

Black Judge Is Abused in Taped Call

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WASHINGTON — Defense attorneys in the Orlando Letelier murder trial have obtained a tape recording of a telephone conversation in which confessed assassin Michael Townley ostensibly makes vague threats and racial slurs against U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker Jr.

Townley, an American expatriate who became a Chilean intelligence agent, has confessed to plotting the assassination of Letelier, the former Chilean ambassador who died in a 1976 car-bombing here.

Townley has testified that he carried out the killing on orders from the Chilean intelligence agency DINA. He is the prosecution's key witness against three Cuban exiles accused of being his accomplices.

Judge Parker, a black, is presiding in the trial.

The tape recording, in Spanish, has been ordered sealed by the judge. It was given to defense attorneys last weekend by Chilean lawyer Sergio Miranda Carrington.

Miranda also is the attorney for Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, head of DINA and the alleged mastermind of the Letelier assassination.

Because the tape has been sealed, the FBI has been unable to determine if the voice alleged to be Townley's is authentic.

The tape, according to sources who have heard it, was made on Jan. 31 as Townley sat alone in the office of the assistant U.S. attorneys.

The man identified as Townley telephoned a Chilean friend named Gustavo, who taped the 12-minute conversation.

During the call, the voice identified as Townley's ridicules the judge as inept, using racial insults. He also makes veiled threats either against Parker directly or, according to other interpretations, suggests that Gustavo or others should threaten Parker.