

FBI can't penetrate silence about Omega 7

By Agustin Torres

The FBI admits that it's having the same problems investigating the allegedly Union City-based Cuban terrorist organization, Omega 7, as local police, including an inability to penetrate a veil of silence in the Cuban community.

Yesterday, the FBI announced that its special terrorist division made Omega 7, believed to be made up of exiled anti-Communist Cubans, its priority assignment soon after the shooting death of Cuban political activist Jose Negrin.

"The biggest problem we are facing is the lack of communication between ourselves and the Cuban people," said Michael McDonald, spokesman for the FBI in Newark.

McDonald said the bureau has been making concerted efforts, without revealing those attempts, to convince the exiled Cubans both in New Jersey and Florida that the federal government is not their enemy.

North Hudson Cubans say the nationalist movements in the exiled community have a low opinion of the federal law enforcement agencies and the U.S. State Department, viewing them as partners of the regime of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. They say it is the result of this country's attempt to coexist with the Castro government.

Local police are making no attempts to break the Omega 7 organization in Union City because they do not have the means or jurisdiction, according to police officials.

"We only handle isolated incidents of crime," said Police Chief Herman Bolte. "Anything that we may run across which may help the feds in their investigation of Omega 7 is turned over to them."

"Lately, there has been better communication between ourselves and the FBI concerning terrorist ac-

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FBI has same problems as cops with Omega 7

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tivities. It hasn't always been so. I think we still provide them with more than they do us."

Local detectives say one of the problems is that the Omega 7 group, although believed to be a small hard-core group, received excellent training.

"Some of the older guys had been policemen or soldiers in Cuba before coming to this country," said one detective who talked off the record. "These guys were trained by the Central Intelligence Agency in the 60s in the use of plastic bombs, terrorist activity and killing during the Bay of Pigs."

"It was no coincidence that the Watergate breaking and entry involved Gordon Liddy, a former CIA man, and Cubans. Notice that the Cubans were the only ones to get the worst jail sentences out of that fiasco."

Local police say the older members of the terrorist groups, who probably have legitimate businesses and jobs, have trained younger and tougher "revolutionaries" who have come up through the ranks of various exile nationalist organizations.

Although police officials deny that there have been complaints by Cuban shopkeepers, some cops say the Hispanic merchants provide financing through subtle reminders for the cause, including a rock through a plate glass window.

Federal authorities, according to published reports, have been trying to establish if Omega 7 has taken a number of contract killings to finance their movement.

One such contract slaying was the bombing death of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C., several years ago which saw three North Hudson Cubans imprisoned for the crime.