

Otero Sues Dade Jailers, Claims

Mia Her (F) 5BColl 6 Jan 77

Accused bomber Rolando Otero has filed a federal civil rights suit against 14 Dade County jailers and officials, accusing them of beating and humiliating him when he was booked into the jail last August. He's asking for up to \$10 million in damages.



OTERO

Aug. 24 — shortly after being acquitted in Jacksonville on similar federal charges — Otero was stripped, forced to submit to a search and inspection of his body cavities, beaten, manacled in a painful position for several hours and then dragged naked through the Women's Detention Wing.

Jail spokesmen have said that Otero resisted the strip search and threw a shoe at a jail sergeant, starting a fight. Jail director Jack Sandstrom declined Wednesday to comment on Otero's suit.

The suit asks that the federal court establish a procedure for searching prisoners at the Dade County Jail, require jailers to read prisoners their rights before the searches and set up a disciplinary procedure that ensures the protection of constitutional rights.

DUPLICATE

Beating and Humiliation

Second trial begins for Otero; jury picking comes before motions

Mia News (FH) 10-Jan 77 HA col 3

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — Rolando Otero went on trial here

today with the major burden on the prosecution to prove Otero was Miami's "El Condor" terror bomber.

Otero, a 33-year-old Bay of Pigs veteran, is accused of placing bombs at nine public buildings in Miami in late 1975. The trial was shifted to this northwest Florida coastal city because of pre-trial publicity in Miami.

Because of a weak government case, Otero was acquitted last August of bombing charges after an eight-day trial in federal court. He now faces charges in state court for the same alleged criminal acts.

The issue of double jeopardy was expected to surface later today when Otero's attorneys, Dade Assistant Public Defenders Bob Rosenblatt and Bill Clay, ask Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells to dismiss the case.

Wells, however, has scheduled jury selection before the defense motions will be heard, and he is expected to deny them.

Assistant Dade State Attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss, granted special jurisdiction to prosecute Otero here, expect the trial to run two weeks or longer.

They are expected to call some

70 witnesses, mostly FBI agents and Metro detectives who have investigated the "El Condor" bombings. After the bombings, "communiques" were sent to newspapers and radio stations signed "El Condor." Bombs exploded at the Miami FBI headquarters, Miami police station and the state attorney's office along with other public buildings. There were no injuries in the explosions.

Otero, who said he once plotted to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, was moved Saturday from the Dade County jail to the Okaloosa County jail in nearby Crestview so he could be taken to court.

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DUPLICATE

Otero Trial Testimony

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By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

which state attorneys say do not exist. Two experts in voice prints testified in depositions that the voice of a person calling news media, to tell them where to find communiques concerning the bombings, was not that of Otero.

● Suppression of testimony taken from witnesses who were not announced as prosecution witnesses before the start of the trial.

● Whether the trial of Otero on state charges arising from a joint investigation of the October and December bombings constitutes double jeopardy, inasmuch as Otero has been acquitted in federal court.

Otero, wearing a heavy coat, braved the cold of this north Florida Gulf Coast town, and appeared calm as the day-long process of selecting the six jurors and two alternates proceeded.

SHORTLY AFTER noon Monday, Judge Wells acted to speed up the selection when, at the end of four hours, only four jurors had been seated, called the lawyers into his chambers and told them to hurry up.

FORT WALTON BEACH — A six-member Okaloosa County Circuit Court jury will begin hearing evidence this morning in the state case against Rolando Otero, charged with nine Miami-area bombings in 1975.

But the jury will not be told that Otero has been acquitted of federal charges arising out of the same bombing incidents, on an order by Circuit Judge Clyde Wells.

Judge Wells ruled in favor of a motion by Assistant State Attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss Monday morning, saying that Assistant Public Defenders Robert Rosenblatt and Bill Clay may refer to testimony from that federal trial as being from a "prior court proceeding."

JUDGE WELLS also is scheduled to rule on a number of defense motions this morning, including:

● Production of any federal evidence relating to voice prints made by the FBI, but

Set to Begin

Clay and Rosenblatt objected, saying that they had a right to question each witness individually in detail. But the judge told them to ask their general questions to the entire 40-member venire and then ask "pertinent" questions to the members seated in the jury box.

Judge Wells told the lawyers that if they did not speed up the process he would take over the jury questioning.

The completed jury and two alternates were selected one hour later, at 5:20 p.m., and told to return at 10:30 a.m. today to be sworn as jurors.

After the jury had been excused for the day, Judge Wells and the lawyers discussed the matter of whether the FBI had made a voice print of Otero before the federal trial, and then not apprised the federal prosecution that such a test had been made.

FBI SPECIAL agent Morris (Bud) Had-dock said voice prints had been made of another suspect, but not of Otero.

Adorno, however, had said during the tak-

ing of a deposition before the trial that an Otero voice print had been studied by the FBI laboratory before the trial.

The issue is critical because two state witnesses who are voice print technicians have testified in depositions that the voice of a Latin man, identifying himself as El Con-dor and telling authorities where to find communiques of the bombing, is not that of Otero.

Judge Wells said he would take the matter under advisement and rule on it and all other issues this morning.

The judge instructed the state prosecutors to have a perspective witness, Max Gonzalez, brought from a Fort Pierce correctional center to Fort Walton Beach so that defense lawyers could quiz him about any testimony he might give in the trial.

OTERO FACES 39 state charges as a result of the Oct. 17, 1975, bombing of a Miami International Airport locker and the



Rolando Otero

... goes to trial

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Rulings Due

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Case Motion

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Dec. 3 and 4 bombings of the FBI office, the post office, state employment office, Social Security office and a bank, plus the old Miami police department building and a washroom at the state attorney's office in the Metro Justice Building.

The charges include three counts of attempted first-degree murder, nine counts of attempted arson, nine counts of possession of unlawful explosives, one count of trying to discharge a destructive device and eight counts of unlawfully discharging a destructive device.

The trial is being conducted in a modernistic circular courtroom lighted by a large circular skylight that illuminates the room to a brilliance of outdoors.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers and Otero occupy a third of the circle; the jury takes up another third; and the judge takes up the remainder.

WHEN THE lawyers speak, they do so from a pedestal podium in the center of the pit, which is in the middle of the courtroom.

Spectators and the press sit above and behind the jury.

Off to one side of the courtroom is a modernistic driftwood art piece, and in the rear of the courtroom on a brick wall is a giant-sized clock that doesn't keep time, and is perpetually pointed at 6:30 p.m.

One juror was immediately excused when, during the questioning, he told Judge Wells that, because his brother was killed by a planted bomb, he did not feel that he could give a fair hearing to the evidence.

Adorno told the jury that the state would present an entirely circumstantial case.

And Rosenblatt asked them to make the state prove Otero's guilt beyond a shadow of a doubt.

THE JURY finally selected is comprised of people who all have ties with Eglin Air Force Base or are retired military persons now engaged in civilian occupations. It includes one woman and five men, and a man and a woman alternate.

None of the jury has any direct knowledge of the bombing nor acquaintances who are Spanish.

Only one black and one Latin-surnamed individual were on the jury.

Both were excused by the state as was a woman whose husband was a member of the Army's skydiving team "Golden Knights."

The name is similar to the Cuban Bay of Pigs skydiving team "Golden Falcons," of which Otero is a member.

The black man, Subren E. Poirier, a cousin of actor Sidney Poitier, and a retired Air Force missile mechanic, now is in the rock and stone business. He was excused when he said he had relatives in Miami who had told him about the bombing.

THE SLAYING of Juan José Peruyero also had reverberations in the closely guarded courtroom.

Otero and his defense counsel were visibly shaken by the killing of Peruyero, who was a close friend of Otero and had appeared as a character witness for him in his unsuccessful bid for release on bond after he was arrested on the state charges in September.

The defense lawyer said Peruyero had not been summoned for the trial, but had been on standby to be called as a character witness, if needed.

Peruyero was shot to death by unidentified assailants outside his home Friday morning. He was three times president of the Bay of Pigs Brigade Association, an opponent of terrorism and had been scheduled to appear before a federal grand jury in Miami to discuss terrorist activities in south Florida and the Western Hemisphere.

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Otero's acquittal kept from jurors in his second trial

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON — Jurors in the state trial of bomber suspect Rolando Otero will not be told that Otero was acquitted on similar charges in a federal trial in August.

"That verdict is not relevant to the guilt or innocence of the defendant in this case," Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells of Okaloosa County told Otero's attorneys.

A six-member jury for the trial was sworn today in this Panhandle city to hear the case against the 33-year-old Cuban exile of Miami. The trial was shifted here because of pretrial publicity in Miami.

Wells instructed that all references to the federal trial be vaguely described as a "prior proceeding." His order adds to the chances of a mistrial since a witness could inadvertently mention the federal trial.

The fact that Otero was acquitted of the same acts for which he is being prosecuted in state court is highly favorable to the defense. But Otero's attorneys said they were not surprised at Wells' ruling.

Otero, charged with placing pipe bombs at nine public buildings in Miami during late 1975, sat through the jury selection yesterday with a brooding, sullen expression on his face. He is due to testify in the trial.

The four-man, two-women jury chosen after a day-long session reflects the population makeup of this coastal resort city of 27,000. Eglin Air Force Base, a mammoth research and testing facility that covers 800 square miles of land north of here, has more than 11,000 military and 4,000 civilian employes.

Jurors selected are Clydie Bulger, a cosmetology instructor; Christopher Karides, a civilian

housing inspector at the air base; Capt. Robert Dickinson, an 8-year Air Force veteran; Catherine Sirney, a housewife whose husband was an Air Force pilot for 27 years; James Karth, a retired Air Force pilot and now a civilian employe at the base, and Everett Earley, a self-employed woodworker and former civilian employe of the base.

Prosecutors excused eight jurors in the selection, including the only black among the 100 prospective jurors.

The defense dismissed six prospective jurors. The judge did not sequester the jury but warned jurors not to discuss the case with anyone or read news accounts of the trial.

Wells was scheduled to hear some 15 defense motions this morning, but the fact that he held jury selection first indicates that his rulings on the motions will not substantially affect the progress of the trial.

One of the motions by Otero's attorneys, Dade Assistance Public Defenders Bob Rosenblatt and Bill Clay, demands a full hearing on a defense allegation that the prosecution is hiding a voiceprint analysis that is favorable to Otero.

According to the motion a telephone call was made to a Spanish language newspaper in Miami and was compared with Otero's voice but did not match. The caller gave his name as "El Condor" and took credit for the terror bombings.

If such a voice print analysis is discovered, it would damage the state's position that Otero acted alone in the bombing. Also, a voice print analysis did not surface in the federal trial and, if it exists, would mean that the federal government withheld evidence in that trial.

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Otero Defense Attacks

Mia Her (F) 12 Jan 77 1B col 1
 By JOE CRANKSHAW
 Herald Staff Writer

Fort Walton Beach, Fla. — An FBI informant slated to be a key prosecution witness against accused bomber Rolando Otero could have committed nine 1975 Miami-area bombings more easily than Otero, a defense attorney told a circuit court jury here Tuesday.

That man, Ricardo Morales — who provided investigators with all their initial information about those bombings — “has a track record of working against anti-Castro Cubans,” Dade Assistant Public Defender William Clay told the jury in a

stormy opening statement marked by state objections.

Meanwhile, Dade police sources acknowledged Tuesday that Morales, a Venezuelan secret police operative who is scheduled to testify Thursday, has disappeared.

MORALES, who had told the FBI that Otero once confessed to him that he was the bomber, did not testify at Otero's federal trial last year on the same bombing charges; he was in Venezuela and could not be located. Otero was acquitted in that trial. Prosecutors said at the time they felt that Morales' non-appearance

had seriously weakened their case.

“My client,” Clay said in his opening statement, as he responded to that of state prosecutors, “has no reason to hate the United States.

“You may not agree with the cause to which he has dedicated his life, but he is not guilty of the crimes with which he is charged.”

Assistant State Attorneys George Yoss and Hank Adorno launched a volley of objections early on when Clay began to read from an anti-U.S. speech made Oct. 6 by Fidel Castro.

“HOW CAN you get that into evi-

Missing Accuser

dence?” Circuit Judge Clyde Wells demanded. “We aren't going to try Fidel Castro in this courtroom. The state can't cross-examine this document. Stick to the issues.”

That was the first of four judicial warnings to Clay. Ultimately — as Clay declared that Castro had “maneuvered” the U.S. government into bringing charges against Otero — Wells took all attorneys into his chambers for a closed-door conference. The press was told to stay out.

Otero was trained as an infantryman and paratrooper by the CIA, Clay acknowledged when he resumed his remarks, but he said that Morales had re-

ceived more extensive training and was a sophisticated intelligence agent with every means at his disposal to perpetrate terrorist attacks calculated to discredit Miami's Cuban community and to thwart anti-Castro activities in South Florida and the Western Hemisphere.

The arrest and trial of Otero, Clay said, had “shut off” all anti-Castro activities in South Florida and was thus serving Castro's interests. “You'll have a good idea of what is behind all of this when this trial is over with,” he said.

THEN CLAY began attacking the circumstantial evidence that Yoss had pre-

Not Trying Castro, Judge Tells Defense

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sented to the jury in his one-hour opening statement.

Yoss had said that evidence would show that Otero was bitter at what he considered the U.S. betrayal of the Bay of Pigs invasion, that his fingerprints were found on a Miami International Airport locker in which a high-powered explosive had been placed and that he had no alibis for the December 1975 evenings when six bombs were placed at several sites in the city, including the state attorney's office and the old Miami police station.

