



Who killed a Cuban diplomat in New York, turned Miami into the cocaine capital of the world, and conducted terrorist activities up and down the East Coast? They call themselves . . .

OMEGA 7:

FROM CUBA WITH BLOOD

By John Cummings

The man took short, repeated trips to the window of his shop in Union City, New Jersey. He looked up and down Bergenline Avenue and then leaned back against a table. The man had been receiving some strange phone calls at odd hours.

He had been approached to contribute to "the cause" and he had also been pressured by two swarthy men who wanted to use his basement after hours—no questions asked. In Union City you learn never to complain to the police about these things.

So the man just watched and wondered. "Sometimes I think Omega is watching me," he said to a friend. "Sometimes I think it's the mob."

His companion broke into convulsive laughter.

"Why are you laughing?" the man asked.

"They're the same guys."

It was in 1974 when the "zero," Omega 7's mark of death, was sent to the first victim. It began a nine-month reign of terror in Miami's "Little Havana" district.

In 1979, after receiving phone calls with nothing but a ticking clock on the other end, death came to a prominent

New Jersey Cuban exile. He was shot down in front of his house in Union City. The specter of death had moved northward, but little changed in the world of Cuban exile terrorism except the body count.

Then, in September 1980, in what the organization's leaders must have considered their finest hour, Omega 7 turned the sidewalks of New York into their personal battleground by murdering a Cuban UN diplomat—marking the first time a UN diplomat had been executed on American soil. The FBI, sparked by public outcry, claimed that terrorism investigations had become their main priority.

The FBI called the diplomat's killing "a serious departure" in tactics for the Omega terrorists. But it all had the aura of déjà vu. Only the setting for this murder had been different. Instead of Little Havana's Calle Ocho in Miami, they were now operating on a second front—the center of which was just across the Hudson from New York City—in New Jersey along Union City's Bergenline Avenue.

One Florida law enforcement official said: "It's ironic when you think about it. The feds had their hands on these

guys just a few years ago and let them just walk away. Maybe it's more than ironic."

He also wondered out loud about two other questions: Why did the federal government put off investigating Omega 7 for so long? Any why did it dismiss Omega 7 as a localized group of political fanatics, when the evidence was clear seven years ago that it was an organization with international ties and one aligned with organized crime?

The sun's heat in mid-October still rises from the sidewalks with a July intensity, belying the calendars that hang on the bodega walls bedecked with Cuban flags along Miami's Flagler Street. The old men rarely gather to play chess along the sidewalk before twilight.

It was no different in October 1975, when Rolando Masferrer made his way to a corner cafe for his morning swallow of sweet Cuban coffee.

Rolando Masferrer had been a gangster in Cuba and he had merely moved his operation 200 miles north when the Cuban revolution inconvenienced him. In Little Havana, he was an object of both scorn and fear. A communist in

It was no secret that politics and narcotics went together like rice and beans in the Cuban exile community. One had merely to look at those netted in Operation Eagle to see that 70 percent of those arrested had been recruited by the CIA for the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Cuba until 1944, he became a political power in his own right in the old days under Fulgencio Batista—controlling a band of extortionists known as “The Tigers.” He had ruled Cuba’s Oriente Province, where Castro began his revolution in 1956, the way Capone had ruled Chicago.

It had come to Masferrer’s attention that two brothers, Ignacio and Guillermo Novo, had been cutting a swath through Masferrer’s control of Little Havana. The Novos were already well known in the community because of their political affiliation with another prominent exile, Felipe Rivero. Rivero, using the Novos, had built a small but disciplined group known as the Cuban Nationalist Movement (CNM).

Rivero, as ideological head of the CNM, was in charge of the Miami, or southern region, while the Novos later built the CNM as a force to be dealt with in the New Jersey area. Though the movement had spread beyond Miami—to Puerto Rico as well as New Jersey—authorities knew that when decisions were made, they were made in Miami.

