

60 MINUTES

Volume XII, Number 32

as broadcast over the

CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

Sunday, April 20, 1980

7:00 - 8:00 PM, EST

With CBS News Correspondents

Mike Wallace, Morley Safer, Dan Rather and Harry Reasoner

"OMEGA 7" - Produced by Martin Phillips

"ANNE LINDBERGH" - Produced by Joseph Wershba

"DAM" - Produced by Al Wasserman

PRODUCED BY CBS NEWS

© MCMLXXX CBS Inc.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

MIKE WALLACE: Omega 7.

MAN: Yeah.

WALLACE: What about it?

MAN: Is okay.

WALLACE: It is okay?

MAN: Is okay. Everything against Castro is okay.

WALLACE: Perhaps a hundred thousand Cuban Americans live in this area, dedicated to the belief that Omega 7 is the best way—indeed, the only way—to keep alive the anti-Castro movement in the United States.

You ever heard of Lu— Eulalio Negrin?

MAN: He's a goddamn Communist. He's a traitor.

WALLACE: So, as far as you're concerned, the fact that they killed him?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: It was okay?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: And Father Reyes?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: What?

MAN: He must be killed, too.

WALLACE: Father Reyes must be killed, too?

MAN: Yeah, he's a goddamn Communist.

MORLEY SAFER: Anne Morrow Lindbergh is 73 now and has lived a life—many lives. In 1927, she was 21, a beauty. He was 25 and the man of the moment.

Do you think that— that we made too much of Charles Lindbergh?

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH: Yes. (Laughs) Yes. He was not a demigod.

HARRY REASONER: This is the Columbia Dam on the Duck River, some 40 miles south of Nashville. Congressman Robin Beard represents the district in Tennessee where the Columbia Dam is located.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBIN L. BEARD (R-Tennessee): I see it helping my constituents, and I think, as a member of Congress representing that particular area, that's my responsibility.

JOE ROSSMAN: Based on our technical look at it, we can say, or I can say, that the Columbia Dam site is probably one of the worst sites that could have been chosen for a reservoir.

REASONER: Isn't there a suggestion that you are against federal spending except when it's politically beneficial to you?

REPRESENTATIVE BEARD: Absolutely not. I think that's a— very irresponsible to even suggest.

WALLACE: I'm Mike Wallace.

SAFER: I'm Morley Safer.

DAN RATHER: I'm Dan Rather.

REASONER: I'm Harry Reasoner. Those stories and more tonight on 60 MINUTES.

(Announcements)

"OMEGA 7"

MIKE WALLACE: The United States has offered asylum to 3500 of those 10,800 Cubans jammed into the grounds of the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, refugees from their own government. Eight hundred thousand Cubans have already sought refuge here, most of them now integrated into our society, though they remain passionately anti-Castro. But a small group—no one knows just how many—have banded together into something called Omega 7, and they have gone a considerable step further than mere peaceful protest. Within the past 12 months, Omega 7 has taken credit for bombing the Cuban Mission to the UN, the Soviet Mission to the UN, the New York offices of Aeroflot, the Soviet airline. It is also thought to be involved in the cold-blooded killing of at least two Cuban Americans, including a New Jersey man last November, Eulalio Negrin.

Just what is Omega 7? No one knows for sure, though the FBI says they are a group of Cuban American fanatics masquerading behind the cover of an organization called the Cuban Nationalist Movement.

This man says the FBI is the brains behind the secret organization Omega 7, though he swears he has nothing to do with it. He is Armando Santana, 30 years old, a bill collector by profession. But the FBI calls him a gangster and a terrorist. We talked to Armando Santana and his younger brother, Eduardo, at the headquarters of what the FBI calls their "front organization", the CNM, the Cuban Nationalist Movement, in Union City, New Jersey.

Over and over again, Mr. Santana, we hear that the CNM, your movement, the Cuban Nationalist Movement, is, in fact, Omega 7.

ARMANDO SANTANA: Those are accusations made by the authorities. Who else are saying it except the authorities, right?

WALLACE: The authorities say?

EDUARDO SANTANA: Local branches of the FBI. As far as we know, the FBI in Washington hasn't made such an accusation.

WALLACE: The FBI in Washington believes the same thing. The FBI in New York believes that CNM, the Cuban Nationalist Movement, is, in fact, Omega 7 and is, in fact, responsible for the bombings and the killings that have taken place in recent years.

ARMANDO SANTANA: So, all you're doing is just restating exactly what the authorities are repeating constantly.

WALLACE: And you will restate the fact that what?