"The final straw came when Undersecretary of State William Rogers arrived in Miami on Dec. 4 to explain to the Cubans why the United States wanted to resume relations with Cuba if only for business purposes," said Yoss. "It was more than Otero and other Cubans could take."

Yoss said that Otero, like many other Cuban exiles who participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion, despised the U.S. government because they believed they had been betrayed by President John F. Kennedy's withdrawal of aerial support over the beachhead.

OTHER evidence, Yoss said, would include voice identification by an Eastern Airlines reservation clerk who received a telephoned bomb warning and a statement by a secretary in the state attorney's office who saw a person who said a bomb had been placed in the Metro Justice Building. An Otero roommate, Ciro Orizondo, would also testify that Otero had a large number of clocks similar to the type used in the bomb, Yoss said.

Clay, in rebuttal, said Otero had been tricked by Morales, who had been the sole source of bombing information originally available to the FBI and the Miami police.

"Morales always seems to get out of trouble very easily," Clay said, citing "friends" who "got him off" bombing and murder charges in recent years. "Some of them are police officers here in this courtroom," said Clay, pointing out Raoul Diaz of the Dade Public Safety Department and Arturo Castro of the Miami Police Department, who have been temporarily deputized as Okaloosa County deputy sheriffs to assist in courtroom security.

"(FIDEL) Castro has been shooting at my client, Otero, for a long time," said Clay. "The shooting began, you could say, at the Bay of Pigs and it still continues today when he has maneuvered things in such a way that the state is firing bullets for him."

It was at this point that Judge Wells took the attorneys into his chambers.

Earlier Tuesday, Wells indicated that he might eliminate some of the 39 charges against Otero. Clay and Assistant Public Defender Robert Rosenblatt sought a dismissal on charges that would not have constituted grounds for what they said was his illegal extradition from Chile. Such a reduction would leave only three charges of attempted first degree murder and nine arson charges for trial.

Otero defense lawyer gets two days in jail for contempt

Mia News (FH) 13 Jan 77 12A Col 3

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — The judge in the new trial of Rolando Otero has sentenced one of Otero's defense attorneys to two days in the Okaloosa County jail for contempt of court.

During cross-examination of an FBI agent, Bob Rosenblatt, one of two Dade assistant public defenders who are representing Otero, mentioned the agents' earlier testimony at "a jury trial."

Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells has repeatedly warned both prosecutors and defense attorneys to refrain from mentioning the earlier federal trial because it might prejudice the jury in the current trial.

When Rosenblatt made the reference, Hank Adorno, a Dade prosecutor, immediately leaped to his feet and shouted in a voice that startled

jurors: "Objection!" Wells ordered deputy sheriffs to escort jurors from the courtroom and began to lecture Rosenblatt.

"You are willfully violating the court order by referring to a jury trial," Wells told Rosenblatt. "This court is going to hold you in contempt and sentence you to serve two days in the Okaloosa County jail at the conclusion of this trial."

Rosenblatt apologized and said he wasn't aware he had spoken the words "jury trial."

"I was talking too fast and I didn't realize I had said it," Rosenblatt said.

Wells refused to withdraw his contempt order, saying, "I've been accepting apologies from you yesterday and again today and I am not going to accept any more."

The prosecution yesterday, in the third day of the trial, presented 12 witnesses who de-

scribed the scenes of the nine bombings which occurred in Miami in late 1975. Otero is charged with the bombings under state criminal statutes even though he was acquitted in August of federal charges relating to the same bombings.

The prosecution is contending that Otero committed the acts because of his hatred of the U.S. government's restriction on Cuban exiles who want to liberate Cuba by force.

Most of the witnesses who testified yesterday also appeared at the federal trial and the introduction of evidence is following a similar sequence.

Rosenblatt was accusing Miami FBI agent Robert Ross of altering his earlier testimony when he made the reference to "jury trial." Wells has instructed that the federal trial be referred to before the jury only as a "previous proceeding."

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Otero Defender Is

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Okaloosa County Circuit Judge Clyde Wells found Assistant Dade Public Defender Robert Rosenblatt in contempt of court Wednesday after the lawyer mentioned before the jury that accused bomber Rolando Otero had previously been acquitted in federal court on the same charges for which the state is now prosecuting him.

"It appears to me that you have deliberately ignored the orders of this court," said Wells, sentencing

Rosenblatt to two days in jail, to be served after the trial concludes.

Wells had, at the outset of the trial, ruled inadmissible the fact that Otero had been tried and acquitted in federal court in Jacksonville last year.

THE ACQUITTAL mention came in the first day of testimony as Rosenblatt interrogated FBI agent Robert Ross, a bomb specialist, and charged that Ross was changing his testimony from the first trial.

"Isn't it a fact that your testimony has changed because my client was acquitted?" Rosenblatt de-

manded. "You are trying to get a conviction for your agency and ... you would perjure yourself to get that conviction."

At issue was the agent's testimony that he could not determine whether an explosive device allegedly planted by Otero had been triggered by the hour hand or the minute hand of its clock. At the federal trial, Rosenblatt declared, Ross had testified that the minute hand had triggered the bomb.

Rosenblatt told Judge Wells that it was critical to impeach Ross because he could provide an alibi for

Found in Contempt

Otero if it were established that the minute hand had been used. "If the hour hand is used we haven't a prayer," the lawyer said.

EARLIER, prosecution witnesses constructed a model of the type bomb which they said exploded in locker 3050 of Concourse A of Miami International Airport on Oct. 17, 1975.

Metro bomb expert Newton Porter testified that the bomb was of sufficient explosive power to hurl six airport lockers more than 58 feet down the concourse into the

passenger waiting area.

Porter provided the high point of the Wednesday morning trial when he connected a bridgewire, a small metal filament that burns easily, to the clock battery and fake dynamite arrangement.

He then set the timing device so that the bridgewire would ignite exactly as it would do if it were exploding dynamite.

The first effort to ignite the bridgewire failed.

"MISFIRES QUITE commonly occur in homemade explosives,"

said Porter wryly. The second effort succeeded, rewarding Porter and startling the jury with a brief flash of white light and a puff of smoke that rose quickly to the circular skylight of the courtroom.

Another prosecution witness, James Carr, a crime scene technician for the PSD, testified that he found a fingerprint that subsequently was identified as Otero's on the chrome metal handle of locker 5030.

The jury also heard state witnesses who were near the explo-

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Bomb Model Displayed at Trial

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sions which took place at the state attorney's office and the old Miami police station on Dec. 4.

John Trembley, a Miami policeman, told the jury that he was instructed to search the premises of the police station for an explosive device about 12:30 p.m. that day. As he went about the search on the second floor of the station, an explosion in the hallway hurled him to the floor.

"I COULDN'T see for the dust and smoke," he said. "I went out in the hallway. It was smoky. I heard screams. I tried to find people and help them, but the smoke was too bad and I had to get out of the building."

Also testifying was a former assistant state attorney now working for the Justice Department, Steven Pave, who told of being four feet from the outer door of the men's washroom on the sixth floor of the Metro Justice Building when the explosion took place about noon.

"Plaster and debris came down

all around me. The hall was filled with smoke and dust.

"There was tremendous damage to the wall on the left. Paint and concrete flecked off the walls and fell all over the place. The wall bulged out. I tried to get away from the area but when the noise and confusion stopped I ran back to the men's room and forced my way inside. Debris, mirrors, wastebaskets, the urinals, doors, concrete were all over the place. It was difficult to see. Dust and debris were everywhere."

One of the new pieces of evidence developed by defense questioning Wednesday was a statement by police technician Jerry Lauck, of the Dade Public Safety Department, who revealed that two important fingerprints were found on a shattered wastebasket at the Tamiami Post Office during an investigation of a pipe bomb explosion there.

No one has yet said to whom the fingerprints belonged.

OTERO'S second lawyer, Assistant Public Defender William Clay,

blamed the bombings on Ricardo Morales. Clay described Morales only as a CIA-FBI informant now living in Venezuela.

Clay also hammered away at the political situation surrounding Cuban refugees and the anti-Castro movement in the Miami area.

That line of questioning brought strenuous objections from prosecutor George Yoss.

At one point, Judge Wells halted the loud proceedings and summoned the lawyers into his chambers. Afterward, the courtroom was quieter.

The day ended with Clay and Rosenblatt asking Judge Wells to release to them information revealing the name of a black informant and three Cuban males who allegedly discussed bombing the airport because of a dispute with some official there. Investigators have told the defense attorneys that none of the three Cuban males who talked with the informant was Otero. Wells made no immediate ruling.

Foreign country to defendant

Otero ^{coll} Panhandle jury

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — When prosecutors in the Rolando Otero trial first got a look at the list of prospective jurors, an FBI agent said, "You can throw all the names up in the air and pick the first six which land on the floor."

Actually, picking the jury was not that simple and the prosecution eventually struck eight from consideration.

But the people in this Panhandle city do have common interests, common backgrounds and a common reliance on the sprawling Eglin Air Force Base for a livelihood.

Besides the 800-square-mile air base which spans two counties, there is a love for U.S. Rep. Bob Sikes who has represented the area for 38 years.

Sikes was reprimanded by House colleagues in July for conflict of interest involving his business dealings in Okaloosa County.

This week the Fort Walton Beach City Council passed a resolution calling Sikes "an outstanding American" in recognizing his political influence which has drawn hundreds of millions of military dollars to his district. "He's been good for this area," said Fort Walton Beach Mayor Gene Smith.

This part of Florida, which rests under the southern border of Alabama is sometimes referred to by oldtimers as "LA," for lower Alabama.

It is indeed foreign country to Otero, a 33-year-old Cuban exile who has been living in Miami since he fled Cuba in 1959. Otero has been in Fort Walton Beach since Sun-

cut from same mold

day, spending his days in the courtroom and his nights in the city jail.

He is accused of placing nine bombs in Miami during late 1975 in retaliation against the U.S. government for its intervention in the Cuban exile's struggle to free Cuba by force.

The case is complicated because the alleged motives involve Cuban politics and the philosophy of terrorism.

The jurors, now in the fifth day of the trial, are attentive and appear to be fascinated by testimony and demonstrations of how bombs explode and the damage that results.

Except for one, the four men and two women who will decide if Otero did indeed hate the United States government and set the bombs to express that hate are married and all but one works or once worked at Eglin Air Force Base. They are:

- James Karth, a former Air Force pilot who according to records, is unemployed. Karth is in his early 40s.

- Robert Dickinson, an Air Force captain, who has lived in Okaloosa County for 2½ years. Dickinson, about 30, has two young children.

- Christopher Karides, a civilian housing inspector at Eglin Air Force Base moved here from Jacksonville four years ago. He has no children.

- Catherine Sirney, housewife, with three grown children. Her husband is a retired Air Force colonel.

- Clydie Bugler, a cosmetology instructor at Okaloosa public schools. She is divorced, has three grown children and has lived in the county for 39 years.

- Everett Earley, a retired civilian employe at Eglin. He now operates a wood-working shop from his home.

FBI Bares Statement From Otero

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By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — A statement Rolando Otero made to Dominican Republic police in early 1976, denying any part in nine Miami-area bombings in October and December 1975, surfaced Thursday as Otero's trial moved into its third day here.

The statement directly contradicts the theory on which first federal and now state prosecutors have sought to convict Otero of 39 terrorist charges related to the bombings.

It had never appeared at Otero's federal trial in Jacksonville last August — he was acquitted there — and it was given to state prosecutors just Wednesday afternoon by the FBI.

Meanwhile, prosecutors sought

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shows that he does not hate the United States nor want revenge for what happened to several of his friends in Miami, and, thus, appears to contradict the theory of the prosecution."

Haddock replied that he had not considered the statement to be evidence. "I am an advocate," Haddock said. "I was looking at it from the standpoint of the prosecution."

IN THE STATEMENT, which is in the form of a series of questions by Dominican police and answers by Otero, the accused bomber says that he was a member of the Bay of Pigs Brigade and the Golden Falcon Parachute Club, and that he is not a member of, and does not support, any organization or individual engaging in terrorist activities in any United States territory.

Otero, who was then in jail, specifically denies accusations sent to Dominican police by the FBI that he participated in Miami-area bombings.

IN THE statement, Otero expresses his admiration and respect for the United States, and states that he believes the bombings to have been the work of Cuban communists seeking to discredit the Cuban community in Miami.

Clay told Circuit Judge Clyde Wells that he felt that the FBI and the prosecutors had deliberately withheld favorable information that tended to contradict the prosecution.

Judge Wells ruled that Dade Assistant State Attorneys George Yoss and Hank Adorno had acted properly in immediately turning the statement over to the defense as soon as they gained control of it, but he declined to rule whether the FBI had behaved properly. "I am not going to find that the FBI was specifically derelict in their duties. There is no finding one way or the other."

The trial went into its third day with testimony from Tom Brodie, chief bomb specialist for the Dade Public Safety Department.

But his testimony was interrupted when he was asked by defense lawyers if he knew Ricardo Morales.

Defense lawyers have said that they will prove that Morales, who is an FBI informant and member of the Venezuelan secret police, had more skill, more opportunity and better motives than Otero for bombing state and federal facilities in South Florida.

PROSECUTORS objected to further testimony before the jury, which was excused. Brodie then testified that he had seen Morales during an investigation of bombings, but declined to say specifically that Morales was an expert in demolitions.

Later, prosecutors called a number of Miami-area newsmen, including Miami Herald City Editor Rich Archbold and staff writers Fredric Tasker and Roberto Fabricio, to testify about telephone callers who instructed them to go to various phone booths to retrieve military communiques which claimed responsibility for the Dec. 3 and 4 bombings.