The Novos, neo-Nazi in their outlook, had been arrested for firing a bazooka at the United Nations in 1964 while Cuban Economics Minister Ernesto (Che) Guevara was addressing the General Assembly. The charges were later dropped on a legal technicality. This had made the Novos and their associates folk heroes of sorts in the macho world of Little Havana and in the growing New Jersey Cuban exile community stretching from Elizabeth northward through Union City, Weehawken, and West New York.

Miami police also noted that Guillermo Novo and his friends worked as “mules,” or couriers, for other exiles who had amassed their own crime families and personal fortunes from the estimated \$20 billion worth of cocaine that passes through Miami each year. Because of them, Miami had become to cocaine what Marseilles had been to heroin. Millions of tax-free dollars went into legitimate businesses. It was no secret that politics and narcotics went together like rice and beans in the Cuban exile community. One had merely to look at those netted in Operation Eagle, the federal government’s massive drug investigation in 1970, to see that 70 percent of those arrested had been recruited by the CIA for the Bay of Pigs invasion.

The Novos were known to have worked for Juan Restoy, one of the legendary “Cuban Mafia” drug dealers, who imported his illicit goods into Miami and used the Cuban communities in New Jersey as distribution centers.

Masferrer, like Restoy, never personally handled the drugs; he left that to others. Masferrer *did* openly practice extortion. Said one Miami police official: “He shook down everybody, and the Novos were obviously the next on the list. He said he was going to publish the names of a lot of drug dealers.”

Masferrer, according to the word on the street, had let it be known to the Novos that unless they paid him off, he would denounce them in the local newspaper, *Libertad*, as drug merchants rather than the patriots they claimed to be.

Fifteen months earlier, another prominent Cuban exile, José Elias de la Torriente, was shot to death in his living room. Outside his door, on that Good Friday in 1974, authorities found a piece of paper bearing his initials and the symbol of a zero. The next day, a letter was sent to Miami newspapers warning that de la Torriente was only the first target.

“Each in his own time and in a cool and dispassionate way will start getting his zero,” the letter said. “An infinite zero will adorn their soon-to-be-forgotten tomb [*sic*] . . . Cemeteries are very big and we have more than enough to fill them.” Several days later, a second letter went out to the local media containing a “hit list” of ten prominent exiles marked to receive their zeros. It was largely forgotten in the months that followed—dismissed as an act to provoke Fidel Castro. But Masferrer didn’t forget that his name was on the list.

So, as Masferrer walked down Flagler Street that day in October 1975, he looked across at his parked 1968 Ford Torino and saw someone looking inside it. He dashed to the man and grabbed him. It was, it turned out, Ignacio Novo. Masferrer drew the gun he always carried from his hip pocket and dragged the screaming Ignacio, the smaller and less aggressive of the two Novos, back to his nearby office. Hardly anyone in Little Havana paid attention to such things, especially when “El Tigre” was involved.

Masferrer later bragged that he pistol-whipped Novo before ordering him to strip. Then, he sent the battered,

bleeding, and naked Ignacio out onto Flagler Street as an object lesson for all to see. “I told him,” Masferrer later confided, “that I would stick his face in a toilet if he ever came near my car again.” Masferrer had a laugh, drank his coffee, and forgot about the Novos after the incident with Ignacio.

Two weeks later, on Halloween morning, Rolando Masferrer turned on the ignition of his car and was blown to bits. The bomb was a plastic explosive with a homing, or radio-operated device placed inside it. According to Miami police, the bomb was made by someone with the highest technical expertise.

No one has ever been charged with Masferrer’s murder. And no one in Little Havana seemed very concerned about it. “He will not be missed,” one exile said of the late Rolando Masferrer.

The following year, in September 1976, the same type of device was used to kill former Chilean Defense Minister Orlando Letelier as he was driving within the shadow of the United States Capitol in Washington. It marked the first time that a bomb of this type was used in a political assassination on American soil. The Letelier murder was carried out by the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), the Chilean secret police organization created by the CIA after it brought the Chilean military junta to power in September 1973.

Five days after Masferrer’s murder, another letter, this one with a Philadelphia postmark, was sent to the Associated Press in Miami claiming credit for the killing, saying: “The secret organization Zero is responsible for the slaying,” and added that Masferrer’s death “should serve as an example for those who disdain the cause of Cuban liberation.”

