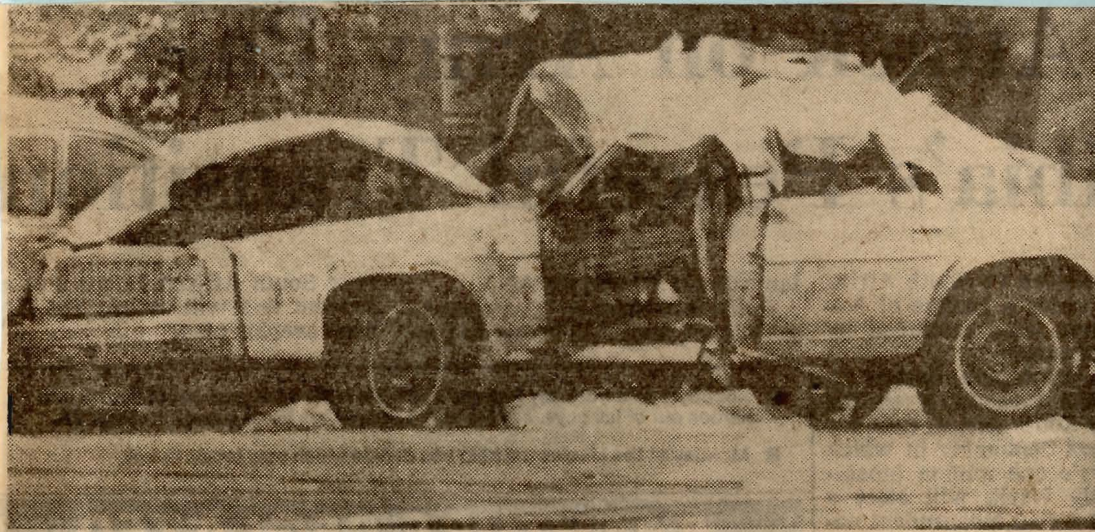
confessed to being the DINA agent assigned to kill Letelier with help from the militant Cubans.

He confessed to building the remote-controlled bomb that was used in the murders and, in five days of testimony, detailed the scheme from its alleged inception in Santiago, Chile, to its conclusion on Sheridan Circle near the Chilean

Embassy.

As a result of his cooperation — given in exchange for a sentence of between three and 10 years — a federal grand jury indicted the defendants, the three Chilean DINA officials and two other Cubans who remain fugitives. They are Virgilio Paz Romero and José Dionisio Suárez of Union City, N.J.

miami herald
February 15, 1979



The Car In Which Orlando Letelier Was Murdered With ... blast in Washington killed

Three Defendants Are Fo In Connection With Letel

FROM PAGE 1A

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FBI sources said later that the convictions also could cripple the terrorist wing of the anti-Castro Cuban movement. Because of that, authorities had placed great importance on winning the case.

THE DEFENDANTS belonged to the Cuban Nationalist Movement, which — along with a splinter group called Omega 7 — is suspected of bombings in northern New Jersey, New York City, Washington and Miami.

The explosion that killed Letelier occurred within sight of the Chilean ambassador's residence — Letelier's home when he was the representative for the Marxist government of former Chilean President Salvador Allende.

When Allende was overthrown in a bloody military coup in 1973, Letelier remained in Washington and became one of the most effective critics of that junta's human rights policies. Letelier, according to testimony, was killed to silence him.

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G. NOVO

I. NOVO

3-93-83

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DINA Agents Might Escape Facing Trial

▶ FROM PAGE 1A

final decision.

ACCORDING TO the U.S. indictment, Fernandez enlisted the aid of American expatriate Michael V. Townley, an electronics expert who lived most of his life in Chile, in planning the bombing.

Townley, who says he worked for DINA and carried out the murder mission on Espinoza's order, was extradited a year ago. In return for a reduced sentence of 10 years in prison, he agreed to cooperate with the Justice Department.

Chamorro said that type of plea bargaining is illegal in Chile.

As a result of Townley's testimony, the indictment also charged five Cuban militants in connection with the assassination.

Last month, two of them, Guillermo Novo Sampol and Alvin Ross Diaz, were convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. A third Cuban, Ignacio Novo Sampol of Miami, Guillermo's brother, was sentenced to eight years in prison for perjury about the murder.