But defense attorneys were able to successfully challenge the chain of custody for almost all of the communiques introduced late Thursday. Just one of them, found by Channel 23, a Spanish-language station, remains to be introduced. It is the only communique initialed by the newsmen who received it.

The communiques are important to the state's case because, as was revealed in the federal trial last August, Otero's fingerprints are on them, according to FBI fingerprint identification experts.

Statement Disclaims Terrorism

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unsuccessfully to introduce into evidence a series of military communiques claiming responsibility for Dec. 3 and 4 bombings in Miami. They allegedly bear Otero's fingerprints, but prosecutors were unable to establish a complete chain of custody that would prove they are the same documents retrieved by newsmen from telephone booths following anonymous telephone calls.

THE DOMINICAN statement has been in the hands of the FBI in Miami since shortly after Otero purportedly made it to a police lieutenant in Santo Domingo.

"Why didn't you give this to the attorney defending Otero in the federal trial?" Dade County Assistant Public Defender William Clay demanded of FBI agent Morris Haddock. "It certainly appears to be favorable to Mr. Otero, in that it

Ante jurado investigador

Brigadistas declaran en caso de Letelier

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Por GLORIA MARINA
Redactora de El Miami Herald

Tres miembros de la Asociación de ex combatientes de la Brigada 2506 atestiguarán ante un jurado investigador federal en Washington que se ocupa del asesinato del ex canciller chileno Orlando Letelier en esa ciudad.

Roberto Carballo, presidente de la Brigada; Armando López Estrada, jefe militar de operaciones, y Bernardo de Torres, ex jefe militar, comparecerán ante el jurado investigador un día después de la toma de posesión del presidente electo Jimmy Carter.

Letelier, ministro de Relaciones Exteriores durante la presidencia de Salvador Allende, murió el pasado 21 de septiembre, cuando una bomba estalló en el automóvil que manejaba. La explosión también mató a una colaboradora norteamericana de Letelier.

"Nos han citado porque les han atribuido la muerte de Letelier a los exiliados cubanos", comentó Carballo.

Poco tiempo después de la muerte del ex ministro chileno, fuentes gubernamentales informaron que estaban investigando a exiliados cubanos como posibles responsables, y en particular a la Coordinación de Organizaciones Revolucionarias Unidas (CORU).

Carballo, en declaraciones anteriores, insistió que la Brigada nunca había formado parte de CORU, ya que en la reunión para crearla, celebrada en mayo pasado en Santo Domingo, nunca se llegó a un acuerdo concreto.

El presidente de la Brigada especuló que una de las preguntas que probablemente les harían tendría que ver con un viaje que hicieron cuatro brigadistas a Washington, aproximadamente una semana antes de la muerte de Letelier.

Carballo y De Torres, dos de los que visitaron Washington, fueron a la embajada chilena.

"Ya se lo habíamos dicho a la policía, y le dijimos el motivo también", comentó Carballo, agregando que nada tenía que ver con Letelier.

El presidente no quiso explicar cuál había sido el motivo del viaje, pero fuentes allegadas a la investigación dijeron que los brigadistas habían ido a preguntar al diplomático chileno el motivo por el cual su país había devuelto a los Estados Unidos al fugitivo Rolando Otero, un miembro de la Brigada.

Otero, que es juzgado en Fort Walton acusado de haber colocado nueve bombas en Miami en 1975, llegó a Chile a principios de febrero de



Carballo: a Washington

Según Ricardo Morales, un informante confidencial de la Oficina Federal de Investigación (FBI) y agente de la policía política venezolana, Otero le contó que la policía secreta chilena (DINA) le propuso matar a Luis Pascal Allende, sobrino del presidente marxista chileno, a cambio de garantizarle asilo.

Otero, de acuerdo con los informes que Morales dio al FBI, rehusó hacer el "favor" y fue apresado en abril y devuelto a los Estados Unidos.

López Estrada, por su parte, dijo desconocer el motivo por el cual requerían su comparecencia en Washington.

"Dicen (las autoridades) que fueron cuatro los que viajaron a Washington antes de la muerte de Letelier, pero da la casualidad que el día en que yo debía estar en la embajada chilena, dos agentes del FBI en Miami me estaban interrogando aquí", comentó López Estrada.

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Other Otero Lawyer Cited With Contempt of Court

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Another of accused bomber Rolando Otero's attorneys was cited for contempt Friday and sentenced to jail. They immediately asked Okaloosa County Circuit Judge Clyde Wells to recuse himself from the case — but he declined.

Assistant Dade Public Defender William Clay was sentenced to two days in jail, to be served at the trial's conclusion, after he refused to stop arguing a point of law involving the admissibility into evidence of taped voice comparisons. An Eastern Airlines clerk who received a telephone warning that a bomb had been placed at Miami International Airport in October 1975 has identified the caller as Otero.

Clay continued to enter objections as Wells ordered arguments to cease. "Mr. Clay, didn't I just tell you to be quiet?" Wells asked. "Yes, sir," said Clay.

"MR. CLAY, don't make another statement," the judge said, citing him on the spot.

Clay will join fellow Assistant Dade Public Defender Robert Rosenblatt in the Okaloosa jail when the trial concludes. Rosenblatt was cited earlier this week after he let the jury know that Otero — charged with 39 counts in nine Miami-area bombings in late 1975 — has already been acquitted of the same charges in a federal trial last August. Wells had ruled that fact inadmissible as evidence.

After Clay was cited, he and Rosenblatt, in a private bench conference with Judge Wells, asked that he recuse himself from further proceedings. "The motion has been denied," Wells announced to newsmen. The jury was not present.

The attorneys then protested that publication by the press of their motion could prejudice the case because the jury is not sequestered.

EARLIER, a brightly colored gift-wrapped package with a pert blue bow was shown to the jury by a Miami bomb expert. It was alleged to be similar to the package in which a high-explosive bomb was spirited into the sixth floor washroom of the Metro Justice Building on Dec. 4, 1975.

Tom Brodie, chief bomb specialist for the Dade Public Safety Department, then removed the ribbon and wrapping to reveal a simulated bomb to the fascinated jury.

The device was a model of the bomb Brodie said he believed had exploded in the washroom outside the state attorney's office. No one knows what the real bomb looked like because the fragments were thrown away by an FBI maintenance man on Dec. 5.

Brodie told the jury that he was reconstructing the bomb on the basis of fragments seen in photographs made of the shattered washroom.

The grim-looking device consisted of a black plastic Seiko wristwatch display box and a cheap wristwatch fastened to the box and a battery by yellow tape.

BRODIE raised the cover of the watch box and revealed a series of fat, red, waxy-looking simulated explosives which he said were heavy density primers.

Brodie said the gift-wrapped bomb was carried into the Metro Justice Building in a brown paper sack, shreds of which were found intermingled with gift wrap paper bits throughout the washroom.

Otero attorneys ask that judge step down

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — Attorneys for Rolando Otero have asked that Judge Clyde Wells disqualify himself from Otero's trial because he is favoring the prosecution.

Dade Assistant Public Defender, Bob Rosenblatt, made the demand yesterday after Wells found co-counsel Bill Clay in contempt for continuing to argue after a ruling was made from the bench. Clay was sentenced to serve two days in the Okaloosa County jail at the termination of the trial, which began here Monday.

The day after the trial began, Wells also found Rosenblatt in contempt for mentioning the word "jury" in reference to Otero's federal court trial in August. Rosenblatt also was sentenced to two days in jail to be served at the end

of the trial period.

Wells, 44, of nearby DeFuniak Springs, had warned the attorneys not to make reference to the federal trial jury — which found Otero innocent of placing bombs at public buildings in Miami. Wells said the current jury would be prejudiced if they had knowledge of the previous acquittal.

Clay was held in contempt of court when he continued to talk after Wells denied a defense motion to suppress evidence in Otero's trial. "It appears to the court that you are wasting time," Wells said.

The judge declined to consider Rosenblatt's motion that he excuse himself from presiding over the trial.

Rosenblatt told Wells that he was "using his discretion against the defense and against Otero" in becoming "personally involved" in the case.

Lawyers starring in Otero sequel

Swinging Miami attorneys balance scales of justice

4 A 3 THE MIAMI NEWS (FH) Monday, January 17, 1977 col 1



Miami News Photos by PAUL ADAMS

Defense lawyers Bill Clay (left) and Bob Rosenblatt

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — In a rare instance last week with both prosecution and defense agreed on a legal point in the stormy trial of accused bomber Orlando Otero, the judge was taken aback.

Peering down from his bench, Judge Clyde Wells spoke in his slow, Panhandle drawl: "Are you guys gonna double team me?"

The judge, 44, who lives in the small farming town of DeFuniak Springs, is unaccustomed to the courtroom style of the young, aggressive attorneys from Miami.

The prosecutors are Hank Adorno, 29, and George Yoss, 27, both major crime assistants in the Dade County State Attorney's office.

For the defense are Bob Rosenblatt, 29, and Bill Clay, 28, both from the Dade County Public Defender's office.

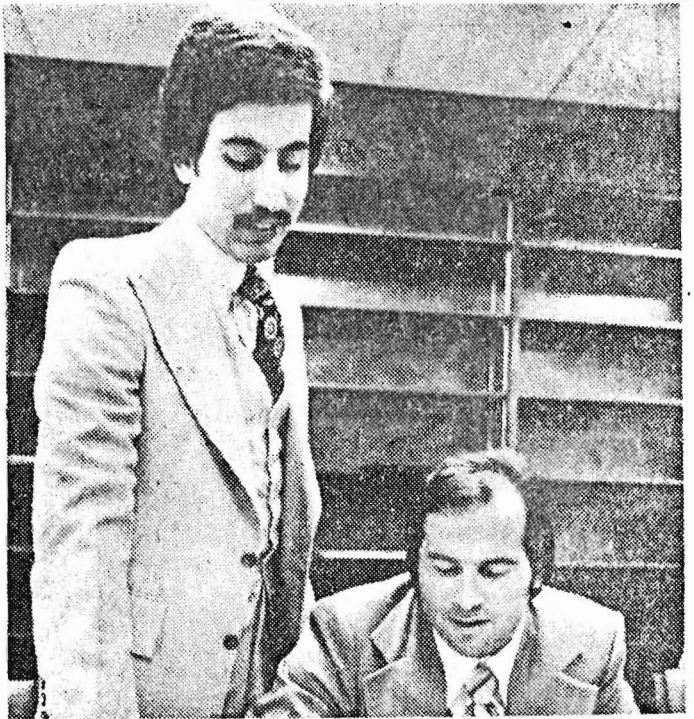
The trial of Otero, who is charged with placing

bombs in nine public buildings in Miami in late 1975, began last Monday in this coastal resort city is famous for its sand dunes and powdery white beaches. It was moved here on a defense motion which contended a fair trial in Miami was impossible because of voluminous publicity surrounding the case.

The trial is a local spectacle. Trial attorneys from the area come daily to watch the spirited proceedings. A bevy of young girls, trial "grubbies," sit in the courtroom and judge the attorneys on a more personal level. All of the Dade attorneys are unmarried.

Rosenblatt and Clay, who are presenting an active defense of Otero, have both been found in contempt of court because they exercise their legal rights to the brink. Both were sentenced to serve two days in the Okaloosa County jail at the end of the trial. Adorno and Yoss are orchestrating a solid, rapid-fire sequence of witnesses and evidence and using objections liberally when defense maneuvers slow the sequence.

Adorno, who stands 6-foot-2 and shapes each word



Prosecutors Hank Adorno (standing) and George Yoss

with forceful gestures, seems to be two questions ahead of his witnesses and sometimes cuts them off if they linger in their response.

He commands a presence of self-confidence and oratory skill. "I am a salesman. There is no question about it," Adorno said of his courtroom performance. "You have to make the jury feel as if they were there."

Adorno was born in Havana to Cuban parents. He inherited bold facial features from his maternal grandfather, a Turkish Jew, who emigrated to Cuba in 1912. He came to Miami in 1954 with his divorced mother, who remarried.

Yoss, is short in stature and has soft, boyish features. But he, too, is a fierce competitor and a skillful pleader in the courtroom. Yoss and Adorno are masters of solemn expression.

Yoss was born in New York City and moved to Miami to attend the University of Miami law school where he graduated in 1974. An accomplished skier,

he plans to vacation at Vail, Colo. when the trial ends.

Public Defender Clay, tall and slender, is a tactician. When he questions a difficult witness, he postures over the lectern. He strikes with questions and then stands motionless waiting for the response and preparing to strike again. The questioning is relentless until he provokes the desired response or the strategy fails.

Clay, born and raised in Portsmouth, N.H., joined the public defenders office in 1973 after he graduated from the University of Miami law school.

"There are a certain amount of mechanics to being a lawyer," Clay said, "but I like to practice law as an art. I could conduct a passive defense only if someone gave me a shot of thorazine or a frontal lobotomy."

Rosenblatt is a pacer, stalking the witness and pausing as if to consider all options for follow-up questions.

The conflicts between the diverse personalities has given this trial a life of its own.

Big Trial, 'Down North Yankees' Don't Cause Ripples in This Town

By JOE CRANKSHAW
AND FREDRIC TASKER
Herald Staff Writers

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. —

The big news in town this week is not the trial of Rolando Otero, Cuban exile accused of nine Miami-area bombings in 1975.

The trial was shifted here to find an unbiased jury, but what they talk about in the barber shops and the seafood restaurants is this:

- The fundamentalist farmer north of town who won't let the state use the \$250,000 overpass it built over Interstate Highway 10. He has tied up the state in court over purchase of his land on both sides of the overpass; built a tall, metal railing along both sides, and uses the bridge to get his cows from one field to another.

