

Cuban denies Omega 7 role

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By ALEIDA DURAN
Staff Writer

Eduardo Arocena, the man FBI agents have said admitted being "Omar," founder and leader of the anti-Castro terrorist group Omega 7, yesterday denied making such a statement or a deal with the government.

In a statement to The Dispatch issued through his sister, Daisy Arocena of Newark, Arocena denied "everything that has been said."

"This is a strategy of the (U.S.) government to destroy me, destroy the revolutionary organizations and finish off the feeling of anti-Castro rebellion among the Cuban exiles," Arocena said through his sister. "I have never made and never will make a pact with the

government. I have not accused Pedro Remon (an alleged Omega 7 terrorist) or anyone else."

Daisy Arocena was interviewed by The Dispatch yesterday after she visited her brother in the federal penitentiary in Otisville, N.Y.

Arocena, 40, a former New Jersey longshoreman, is being held in lieu of \$1 million bail on two charges of transporting explosives from New Jersey to New York in connection with a 1980 plot to assassinate Raul Roa Kouri, a Cuban delegate to the United Nations.

A federal hearing was held in Manhattan Wednesday to determine whether the U.S. Attorney General's Office has probable cause to continue holding Arocena without trying him immediately. The

judge ruled that the government has probable cause.

Daisy Arocena, acting as a spokeswoman for her brother, said when Arocena tried to stand up to answer FBI agent James Lyons' charges that he was cooperating with the bureau during Wednesday's hearing in U.S. District Court, the public defender he says was imposed on him by the authorities ordered him to sit, and when he tried to speak with reporters, they prevented him from doing so.

He also said he is alone, isolated and that his attorney, Gerald Walpin, "is not defending" his interests.

Even before yesterday's visit to the

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Eduardo Arocena

They are trying to 'destroy me'

CUBAN

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penitentiary and Lyons' testimony, Arocena's family had said they were sure he had not declared himself guilty to the FBI.

"I do not believe that is the truth," Arocena's wife, Miriam, said in a telephone interview from Miami yesterday. "Eduardo has told me not to believe anything they (FBI agents) tell me, anything they write. Eduardo has told me 'they are going to build proof. They're experts at it.' I don't believe anything of what the agent said."

Arocena's mother, Zenaida, also denied that he had made any statement to the FBI. "You can be sure that what they have in jail is an *hombre* (man)," she said.

Lyons testified that Arocena had been cooperating with the government in its investigation into the activities of Omega 7, an anti-Castro organization that has claimed responsibility for more than 30 bombings and two deaths in the New York metropolitan area.

District Court Judge Nina Gershon ruled after hearing Lyons testimony that there was "probable cause" for federal Prosecutor Michael L. Tabak keep Arocena jailed on the charges. The judge also refused Arocena's petition to reduce his \$1 million bail.

Arocena has denied having any connection with Omega 7. He did not testify during Wednesday's hearing. Instead, he listened to the allegations while an interpreter translated into Spanish.

Lyons said that at the end of September 1982 Arocena flew from Miami to New York for a secret meeting with agents of the FBI. The moment Arocena was arrested on July 22, the FBI said there was a "confidential informant," but refused to divulge his name.

"He (Arocena) said he was the founder and leader of Omega 7," Lyons

testified. "In Omega 7, they call me 'Omar,'" Arocena said, according to Lyons' testimony.

The agent also said that Pedro Remon was the "trigger man" in the slaying of Felix Garcia, a diplomat with the Cuban mission to the United Nations, who was shot down in Queens, N.Y., on Sept. 11, 1980. Lyons said that Arocena identified Remon as the man who called CBS News to claim responsibility for Garcia's death.

Remon and seven other accused members of Omega 7 are being held in jail for refusing to testify before the federal grand jury investigating the group.

Lyons said Arocena also named Remon as the maker of the bomb in the aborted attempt to kill Roa Kouri in Manhattan. He said Arocena had told him that the bomb was part of a plot aimed to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro when the Cuban leader visited New York in 1979.

"They were going to use the explosive device to assassinate Castro, but the opportunity did not arise," said Lyons.

After his confession, Lyons testified, Arocena returned to Miami to find more evidence of bombs for the FBI. But instead of doing so, he telephoned and said he was going into hiding.

After a nine-month search, FBI agents arrested Arocena July 22 in an apartment in the Little Havana section of Miami.

The Arocena family, however, is sure he had not made any of the statements the FBI claimed.

"Eduardo has declared nothing," said his sister. "This is a government maneuver. It seems a lie that in the United States they can do things like this."

She said that after her brother vanished from the public scene, FBI agents visited her house and assured her that Arocena had come to New York and was being kept by them in a hotel. They showed her photographs and handwriting to convince her that he had talked.

"If they had had him here, sleeping



**Daisy Arocena
Defends her brother**

in the same hotel room, why did they not arrest him? Why did they search for him for nine months? I believe they are capable of anything to demonstrate what they want. It is all a lie."

Arocena's wife, Miriam, said that the same day her husband disappeared, FBI agents searched for him at her house and, when she asked them why, they answered that it was because he was an "anti-communist."

"Eduardo had left the house in the morning as usual. After the agents came, I did not see him again until he was arrested," she said. "I do not believe that what the agent said is true."

According to the family, a second lawyer, Paul Goldberger, was disqualified by the court as his defense counsel. The first, Ana Maria Carnesoltas, was disqualified because of a possible conflict of interest.

"Goldberger was disqualified for the same reason, but he said he will appeal today (yesterday)," said Daisy.

She charged that the court is trying to force the public defender, Walpin, to represent him, but the accused does not want that lawyer because "he does not like his methods."

At Wednesday's hearing, Walpin charged that Arocena had been "inveigled (enticed)" to inform by FBI agents using the ploy of calling him an "honest, proud freedom fighter" and suggested that he had been induced to talk in order to rid Omega 7 of drug dealers.