The two other men, Virgilio Paz Romero and Jose Dionisio Suarez Esquivell, have eluded arrest.

Miami Herald
April 18, 1979

3-93-84

P.2

3 Chileans May Never Face Trial

Extradition Dim In Letelier Case

3-93

MH
4/18

From Herald Wire Services

SANTIAGO, Chile — The Chilean Supreme Court's chief prosecutor Tuesday recommended rejection of a U.S. request for the extradition of three military officers linked to the 1976 assassination of former diplomat Orlando Letelier.

The prosecutor, Gustavo Chamorro, also said he was recommending against trying the three men in Chile on U.S. charges, saying the method the U.S. used to obtain the evidence most damaging to them was not legal in Chile.

The actions diminish the chance that the three will testify or be tried in any court — Chilean or American — about the assassination despite the fact that they have been indicted by a U.S. grand jury in connection with the case. Such testimony might have spelled out any official role of the Chilean government in the assassination.

When the U.S. indictments were handed down on Aug. 1, 1978, Chilean observers speculated extradition of the officers was unlikely but that they might be tried in Chile.

CHAMORRO submitted his recommendation, in a 15-page document, to Supreme Court President Israel Borquez.

Chamorro told reporters after meeting with Borquez that the U.S. extradition request should be rejected because of "lack of evidence" linking the military officials to the bomb slaying of Letelier, former Chilean ambassador to the U.S., and associate Ronni Moffitt in Washington.

Chamorro stressed, however, that his recommendation was "not a dictum that the judge in charge is obliged to obey."

In September, the United States asked the military regime of President Augusto Pinochet to extradite the officers, including retired Brig. Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, former head of Chile's feared DINA, the secret police.

The other two men are Col. Pedro Espinoza, DINA's former operations chief, and agent Armando Fernandez Larios. All three have been in military custody since September in Santiago.

LETELIER WAS the representative for the Marxist government of former Chilean President Salvador Allende. When Allende was overthrown by a military coup in 1973, Letelier stayed in Washington to lead criticism of Pinochet's new regime.

The U.S. grand jury accused the three Chilean officials of ordering the Embassy Row bombing to silence that criticism.

Under Chilean law, Borquez has five days to make a preliminary ruling that can be appealed by the three officers' defense lawyers or by Alfredo Etcheverry, a Chilean attorney hired by the U.S. government to represent it in Chile.

The ruling by Borquez, whether it is appealed or not, will be sent to the Chilean Supreme Court for a

Miami Herald
April 18, 1979

3-93-84

(21)

Letelier Case Isn't Closed Yet

THE GOVERNMENT of Chile surprised no one with its discovery of a legalistic excuse to obstruct the extradition of three military officers accused of the murder of left-wing diplomat Orlando Letelier. The United States must do its best to keep the case alive in spite of the decision by Chilean prosecutor Gustavo Chamorro.

Coldly efficient assassins planted a bomb in Mr. Letelier's car in 1976, killing the diplomat and an assistant, Ronni Moffitt. It was an act of terrorism on United States soil and must be punished in accordance with U.S. law.

Three anti-Castro Cubans already have been convicted in the case. The United States has sought extradition of Brig. Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, former head of DINA, Chile's secret police; Col. Pedro Espinosa, former operations chief of DINA; and spy Armando Fernandez Larios. All of them are in custody in Santiago.

The Chilean government was impli-



Pinochet

cated in the killing, to some extent. U.S. Ambassador George W. Landau has sworn that Chile's military ruler, Augusto Pinochet, tried to obtain false passports for two of his spies. One of those, Michael Townley, was the Government's star witness in the Letelier trial.

Ambassador Landau's testimony was restricted, because the diplomat said if he told the FBI all he knew about General Pinochet's role, he could not be effective in Chile. Of course General Pinochet has denied any involvement in the assassination, but there seems to be no indication that he wants to let his former top spies out of the country.

The excuse used by Prosecutor Chamorro is that Townley testified under a plea-bargaining agreement, which is illegal in Chile.

That's no good. This was terrorism on U.S. soil, and the Justice Department is trying to make the conspirators pay for a violation of U.S. law. It is not meddling in Chilean internal affairs to demand that the Government keep up the diplomatic and legal pressure for extradition.