ARMANDO SANTANA: That this is contrary (indistinct). Nobody in our movement has been indicted or convicted as a member of Om— Omega 7.

DEMONSTRATORS (chanting): Guerra! Guerra!

WALLACE: Guerra, Guerra!—War, War!—has been the cry of assorted anti-Castro Cuban groups like this one for two decades. This is not a meeting of Omega 7, nor of the CNM, though Armando Santana is here. And while it is true, as he says, that no one has been indicted or convicted as a member of the secret Omega 7, nonetheless, Armando Santana himself served a two-year term after being caught in an attempt to bomb New York's Academy of Music in 1976.

BOB SCHERER: They are dedicated. They are fanatical. They are very articulate. They dress well. They present a very good front appearance.

WALLACE: FBI agents Bob Scherer and Carter Cornick have worked on an investigation of Omega 7 and the Cuban Nationalist Movement for the last four years.

CARTER CORNICK: What, in fact, these people do is they intimidate, they extort from, and they actually murder people for political reasons. They murder, however, defenseless, unsuspecting individuals in the same country which has granted them asylum— asylum from the— from the country in which they escaped dictatorship.

WALLACE: On the Main Street in Union City, New Jersey, I asked passersby how they feel about Omega 7.

Omega 7.

MAN: Yeah.

WALLACE: What about it?

MAN: Is okay.

WALLACE: It is okay?

MAN: Is okay. Everything against Castro is okay.

WALLACE: Perhaps a hundred thousand Cuban Americans live in this area, dedicated to the belief that Omega 7 is the best way—indeed, the only way—to keep alive the anti-Castro movement in the United States.

Is there anybody in this crowd who is against Omega 7?

MAN: Nobody.

CROWD: No, nobody.

MAN: Shouldn't be nobody.

WALLACE: And— and there's nobody who is against the tactics, the bombing, the killing that goes on?

CROWD: No, no, no, no.

MAN: Shouldn't be nobody.

WALLACE: You, young man, you are?

MAN: We may not sympathize with all their tactics, but we are for it, against Communist. We— we're all the way against Communism.

WALLACE: When you say—

MAN: We might not agree with such tactics as bombings and terrorist acts, but we do agree with the Omega 7.

WALLACE: I asked about two Cuban Americans whose names are well known to the Cubans of Union City: Eulalio Negrin and Father Andres Reyes.

You ever heard of Lu— Eulalio Negrin?

MAN: He's a goddamn Communist. He's a traitor.

WALLACE: So, as far as you're concerned, the fact that they killed him?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: It was okay?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: And Father Reyes?

MAN: That's right.

WALLACE: What?

MAN: He must be killed, too.

WALLACE: Father Reyes must be killed, too?

MAN: Yeah, he's a goddamn Communist.

WALLACE: Father Andres Reyes used to preach in Union City, but he was transferred by his diocese after his life was threatened for advocating a dialogue between Castro's Cuba and the Cuban community in the U.S.

FATHER ANDRES REYES: The only thing I can tell you, that what I did, I did it because I want to be a good Christian. I did it because I'm a Christian. And because of that, I won't hesitate to do it again if I have to— to do it. So, I'm— I'm not pro-Castro, pro-anybody, just pro-Christ.

WALLACE: Eulalio Negrin was shot to death in the street in Union City last November by two masked gunmen. He had acted as an intermediary between Cubans here and the government in Havana. Omega 7 took responsibility for his murder, saying that he was legitimizing Fidel Castro.

Well, you said that he was a traitor and you'd like to give his killer a medal. Your— quoting you.

ARMANDO SANTANA: That's correct. I said that, I don't deny it.

WALLACE: Were you in any way involved in the murder of Eulalio Negrin?

ARMANDO SANTANA: No, I was not involved in the murder of Eulalio Negrin.

WALLACE: A couple of months before you tried to beat him up.

ARMANDO SANTANA: Well, that's because the gentleman provoked me.

WALLACE: And conceivably—

ARMANDO SANTANA: Conceivably what?

WALLACE: You— you know that you are generally regarded by law-enforcement officials as being an accessory to the murder of Eulalio Negrin. You know that.

ARMANDO SANTANA: Yes, I know that.

WALLACE: Yeah.

EDUARDO SANTANA: Well, that's their problem. Since they've had a persistent inability to gather accurate information within the exiled community as a whole, they— they base all their intelligence on supposition. And that's another supposition.

WALLACE: You don't believe in hurting innocent people with your bombs, is that correct?

ARMANDO SANTANA: With— not with my bombs, with the bombs.

WALLACE: With the bombs.