- The two junior high school boys given five licks with a paddle and \$350 fines for setting off a smoke bomb and forcing Choctawhatchee High School's 2,000 students to evacuate the building in the rain.

- The artist who gave up and left town without finishing larger-than-life statues of the revolutionary drummer, fife-player and flag-bearer from the painting "Spirit of '76," after spending \$12,000 of the \$20,000 set aside for it. School children had donated lunch money and picked up aluminum beer cans to raise the cash. Nearby Eglin Air Force Base had donated scrap copper and brass. Jaycees had helped build the big, concrete pedestal that now stands empty at the Lions Club Park. "Been a bitter pill," the town editor says.

* * *

ALL THE LOCAL residents know about the Otero trial is what they read in the papers. While the trial makes headlines throughout the state, residents here view it with nonchalance and a casual assumption that if he's charged he must be guilty.

Even Tom Mauldin, manager of the Air Force base laundry and mayor of Shalimar (population 578), the Fort Walton Beach suburb where the courthouse is located, is unimpressed by the 151 witnesses, prosecutors, defenders, FBI agents and reporters who have swollen his city's population by nearly 30 per cent.

"We had a meeting of the town council last night," he said, "and nobody even mentioned it." No more than 10 residents are in the trial audience on an average day.

"We heard he was one of your bigger criminals," a clerk at the local Chamber of Commerce said. "We wonder if he'll try to bust out."

FORT WALTON Beach is the kind of town that watches local television out of Mobile, considers itself more South Alabama than West Florida, but remains tolerant of the frantic invasion from metropolitan Dade County.

"We pick on people from Miami," a resident smiled. "We call 'em 'Down North Yankees.'"

A majority of those "Yankees" was born in Cuba, and is having a friendly, but frustrating, time trying to communicate with local people who speak with a southern drawl.

"I went into a restaurant and said, 'May I have a hamburger?'" said Raul Diaz, a Cuban-born Metro policeman helping with trial security. "And the lady said, 'Sure, if the Good Lord's willin' and the creek don't rise.'"

"I wasn't sure what she said," he said.

* * *

IN THE SOUTH, Okaloosa County is a tourist center, with stark white beaches and condominiums that hold up much of the county's economy.

In the middle is Eglin Air Force Base, all 720 square miles of it, where 57 per cent of the county's labor force works.

In the north, it's Old South farms on red clay, growing corn and peanuts and raising horses and conservative politicians.

Tourism is hurting right now. It's the coldest winter in 25 years.

It's a slower place than Miami, a relief. Hamburger is 69 cents a pound; eggs are 50 cents a dozen; you can see a movie for \$2.50, and they already have "King Kong;" gas is 52 cents a gallon down at the WoCo Full Service; and the entire after-work traffic jam is a two-block-long slowdown at 4:30 p.m. where Eglin Parkway goes past the shopping center.

There's a "Carmichael's Academy of Cultured Anatomy" where

DUPLICATE

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— Joe Crankshaw / Miami Herald Staff

Rolando Otero Arrives at Okaloosa County Courthouse

... his bombing trial was moved from Miami

go-go girls dance topless.

But it takes Pages 74 through 76 of the Yellow Pages to list all the churches.

The area calls itself "Bob Sikes Country" after U.S. Rep. Robert L. Sikes, the 36-year Panhandle congressman.

THE AREA reelected Sikes overwhelmingly last November, even though he had been reprimanded by the House after accusations of conflict of interest.

Sikes gets much of the credit for the lucrative Air Force base. "If you live here, you want Bob Sikes to stay in Congress," says Morgan S. Little, pudgy, affable managing editor of The Fort Walton Beach Playground Daily News.

Eglin employs 16,050 military and civilian workers, spreading around a \$185-million-a-year payroll and attracting an additional 10,000 or so pensioned military persons who like to live near the base exchange.

The area was chosen for the Otero trial because of its excellent new courthouse and because it is as far from Miami as you can get and still be in Florida.

It's a conservative Only 8 per cent of its population is "non-white." There are hardly any Latins.

That tiny Shalimar should have the best courthouse for the trial is

credited primarily to a crusading local jurist.

SLIGHT, COURTLY Circuit Judge Erwin Fleet finally pushed through a referendum in 1972 to get a courthouse located outside the county seat of Crestview.

The \$2.1-million courthouse came to house the nation's second "Courtroom of the Future," designed after a model built at California's McGeorge School of Law.

The courthouse adopted the latest concepts in security and trial psychology developed by the American Institute of Architects and the American Bar Association.

The courtroom where Otero is being tried is quiet, cooled by soft pastels and wood tones. The trial area is circular, with judge, defendant, lawyers, court reporter, witnesses and jury facing each other, each within the peripheral vision of all others.

★ ★ ★

ROLANDO Otero-Hernandez enjoys seemingly airtight security in the jail. The security was organized by bluff, square-jawed Okaloosa Sheriff Frankie Mills. Mills, who took office Jan. 4, already has handled two murder cases and a kidnap-rape case, in addition to the trial protection.

"Everything after this ought to seem like an emotional vacation," Mills draws.

The custody is courteous. When Otero couldn't sleep, they took him to the hospital and got him a prescription for Valium; when he tired of the spaghetti at the jail, they went out and bought him a lunch from the Kentucky Fried Chicken shop.

The courthouse doors are locked. Hulking, genial Deputy Bob Klinkingbeard, affectionately nicknamed "Deputy Dawg" by local reporters, grins and mans the metal detector.

The trial is presided over by a stern, fatherly, jowly cattle rancher from DeFuniak Springs, Circuit Judge Clyde Wells. "We feed 'em, herd 'em and do everything," he says. "I have determined that judges can safely engage in anything which is a losing proposition moneywise and not be charged with a conflict of interest."

WELLS RUNS A no-nonsense courtroom. Both of Otero's public defenders are facing two-day jail terms at the end of the trial for contempt of court because they pressed lines of questioning after the judge had told them to stop.

"They been at it tooth and toenail," a deputy grinned. "But they gettin' calmed down now. They found out that ol' farmer judge got a temper."

Otero Didn't Have Bomb, Witness Says

Miami (F) 2B
18 Jan 77 cop

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH — Orlando Otero did not carry any explosives into the Miami International Airport Oct. 16, 1975, the night before a bomb exploded in a locker in Concourse A, a key state witness told an Okaloosa County Circuit Court jury Monday morning.

Other state witnesses, including an FBI agent and Otero's roommate, Manuel Revuelta, testified that neither personal friends nor government investigators had seen anything of an explosive nature in his room before or after the Oct. 17 airport bombings and the Dec. 3 and 4 bombings of eight Miami facilities.

Antonio (Tony) González, testifying for the state because he could establish Otero's presence at the airport on the day of the bombing, said he drove Otero to the airport between 5 and 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, to pick up a car belonging to Otero's roommate, Héctor Serrano.

GONZALEZ, 35, is a close friend of Otero, being tried here on charges related to nine Miami-area bombings.

But González told Assistant State Attorney George Yoss that Otero had only a jacket with him when he got out of the car and went toward the parking garages at the airport.

Other state witnesses in the trial, including Metro Public Safety Department bomb specialist Newton Porter, have testified that the airport bomb was a high-powered explosive contained in a blue, imitation leather briefcase stored in locker 5030.

The bomb exploded shortly before 6 a.m. Oct. 17, almost twelve hours after Otero visited the airport.

In his testimony, Porter said the explosive device could have had up to a twelve-hour delay.

GONZALEZ told the jury that he parked the car in a 10-minute parking zone near the Eastern Airlines complex. He said Otero went away from the building and from Concourse A to enter the parking garage to look for Serrano's car.

He did not find the car, he told González, and returned quickly.

González said the next time he and Otero went to the airport was about 7 p.m. Oct. 17, 13 hours after the explosion, and that they quickly found the car.

Under questioning from Assistant Public Defender Bob Rosenblatt, González told the jury that he, Otero, Serrano and Manuel Revuelta, another witness, all were veterans of the Bay of Pigs and all were engaged in a Cuban bolita operation. He said they customarily drove each other's cars for business and social reasons.

GONZALEZ, Serrano and Revuelta have been granted immunity from prosecution on gambling charges in return for their testimony against Otero.

FBI agent George Klszynski told the jury that a search of Otero's room in apartment 210 of the Fontainebleau Apartments turned up four penlight batteries, some stereo wire, a small screw, a business card from Ramar Hardware store, a poster of convicted bomber Luis Crespo and several books, but no explosive material.

At the end of the day's activity, Judge Wells said that the trial day will be lengthened until 9 p.m. each day and that Saturday sessions also may be held.

Evidence rehashed ^{2A} at Otero trial ^{col 2 Mia News} ^{18 Jan 77 (FH)}

By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — After five days of testimony, Dade County prosecutors have yet to introduce any substantial new evidence against accused bomber Rolando Otero.

Prosecutors said they plan to call about 25 more witnesses this week before they rest their case.

Nearly all of the 36 state witnesses who have testified are the same ones who testified in the August federal trial of Otero in Jacksonville. Otero, who at that time faced federal charges of placing bombs in public buildings in Miami in 1975, was acquitted because the evidence largely was circumstantial.

Otero now faces state charges for the alleged bombings. Dade Assistant attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss contend Otero set the bombs in retaliation against the

U.S. government's intervention in Cuban exile terrorist campaigns directed at the Castro government.

Defense attorneys for Otero are waging a vigorous attack against the credibility and weight of state evidence against Otero.

The most damaging evidence presented by the state is testimony that Otero's fingerprints were found at the bomb scene at Miami International Airport. The latent print was lifted from the door handle of a luggage locker which was blown apart by a high-powered explosive in the early morning of Oct. 17, 1975.

Tony Gonzales testified yesterday that he drove Otero to the airport the evening before the bombing to search for a car which was left in a parking lot by a mutual friend. Gonzales said Otero left the car and returned in five or 10 minutes saying he could not locate the friend's car.

Dade billed for expenses

Otero trial

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By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

his home 50 miles away by a Florida Highway Patrol trooper.

Security costs are estimated at \$500 a day based on salaries of the officers.

Wells, who said he would not bill Dade County for presiding over the trial, said Dade is making direct payments to witnesses because Okaloosa County does not have enough money in its witness fund.

One of the smallest daily expenses is the \$12 a day the Fort Walton Beach jail will charge Dade for keeping Otero locked up when court is not in session.

Otero is being tried on charges that he placed nine bombs in Miami in late 1975 causing damage at the FBI building, Miami police station, Dade state attorney's office and other locations. He was acquitted of federal charges relating to the bombings

FORT WALTON BEACH — The second trial of Rolando Otero, now in its eighth day, will cost Dade County taxpayers more than \$50,000 in court expenses.

Although the trial is being held in Okaloosa County on a venue change, all expenses will be billed to Dade County.

The \$50,000 estimate is based on court costs, including expenses of the more than 100 witnesses subpoenaed by the prosecution and defense. Also figured in are the daily costs of court officers and the 10 security officers on duty at the courtroom.

There are eight Okaloosa County deputies assigned to protect the courtroom plus two detectives from Miami.

Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells is guarded in the courtroom and chauffeured from

costs \$50,000

after an eight-day trial in Jacksonville in August.

The shifting of the trial here could top \$30,000 just in air transportation, hotels and meals for those connected with the trial.

The expenses of 49 witnesses called so far come to about \$13,000.

Betty Roettger, a secretary in the Dade state attorney's office was coordinating the air shuttle of non-FBI witnesses. Said witnesses are normally paid \$5 a day-expenses to appear at trials in Miami.

Payments theoretically are drawn from Dade's Fine and Forfeiture Fund but in practice are drawn from the county's general operating budget.

The six jurors and two alternates selected for the trial here are paid \$10 a day.

The court reporter who records each word uttered in trial proceedings charges \$100 a day plus mileage for the 160 miles

round trip drive from his residence in Marietta.

There were considerable pre-trial expenses, including the recording of dozens of depositions and trips by the defense attorneys and prosecutors to Fort Walton Beach for pre-trial hearings.

All witnesses are being housed in a local motel and are transported by FBI agents. The two Dade public defenders representing Otero, Bill Clay and Bob Rosenblatt, are staying in a penthouse suite at the Conquistador Inn that in the summertime rents for \$100 a day. The attorneys got the suite at a special rate of \$400 for the month.

Prosecutors Hank Adorna and George Yoss are in the same motel in \$175-a-month rooms. Rooms were rented on a monthly basis because no one was certain how long the trial would last.

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Dud Linked To Other ^{3B} Bombings ^{Col 1}

By JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — FBI laboratory experts Tuesday connected bombs thrown in late 1975 at the Miami FBI office, the Florida State Employment Service office and the Social Security office — allegedly by accused terrorist bomber Rolando Otero — with a residential bombing that was charged to another individual.

The revelation came when FBI agent Roger Amrol said that Vice-Grip marks on the pipe bombs allegedly thrown by Otero were exactly the same as those found on a pipe bomb which failed to explode at the University of Miami residence of Elises Pérez-Stable. Convicted terrorist Antonio de la Cova, already sentenced to 65 years on federal and state bombing charges, is accused of planting that bomb.

In another action Tuesday, Circuit Judge Clyde Wells said he will rule this morning on whether Otero was illegally arrested in Santiago, Chile, last May and brought to the U.S. for trial, first by the federal government — which acquitted him — and now by the state, on 39 counts relating to the 1975 bombings.

JUDGE WELLS' ruling could reduce the charges which Otero faces from 39 to 10, some of which the state would have difficulty in providing because evidence has been lost.

