

Suspect in Bomb Death of Letelier Said to Agree to Aid U.S. Inquiry

By **NICHOLAS M. HORROCK**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 27—A 35-year-old American, who has been charged in the bomb slaying of former Ambassador Orlando Letelier of Chile, has agreed to supply information about the plot to United States authorities, two Government sources here said today.

They declined to give details of the arrangement between Michael Vernon Townley, an American who had lived in Chile since 1958, and Government lawyers. "He is cooperating with the F.B.I. and will supply information both about what went on here and the planning in Chile," one source said.

The sources would not say what inducement had been offered to Mr. Townley to become a Government witness, but they acknowledged that "plea bargaining" had been going on for two weeks. Seymour Glanzer, a former associate of Mr. Silbert's in the Watergate prosecu-

tion, who is representing Mr. Townley, was not available for comment.

Yesterday Mr. Townley was formally charged with conspiracy to murder an official of a foreign government and held in custody without bail. At the hearing, Eugene M. Propper, the assistant United States attorney handling the case, told the United States magistrate that Mr. Townley might be in danger and that the Government was taking extraordinary measures to protect him.

Several Government sources have said that Mr. Townley was being held at military posts in and around Washington and was being moved from place to place in secrecy.

In normal plea bargaining arrangements the Government agrees to accept one or two charges in exchange for testimony and refrains from charging the de-

Continued on Page A4, Column 3

Suspect in Bomb Death of Lotelier Said to Agree to Aid U.S. Inquiry

Continued From Page A1

defendant with a wide range of other crimes they may suspect him of.

Mr. Townley has been identified as an agent of the Chilean intelligence service, Dina, and the United States has said that he traveled frequently to the United States in connection with Mr. Letelier's killing and on other missions for the Chilean intelligence service.

Presumably he can identify members of the assassination team that killed Mr. Letelier, and Mrs. Ronni K. Moffitt in Washington on Sept. 21, 1976, by placing a bomb under their car.

But to many Federal officials, the more important aspect is that Mr. Townley can identify former members of the Chilean Government who ordered the murder and other agents of the Chilean intelligence service who may have participated in the plot.

Mr. Townley was returned to the United States after being expelled by Chile earlier this month. Shortly after his return the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested two Cuban exiles in Miami who are reportedly linked to the Letelier plot. Several sources have said that the main Government pressure on Mr. Townley was both the scope of United States knowledge about what had been planned and the fact that the Chilean Government had apparently abandoned him to this prosecution.

Shortly after he arrived in the United States Mr. Townley was joined by his Chilean wife, who later returned to Santiago, the Chilean capital, and told the press that her husband would remain loyal to President Augusto Pinochet. But

Federal sources have said that Mr. Townley finds he was isolated in this country and may have sought a way to reduce the charges against him.

General Pinochet led the military junta that overthrew the former leftist government of President Salvador Allende Gossens in 1973. Mr. Letelier served under the Allende administration and was an exile in Washington when he was killed.