In that same “communique,” Zero claimed something else—that it had also moved against another target. But that execution had failed. The target, half a world away in Rome, was Chilean expatriate Bernardo Leighton, a former Chilean senator who had fled his country after the CIA-backed military coup. The attack on Leighton, while walking on a street with his wife on October 6, 1975, left the former Chilean senator partially paralyzed. The attack was, of course, outside United States jurisdiction. And Masferrer? Well, the FBI decided that was a “local matter,” as

(continued on page 89)

brand-new bride asked me if I still wanted to watch her with another man. I told her that I did, and she told me that she would do anything to make me happy.

With that, I hugged her and asked when she would like to do it. To my surprise she said right that very moment. I went up to the bedroom we had reserved in the hotel at which we held the reception, and hid in the closet.

After what seemed like hours, my radiant bride entered the room with Ken, an old boyfriend of hers who had been invited to the wedding. Kim closed the door, making sure that it was locked. She then turned to Ken and told him that it was his turn to kiss the bride. After a long and passionate kiss, they fell onto the bed. Kim refused to remove her wedding gown, choosing only to hike up the dress to her waist. I watched as Ken removed her panties and then planted a kiss between her legs.

Kim immediately reached up and unzipped Ken's pants to free his cock. I could not believe how beautiful she looked as Ken slowly slid his eight inches into her mouth. I then watched as Ken glided his rod deep into my wife's cunt. He grinded his hips into her until they both had dramatic climaxes.

Ken quickly left the room when they had finished. Kim told me to stay in the closet, though, and that she was going downstairs for a few minutes. She soon returned with Dean, a good friend of her younger brother. Dean is about 18 years old and has an incredible athletic build. He seemed a little bewildered when my wife locked the door. He looked even more amazed when Kim pulled down the top of her wedding gown and offered her lovely breasts to him. She smiled as he appeared dumbfounded while she unzipped his pants. Falling to her knees, Kim took out his cock and hungrily began to suck him off. My wife then led him to the bed. Dean crawled on top of her and into her body. She brought her long legs high up on his back, and they soon had what appeared to be a series of tumultuous orgasms.

Kim screwed two guys on our wedding day, and 19 different guys during our short honeymoon.

We've never been happier and more in love with each other. We hope that *Gallery* readers will continue to send in letters on this particular form of enjoyment. Please keep up the quality of your fine magazine.—*T.F., address withheld by request.* ☐

OMEGA 7

(continued from page 78)

were the other "Zero" murders that followed, along with scores of bombings in public buildings.

A federal prosecutor in Miami, R. Jerome Sanford, began to ask some questions. Who were these men who planned and carried out executions on two continents? Where did their support come from? And why did they seem to operate with impunity? Sanford was answered by official silence from the Department of Justice and from federal agents he prodded and pushed for answers. Last year, out of frustration, he resigned from the Justice Department.

It didn't take investigative expertise to learn that these assassins weren't trained by Russians in Yemen, Libya, Ethiopia, or Havana. Most of the members of Omega 7 were originally trained by the CIA in Florida. And, as Sanford saw from the records, most Omega members were involved in drugs.

Like thousands of other exiles, they had been part of what became known as the "secret war" against Cuba. For almost five years, from the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion until mid-1965, more than \$50 million was spent by the CIA on an operation known as JM/Wave. A permanent staff of 300 Americans, headquartered at a nondescript building on the south campus of the University of Miami, controlled 6,000 Cuban exiles who harassed Fidel Castro with raids, attacks on Cuban shipping, and assassination plots. It became a vast, secret army, and the best of the group were given training at Fort Jackson, Fort Knox, or Fort Benning.

Then, almost overnight, Lyndon Johnson dismantled the operation. And left behind, in shock, and with the bitter memory that they had been used and then cast aside, were 6,000 well-trained and fanatical anti-communist Cubans who aligned themselves with either old friends in the mob, fanatic right-wing groups, or both—vowing to fight on to "liberate" their Cuban homeland. In effect, the CIA had financed, organized, and then largely abandoned a "Cuban PLO" and left it to fend for itself.