The reason the United States has been relatively free of acts of terrorists is that the authorities have made it clear that such criminals will be prosecuted. That principle must not be compromised.

Miami Herald (E-2) 4-22-79

miami Herald

April 22, 1979

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The Michael Townley Puzzle

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OUTSIDE the courtroom of U.S. District Court Judge Barrington Parker, Jr., last Friday afternoon there was the air of a college reunion as a dozen reporters awaited Michael V. Townley's sentencing for his role in the assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

Much hand-shaking and smiling took place as the reporters, from several nations, brought each other up to date on their activities since their last gathering almost four months ago.

It was a friendliness born of familiarity. Sporadically through 1978, then almost daily through January and February, the reporters listened as the bizarre Letelier story of international intrigue and political assassination unfolded in Parker's courtroom.

In many ways, Townley's sentencing Friday was like a graduation: After this gathering the reporters would probably go their separate ways, seldom to see each other again.

ALL of us will take away from this case some common memories that would seem the stuff of a good John LeCarre novel. Even when stripped to its barest elements, the story of Orlando Letelier's assassination in downtown Washington for effectively criticizing the policies of Chile's present military government will probably remain among the most interesting of each reporter's career.

But I will remember most vividly my impressions of Michael Townley, the American expatriate who admitted masterminding the assassination on orders from his super-



**OUR MAN
IN WASHINGTON**
Tom Fiedler

riors at DINA, the Chilean intelligence agency.

He will remain a fascinating puzzle to me and, I suppose, to others who followed the trial.

Townley is a living contradiction in morality. A gentle-spoken and clean-cut man, he testified that he rarely failed to buy his children gifts when he was traveling "on missions" abroad.

He told a jury that he postponed one assignment because it would have caused him to miss a son's birthday and be away from his wife when she was preparing for an operation.

Townley, in essence, appeared the model parent and husband.

BUT in that same soft tone of voice, Townley described in scrupulous detail how he assembled the bomb that blew Letelier's legs off and, by accident, killed Letelier's co-worker, Ronni Moffitt.

More important, without registering any hint of emotion, Townley initially said that he had no regrets about carrying out his assignment to kill the former ambassador because both he and Letelier were "soldiers" carrying out their respective assignments.

I found it especially disturbing that a man who appeared so gentle and wholesome could show no remorse about carrying out what



was, on the face of it, a terrible crime.

But in grappling with that incongruity for the past several months, I have come to the conclusion that Michael Townley's rationalization of what he did is not at all unusual.

In fact, there may be a little of Michael V. Townley in each of us.

I WAS helped to that conclusion after thinking about his explanation that he was simply a soldier doing his part in a battle.

Killing in battle, after all, is not like killing at all. At least, that has been the time-honored rationalization that allows even the most religious among us to get around the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

A disturbing parallel can be drawn between Townley's rationalization and that, say, of the Air Force B52 pilots who took part in the saturation bombing raids over Hanoi and Haiphong only a few years ago.

Like Townley, most of those pilots considered themselves technicians — men with excellent educations and finely honed skills that enabled them to maneuver a complex aircraft over a target and bring it back safely.

It was also for them a technical decision — not a moral one — to press the buttons that released the bombs that rained death on so many unarmed people.

WERE these men murderers? They certainly don't believe they were.

They never looked their victims in the eye, but death, nevertheless, was the result of their actions.

The disturbing thing is that it isn't a great step from that rationalization to Townley's. He never looked his victim in the eye, either.

Perhaps the only difference is that Townley finds no distinction between a political war and a shooting war.

But his rationalization of the Letelier assassination as the act of a soldier helps explain how a man can appear perfectly rational while taking credit for a despicable action.

Another reporter, in one of those press-room discussions that dominated the trial recesses, captured the essence of the troubling moral contradiction that Townley personified.

"After all," my colleague said, "Adolph Eichmann was supposedly a nice guy, too." Consider what he rationalized himself into doing.

*miam: Herald
15 May 79*

3-93-86

The Nation.

Volume 228, No. 21

3-93

WHAT TOWNLEY CAN'T TELL

CHILE'S GLOBAL HIT MEN

JOHN DINGES

The name in the now outdated United States passport is false, but the faded stamps tell a story. In Rome, there is a special telephone number to contact a terrorist whose nickname is "Topogigio." Other pieces of the puzzle come from hotel, telephone and flight records from a dozen cities.