ARMANDO SANTANA: Right.

WALLACE: Look, it was going to be your bombs at the Academy of Music. You served two years. Your bombs.

ARMANDO SANTANA: That— that— that I'll take care of.

WALLACE: You don't believe in hurting innocent people, you say?

ARMANDO SANTANA: I don't believe in hurting innocent bystanders.

WALLACE: Do you know something? The FBI said to me yesterday, "They're just blind lucky that not one or two but a dozen or two dozen people have not been killed so far, and the time is going to come when their plans, their bombs are going to go awry."

ARMANDO SANTANA: Mr. Wallace, I hate to use these figures. I don't want to get into a— a conflict thing, but innocent people sometimes get hurt in wars. The example is in— in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. But I think every effort has been made on the part of the anti-Castro movement to try only to concentrate on the people directly responsible for the Communist existence in our nation.

WALLACE: On a side street in Union City, a storefront advertises that, for a fee, they can send medical supplies to families in Cuba and arrange for visits to that island nation. Inside, we met a woman who'd come to make such travel arrangements, but when we began to speak to her of Omega 7, which threatens those who do business with Fidel, her companion warned her not to answer.

(Companion speaking in Spanish)

What— what does he say?

MAN: I tell her take care when she open the mouth, because, you know, you ask a lot of things, maybe you know—

WALLACE: It's— it's a free country.

MAN: I know.

WALLACE: She— she has the right to answer a question.

MAN: I know.

WALLACE: But you just don't want her answering questions about Omega 7, because—

MAN: No.

WALLACE: Not a question of being afraid. You know what they can do, right?

There is something called the Committee of 75—its members listed here—that is despised by Omega 7 and by the leaders of the Cuban Nationalist Movement. The committee is sneered at as appeasers of Fidel. Their names are paraded in this publication of the CNM. In fact, the Committee of 75 is comprised of priests, academicians, professional and business persons—among them, Father Reyes and the late Eulalio Negrin—who say simply that Castro and his Cuba are a fact of life that must be dealt with. They preach, in effect, peaceful coexistence.

These two individuals are members of the Committee of 75, afraid to show their faces here for fear of retaliation. What is it that they do that puts them in jeopardy?

WOMAN: I have been involved in— in— in some activity that— that I believe is fair and just and legitimate.

WALLACE: What's that?

WOMAN: To be involved with a group of people of the Cuban community, to try to bring some political prisoners out of Cuba, and to try to make some kind of arrangement so that Cubans, Cuban Americans, can travel to Cuba and visit their relatives.

WALLACE: In other words, you are—your group, your Committee of 75—are, in effect, saying, "Look, Castro's here, he's going to stay here, it's a legitimate government and let's coexist"?

MAN: That's right. Just like the Hungarians and the Poles and the East Germans can do with their countries of origin: in a realistic way, to let people-visit their families and do things like that.

WALLACE: They regard you as traitors?

MAN: Sure.

WOMAN: Enemies.

MAN: They regard George McGovern and Ted Kennedy as traitors, too. They probably regard you and the press as traitors and enemies and all kinds of ludicrous things.

WALLACE: And I suppose a sensible question: Are you Communist? Are you Fidelistas? Are you dedicated to Fidel Castro?

MAN: Of course not. Of course not. And they have no right to define us in the way they wish. That's outrageous. They run around, they define who in their eyes is a Communist or whatever, and they turn around and say they will execute us.

WALLACE: How se— Execute you?

MAN: That's exactly what they say.

WALLACE: How— how serious, do you believe, are the threats which they level about execution?

MAN: Very serious.

WOMAN: Very serious.

MAN: They have killed two people already. They have carried out numerous bombings in the New York, Miami and Puerto Rico areas, and they're tied to international ter— international terrorist organizations. The— the same group claimed the attempted bombing of a TWA plane going to Los Angeles a year or so ago.

WALLACE: It is that same group that the FBI says conspired to carry out this car bombing in Washington, D.C. that caused the death of a Chilean diplomat and triggered headlines around the world four years ago.

The Chateau Renaissance Motel just outside Union City, New Jersey. It was here, back in 1976, that members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement met with a Chilean secret agent, Michael Townley. The purpose of their meeting? To tell Townley they would help him with the assassination of a former Chilean foreign minister, then living in exile in Washington, Orlando Letelier.

Former U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper prosecuted the Cubans for their involvement in the Letelier murder. He told us why it was the Cubans had agreed to help carry out that murder.

