

Clues sought in bombing

5-1-76-1

By WILLIAM TUCKER
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Miami police and the FBI combed Little Havana today for clues to the dynamite blast that blew off the legs of a militant anti-Castro Latin radio official when he started his car in his station parking lot.

The attempt on the life of Emilio Milian last night was the seventh Latin assassination attempt here in the last two years. Four of the attempts have claimed lives, including ex-Batista strongman Rolando Masferrer who, like Milian, was



EMILIO MILIAN

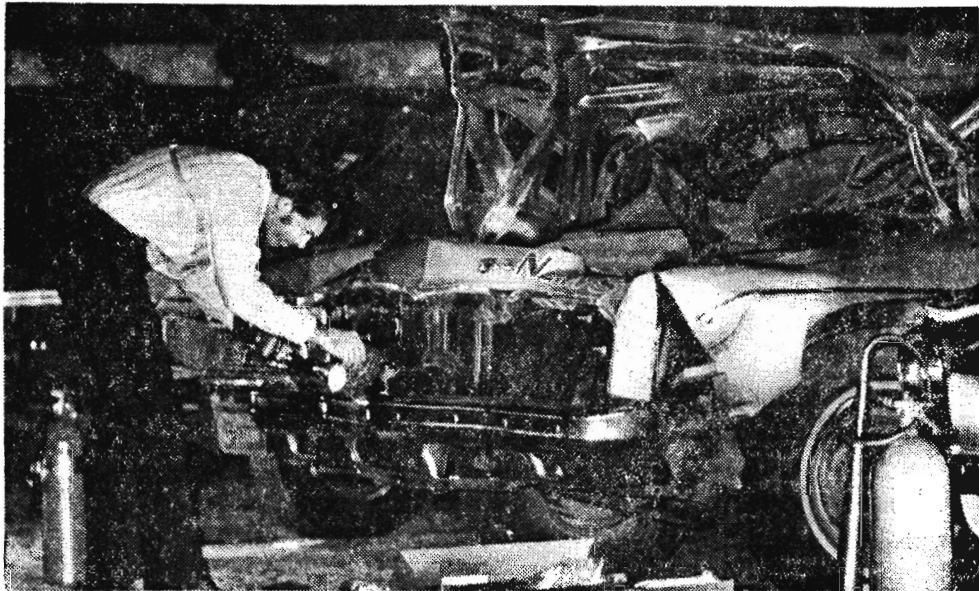
the victim of a bomb placed in his auto. Three of the four assassinations occurred on a Friday.

Station WQBA offered a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the capture of whoever was responsible for mangling Milian, the station's news and program director, and the driving force behind its hard-line anti-Castro editorial policy.

As usual, speculation on the motive was rampant. One Cuban exile leader, Leo Viota, area coordinator for the Abdala youth organization, said, "It is not far-fetched to believe that Castro has agents here in Miami, when he has them as far as Angola."

Miami homicide officer Anthony Dagger said Milian had received threats recently, adding that police

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Miami News Staff Photo by KATHY WILLENS

Investigator searches bombed WQBA car for clues

Bomb cripples newsman

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were watching his home at 159 NW 58th Ct.

But the blast — which was heard more than a mile away — came at an unexpected place: the station parking lot, which was crowded with cars. The bomb must have been placed in Milian's car yesterday afternoon, police said, because he reportedly drove the car, a company station wagon, during the day, returning to the lot about 4:30 p.m.

As many as 20 cars were parked in the lot, facing SW 13th Ave., directly behind the early American-style station building at 1301 SW 1st St.

"I saw the man get in the car and when he turned on the switch it went off," said Rosa Delgado, 23, of Hialeah, who was waiting in her car on the side street next to the parking lot.

"I rushed to the car — which was burning — and tried to get him out but I couldn't get the door open. He didn't say a word. His eyes were full of pain. His face was bloody, his hands were bloody."

Police said two employees of the station rushed out the back door over the scattered glass and pulled Milian from the wreckage of the car. He was conscious but his eyes were glazed with shock.

His legs were riddled below the knee and both were amputated as soon as he was rushed to Jackson Memorial Hospital. After two hours of surgery and treatment, he was reported in serious but stable condition.

"He has lost both legs below the knee, and he has minor multiple lacerations in the left hand and face," said Don del Vecchio, night administrator at Jackson. "He will require minor facial plastic surgery. His life is not in danger."

Police said the bomb was hidden in the engine compartment of the station wagon, attached to the ignition so that it exploded when Milian — on his way home to pick up his wife — turned the starter

switch, at 7:18 p.m.

The station had not received any warning of the blast, police said. But Miami officers and the FBI closely questioned station employees for several hours after the explosion, hoping that one or more of them might provide a clue.

Milian's son, Alberto, 15, told police at the hospital that an old model Ford Galaxie had circled the Milian home twice with its lights off three nights earlier, adding that once he heard a door of the car open and close. He said he couldn't identify anyone in the auto.

Previously, his family said, Milian had regularly reported threats on his life to the police, but the car mentioned was not considered a direct threat.

Station WQBA said information about the attack could be submitted anonymously, and began at midnight to broadcast an hourly editorial.

"Why this covert action against a man who loves Cuba and works in the open?" the editorial asked. "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 has three children: Emilio Jr., 16, Alberto, 15, and Mirta Mary, 13. His wife, Emma, had dressed to go to a party with him when she received word that he had been bombed. She rushed to the hospital in her party dress.

At the hospital, she sat calmly, holding a Bible. "I believe firmly in God," she said, "and feel He will save him."

Milian began working in radio in his home town, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, at the age of 15. He became program director of the station while still in high school and later went to the University of Havana to study medicine. He dropped out after three years to concentrate on his radio work, becoming one of the island's most prominent announcers.

In 1961 he fled to Mexico, where

he worked on the Mexico City newspaper, Excelcior, until 1963 when he came to Miami. He joined WQBA in 1964, becoming program and news director in 1970.