The evidence surfaced in the course of the investigation of the car-bomb assassination of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier in Washington. The clues lead far beyond Letelier's death to other

murders, other cities and the existence of an assassination underground on three continents sponsored by Chile's military rulers.

Most of the information is now in the hands of the Justice Department, but it remains under wraps. The reason: secret agreements were signed last year with the Chilean Government by United States officials negotiating for the extradition of Michael V. Townley, the key witness in the Letelier murder trial. In these agreements, American officials promised Chile that they would not reveal the byproducts of the Letelier investigation to authorities in other countries when crimes committed by Chilean agents in conjunction with local terrorists were involved.

The new and potentially more explosive areas of investigation are opening up as the Letelier case moves into its final legal stages. At a five-week trial ending in February, a Washington jury convicted two Cuban exiles who were accused of acting as "hit men" under contract with DINA,



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Chile

(Continued From Front Cover)

le's notorious secret police, to kill Letelier, a leader of Chilean exile resistance to the military Government. On May 14 a Chilean judge denied an American request that Chile extradite Gen. Manuel Contreras, the head of DINA at the time of the murder, and two DINA officers accused of ordering, financing and arranging the assassination.

At the center of the DINA network is the figure of Michael Townley, assassin, contract agent and international liaison for DINA. American-born, he spied and was killed for DINA. After his expulsion from Chile, he told American investigators how, under DINA orders, he arranged Letelier's September 21, 1976, assassination with a sophisticated remote-control bomb built by himself and set off by Cuban exiles. Townley became the chief prosecution witness at the trial of the two Cuban expatriates on charges of murder and conspiracy and at that of a third for covering up the crime. For six days on the stand, Townley matter-of-factly described the gruesome details of the bombing that killed Letelier and an American companion, Ronni Moffitt, who was riding with him.

But there was much more that was not heard at the trial. As a result of the Letelier case investigation, abundant hard evidence has emerged that confirms the long-suspected involvement of Chile's DINA in attacks on other prominent exiled opponents of the military Government. The first such attack was the bombing murder of retired Army Gen. Carlos Prats

and his wife in Argentina in September 1974. A year earlier, former Vice President Bernardo Leighton, a leader of centrist opposition to military rule, and his wife were critically wounded by a gunman's bullets in Rome.

More ominously, the evidence traces the still incomplete but unmistakable outline of a three-continent network of violent anti-Communists receiving support and training from Chile in exchange for their participation in DINA's international terrorist operations. Michael Townley was DINA's liaison to groups in Argentina, the United States, Spain, France, Germany and Italy. Townley has also admitted carrying out DINA missions he refuses to describe in Holland,

Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg. Independent of Townley—and so far shielded from scrutiny—other parts of the network are known to involve officially sanctioned police and paramilitary operations in several Latin American countries backed up by sophisticated computers based in Santiago.

On October 4, 1973, Michael Townley became Kenneth W. Enbart, construction worker. Using a forged Florida driver's license and birth certificate in that name, he applied for a United States passport in a Hialeah, Fla., courthouse, listing South America as his destination.

Less than a month before in Chile, the elected socialist Government of President Salvador Allende was overthrown in a right-wing military coup that was one of the bloodiest in Latin American history. Townley, the son of a wealthy Ford Motor Company executive, had spent much of his life since adolescence in Chile, where his father was stationed. While the Allende Government was in power, Townley had joined a rightist group engaged in terrorism against Allende. He was implicated in a homicide and forced to flee the country. Now he was returning.

Soon after his arrival in Chile, Townley was approached by DINA operations director Lieut. Col. Pedro Espinoza, who was later indicted in the Letelier case. Espinoza recognized him as a potential agent: armed with two identities as an American citizen, experienced in commando operations, electronics and explosives, totally devoted to the fanatic anti-Communism of the Chilean dictator, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, Townley was a prime candidate for the newly created secret police.

It was not difficult to convince DINA chief Contreras that Townley would be useful as an American agent to do DINA's dirty work abroad. Townley was hired in mid-1974, joining the other civilian contract agents recruited for DINA operations from the ranks of the neo-fascist Fatherland and Liberty Party. Townley's former comrades in terrorism against Allende. He was assigned to DINA's "External Section."