From this milieu came Rivero, the Novo brothers, Carlos Rivero Collado, Virgilio Paz, José Dionisio Suarez, Armando Santana, and Alvin Ross Diaz. This became the nucleus of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, from which came the hard-core group, Omega 7.

What the CIA had created, the Chilean junta nurtured and used. The United States had, in the name of anti-communism, created an organization that later terrorized the nation that had

paid to organize it.

The deaths of Masferrer and de la Torriente were only the beginning of a reign of terror that would lead to at least five murders and more than 200 bombings in Miami alone (at one point in early 1976, there was a murder a week in Little Havana); the murder of Letelier a year later; scores of bombings throughout the United States; and attacks on Cuban diplomatic missions and airline offices around the world—actions that threatened the United States hijacking treaty with Cuba. Then, most recently, there were the murders of two prominent Cuban exiles in New Jersey; and, finally, the murder of the Cuban diplomat Felix Garcia Rodriguez last September as he was driving through New York City.

The FBI could hardly ignore the Letelier case since it occurred on Washington's "Embassy Row." Unlike the murders in Miami and New Jersey, it could not be shrugged off on jurisdictional grounds.

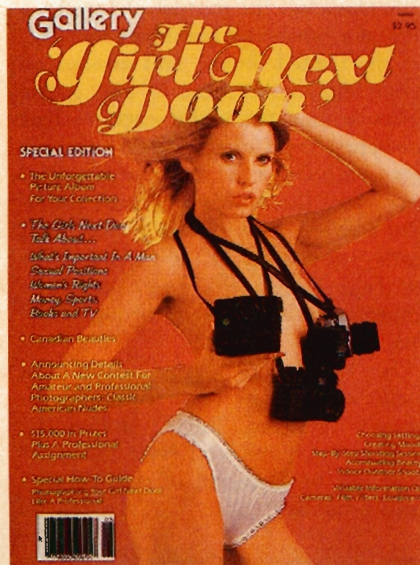
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The genesis of Omega 7 goes back to 1974, when the CNM—abandoned by the CIA—and the Chilean DINA, newly created by the intelligence agency, "found" each other. This connection with the DINA was important to Felipe Rivero for many reasons. Not only did it mean money, support, and arms—but also the opportunity to carry on a "war throughout the roads of the world" against Cuban diplomatic missions and installations. Rivero, a member of the Bay of Pigs invasion brigade, had endured 20 months of imprisonment in Cuba, and had seen his family's property confiscated by Castro. He was a bitter and desperate man, dissatisfied with his status as an automobile salesman on Miami's Southwest Eighth Street.

An alliance with DINA was to bring him support from another source, a group that has become loosely known as the Fascist International. And here two other key figures of the CNM come into focus, José Dionisio Suarez and Virgilio Paz. In February 1974, Rivero had sent Guillermo Novo and Dionisio Suarez to Chile as "emissaries" to the new junta. Dionisio Suarez and Paz were later indicted in the Letelier murder, but have never been tried because they disappeared. Paz, in fact, remained in Chile for a period of time to receive military training.

In February 1975, the junta sent American expatriate and DINA assassin Michael Vernon Townley to meet with Rivero at his office in the automobile agency on Calle Ocho in Miami. It was known at the time that Townley was in

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Miami, but police intelligence officers were not sure why—except that anything involving the CNM meant trouble.

Early evidence of a DINA-CNM collaboration was seen in 1974, when Carlos Rivero Collado, a founder of the CNM, "rolled over." As a DINA-CNM arrangement was being made, Rivero Collado (no relation to Felipe Rivero) suddenly disappeared and turned up as a defector in Havana. He told the Cubans stories about Miami conspiracies and U.S. collusion with the exiles. And he put it all together in a book called *The Nephews of Uncle Sam*, a book he later said was heavily edited by Castro.