Earlier FBI agent Eugene Flynn told the Okaloose County Circuit Court jury hearing Otero's case that empty .45- and .50-caliber shells were found in an ammunition belt in Otero's bedroom.

His testimony was the first indication of any possible source of the smokeless powder which other experts have testified was used in the construction of six pipe bombs.

THE INFORMATION had not been presented during Otero's federal trial last year.

Otero's roommate, Ciro Orizondo, testified that the empty shells found by Flynn were to be used for decorative purposes. He did not elaborate.

Orizondo also testified that three to six months before the December bombings, he found eight clock boxes in the kitchen garbage can. He said the top box in the pile was a Westclox box.

The state contends that the pipe bombs which exploded at various Miami facilities on the night of Dec. 3 were armed by Westclox clocks.

ORIZONDO ALSO testified that he and Otero were together for a portion of the evening Dec. 3, but that Otero was missing from the apartment, where a party "at which we got drunk" was underway.

But Orizondo said that Otero was in the apartment at 10 p.m. when they saw a television bulletin about the bombings.

Testimony by Orizondo and Manuel Revuelta, another Otero roommate, showed that the three men were engaged in the operation of a bolita ring, and that they were friendly with Ricardo Morales, an FBI informant and former CIA agent now working for the Venezuelan government.

Orizondo said Morales was in Otero's apartment at the Fontainebleau Apartments at least three times before the December bombings.

THE DEFENSE contends that Morales had a better motive, more training and skills, and an equal opportunity with Otero to have carried out the bombings in Miami.

Judge Wells' ruling on the defense motion to reduce the number of charges against Otero will determine whether the defense or prosecution successfully proved in an hour and a half debate Tuesday afternoon that the federal government acted improperly in arresting Otero in Santiago even though no formal extradition charges were pending against him.

"They didn't know how to get him out," said defense lawyer William Clay, "and they wanted to have a lot of charges placed against him by both the state and federal government so that he could be extradited. Then they couldn't get the extradition going so they solved the problem adequately, they just stole him."

Clay said that he did not think the government could go forward on 39 counts against his client when it had "gotten those counts by crook."

State prosecutors were successful, however, in ensuring their ability to present Mrs. Roberta Sweet, a secretary in the state attorney's office, to testify that she spoke to Otero in an elevator a few hours before a bomb exploded in the sixth-floor washroom of the Metro Justice Building.

Otero defense tries to cast

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — Defense attorneys for Rolando Otero are attempting to cast doubt on evidence which points to Otero as the "El Condor" bomber.

The attorneys hope their efforts will convince the jury that the the accused terrorist may have been framed.

Otero's defense team repeatedly raises questions which implicate Ricardo Morales, a secret police agent for the Venezuelan government who provided information to the FBI and Metro police.

The defense's references to Morales have raised new questions in Otero's trial that could confuse the six-member jury. So far, the defense has been unable to piece together a clear picture of Morales' connection to the case because the judge has ruled that references cannot be made to the federal trial in which Otero was acquitted.

The state rests its case today and the defense has subpoenaed 51 witnesses, many who have knowledge of Morales. They also have subpoenaed files that both the FBI and police have on Morales.

Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells has in most cases stopped the defense from introducing any substantial testimony concerning Morales, ruling it irrelevant to charges against Otero.

Morales had told the FBI that Otero had boasted to him of placing the bombs that exploded at a public building in Miami in late 1974. Otero is being charged on state counts connected with the bombings.

Typical of the defense strategy was the cross examination yesterday of an FBI fingerprint specialist who identified Otero's finger and palm prints on four of five of the "El Condor" communiques which claim responsibility for some of the bombings. The specialist, Alfred Lowe, was asked by Dade Public Defender

doubt on FBI informant

Robert Rosenblatt if fingerprints could be forged by using wax models or tape and transferred from one object to another.

The questions related to a thumb print found on a chrome door handle of a luggage locker which was ripped apart by a bomb Oct. 17, 1975. The left thumb print has been identified as Otero's based on a comparison of 12 identical characteristics of ridge formation.

Asked by Rosenblatt if such a print could be transferred, Lowe said, "That's very unlikely, but not impossible." Lowe added that a person without fingerprint training could not accomplish a fingerprint transfer.

Rosenblatt and co-counsel Bill Clay previously had asked FBI witnesses what fingerprint training is given by the CIA. Morales has been identified as a CIA operative.

Clay has also portrayed Morales as an expert in

demolition and "the dirty business of intelligence" and "a double agent, an opportunist who doesn't leave a calling card."

"Ricardo Morales has made a career of putting people behind bars who have fought against Castro," Clay said in his opening statement to the jury. He referred to Morales' court testimony in 1968 which led to the conviction of Orlando Bosch who was charged with the shelling of a Polish ship in the Miami harbor. Morales testified against Bosch soon after Morales was arrested and charged with placing a bomb at a pharmacy located in Miami's Latin community. The charges against Morales were dropped.

Morales, who was last reported to be in Caracas, Venezuela, has been subpoenaed by the defense. Other subpoenaed included Miami City Commissioner Manolo Reboso, 14 FBI agents and several Miami and Metro officers.

col Court Upholds Otero's Arrest in Chile

By JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Circuit Judge Clyde Wells ruled Wednesday that U.S. authorities had not acted improperly in arresting accused terrorist bomber Rolando Otero aboard a Braniff airliner in Chile last May.

"If there was improper conduct, it was by Chilean authorities and the U.S. is not responsible for their conduct," said Wells.

The ruling dashed the hopes of Otero's lawyers, Dade County Assistant Public Defenders Bob Rosenblatt and Bill Clay, to reduce to 10 the 39 charges filed by the state against their client, on trial here for nine Miami-area bombings in 1975.

In a second victory for the prosecution, Assistant Dade State Attorneys George Yoss and Hank Adorno also succeeded in introducing into evidence the military-style

Otero Team Loses a Case

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Rolando Otero's court interpreter went before a judge himself Wednesday after he stopped his car outside the city jail, got out and then looked back to discover that it was rolling away from him. Vincent de la Vega's car struck a city police car as it rolled, and de la Vega was cited for leaving a motor vehicle unattended and causing an accident. Otero's attorneys, Bob Rosenblatt and Bill Clay, argued de la Vega's case unsuccessfully; he was fined \$15.

communiques, claiming credit for the blasts, that were left in telephone booths for Miami newsmen to find.

JUDGE WELLS allowed the documents after FBI fingerprint specialist Alfred Lowe testified that he had found upon them 15 palm and fingertip impressions identified as Otero's.

Lowe also said Otero's right thumbprint appears on a business

card for Ramar Hardware Store, where investigators contend pipes for at least three of the pipe bombs planted at various locations on Dec. 3 and 4, 1975, were cut and threaded.

Lowe conceded that he did not find Otero's prints on any of the bomb fragments he examined.

Prosecutors also persuaded Judge Wells to allow Mrs. Roberta Sweet, a secretary in the state attorney's office, to testify to an inci-

dent alleged to have taken place on a Metro Justice Building elevator on the morning of Dec. 4.

MRS. SWEET, a policeman's wife, said that a man aboard the elevator with her — she later identified him as Otero — warned her that a bomb would be planted in the state attorney's office and at the Miami Police Department.

Later, FBI agent Robert Scherrer, the man who escorted Otero from Santiago, Chile, back to Miami, told of a scuffle that occurred aboard the plane. Otero lost two teeth in that scuffle. That happened when Otero bit down hard on Scherrer's right hand, the agent said.

The prosecution has now presented more than 50 witnesses, some of whom have testified more than once, and it's expected to call another eight or nine before resting its case.

Otero's lawyers *Mia News (FH) ch 3* try to cast doubt *GA* on state charges

21 Jan 77

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — After a defense motion for acquittal was denied, the trial of bomber suspect Rolando Otero resumed today with the defense's strategy aimed at casting a cloud of conspiracy over the charges against Otero.

It is expected that defense efforts to draw testimony relating to informer Ricardo Morales will be met with continuous and forceful objections from both the prosecution and presiding judge, Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells.

"Ricardo Morales is not on trial here," Wells told defense attorneys Bill Clay and Bob Rosenblatt.

Any testimony relating to Morales, Wells said, must be proven relevant to charges against Otero. The 33-year-old Otero is accused of bombing eight buildings in Miami during October and December, 1975.

The defense is attempting to subpoena Morales, who is working as an intelligence agent for the Venezuelan government.

Wells yesterday denied a defense motion which asked that he issue a verdict of acquittal for Otero. Rosenblatt made the motion on ground that the state, during its nine days of presenting witnesses, did not show sufficient evidence to convict Otero.

Sixty witnesses appeared for the state, but there was no substantial difference in testimony from that heard in Otero's trial in federal court in August. Otero was acquitted of federal charges relating to the bombings after an eight-day federal trial in Jacksonville.

Otero is expected to testify next week when all the defense witnesses have been heard.

Otero has been in jail since May 20.

State Rests *col/* Prosecution Of Otero

By JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — The prosecution rested its case against Rolando Otero at 11:15 a.m. Thursday, without calling a key witness who — although not present — has been cited almost daily by lawyers in the trial.

The oft-mentioned witness is Ricardo Morales, a Venezuelan secret police officer, Cuban exile, former CIA operative and FBI informant, who defense lawyers contend did the bombings with which Otero is charged.

Morales, according to depositions on file in circuit court, was the first to tell FBI agents that Otero had admitted responsibility for the Oct. 17, 1975, bombing at Miami International Airport and the Dec. 3 and 4, 1975, bombings at several other Miami buildings.

MORALES HAD been scheduled to testify in the federal trial at which Otero was acquitted in August of 1976, but failed to appear, although exile sources said he spent much of August in the Miami area. Morales was in the Miami area again at the start of Otero's state trial, but later left for Venezuela.

"We intend to prove that Ricardo Morales, not Orlando Otero, committed these bombings," Assistant Public Defender William Clay told the Fort Walton Beach jury, "and we intend to prove (it) by evidence which is every bit as solid and circumstantial as that presented by the state against our client."

"The court reminds you, Mr. Clay," Circuit Judge Clyde Wells said, "that Mr. Morales is not on trial here, and I will expect that you will not present speculative evidence — which would be improper — when the jury is present."

The judge ruled that if Morales did appear now he would not be permitted to testify as a prosecution witness, because the state has rested its case.

The state was rebuffed by Wells when it tried to introduce a hollowed-out book it contends was intended for use as a bomb.

Adorno called Newton Porter, a Dade County Public Safety Department bomb expert, who testified that the book could have been used as a bomb by Otero.

THE BOOK was found by investigators searching Otero's room in the Fontainebleau Apartments, but Judge Wells disallowed the evidence when a bomb expert said the book also could have been used to conceal a revolver.

Otero witnesses kept off stand

Mia News (FH) 22 Jan 77 12A col 1
By **BILL DOUTHAT**
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — Attorneys for bombing suspect Orlando Otero have accused the trial judge of undermining their defense by banning testimony relating to informer Ricardo Morales.

"I object to this court screening every defense witness," Dade Assistant Public Defender Bill Clay told Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells.

Wells yesterday excluded about a dozen witnesses subpoenaed by the defense on the grounds that their testimony would be irrelevant to the charges against Otero.

The witnesses, Clay said, have had knowledge of Morales' role as an FBI and police informant and his connection with the 1968 bombing of a Little Havana store which shipped medicines to Cuba.

Clay is contending that Morales framed Otero for the eight 1975 bombings which Otero is accused of committing.

It was revealed yesterday that Morales, a high-ranking intelligence agent for the Venezuelan government, had identified Otero's voice as the one on a tape made by the Spanish-language newspaper, La Libertad, Dec. 5, 1975. In a telephone call to the Miami weekly,

which was recorded by the newspaper, the caller claimed responsibility for the Dec. 3 and 4 bombings in Miami.

Earle Richardson, a voice-print expert for the Dade County Public Safety Department, has said that the voice on the tape "in all probability" is not Otero's voice.

FBI agent Joe Dawson testified yesterday that the tape was played for Morales and that he said he recognized the voice as Otero's.

Morales has not appeared at the trial but is rumored to be available as a prosecution witness. Both a motel room and a rental car were reserved here for Morales earlier this week, but were later canceled.

Mla/Her (F) 22 Jan 77 3B CP1

Court Refuses to Allow Information On Informant in Otero Trial Defense

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — A Panhandle circuit judge ruled Friday that lawyers defending Rolando Otero against charges of



bombing nine Miami buildings in 1975 may not present information about 1968 bombings allegedly committed by an FBI informant who provided information against Otero.

OTERO cutting the heart out of our defense," protested Assistant Public Defender William Clay. "We want to show a pattern of conduct by the informant, Ricardo Morales, against anti-Castro Cubans, which makes him suspect in this case."

CIRCUIT JUDGE Clyde Wells ruled the defense could produce information showing that many others in the South Florida area could have committed the bombings charged to Otero.

Friday the public defenders called Metro bomb expert Thomas Brodie; Assistant U.S. Attorneys Pat Sullivan and Jerry Sanford, who unsuccessfully prosecuted Otero in federal court last August; Armando Sanchez, owner of a Miami hardware store; Sidney

the prosecutors in the federal trial.

- Timing devices obtainable only through government sources were used in some Miami area bombings and could have been used in at least three of the offenses charged to Otero — the bombings of the state attorney's office, the old Miami police station and Miami International Airport.

- Records of the activities of Morales, now a top Venezuelan secret police official, could not be found Thursday in the Dade Public Safety Department warehouse after being subpoenaed by the defense.