He acquired yet another identity: on September 6, 1974, Townley was given a Chilean identity card with his official DINA alias, Juan Andrés Wilson Silva, technician. In what was perhaps his first major operation, Townley was ordered to go to Argentina to ar-

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range the assassination of General Prats as an exiled Allende loyalist and former commander in chief of the Chilean Armed Forces, Prats was considered the most dangerous rival to General Pinochet, who had expelled him shortly after the military takeover.

Townley's steps can be traced through the still readable stamps in the Enyart passport. The stamps show him flying from Santiago's Pudahuel Airport on September 10 to Buenos Aires, where Prats and his wife were living in exile. According to investigative sources, Townley made contact with low-level members of Argentina's rampant terrorist community, a group of civilian mercenaries attached to a branch of the Army Intelligence Service.

The night of September 30, General Prats and his wife, Sofia, were dinner guests at the home of friends. They drove home after midnight. Prats stopped in the driveway of the apartment building where the couple lived and got out to open the garage door. A moment after he returned to the driver's seat, the car door still open, a bomb exploded. Both were killed in a blast so powerful it blew parts of the car nine stories high onto an apartment balcony. Argentine investigators theorized in a still secret report that a clock timing device was used to detonate the bomb, rather than a remote-control device such as that used in the car bomb that killed Letelier two years later in Washington. Townley's Enyart passport shows him arriving in Santiago a few minutes after midnight—just about the time the bomb was going off in Prats's car. As he did in the Letelier assassination, Townley left his local contacts to finish the operation so that he was far away when the bomb went off.

After the Prats mission in late 1974, Townley was sent to Miami. He bought bugging and anti-bugging equipment and plugged himself into Miami's anti-Castro Cuban terrorist underground, which held Chile's Pinochet and DINA in great esteem because of their successful war against the left. Townley let it be known that DINA was seeking a suitable group to help on a special mission.

In February 1975, on a second trip to Miami, contact was made with the leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, a small but militant group on the rightist fringe of the exile movement. A meeting was arranged in New Jersey with Guillermo Novo and others of the C.N.M. "Northern Zone." Then Townley returned to Miami to buy the equipment to build the assassination device that was to become his trademark: a Fanon-Courier paging or "beeper" system, which he modified electrically to serve as a remote-control detonator.

Townley, with C.N.M. aid, intended to use the device on a mission for which he invented his own code name: "Open Season." DINA had ordered him to disrupt a meeting of Chilean exile leaders in Mexico City and "eliminate" as many as he could. The assassination list, he later told investigators, was headed by

Communist Senator Jodia Teitelboim and Socialist Party General Secretary Carlos Altamirano. Orlando Letelier, recently released from a Chilean concentration camp, was also at the meeting.

C.N.M. member Virgilio Paz, a sometime car salesman in his early 20s, was sent by Novo to help Townley in Mexico. For reasons not yet explained, Townley, his wife, Mariana, and Paz arrived weeks late for the exile meeting and did not carry out the assassination plans. But the relationship between DINA and C.N.M. continued active and mutually fruitful.

Meanwhile, the focus of DINA chief Contreras widened to Europe, where most Chilean exiles lived. Townley was sent to establish or renew contacts with anti-Communist groups there. The Pinochet Government was becoming concerned about a new threat: the Christian Democratic Party, originally acquiescent to the coup against the leftists, was moving into opposition. Pinochet feared the formation of a united Christian Democratic-leftist opposition front that, according to past elections, would represent up to 80 percent of the population. The exiles in Europe included many of the parties' top leaders, and they were pursuing the idea of an alliance.

Townley and Paz went to Rome in September 1975 to cement DINA's relationship with the Youth Front (Fronti della Gioventu), the militant youth arm of the Fascist Italian Social Movement (M.S.I.). Investigators also believe Townley was there to enlist their help in assassinating the exiled elder statesman of the Christian Democratic Party, Bernardo Leighton. The relationship between DINA and M.S.I.'s Youth Front appears to have been virtually a carbon copy of the DINA-Cuban Nationalist Movement link; aboveboard propaganda exchange and ideological support combined with clandestine terrorist operations.