Though largely disregarded at the time as propaganda, Rivero Collado, himself a member of the Bay of Pigs invasion brigade, had some interesting revelations about his former "counter-revolutionary" colleagues in the United States—particularly about the CNM's and Omega 7's ties to DINA. In one broadcast over Radio Havana, Rivero Collado said that an exile who had been arrested twice by the FBI was smuggled into Chile in 1971 with the mission of assassinating both then Marxist President Salvador Allende and Fidel Castro, who was making a state visit to Chile. The plot failed, but Rivero Collado said: "I ask myself the question of how it is possible that U.S. authorities were not able to control the comings and goings of a person who had been sentenced twice by the courts in Miami. And I ask myself another question: Are the U.S. authorities incapable of keeping their borders from being used for these criminal activities or did they deliberately close their eyes to that situation?"

In the same broadcast, Rivero Collado named Felipe Rivero and Guillermo Novo as the chiefs of the CNM and Zero groups, which he described as "one and the same." He added: "Felipe Rivero directs the work in Florida and Guillermo Novo in New York. The Chilean military junta has two objectives: The first is to conduct propaganda campaigns; the second, to finance terrorist activities of groups in U.S. territory and in the territory of several countries in Latin America and Europe." That was two years before the Letelier murder and months before the Zero terror campaign began.

Then, as suddenly as he appeared in Cuba, Rivero Collado suddenly fled, claiming that his true reason for being there was to spy on the Castro regime, but that the Cubans had discovered his covert activities. He turned up in Colombia in 1977. His present whereabouts are unknown, and he remains an enigma to all those who knew him.

In Miami things were proceeding

quickly as Townley met with Rivero in February 1975. The substance of this meeting is in dispute between the two participants. According to Townley, he told Rivero that he represented DINA, and wanted help carrying out two DINA "sanctions" in Mexico—the elimination of two former Allende followers who were planning to sponsor a conference of Chilean exiles in Mexico. According to Rivero however, Townley met with the sole purpose of seeking a communications bridge between DINA and the CNM.

Rivero sent Townley to New Jersey to meet with Guillermo Novo, who put him in touch with Virgilio Paz, and Armando Santana. And though the "northern branch" appeared distrustful of the American expatriate at first, it was agreed in New Jersey that the CNM, and Paz in particular, would aid Townley in his DINA "sanctions" mission. But the mission in Mexico was aborted, primarily because Townley and Paz arrived after the potential targets had left Mexico City for Europe.

The story of what happened next comes primarily from Townley's own mouth, given to the FBI after he was handed over to United States authorities by Chile to face trial in Washington for Letelier's murder—a crime he admittedly planned and carried out for DINA. It was reduced to a 35-page written statement that was never totally made public—even to the attorneys who were later to defend Guillermo Novo and Ross Diaz in the Letelier case. It is not clear whether the significance of what Townley told the FBI about the plan known as "Operation Open Season" was simply lost on the federal authorities, or whether it was something the United States government deliberately tried to hide.

Townley gave the statement to the FBI when he agreed to become the government's main witness against Guillermo Novo and Ross Diaz. They were the only ones who stood trial, as Paz and Dionisio Suarez, who actually helped construct the bomb that was planted under Letelier's car, disappeared—even though Dionisio Suarez had been in federal custody only months before.

When Townley and Paz failed to find their victims in Mexico, DINA ordered them to fly to Madrid, Spain. It was no accident that the Spanish capital was the center of Fascist activity at that time. Francisco Franco, in his last days, was one of the few absolute rulers left in the world. The CNM had its own representative there, and the Chileans had made their Madrid embassy the European headquarters for its efforts to seek out and destroy the Chilean exile move-

ment. Townley and Paz's "Operation Open Season" involved visiting eight countries in nine months, during which exiles would be targeted and, it was hoped, eliminated. Leighton turned out to be their only victim; and he survived, though the attempt on his life did serve to silence his attacks on the junta.

It was in Madrid, too, that Townley and Paz contacted a group of former French secret army terrorists from Algeria calling itself Aginter Press. It operated primarily in Europe and Africa, posing as a news agency. But Aginter Press was no stranger to Latin America and Miami. The French fugitives originally had found refuge in Portugal under the Salazar regime, but had to flee Lisbon in 1974 after the left-wing revolution. It was Aginter which, in turn, put Townley and Paz in touch with their "correspondent" in Rome, Stefano Della Chiaie, who helped arrange the Leighton hit.

