

## 400 greet Cubans cleared in slaying

The two anti-Castro Cuban exiles acquitted in the 1976 assassination of leftist Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier returned home to Union City, N.J., early yesterday and were greeted by more than 400 jubilant friends, relatives and supporters.

Guillermo Novo Sampol, 41, and Alvin Ross Diaz, 48, both said they were stunned at their acquittal by a federal jury Saturday in Washington. Novo, however, was convicted on two counts of perjury. No date for his sentencing has been set.

"All of us, all the exiles, won a great battle for the interests of justice everywhere," said Ross, who had participated in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and spent two years in a Cuban prison. "We are grateful to all who supported us."

Novo said the acquittal has international impact because "it shows the whole world that a united Cuban community can win a great law battle against powers like Chile and the United States."

Both men were found guilty at their first murder trial in 1979, but a federal court overturned the convictions because prison cellmates of Novo and Ross were permitted to testify. Both had been given life sentences and have been free on \$200,000 bail since the new trial was ordered.

Letelier, who was killed in a car bombing on Embassy Row in Washington, was a top official in the Marxist regime of Salvador Allende.

—Bruce Chadwick