Morales, according to Clay, is in the Fort Walton Beach area. Sources close to the prosecution said he is not. Investigators say they do not know where he is.

Wiser testified that at 11 p.m. on Dec. 3 a telephone caller told him: "This is the Cuban Youth. We take place (sic) for the bombings

today." The wording is similar to that in telephone messages received by several Miami newsmen; the caller in those cases identified himself as "El Condor." and claimed responsibility for the six bombings the night of Dec. 3.

AFTER SULLIVAN and Sanford testified that they had not been given the Otero statement, Assistant Public Defender Bob Rosenblatt moved that the charges be dismissed on the basis of prosecutorial misconduct. Judge Wells denied the motion, saying state prosecutors had acted properly and that he had not yet ruled on the FBI's conduct.

The judge also ruled that Metro Lt. Thomas Lyons, head of the squad investigating terrorism in Dade, will be required to testify about his knowledge of any part Morales may have played in their investigation of the 1975 bombings.

Sanchez, owner of Ramar Hardware, where prosecutors say pipe for three of the Dec. 3 pipe bombs was cut and threaded, testified that he had never cut or threaded any pipe of the dimensions of the pipe bombs and said he had never sold Otero anything prior to Dec. 9, 1975 — five days after the bombings of the state attorney's office and Miami police station.

FBI experts have testified that the pipe bombs thrown at three of the bombing sites were cut and threaded on the Ramar machine.

But prosecutors Hank Adorno and George Yoss elicited testimony from the son of Sanchez, Armando Jr., that he could have sold materials to Otero before the bombings. He said he could not recall.

The trial will continue Monday morning.

Allen, a Southern Bell worker; and Gary Wiser, a Metro desk officer.

They testified that:

- FBI Agent Morris Haddock did not give the federal prosecutor a copy of an statement allegedly made by Otero to Dominican Republic police, in which he denied knowledge of the Miami bombings. Haddock testified earlier this week that he had given the statement to

Jurors must decide inconsistencies.

Otero trial winding up this week

BY BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

Miami News (FN) 24 Jan 77 SA Colz

FORT WALTON BEACH — Rolando Otero, small-time bolita runner or big-time terror bomber?

That question, which has disturbed the conscience of Miami's Cuban community for a year, should be answered this week by four men and two women who live in this coastal city 680 miles northwest of Miami.

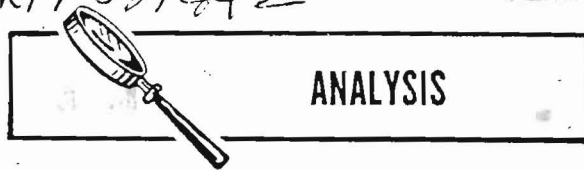
It is a tough decision for the six-member jury, which, in composite, is well-educated and attentive.

The state's case against Otero is like a puzzle with many pieces missing. But some of the pieces shown to the jury interlock and form part of an image of guilt.

The inconsistencies that the jurors must deliberate before issuing the final judgment include the following:

- Otero's left thumb print was found on the chrome door handle of a luggage locker which was bombed Oct. 17, 1975, at Miami International Airport. Witnesses have placed Otero outside the airport the night before the explosion. But why would Otero, a Bay of Pigs veteran skilled in commando tactics, leave his fingerprint? The defense suggests the fingerprint was forged to frame Otero, and Tony Gonzalez, who drove Otero to the airport the previous night, said Otero was carrying a coat, limp on his arm, and nothing else.

- Where was Otero between 6:30 and 8 p.m. on the night of Dec. 3, 1975, when six pipe bombs were



placed at public buildings in Miami? The prosecution has no eyewitnesses, but Otero's roommates, on the stand as witnesses for the state, testified that Otero was not at his Fontainebleau Park apartment. Otero said he was picking up bolita bets, a numbers game which used dog track results to determine winning numbers.

- Why would Otero confess to the bombings to Ricardo Morales, a man Otero knew was a police informer? Morales was paid \$30,000 over a 10-year period for his services to the FBI.

- Roberta Swet, a secretary in the Dade County state attorney's office, testified that she saw Otero in an elevator just hours before a bomb exploded in a hallway bathroom outside her office. But an FBI agent who interviewed her on the same day wrote in his notes that she described the man as an "Anglo" and a "non-Latin." Otero has pronounced Latin features and speaks with a heavy accent.

- Why would Otero, who has been involved in secret plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, blurt out to the secretary that "a bomb will go off in the state attor-

ney's office and Miami police station" three hours before they actually exploded?

The strongest evidence against Otero is the airport bombing, and the jury could find him guilty of that bombing and acquit him of the eight others.

The jury may also be swayed by the performance of the attorneys in this trial. The prosecutors, Dade assistant state attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss, are aggressive and self-confident. They have far outscored the defense in favorable rulings from the presiding judge, Clyde Wells, and have a rapport with Wells that could not go unnoticed by the jury.

The defense attorneys, Dade Assistant Public Defenders Bob Rosenblatt and Bill Clay, are brash and vociferous. They are unyielding in their wide-swinging, scrappy crusade to expose an alleged unholy alliance between some informants and police agencies.

In doing this, they have attacked the credibility of FBI agents and other authorities and often suggested that evidence against Otero has been tampered with while in their possession.

Otero was acquitted of federal charges relating to the bombing last August, primarily because of the circumstantial nature of the evidence against him. The attorney for Otero in that trial skillfully presented a passive, underdog defense.

Rosenblatt and Clay, however, consider this a political trial and therefore seek not only to free their client but to right what they call the wrongs.

Otero Denies

Miami Herald Feb 25 1977

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla.— Rolando Otero, Cuban-exile Bay of Pigs veteran, testifying for nearly 5½ hours Monday afternoon, denied any connection with nine 1975 Miami-area bombings.

Saying that he wanted to acquit himself as he had done in previous court trials, Otero took the stand in his own defense and underwent direct examination.

He told the jury of joining the Bay of Pigs Invasion as a paratrooper, being captured and ransomed, then working for 15 years as an anti-Castro exile.

OTERO WILL face cross examination by Assistant State Attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss when the trial resumes this morning.

Prosecutors had conceded during earlier proceedings Monday that Otero was not "El Condor," who made telephone calls to Miami-area news media following the Dec. 3 and 4, 1975, bombings; that the bombings were connected with another explosion, of which someone else has been convicted; and that information provided by FBI informant and Venezuelan secret police official Ricardo Morales was important to the case.

In his afternoon testimony, Otero said:

- Contrary to prosecution theory, he was not embittered at either President John F. Kennedy or the United States because the Bay of Pigs invasion failed for lack of air support.

- He went to the Dominican Republic in January 1976 to attend a parachute event, and did not know about the charges against

Bombing Charges

him until Dominican police questioned him.

- He traveled to Venezuela and to Chile in an effort to gain information about communist terror tactics against American corporate officials, and in Chile made contact with the secret police, who offered him a job to kill Pascal Allende, nephew of the deposed Chilean president, who was hiding in Costa Rica. He refused the job, he said.

- He had no connection with any of the Miami bombings.

One of the most dramatic moments in the trial came when Otero refused to state the names of anti-communist Cuban exiles who had aided him in Venezuela and Chile — even though his lawyer told him he ought to do so — because he said it would endanger the lives of the people who helped him.

DRESSED IN a tan jacket and slacks, Otero faced the jury confidently and spoke through an interpreter, Vicente de la Vega.

Use of the interpreter created a minor disturbance, and what defense lawyers called "a cheap shot," when Adorno objected, saying Otero could speak English.

But Judge Clyde Wells ruled that he could speak through the interpreter.

Otero testified that he never hid any of his travel in Latin America, always traveled under his own name and applied for membership in the Prince of Wales Country Club in Santiago, Chile.

The defendant said he returned to Chile after it became apparent that Venezuelan authorities would no longer shelter him in that country, and he was arrested by Chilean military police about a month after he returned to Santiago.



Rolando Otero
... testified 5½ hours

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DUPLICATE

Otero again denies he was 'El Condor' terrorist bomber

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — For the second time in five months, Rolando Otero has risen to his own defense to deny he is the "El Condor" bomber who placed nine bombs in Miami public buildings.

His face gaunt and pallid from eight months in jail and his soft voice betraying no emotion, Otero tried to explain in his own words yesterday why he wasn't the bomber.

The prosecution objected when Otero sought to elaborate; the court ordered the defendant to stick to the line of questioning.

Asked by defense attorney Bob Rosenblatt if he were responsible for the 1975 terror bombings, Otero replied: "I have heard them (the charges) for a long time. I have no connection with the bombings and I have proven it previously."

Otero was referring to his acquittal of federal bombing charges last August. He is now standing trial on state charges relating to the bombings.

After Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells ruled that Otero could not elaborate on his denial of charges against him, Rosenblatt turned from the witness stand in anger and said to the judge "the prosecution does not want him to explain."

Otero, raising his voice for the first time, said: "Tell Mr. Adorno that the FBI agents had more latitude in answering questions in this court than I have." The objection had been made by Dade Assistant State Attorney Hank Adorno.

Otero spent more than four hours on the stand yesterday and was scheduled to be cross-examined by the prosecution today. The trial, now in its 12th day, is expected to conclude by tomorrow or Thursday.

In his testimony, Otero, 33, spoke softly in Spanish and his words were translated by Vicent de la Vega, a professional interpreter from Miami. When the jury left the room for a recess midway through the testimony, Otero stood and smiled at each one as they passed by the witness stand. None of the jurors looked at him.

Rosenblatt's questioning of his client closely followed the questions and responses given in the federal trial. But Otero yesterday gave more detailed answers.

For the first time, Otero revealed details of his travels in Venezuela and Chile in early 1976. By that time fugitive warrants had already been issued charging him with the Oct. 17 bombing at Miami International Airport and the seven bombings at various buildings in Miami on Dec. 3 and 4.

Otero said he made two trips to Chile from Venezuela and had hoped to fight against terrorist kidnappings of American executives and others in South America which he said was directed by agents from Communist Cuba.

He said he collected \$1,500 from Cuban anti-Communists living in Curacas, Venezuela, which he used to finance his trips to Chile. Against the advice of his attorney, Otero declined to reveal the names of his sponsors. "I totally refuse to give any names," Otero said. "It would endanger all of their lives."

The purpose of the Chile trip, he said, was to gather information and make contact with anti-Castro forces. At one point, he said, Chilean agents suggested he travel to Costa Rica to assassinate Pascual Allende, nephew of former Marxist president Salvador Allende.

"My conversations with the Chilean government were not productive so I returned to Venezuela," Otero said. He returned a week later and was eventually arrested and forced aboard an airliner to Miami where he was taken into custody last May 20.

Otero also testified that he was running bolita (gambling lottery) errands on the evening of Dec. 3 when bombs went off in succession at five public buildings.

"I left my apartment at 7:30 p.m. and went to a shopping center at NW 54th Street and 12th Avenue. I got there and underwent the (bolita) transaction and went to a restaurant at Flagler and 47th Avenue and then went home."

Rosenblatt demanded that Judge Wells declare a mistrial and hold co-prosecutor George Yoss in contempt for suggesting that Otero would speak in Spanish to gain an advantage. Yoss had said, "He's using Spanish because it is easier for him to listen to the questions being asked and it gives him time to think of options."

Wells denied Rosenblatt's motions and instructed the jury to disregard Yoss's remarks.

DUPLICATE
Otero Denies TouchingBy **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Accused terrorist bomber Rolando Otero flatly denied Tuesday ever touching a Miami International Airport locker door said by authorities to bear his fingerprints.

"Have you ever seen that door?" thundered prosecutor George Yoss as he flung the four-pound door on the witness stand. "Have you ever touched it?"

Otero fixed him with a steady gaze. "No," he said.

THE DOOR was from airport locker 5030, inside which a bomb was planted Oct. 17, 1975. FBI fin-

gerprint experts have testified that Otero's left thumbprint was found on its chrome handle but Otero's lawyers, Robert Rosenblatt and William Clay, claim that it's a forgery.

The defense rested its case Tuesday after Otero testified for nearly seven hours in his own behalf. The case is expected to go to the jury Thursday.

Otero, charged with 39 bombing-related offenses stemming from nine Miami blasts in 1975, told the jury that those bombings were of propaganda value only to Fidel Castro and not to anti-Communists like himself. In speaking at length of his dedication to fighting Castro and communism, Otero re-

peatedly emphasized that his activities always occurred "outside the United States."

State prosecutors will present rebuttal witnesses today. The first will be convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, who has been named by Otero as one of the men responsible for Cuban exiles' training for the Bay of Pigs.

THE STATE contends that Otero bombed Miami International Airport Oct. 17, 1975, and planted eight other bombs in December because he was upset with the U.S. abandonment of Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs and disturbed by possible resumption of trade rela-

Door Bearing Print

tions between this country and Castro's Cuba.

But Otero, while conceding disgust at the potential thaw with Cuba and the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, insisted that he had nothing to do with the bombings.

He refused to agree to prosecution contentions that he wanted to strike violently at the U.S. because of the treatment of convicted bomb builders Humberto Lopez and Luis Crespo.

When Yoss asked Otero why he had lied to an FBI agent about his part in a plot to kill Fidel Castro, Otero replied that his CIA training taught him to keep such matters secret even though he believed that the FBI knew about the plot.

"DO YOU believe that all the case against you has been manufactured? Do you believe that all the evidence has been made up?" Yoss asked.

"Yes," Otero said.

Yoss then presented a series of bank and mortgage loan applications, and applications to work at the Laramie Tire Store and the Miami Police Department to show what he called "inconsistencies or lies" in the documents.