Townley's contact person was a man he knew as Alfredo Di Stefano, who went by the nicknames "Topogigio" and "George." Townley and Paz are believed to have worked out with Di Stefano a three-way mutual aid arrangement involving DINA, C.N.M. and Di Stefano's youth group. The collaboration was to be put to a test, Townley suggested, in the Leighton operation.

Leighton, then 66, was a co-founder of the Chilean Christian Democratic Party and leader of its most liberal wing. He had lived in voluntary exile in Rome since December 1973. He and his party had long-standing close ties with Italy's ruling Christian Democratic Party and other Christian Democratic leaders around Europe. Leighton's assassination was portrayed by DINA as being politically beneficial both to Chile's junta and to the cause of Italian Fascism. Respected by both sides for his political savvy, Leighton was considered by DINA's analysts to be a dangerous "catalyst" who could forge a precedent-setting alliance against the right that could spread to other countries. Di Stefano agreed to carry out the

ree-way operation. The target was a Cuban, the assassin Italian, and—in a twist—the Cuban exile movement would take credit for the operation in order to take the heat off the Italians. Having secured Di Stefano's involvement, Townley flew to the United States. On October 6, as Bernardo Leighton and his wife stepped out of a taxicab after a shopping trip and walked to their apartment on Rome's Via Aurelia, a few blocks from the Vatican, they were shot down from behind by a lone gunman. Both were critically wounded but survived. Ana Leighton, 57, shot in the spine, remains partially paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair. Leighton recovered fully from a head wound, but withdrew from active politics. The real or imagined threat to Pichet of a center-leftist coalition was erased; political leadership in the Christian Democratic Party reverted to more conservative anti-Communist figures back in Chile.

Miami's Spanish-language paper, *Diario las Americas*, received a communiqué postmarked October 10, in which a Cuban exile group identified as *Hero*, one of the pseudonyms for the Cuban Nationalist Movement, claimed credit for shooting Leighton. No details to verify the claim were given, but on November 4, almost a month after the shooting, another *Hero* communiqué was received by the Associated Press office in Miami. The message said that Leighton was shot in the back of the head, not in the forehead as reported in the press, and that the weapon used was a 9-mm. Beretta pistol. Italian police confirmed that the details were correct and could only have been obtained from someone with firsthand knowledge of the assassination.

The confusing messages, it has now been learned, were part of the "test" of the trilateral pact agreed upon in Rome. Townley's Italian contacts who arranged the shooting attack passed details of the wound and gun to the C.N.M., which gave them belatedly to the press to bolster its claim to have committed

the crime. The information was relayed through DINA. Di Stefano, Paz and two other Youth Front members named Luigi and Mauricio were then rewarded with trips in 1976 to Chile, where they worked with DINA in training and propaganda programs.

What was to be the last act of the collaboration between DINA and the Cuban Nationalist Movement took shape in mid-1976, when Chile's rulers planned the assassination of Orlando Letelier. The job was given to Townley, a natural choice for an operation in Washington because of his American citizenship and strong ties to cooperative Cuban Nationalist Movement members living in New Jersey, a few hours drive from Washington.

For the third September in as many years, Townley embarked on a DINA assassination mission. Once more, Contreras ordered him to use the mission to test elements of DINA's overseas network. Paraguayan intelligence, which had recently joined Operation Condor, the counterinsurgency organization created by Contreras to coordinate the secret police operations of the military Governments in South America's Southern Cone, agreed to provide false official passports for DINA's unspecified mission to Washington.

Townley persuaded C.N.M. members Guillermo Novo, Alvin Ross, José Dionisio Suarez and his loyal companion, Virgilio Paz, to assist him in the assassination. At 9:30 A.M. on September 21, 1976, a bomb exploded in Letelier's car as he rounded Sheridan Circle near the Chilean Embassy, where he had once lived. Receipt records show Townley was in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., at the time, buying electronic equipment at Audio Intelligence Devices, a manufacturer of electronic eavesdropping equipment.

But this time Contreras's reliance on his network backfired. The Paraguayan passports, though never used, provided investigators with pictures of Townley and another DINA agent involved in the operation.



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Security was poor inside the Cuban ex-ommunity and within weeks the C.N.M. role in the murder had been established. American investigators began to follow the trail of a "blond Chilean-American" said to be DINA's liaison to the C.N.M. The trail led to Chile in February 1978, when for the first time the picture and description of the suspected agent were matched with Michael Townley.

