

Tropical

Partly cloudy, warmer. Highs upper 70s to low 80s. Lows in the mid-60s. Winds light to southeast at 10 to 15 m.p.h. (Details, Page 2A.)

WEDNESDAY'S TEMPERATURES

8 a.m. 64	2 p.m. 72	8 p.m. 68
11 a.m. 67	4 p.m. 72	10 p.m. 65
1 p.m. 70	6 p.m. 70	Midnight 64

# The Miami Herald

WFL

Final Edition  
20 cents

Thursday, February 15, 1979

Florida's Complete Newspaper

A Latin American Edition is Published Daily

136 Pages

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69th Year — No. 77

## 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

Mrs. Isabel Letelier

... after the verdict



— Associated Press

Distraught Relatives Leave Court

... sister Anna Pleyva Novo, left, Lucy Ross, daughter

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— 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

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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 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.

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 Larios 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 36-year-old former Miami auto mechanic, ultimately

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.