Otero denied that he had lied and explained, over Yoss' objections, that he had answered the questions about references and employment as best he could and couldn't be exact on addresses. He said he had told the Miami police that he had

worked for the CIA simply to explain the period that he was in the Bay of Pigs invasion and a Cuban jail.

OTERO ALSO told the prosecutor that he had trained in Guatemala to be a paratrooper in the invasion and that his unit and several others had been coordinated and directed by E. Howard Hunt.

Hunt, now serving time in a federal correctional institute at nearby Eglin Air Force Base for his role in the Watergate burglary and awaiting parole consideration, will testify that he never met Otero, his attorney, William Snyder of Baltimore, said Tuesday night.

Otero bomb trial goes to jury

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — The case against accused bomber Rolando Otero went to the jury today after an emotion-charged closing by the prosecution.

Hank Adorno, Dade County assistant state attorney, implored the six-member jury to ignore "smokescreen" allegations from the defense that Otero was framed and urged them to rely solely on the evidence.

"The only justice in this case is a verdict of guilty," Adorno concluded after a blistering three-hour attack on the defendant yesterday.

"The defense wants you to look every place but at the evidence which proves this man guilty," said Adorno, pacing angrily in front of the jury. "They want to blame the CIA, the FBI and everybody but the defendant."

The dramatic closing was seen as a maneuver by the prosecution to shift the course of the trial. During the past three weeks, evidence presented against the 33-year-old Otero has been largely circumstantial.

The weakest aspect of the prosecution's case has been its failure to show a strong motive why Otero, who has fashioned his life as an anti-Communist, would want to bomb nine public buildings in Miami.

The prosecution introduced 175 exhibits and

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An analysis *col 3*

62 witnesses, most of which simply substantiated that the bombing occurred. The strongest link to Otero was that his thumb print was found on the chrome handle of a luggage locker at Miami International Airport which was blown apart by a high-powered explosive on Oct. 17, 1975.

Bill Clay, co-counsel for Otero, said in his closing argument that the thumb print discovery fits the cloak-and-dagger nature of the case.

"This is no ordinary robbery of a corner grocery store where the robber gets excited and leaves his fingerprint on the counter," Clay said in a low-keyed two-hour speech to the jury. "The fingerprints may well be Rolando Otero's but how they got there is another question."

Throughout the trial, the defense has contended that Otero was set up by Ricardo Morales, a highly paid FBI informant who the defense alleges wanted to disrupt militant exile operations for his own ends.

Morales, now the second-ranking intelligence chief for the Venezuelan government, was the informer who told Miami FBI agents that Otero was the bomber.

Morales was kept from the trial by the pros-

ecution because his checkered background as a CIA operative and informer would lend credence to the defense theory of a frame-up.

"The man responsible for these bombings is not Rolando Otero," Clay said.

Adorno, his voice sometimes quivering, declared that Otero left a "signed confession" by leaving his fingerprints on four communiques issued to the press after the Dec. 3-4 bombings in Miami.

The communiques were signed "F! Condor" which Adorno said was a code name Otero adopted for the movie, "Three Days of the Condor." The movie was about a CIA agent who was betrayed by his superiors.

The movie code names became a pattern when, as a fugitive, Otero sent letters from the Dominican Republic to friends in Miami under the name of "Rolando Papillon." The movie, "Papillon," was about a man who was on the run from Devil's Island. Clay charged that the references, as well as the state's entire case, were built on "essential improbabilities."

"Every innocent fact has been turned and twisted to make Otero look guilty," Clay said.

Meanwhile, relations between Clay and presiding Judge Clyde Wells have further deteriorated. Clay made a last-minute motion for a mistrial, but Wells denied the motion without allowing Clay to state the grounds for the motion.

Jury Gets Otero Case Today

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**

Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — The state's case against Rolando Otero goes today to an Okaloosa County jury, which must decide if he is an embittered terrorist bomber or an impassioned Cuban freedom fighter who has been framed.

"The only issue for you to resolve," said Assistant Dade State Attorney Hank Adorno in his final argument, "is identity. Did Rolando Otero place those bombs or participate in their placement? ... I submit we have shown he did."

Defense attorney William Clay contended otherwise. "No one approaches the end of this trial with more trust, hope and faith in the fairness of this jury than my client," he said.

"CERTAINLY he had doubts in 1961 when the Bay of Pigs invasion failed, doubts about the U.S., but those were resolved when he and other were ransomed.

"Certain individuals (in state and federal investigative agencies) felt they knew who did the bombings and those individuals have put Rolando Otero into the defense chair even though he is innocent."

Clay urged the jury to remember that the nine 1975 bombings with which Otero is charged "are counter to the cause of the Cuban exiles. Others, not anti-Communists, profited by them."

Clay and fellow assistant public defender Robert Rosenblatt have repeatedly told the jury that Ricardo Morales, a Venezuelan secret police officer and former FBI informant, provided investigators with the first leads against Otero, and that their client is being framed by an alliance of communists and democratic interests in the Western Hemisphere.

PROSECUTOR Adorno told the jury not to speculate, to base their deliberations only upon the evidence — 175 exhibits and the testimony of more than 90 witnesses — rather than upon "some dream of Mr. Clay's about a plot or conspiracy."

The prosecutors have said the evidence shows that Otero placed the bombs to express opposition to an apparent (in 1975) thawing of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S.

Earlier Wednesday, prosecution rebuttal witness E. Howard Hunt took the stand to deny Otero's claim that Hunt trained the Bay of Pigs brigade at Camp Trax near Guatemala City.

Otero Is Convicted of Bombing

Mia Her (F) 1A col 1 28 Jan 77

At Airport, Cleared of 8 Others

By JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — An Okaloosa County Circuit Court jury found Rolando Otero guilty Thursday of placing a bomb in a locker at Miami International Airport, but acquitted him of eight other Miami-area bombings.

Conviction on five separate charges could bring the 33-year-old Cuban native, Bay of Pigs veteran and self-proclaimed fighter of Communists as much as life imprisonment. Judge Clyde Wells said Otero would be sentenced sometime in March, either here or in

nearby Crestview, following a pre-sentence investigation.

Otero, who had been acquitted by a U.S. District Court jury in Jacksonville in August on similar charges, took Thursday's verdict calmly, showing no outward emotion.

HE HAD maintained his innocence throughout the nearly three-week-long trial, and his lawyers said they would appeal.

Otero told reporters afterward that he had been framed, that the trial was "political from the start."

He said, though, that he didn't

blame the jurors — four men and two women.

"There was so much evidence presented in this trial, so many FBI and police, that anyone can become confused, even between what's white and what's gray," he said. "I respect the jury, but I wish they had either found me innocent completely or guilty completely. If I placed myself in their places, I would be confused, too."

Dade County Assistant State Attorney Hank Adorno, one of two prosecutors in the case, said, "I'm ecstatic," after jury foreman Robert Dickinson, an Air Force cap-

tain, read the verdict after four hours and 23 minutes of deliberation.

OTERO WAS found guilty of one count each of unlawful possession of explosives, unlawful possession of an explosive without a permit, attempted first-degree murder, first-degree arson and unlawfully discharging a destructive device.

All the charges grew out of the single incident in which a bomb, placed in a blue leather briefcase, exploded in Locker 5030 on Con-

Turn to Page 14A Col. 1



— Associated Press

Rolando Otero Escorted Into Courtroom

... he was found guilty by Okaloosa County jury

Otero Is Convicted

Mia Her (F) 14A call 28 Jan 77

of Airport Bombing

'There was so much evidence presented in this trial, so many FBI and police, that anyone can become confused, even between what's white and what's gray. I respect the jury, but I wish they had either found me innocent completely or guilty completely. If I placed myself in their places, I would be confused, too.'

— Rolando Otero

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course A of the airport Oct. 17, 1975. Police testified that they found Otero's thumbprint on the locker door. Otero's lawyers charged that the print was a forgery.

Otero was acquitted on 34 other counts involving the bombings at the Miami FBI office, a Social Security office, a Florida State Employment Service office, two post offices, a bank branch, the second floor of the Miami Police Department and a men's room outside the Dade State Attorney's Office.

WELLS ORDERED that Otero remain in the Okaloosa County Jail until the sentencing. He is being held under \$250,000 bond, which he has been unable to raise.

During the trial Otero saw the

state parade FBI agents, Miami and Metro police officers, his own roommate and other close associates, former employers, lab technicians and even convicted Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt before the jury in an effort to prove him guilty.

He also saw his two lawyers, Dade Assistant Public Defenders Robert Rosenblatt and William Clay, earn contempt-of-court jail time for violating Wells' order not to mention the earlier federal court acquittal to the jury.

The jury heard conflicting testimony.

FBI witnesses testified to documents supposedly given to trial lawyers, who, in turn, testified that they did not receive the documents.

ADORNO AND co-prosecutor Assistant State Attorney George

Yoss started the trial by telling the jury that they would show that Otero placed the bombs; made a series of telephone calls to Miami news media, telling where communiques claiming responsibility for the bombings could be found; and then placed the communiques in

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telephone booths throughout the city.

But later prosecutors retreated from that position. They admitted that Otero wasn't the voice on the phone. They said the caller could have been another man, named Ricardo Garzon.

They also admitted that another convicted bomber, Antonio Rafael de la Cova, was tied to a bomb with marks similar to those found on three other bombs Otero was charged with placing throughout the city.

But the prosecutors still insisted that Otero was guilty. They pointed out that his fingerprints were found on the communiques, and that his thumbprint was found on the door of a Miami International Airport locker that exploded, in

one of the nine bombings with which he was charged.

OTERO'S LAWYERS contended that their client was framed by an unholy alliance in the espionage world: Communists seeking to use the FBI to put Otero out of the assassination business and anti-Communist Chileans seeking to punish him for his refusal to kill remaining family members of the late Chilean President Salvadore Allende.

(In his post verdict press conference, Otero told reporters that he had been told by Venezuelan security police before his capture that the FBI was offering \$100,000 to a member of the Chilean military intelligence service for his arrest, capture and delivery.

(Contacted later, Julius Mattson,

special agent in charge of the Miami FBI office, called the statement "not true. We didn't have to do it that way, and we didn't have the money, anyway. It didn't happen.")

In a defense that sounded as though it came from a spy novel, Otero's lawyers talked about forged fingerprints, CIA safehouses, counter espionage, bomb-making techniques, cross and double-cross spy work, double agents, assassination plots against Fidel Castro and the secret police of half a dozen Latin American countries.

THE DEFENSE also charged that Ricardo Morales, a former FBI informant, CIA agent and Castro Cuban secret police officer who is now a top Venezuelan security official, could have done the bombings.

Much of what the defense wanted to introduce was ruled out by Wells, a bluff, shrewd former prosecutor, who herds cattle, grows soybeans and sells real estate when he isn't on the bench.

"We are trying this case on facts, not politics," the judge said more than once.

But his attitude changed. Early in the trial, Wells bridled at the mere hint that the FBI could lie or misrepresent facts. But his defense of the agency softened as the trial progressed.

An Opponent of Casto,

Miami Her (F) 28 Jan 77 14A col 1

Rolando Otero was among the youngest of the invaders in Fidel Castro's jails.

A 1959 refugee to the United States, he dropped out of high school in Miami to train for the Bay of Pigs invasion with his impassioned brother exiles. He became one of a 200-man group of paratroopers and guerrillas — trained by E. Howard Hunt among others, Otero claims, although Hunt has repeatedly denied that.

On April 18, 1961 he turned 18 years old. That was the day the invaders, waiting for an air strike that never came, found themselves routed by Castro's soldiers. For the next year and a half Otero was a prisoner in Cuba.

"MANY OF the younger members of the brigade

were brainwashed into a war mentality that persists even today," a longtime Otero associate told a reporter last year. "The trouble is, the U.S. is no longer providing any guidance to people like Otero, who now feel cornered."

Prosecutors at Otero's just-concluded trial charged that the now-convicted terrorist bomber, like many another Bay of Pigs veteran, felt himself and his cause to have been betrayed by the American government.

Returning to the U.S. in late 1962, Otero traveled around the country, returned to Miami, married and subsequently divorced and supported himself with a series of jobs.

At one point he applied to become a Miami Beach police officer. He failed the examination.

At the time of the 1975 bombings with which he

He Felt Betrayed

was charged, he acknowledged on the witness stand, he was involved in a bolita operation.

AND THROUGH the 1960s and '70s he remained an ardent anti-Castro operative, an active participant in various clandestine activities.

On at least one occasion he seriously plotted to assassinate Castro. The plan was aborted, it was disclosed in trial testimony, when Venezuelan secret police official Ricardo Morales — a onetime Castro intelligence agent — learned of it.

It was Morales, also an FBI informant, who gave U.S. authorities all their early leads that pointed to Otero as the Miami bomber. Otero's attorneys based much of their defense on the premise that Otero was being framed.

Otero guilty verdict leaves many questions unanswered

Mia News (F)

28 Jan 77 6A col 1

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — The six jurors walked slowly to their seats, eyes to the floor, their faces mirroring the agonizing 13 days of testimony and the verdict they would announce.

Guilty, on five counts, for the bombing of a luggage locker at Miami International Airport.

Not guilty, on 34 counts, for the eight "El Condor" terror bombings.

The verdict against Rolando Otero leaves many questions unanswered, as did the testimony itself. The proceeding was unable to unravel the intrigue and political terrorism in Miami.

"We six probably do less than anyone else," said jury foreman Tim Dickinson, an Air Force captain. "But we stayed within the rulings of the judge and tried to listen to the facts and nothing else."