The United States, bent on solving Letelier's murder, demanded Townley's extradition. Chile, caught in one murder, negotiated to protect the rest of DINA's terror network and prevent the other assassinations from being linked to the Pinochet Government. Two weeks of tense negotiations in Washington and Santiago were interspersed with heavy doses of diplomatic arm-twisting by United States officials. On April 7, a secret agreement was signed in Washington by Chilean Undersecretary of Interior Enrique Montero and United States Attorney Earl Silbert. The hitherto secret agreement, a copy of which was obtained by this reporter nearly a year after its signing, spells out the conditions for Townley's release into American hands. To obtain the expulsion of Townley, the United States promised that "information [obtained through the Letelier investigation] . . . will be conveyed only to the Government of Chile," and that the information would be used by the United States only "to prosecute violations of law in the United States." The pact thus prohibited the United States from passing on to, say, Argentina, Germany or Italy, information uncovered about Chilean terrorist acts within their borders.

Townley was put on a plane in handcuffs on April 8, seated next to two F.B.I. agents and flown to a top-security military base near Washington. Negotiations began anew, this time about the conditions under which Townley would cooperate with the investigation in the United States. On April 17, Townley spent a sunny Monday afternoon on the enclosed lawn of the Quantico Marine Detention Center conferring separately with his defense attorney, Seymour Glanzer, his wife, Mariana, United States Attorneys, F.B.I. agents and two high-ranking Chilean Army intelligence officers. A few hours later, he signed a plea-bargaining agreement with United States Attorney Silbert.

Under the terms of the agreement, Townley would tell what he knew about the Letelier assassination. He and his family would receive protection. He would plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to murder a foreign official and be sentenced to three and one-third years to ten years in prison.

Townley, too, was concerned about protecting DINA's network, and at his insistence, a clause was added providing that he could be required to give information only about crimes involving American citizens or those that were committed on United States territory.

Townley underwent a marathon of hundreds of hours

of questioning. His mer terrorist associates, not knowing how much he was telling, ran for cover. C.N.M. members Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross were picked up near Miami, Fla., as they were preparing to flee the United States with false passports. Co-conspirators Paz and José Dionisio Suarez escaped and are still at large.

In late April, Mariana Townley attempted to contact Di Stefano in Rome to assure him that her husband was not betraying DINA's Italian connection. She called a number for emergencies that in the past had been manned twenty-four hours a day by the Youth Front militants. It had been disconnected. In fact, Townley was refusing to answer investigators' questions about other DINA assassinations, in accordance with his agreement, but his reticence could not stem the flow of clues and leads produced by the information he provided on DINA and his travels in connection with the Letelier case.

Throughout the trial in January and February, prosecutors fought off defense attorneys' efforts to force Townley to face cross-examination on other assassination missions for DINA. United States District Judge Barrington Parker held to the guidelines of the United States pact with Chile and declared off-limits all questions probing into other DINA operations and crimes.

Four men out of the nine indicted and charged last year in connection with the Letelier murder are in prison. Two Cubans, Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross, were given life sentences. Ignacio Novo, Guillermo's brother, was given five years for lying to a grand jury and for misprision of a felony—covering up the crime.

Judge Parker finally, on May 10, sentenced Michael Townley to a maximum of ten years in prison. Though bound by the plea bargain with Townley, Parker expressed his discomfort with the way the case and Townley himself have been handled. With reason, for the United States had been maneuvered into complicity with Chile's efforts to cover up its international terrorist activities. Meanwhile, President Augusto Pinochet continues to insist that his Government had nothing to do with Letelier's death or with any other human rights violations, for that matter. The Chilean Supreme Court is expected to uphold on appeal the ruling denying extradition of Contreras and the two officers on the ground that Townley's testimony was obtained in exchange for a promise and is thus inadmissible.

The case is far from over for Townley. In a letter to his wife a year ago—a copy of which was obtained—Townley told of his fears:

With what has started in the press, screaming about Argentina, Italy, etc., and what is going to come out at the trial about Mexico, the rest of the world is going to be screaming for you and me for many years to come. It won't make any difference that they also scream for Contreras and the Chilean government, they will be screaming first of all for us. . . .

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