EUGENE PROPPER: The Cubans had asked the government of Chile, through Townley, to be allowed to use Chile as a government in exile, to be recognized as the legitimate Cuban government in exile, to be allowed to send their fugitives there if and when the FBI or local police were after them. They were looking for a safe haven. They were looking for a source of explosives or weapons if they needed it. Effectively, they were looking for legitimacy. And the government of Chile, which is very anti-Castro, was their legitimacy.

WALLACE: So, in order to get the Chilean government to cooperate with them, they cooperated in the killing of Orlando Letelier, is that what you're saying?

SCHERER: Exactly.

CORNICK: Exactly, sir.

SCHERER: Exactly.

WALLACE: Tit for tat?

SCHERER: Tit for tat, exactly.

WALLACE: September 21st, 1976, Sheraton Circle, Washington, D.C. It was past here that Orlando Letelier drove to work each morning. On the day in question, his assistant, Ronni Moffitt, was sitting in the front seat next to him; in the back seat, her husband, Michael Moffitt. As his car reached this spot, it suddenly exploded. Letelier died instantly. Ronni Moffitt made it out of the car; she died 45 minutes later. Her husband, Michael Moffitt, survived the accident with almost no injuries.

Five Cubans from the Cuban Nationalist Movement were indicted as part of the conspiracy to assassinate Letelier. Among them, this man, Guillermo Novo, who used to head the CNM. Back in 1964, he and his brother, as a protest against Castro, fired a bazooka at the UN building in New York. It fell short.

Today, he sits in Leavenworth Prison serving a life term for his role in the Letelier murder.

What is Omega 7?

GULLERMO NOVO: I don't know. I— Omega is the 24th letters of the Greek alphabet. I've been playing with this to see what— what it means, really. Twenty-four, twenty-four sevens, seven twenty-four; the last of the seventh, I don't know.

I know it was an organization that is doing attacks on Soviet and Cuban property, that's about it.

WALLACE: You know nothing whatsoever about it and its activities?

NOVO: I know about its activities what I have read in the papers.

WALLACE: No, I mean of your own certain knowledge.

NOVO: No, I do not.

WALLACE: You're not a member of it, have never been a member of it, know nobody who is a member of it, don't know anything about the inner workings of Omega 7?

NOVO: No, I don't.

WALLACE: And its relationship to Cuban Nationalist Movement?

NOVO: There's no relationship between Omega 7 and the Cuban Nationalist Movement. I'm not a terrorist. We're not terrorists.

WALLACE: You're not a terrorist?

NOVO: Of course not.

WALLACE: Well, you're serving time—

NOVO: Yes.

WALLACE: —as a murderer—

NOVO: Yes.

WALLACE: —Orlando Letelier.

NOVO: Yes.

WALLACE: You're a mild man, an intelligent man.

NOVO: And I did not have anything to do with the killing of Letelier.

WALLACE: Well, you did not persuade a jury of that.

NOVO: Unfortunately not. The government was very efficient in presenting the lies and the falsifications of evidence that they did present.

WALLACE: Why would the United States government, why would the FBI, be so certain that Guillermo Novo was one of those responsible?

NOVO: I don't think they're certain that I— I— I am convinced that they know that I had nothing to do with the killing of Letelier.

WALLACE: Well, then, why would they finger you and put you here in Leavenworth Prison?

NOVO: Well, I suppose— I don't know. I suppose maybe they needed a scapegoat. Someone had to be chosen, so it was I. It could have been anybody from any other organization—with the proper record, naturally, with a record of anti-Castro activist, with a ballgrent record.

WALLACE: Though Novo swears he is innocent, he refuses to back away from his pledge to bring down Fidel Castro.

You're 40 years old and conceivably could spend the rest of your life in this prison. Is it worth it?

NOVO: Yes.

WALLACE: While Guillermo Novo sits in prison for complicity in murder, the man who replaced him as head of the CNM, Armando Santana, with his brother, Eduardo, leads the charge from headquarters in Union City, impatient with the Cuban Americans who have so far failed to free Cuba from Castro.

ARMANDO SANTANA: I'm not criticizing the old generation, but everything in history evolves and new generations take over. Okay? That— that's common history.

WALLACE: Yeah.

ARMANDO SANTANA: But the tactics of the old generation, concentrating on waiting for the green light from Washington, and waiting for the Marines to solve their problem and the CIA to solve their problem for them.

WALLACE: Uh-hmm.

ARMANDO SANTANA: And we don't believe the American government it's— and its interest are ever going to concord with our interest.

WALLACE: You don't—

ARMANDO SANTANA: And if we're going to wait for the Marines to liberate our nation, I'm going to be buried here in the United States.

(Announcements)