But, despite the attack on Leighton and the killing of another Chilean exile in Argentina, DINA was not satisfied. It looked northward again to the United States, and the man it considered its prime enemy—Orlando Letelier.

When Letelier's car exploded as it entered Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C. on September 21, 1976, President Ford ordered the FBI to relentlessly pur-

sue his killers, and for every government agency to provide any helpful information to the Justice Department.

The involved investigation that followed took 18 months to solve because the CIA stonewalled it from the beginning, and turned up more than the government cared to talk about.

According to prosecutor Sanford, for almost two years, the FBI had given only lip service to finding the men behind the murders in Miami. In fact, Sanford claims, federal agencies resisted his every effort to learn if the Letelier case was tied in any way to the events happening in Miami. And when the FBI did uncover connections to Miami activities, Sanford said he was never even contacted about the information.

One fact that continues to puzzle local Miami law enforcement officials is why José Dionisio Suarez, still a fugitive in the case, was simply allowed to walk out of jail prior to his indictment. Called before a Washington, D.C. grand jury, Dionisio Suarez vowed to spend the rest of his life in jail rather than talk.

For this, he was given a jail term for contempt of court. Finally, after more than a year in jail, the authorities sent an emissary to Dionisio Suarez with a deal. But Dionisio Suarez still refused to cooperate.

The intermediary wondered why they

waited until the contempt sentence was about to run out before offering a deal. Technically, according to the government's legal argument, there was nothing on which to hold Dionisio Suarez once the term for contempt ended.

Dionisio Suarez walked out three months later. He was subsequently indicted for the Letelier murder, but has never been caught—though his presence has since been frequently reported in and around the taverns of Union City and even at the CNM's headquarters there. Since his release, Dionisio Suarez is believed to have set off a bomb aboard a TWA airliner, firebombed the Soviet UN mission, and informants said he was in Union City the day before the Cuban diplomat was gunned down in New York.

One of the most interesting scenarios in the Omega 7 saga involved Guillermo Novo's arrest. As a suspect in the Letelier murder, Novo went into hiding when the feds tried to send him to jail by revoking his parole on an earlier charge. He and Alvin Ross Diaz decided to disappear to where they felt the safest—into Miami's Little Havana. Guillermo, along with his brother, eluded capture for almost a year.

His arrest in Miami in May 1978 raises some questions never answered by the FBI, especially concerning what Novo



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did during that period. Guillermo was spotted by a local police officer, Humberto Rapado, and trailed to a discotheque called the Sensation.

Rapado and his partner, Dan Benitez, notified the FBI that they had found Guillermo. "For some reason they (the FBI) didn't seem interested," Benitez said later. Both detectives decided to put the men under surveillance.

"Guillermo was wearing a wig, but I'd know him in the dark," said Benitez, who then worked for the terrorist unit of the Dade County Public Safety Department. Today, he is a Florida state police investigator.

Several days later, Novo and another man, Manuel Menendez, were seen leaving the Sensation with a paper bag. Benitez said he doubted that the bag contained bagels. They followed both men to Menendez's apartment, which he was sharing with Ross Diaz and Novo, on Northwest 57th Street, not far from the Miami airport.

On the morning of May 5, 1978, Menendez, Novo, and Ross Diaz arrived at a motel near the airport to have breakfast. Later, Ross Diaz departed alone, while Menendez and Novo left in a second car. Police and FBI agents quickly moved in on Novo and his companion. In the car, they found a bag containing a series of disguises and a passport made for Novo in the name of

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Felipe Rivero... "Ideological head" of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, predecessor of Omega 7.

José Dionisio Suarez... Chief CNM terrorist charged with Letelier murder—never apprehended.

Orlando Letelier... Former Chilean Defense Minister and ambassador to the United States under the Marxist President Salvador Allende, who was overthrown in 1973 by a CIA-backed military coup.

Guillermo Novo... "Head of the northern region" of the CNM in New Jersey, and a defendant in the Letelier murder trial.

Vigilio Paz... A CNM hit man involved in "Operation Open Season."

