

Reward Offered in Bombing

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Susquehanna Broadcasting Co. Saturday offered a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of the persons responsible for the bombing that shattered the legs of Emilio Milian, news director for the Spanish-language radio station WQBA.

The station broadcast hourly editorials pleading with listeners to provide information about the Friday night bombing. In part, the editorial said, "Why this covert action against a man who loves Cuba and works in the open? If every person who speaks in the name of

justice and liberty is going to be a victim of bombs, then we are not living in a community, but in a jungle."

Milian frequently spoke out against a wave of terrorism and violence in Dade County's Cuban community, and had been receiving anonymous threats for "the last couple of years," police said.

"They got him and took off his legs, but the station is still here," WQBA vice president and general manager Herbert M. Levin said. "We're going to maintain the same line."

HE SAID OTHER news media in Dade County will

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Reward Offered by Station For Conviction in Bombing

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be asked Monday to add to the reward fund.

"They were attacking Emilio for what he says," Levin said. "It (freedom of expression) is one of the fundamental things of this country. You can't go around doing that (bombings)."

After the reward was posted, Miami homicide investigators reported "quite a few" anonymous tips but said they had no suspects and few leads about who planted the bomb under the hood of the WQBA news car.

"We have appealed to the public," detective Anthony Dagger said. "Anyone who was in the area who saw anything or heard anything should call us."

Milian, 45, was in serious condition Saturday in Jackson Memorial Hospital's surgical intensive care unit. The bomb exploded as he started the car at 7:17 p.m. Friday in the parking lot of the station, 1301 SW First Ave.

BOTH OF HIS LEGS were amputated below the knees. He also underwent surgery for injuries to his face and left hand.

The two surgery waiting rooms on the third floor of the main hospital building were filled with relatives and friends Saturday, including Milian's elderly parents, Emilio Sr. and Maria.

Milian's sister, Fahir, said their parents are "in delicate health" and had not been told the nature of their son's injuries. "We feel that they would not be able to stand (it)," she said.

Alberto Milian, 15, one of Milian's three teenage children, also waited.

Wiping his eyes with a handkerchief, Alberto recounted how his father silently made a cutting motion with his hand across the top of his legs following the surgery.

"He is a very strong and a young man," Alberto said. "They say that there is a slight chance that he will be able to walk."

"The important thing, I think, is that he wants these people to be caught."

The youth was outraged by the what he described as a failure of law enforcement authorities to adequately protect his father. He said they were aware of threats against Milian and other WQBA staff members.

"The police departments and other agencies ought to do something," he said.

DETECTIVE DAGGER said Miami police had a "watch order" on Milian's home and the radio station. It meant that "periodically, the car in the area checks it out," Dagger said.

The FBI is not actively involved in the investigation although the agency has offered its crime laboratory and volunteered to pursue leads outside of Florida for Miami police.

Levin said he will push for a full-scale federal investigation of the bombing since the station participates in the federally-sponsored emergency broadcast network.

Police said they are uncertain if the bombing of Milian's car is related to bombings and assassinations of other prominent Cuban leaders in Dade.

"We don't know if they're connected," Dagger said. "There have been so many of them that right now we're not sure if this one is related to any other."

LEVIN, HOWEVER, believes the bombing is "part

of the series. I would estimate they were the same people who have done the other ones. I think they're all inter-related."

The bombing, Levin said, "doesn't lend itself to easy solution." Members of the Cuban community "aren't cooperating (with police) because they're scared to death."

In the past two years, four Cuban exile leaders have been slain and there have been two other unsuccessful attempts.

Those who have been killed are Jose de la Torriente, Luciano Nieves, Rolando Masferrer and Ramon Donestevez. Bay of Pigs leader Higinio Diaz and exile activist Jose Antonio Mulet survived separate shootings.

There have been no arrests in any of the cases.

Largely as a result of those acts of violence, the Florida Senate last week passed a bill calling for specific punishments for terrorist bombers, including the death sentence if the bomb claims a life.

The type of bomb that exploded in Milian's car still is unknown, police said. The blast threw the hood of the auto over a cement wall, tore the left front fender and blew open the front door on the driver's side. The top of the car was pushed up several inches by the force of the explosion.

WQBA MADE headlines in 1971 when three gunmen dressed in green Army fatigues and wearing black hoods over their faces took control of the station briefly on a Friday night, tied up two station employees and broadcast a pro-Castro propaganda message before fleeing.

After that, security around the station was tightened.

The next day, Milian said in an editorial that there was no doubt that the attackers were Communist.

"WQBA is proud of having been the victim of these Communists in disguise," he said, "because this means only one thing: that we are hitting them hard . . . we are hitting them where it hurts and that is our objective."

More recently, Milian editorialized strongly against terrorist activity, saying that the bombings would not help the goal of many exiles to return to Cuba.

Milian lived in Havana during the 191 Bay of Pigs Invasion but was not a participant on either side. He was a radio commentator. He left Cuba in 1965 on a freedom flight to Mexico and came to Miami about four months later.

He operated a print shop in Miami and worked part time as a sports commentator for the radio station. In 1971, he became news director of WQBA.

MILIAN ORGANIZED the annual Three Kings Parade in 1972 after the Cuban government prohibited the celebration there. The January 6th observance is the traditional date in Latin America and Spain when children receive their gifts.

Police and fire investigators initially thought the Milian bombing was connected to a late Friday night fire of a yacht moored at NW 12th Avenue and 11th Street.

The yacht's owner is Sidney Levine. Early reports apparently confused Levine with WQBA general manager Herbert Levin. But Levin said Saturday that no one who works at the radio station owns the yacht.

The boat was destroyed by fire apparently caused by a bomb-like device, according to fire investigators. It was reported on fire about 9:30 p.m.