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3 Held in Bazooka Attack 'Purposely Didn't Hit UN'



JULIO PEREZ



GUILLERMO NOVO



IGNACIO NOVO

Wanted to Steal Che's Headlines

Three Cubans, identified as officials of an anti-Castro exile group, have been charged with taking part in the Dec. 11 bazooka shot at the United Nations building.

They were quoted as saying they purposely missed the 38-story East River skyscraper; that their motive was to take newspaper headlines from Ernesto (Che) Guevara, Cuban minister of industry, who was speaking to the U.N. Assembly at the time.

Guevara is the No. 2 man in the Communist regime of Premier Fidel Castro.

The three Cubans were booked last night in Long Island City from where the rocket was fired.

The missile from the World War II German-made rocket launcher soared over a tugboat and exploded in the river about 100 yards from the U.N. Secretariat building on the Manhattan shore. No one was hurt.

* * *

STANLEY ROSS, editor of *El Tiempo*, a Spanish-language weekly newspaper in Manhattan, said the three men told him before their arrests that they had purchased a deactivated bazooka for \$35 from a war surplus store in Manhattan and fashioned a firing pin out of an automobile ignition.

The Press learned that the three suspects allegedly had the rocket launcher in their possession for a month while spending several weeks searching for an appropriate firing site.

Ross said his reporters found out who the perpetrators were and urged the three to surrender.

But Asst. Queens Dist. Atty. Frances X. Smith denied Ross had anything to do with the investigation or the surrender of the three men. He was backed up by Queens Chief of Detectives Philip Walsh and Dist. Atty. Frank O'Connor.

* * *

SMITH TOLD Ross: "You are doing a disservice to the hardworking police by seeking credit for their work."

Police said the arrests resulted from painstaking work on their part, including checkups on the sale of bazookas.

There were unconfirmed reports the FBI would make further arrests in connection with the bazooka sale. The FBI declined comment.

The Cubans were booked as Julio Carlos Perez, 31, a teletype repairman from the Bronx, and brothers, Ignacio Novo, 26, a shoe salesman of Manhattan, and Guillermo Novo, 25, a door-

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Bazooka Shot 'Purposely Didn't Hit UN'

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 man from North Bergen, N.J.

Chief of detectives Walsh, said the three were charged with endangering life maliciously by placing an explosive near a building, and with attempting to damage a building or a vessel, both felonies punishable by up to 25 years in prison on each count. They also were charged with conspiracy, a misdemeanor, which could mean a three-year prison term.

IN MIAMI, Felipe Rivero, national director of the Cuban Nationalist Association (or movement), said Ignacio Nova was his organization's national secretary general, that Guillermo Nova was its delegate for New Jersey and that Julio Perez was chief of its "Naval Department."

Yesterday's surrender of the trio concluded one of the most intensive searches in police history.

Within 20 minutes of the bazooka firing, Long Island City police located the rocket launcher in a lot at 4-63 48th Ave., Long Island City.

Right behind the police were District Attorney O'Connor and his top lieutenants, Smith and Asst. Dist. Atty. Harold O. Cullen.

Over that weekend the investigators summoned all their resources in a two-pronged effort to locate the men through anti-Castro Cuban refugee groups, and locate the origin of the rocket-launcher.

THE FIRST break came when a police informant passed valuable information along to the special service unit in the Long Island City precinct. As they — and bomb squad and precinct detectives—put pressure on the Cuban organizations, the bazooka was identified as a World War II German make.

Three names, Walsh said, were given to police. The men were brought in, but none of the witnesses could identify them and they were freed . . . until yesterday.

O'Connor, Smith and Cullen, sleepless since the weekend, showed up at the stationhouse shortly after the men surrendered.

Asked if he knew of their lawyer's claims that the men never intended to hit the UN, O'Connor said:



Queens Dist. Atty. Frank O'Connor, right, listens as Chief of Detectives Philip Walsh tells about the bazooka arrests.

"This will have to be determined by the grand jury."

WHEN ASKED if the men surrendered because their alleged attempt gave Cuban anti-Castro groups a bad name, O'Connor shrugged his shoulders. A DA's spokesman said special credit was due to Detectives William Riley and Martin Logan.

Police Commissioner Michael Murphy showed up at the stationhouse about 10:30 p.m., shortly before the suspects were booked. He praised his men and the district attorney's office for its cooperation.

"We are awakened to the fact that these Cuban groups are potentially dangerous," said Murphy. This is the first time they have used artillery.

"The availability of these types of arms," Murphy said, "is a disgrace. There is a tremendous need for legislation."

O'Connor said yesterday that he will start seeking stricter laws to cover all types of arms.