Rolando Masferrer... One of the first victims of the "Zero" assassinations.

Alvin Ross Diaz... A close associate of the Novos, and a defendant in the Letelier murder case.

Ignacio Novo... Guillermo Novo's brother, and a key member of the CNM.

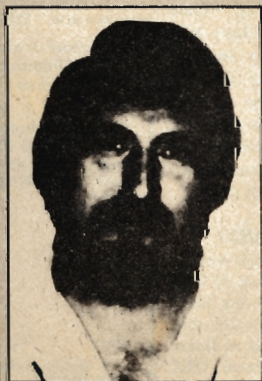
Armando Santana... Acting head of the New Jersey branch of the CNM in Guillermo Novo's absence.

Eulalio Negrín... A prominent New Jersey Cuban exile who was shot to death in November 1979, after espousing closer United States ties to Cuba.

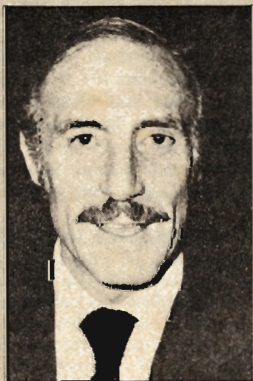
Carlos Rivero Collado... One of the founding members of CNM.



Felipe Rivero



Jose Dionisio Suarez



Orlando Letelier



Guillermo Novo



Virgilio Paz

"Victor Triquero." Later, at Novo's murder trial in Washington, Ricardo Canete, an FBI informant, testified that he provided the passport that Guillermo used. Observers found it intriguing that Canete was a government informant at the time he was helping Guillermo elude the authorities and providing him with false identity papers. Novo also had a Florida driver's license in the same name provided by Canete. Ross Diaz was arrested later on the Palmetto Expressway.

Guillermo Novo and Ross Diaz were tried and convicted of the Letelier murder in 1979. The convictions were reversed by an appellate court in September the following year, and Novo and Ross Diaz were freed. Both were acquitted of murder at a second trial, but Guillermo Novo was found guilty of perjury and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Ignacio Novo, although never indicted for murder in the Letelier case, was tried and convicted on perjury charges stemming from his testimony before the grand jury in the case. However, that conviction was also overturned on appeal, and he is currently awaiting a retrial on the same charges.

Omega 7 is never far from public view because of the organization's "popularity" within the Cuban community. But how much of that respect is generated by admiration and how much by fear is an open question. It therefore follows that lack of witnesses has been the main problem with the government's failing to crack the organization.

But even while Guillermo Novo sat in the Hudson County Jail, Omega 7 never slowed down. Eulalio Negrin, a prominent exile in Union City who advocated closer ties between the United States and Cuba, was killed because he openly favored a dialogue with the Castro government. He was shot to death in November 1979, after receiving repeated calls in which he only heard a clock ticking.

Then, last fall, the United States switched its course, and "leaked" to the media that a new investigative tactic was to be utilized. Instead of going after Omega 7 as a terrorist group, it decided it would use its Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations, or RICO, statutes and seek to indict the terrorists as racketeers.

FBI sources were finally conceding, after seven years, that many of Omega 7's activities have little to do with liberating Cuba, but that they are primarily interested in extorting money from Cuban exiled businessmen in Florida, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico, and in the distribution of narcotics.


In March of this year, the first conviction came. José Tenreiro Napoles of Elizabeth, New Jersey, who has often

acted as a "public relations" official for Omega 7, was convicted of perjury when he denied sending veiled threats in a Christmas card to two Cubans living in San Juan. He faces a five-year jail sentence—something federal prosecutors hope will make him "roll over" and testify against this confederates.


Federal agents willing to talk privately about the problem note that enforcement aimed at Cuban exiles has always wavered with United States policy

toward Cuba. What crackdowns there have been came primarily during the Carter administration, which established closer diplomatic ties with Cuba. The question now is: What will happen under the Reagan administration, which has turned a new aggressive face toward Castro? ☐


John Cummings is an investigative reporter at Newsday. He has written numerous magazine articles that have appeared in such publications as Inquiry and Penthouse.




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