The jury of four men and two women was kept in the jury room during hours and hours of arguments by the defense that the truth was not emerging in the trial. The jury never learned that the mysterious foreign agent Ricardo Morales was on the payroll of the FBI and led the FBI to Otero.

The defense claimed Morales was a pivotal figure in the case, but Morales, now a high-ranking Venezuelan security official, did not testify during the trial and the judge repeatedly ruled out testimony concerning Morales.

Also unanswered is who is guilty of placing eight bombs at public buildings in Miami on Dec. 3-4. Otero was acquitted of those charges even though his fingerprints were found on the "El Condor" communiques which took credit for the bombings.

Dade assistant state attorneys Hank Adorno and George Yoss, said they were elated at the guilty verdicts — which carry a maximum sentence of life in prison plus 50 years — and that the real issues of the trial are settled.

"The issues do not include Ricardo Morales," said Adorno.

"What the verdict means is that terrorists in Dade now know police will investigate their crimes, the state attorney's office will prosecute and the jury will convict," Adorno said. "Hopefully this conviction will act as a deterrent."

vice, which carries a life sentence; unlawful possession of an explosive; unlawful possession of an explosive without license or permit; attempted murder in the first degree; and arson in the second degree.

Otero will probably be held at the Okaloosa County jail here until sentencing, which will be pronounced in late February or early March after a 30-day pre-sentence investigation.

Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells, who presided over the trial, said he felt the jury was swayed by the identification of Otero's thumb print on the locker door at the airport. Wells said the significant difference between this trial and Otero's federal trial last August was that the federal judge allowed tes-

timony concerning Morales. Otero was acquitted by the federal jury.

"I didn't allow it because of the rules of evidence," said Wells, a first-term judge from the farming community of DeFuniak Springs. "Testimony about Morales just simply was not admissible."

Asked if he considered the two trials of Otero as a violation of the double-jeopardy protection of the U.S. Constitution, Wells said, "It bothers me that the status of the law is that way, but it's the law."

The judge refused to vacate contempt of court charges against defense attorneys Rosenblatt and Bill Clay. They were found guilty of courtroom misconduct early in the trial and each was sentenced to two days in jail.

Defense attorneys for Otero said they would file a motion for a new trial within 15 days. "We're going to have one heck of an appellate brief," said Dade assistant public defender Bob Rosenblatt. "We are very confident as far as the appeal goes."

The formal charges of which Otero was convicted were: Unlawfully discharging a destructive de-

Calls trial a 'Roman circus'

'Court crucified me,' Otero says

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON BEACH — Denouncing the trial as a "Roman circus," Rolando Otero said his conviction yesterday of the 1975 bombing at Miami International Airport was only a temporary setback.

"I know how to win and I know how to lose," Otero said moments after a jury found him guilty of one bombing and cleared him of eight others. "This is only a temporary loss."

Otero, his hands trembling, talked with reporters as he sipped a soft drink in a paper cup and joked nervously with his attorneys.

Otero accused Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells of undermining his defense by barring testimony relating to informer Ricardo Morales who first told the FBI that Otero was the bomber.

"My attorneys couldn't even speak," said Otero. "The court was trying to crucify me. It's a political trial, that is clear." At one point during the trial he commented privately that the



'I know how to win and I know how to lose. This is only a temporary loss.'

— Rolando Otero

judge was "the third prosecutor."

Although his attorneys contended Otero was framed by Morales, Otero declined to place the blame on anyone. He suggested that the bombings were done at the hands of agents acting on behalf of Communist Cuba.

"To my information, there are close to 4,000 or 5,000 Castro G-2 agents infiltrated in differ-

ent programs and spread out through the United States," Otero said. "Probably some of them would try."

Otero accused the FBI of paying \$100,000 to the Chilean national police for his arrest and deportation. Otero was placed aboard an airliner in Santiago, Chile, last May 19 and returned to Miami in the custody of an FBI agent.

MIA (Hear/F) Col 2 6A
Otero Verdict ^{29 Jan 77}
A Warning, Too

THAT someone, finally, has been convicted by a jury of a senseless bombing in Dade County is good news for all law abiding citizens, but perhaps even more so for those in the Cuban refugee community who have been unfairly embarrassed by terrorist acts committed in the name of Cuban freedom.

Rolando Otero was not convicted of eight other bombing charges, but the explosion in a locker at Miami International Airport — which could have taken a tragic human toll but by providence did not — was traced directly to him by expert police work and prosecution.

It is now proved that such police work and legal action await the deeds of any other misguided would-be patriot who sees in his warped way that eventual good might come from the use of bombs against an innocent society.

The nation that is the most free on earth intends to remain that way, unintimidated by zealous criminals who attack its citizens for whatever distant aim. Those criminals will be sought out and given a fair trial. And then punished.

Otero Sentenced to

Mia Her (F) 18 Mar 77 Col 2 1B

Year

40 Years

DUPLICATE

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Cuban exile Rolando Otero was sentenced to 40 years in prison Thursday for the Oct. 17, 1975 bombing of a Miami International Airport locker.

Otero, who had just told Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells that "the best sentence for an innocent man is liberty," took the sentence calmly.

"I expected anything up to 100 years in prison because the judge acted more like a prosecutor than a judge during the trial," Otero said.

"We would like to have seen him get more time," said Assistant State Attorney Hank Adorno, who prosecuted the case with Assistant State Attorney George Yoss. "But we are satisfied that it will be a long time before Otero gets back out on the street."

OTERO'S attorney said he would become eligible for parole within six months to a year.

The 33-year-old Bay of Pigs veteran was convicted in January by an Okaloosa County jury which found Otero guilty on five of 39 charges filed against him and acquitted him of eight other Miami-area bombings. Otero had been acquitted of similar charges in a federal court trial in August 1976.

In the complex sentence Thursday, Otero received 10 years for unlawful possession of explosives and five years for possession of unlicensed explosives, with the two sentences running concurrently; 15 years for attempted murder, with the sentence running consecutively to the first two sentences; 15 years for attempted arson, with that sen-

tence consecutive to the previous 15 years attempted murder sentence; and 40 years for discharging an explosive device in a public place with all the prior sentences running concurrently with this last 40-year sentence.

THE NET effect was to place Otero in jail for 40 years.

Assistant State Attorney Adorno had asked Judge Wells to sentence Otero to life in prison.

Assistant Public Defenders Robert Rosenblatt and William Clay immediately filed motions for a new trial and for a reduction in sentence, saying that they have evidence that the state withheld or negligently overlooked favorable evidence that would have benefited Otero's defense.

Sources close to the case say that the information, which was not discussed in open court, consists of reports that Dade police and sheriff's deputies are in possession of a recording of a voice calling the airport following the October 17 blast and claiming responsibility for the bombing.

According to the sources, the voice contends that the bomb was planted to protest the treatment of

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Otero Gets 40 Years for Bombing

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FROM PAGE 1B

Colombians arrested at the airport while attempting to smuggle narcotics.

CLAY AND Rosenblatt unsuccessfully tried to block passage of any sentence, by asking Judge Wells to excuse himself from the task because he "had become personally involved in the heated trial process."

Wells denied their request and all other motions made by the defense and proceeded to pass sentence on Otero on the five charges of which he had been convicted by the jury.

Prior to passage of the sentence Judge Wells asked Otero if he had anything to say.

Otero, casually dressed in a tan cable-stitched sweater and tan slacks, picked up a yellow legal pad and asked court interpreter Bicent de la Vega to translate for him.

Otero told the judge that a federal jury had found him innocent of the same charges and that the state trial was simply part of a political plot to get him. He said the trial was double jeopardy and "a stain on the Florida judicial system."

THE DEFENDANT, pacing the circular pit of the modern courtroom before the judge and speaking Spanish in a resonant voice easily heard to the rear of the large

Trial Cost \$60,000

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Dade County will pay more than \$60,000 for the trial of Rolando Otero in Okaloosa County, court records show.



OTERO

Drawing the most money are: the FBI, which received \$10,650.52; the airlines, which received more than \$10,000, but the final figure has not been totaled; Professional Translating Services Inc. of Miami, which received \$4,229.31; the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Dept., which received \$5,643.04; Okaloosa County court reporter Bobby Rust who got \$2,975; and the Ramada Inn on the beach, which received \$2,776.36.

"This doesn't count salaries of the police, court officials, prosecutors and defense attorneys who worked on the case," said Assistant State Attorney Hank Adorno.

The prosecution outspent the defense \$35,000 to \$15,000, according to the records.

A complete summary of all costs will not be ready until after a series of lengthy appeals from Otero's conviction on the bombing of a Miami International Airport locker.

The trial was moved to Okaloosa County because of complaints that there was excessive publicity on the bombings in the Miami area.

Adorno, speaking after Otero, asked the judge to set the maximum sentence as a deterrent to other would-be bombers, and to assure the public "that they can walk in safety."

Following the sentencing, Otero told reporters that Cuban exiles like himself must continue to oppose Castro, even though the United States is "now dealing with the very regime that contrived to kill John F. Kennedy."

Bitterly, Otero noted that when Cuban exiles had U.S. backing they were called "Freedom Fighters," but "now that we act independently, they call us terrorists."



Associated Press Wirephoto

Deputy at courthouse puts the bracelets on Otero

Mia News (FA) 4A CP 3 18 Mar 77

Otero gets 40 years, insists he's innocent

Special to The Miami News

FORT WALTON BEACH — Rolando Otero has been sentenced to 40 years in jail by an Okaloosa County Circuit Court judge after being convicted on five charges stemming from the October, 1975 bombing at Miami International Airport.

"The only sentence an innocent man should receive is freedom," Otero told Judge Clyde Wells yesterday during a five-minute speech before sentencing.

The maximum sentence he could

have received was life in jail. He was convicted in January in a state trial after his trial was moved here from Dade County because of pre-trial publicity.

Otero had been acquitted in a federal trial on similar charges involving the airport bombing.

Otero's attorneys, Dade Assistant Public Defenders William Clay and Robert Rosenblatt, announced they have moved that the jury verdict be set aside, claiming that the state suppressed evidence important to their case.

Mia Her (F) Col / Otero's Fear 3B

Of Prison Led 25 May 77 To Suicide Try

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**

Herald Staff Writer

Bay of Pigs veteran Rolando Otero, convicted of a 1975 locker bombing at Miami International Airport, tried to kill himself rather than "become subhuman in the prison subculture," one of his lawyers said Thursday.

"He admitted taking three sleeping pills," Assistant Public Defender Bill Clay said, after interviewing Otero. He took the pills, which he hid from jailers in Crestview, as he was being flown to the Lake Butler prison reception center a week ago.

"Otero was depressed because he had been acquitted on all the charges in a federal court and 90 per cent of the charges in a state court," Clay said. "He was upset by the manner in which the state trial was conducted."

Otero had complained that his defense was hampered by the actions of Okaloosa County Circuit Judge Clyde Wells, who conducted the trial after it was transferred from Miami to escape publicity.

Clay said Otero, who spent two years in a Castro prison and has been in Florida jails since May 1976, felt that he would have to become a mock criminal in order to survive in prison.

"He didn't want to do that, because he considered himself innocent," Clay said.

"He didn't want to have to change his vocabulary to fit prison life. He didn't want to follow the orders of the 'houseman,' a prisoner who runs each cell in the subculture. He didn't want any of these things," Clay said.

"Rather than be dehumanized in his own eyes," Clay said, "he chose to try and kill himself."

Clay said Otero is in good condition and walking about now. "He promised us he won't try to kill himself again, and I think we can believe him."

DUPLICATE

Otero's lawyers get strong rebuke from judge

By BILL DOUTHAT
Miami News Reporter

FORT WALTON — Before this trial began, Circuit Court Judge Clyde Wells directed a not-so-subtle warning to the Miami attorneys who have come here to defend accused terrorist bomber Rolando Otero.

"I want you to abide by my rulings," said the judge. "I can be mean and ugly which is contrary to my nature."

By yesterday, the judge had clashed with the two Dade assistant public defenders who are representing Otero in this city 680 miles from Miami.

Behind closed doors, with a court reporter present, the judge admonished assistant public defender Bill Clay, threatening to take him before Florida Bar's Grievance Committee for what the judge considered improper conduct in the courtroom.

The scene looked so bad for Clay and co-counsel Bob Rosenblatt that when they returned to the courtroom defendant Otero turned to them and said: "Are you sure you guys are going to be OK?"

Tension, suspicion and elements of international intrigue have all surfaced in this trial which began only three days ago. After a day-and-a-half of jury selection and pretrial motions, attorneys yesterday made opening statements to outline evidence they plan to introduce during at the trial, which could easily run two or three weeks.

Clay encountered a barrage of objections from Dade assistant state attorney George Yoss when he contended that Otero, charged with nine terrorist bombings in Miami, was a scapegoat for the crimes.

"It was a Castro agent (who placed the bombs) or someone acting on behalf of the Castro government," Clay said. The prosecutors, he said, were "duped" by placing charges against Otero, an avowed anti-communist.

Judge Wells stated with finality: "We are not going to try Fidel Castro. We are not going to try Communists in this case. We are going to try it within the facts in the law." Wells warned Clay to stay within provable statements as he outlined his defense.

ing statement in the courtroom, said Ricardo Morales, an FBI informant who said Otero confessed to the bombings, is a likely suspect himself because of his checkered past as a "secret police agent for Castro, mercenary and soldier of fortune."

Yoss said he did not intend to have Morales appear at the trial but did not explain why.

Yoss, in his opening statement, pictured Otero as a militant Cuban embittered at the U.S. government for interfering with exile operations directed against the Castro government.

"One person had the motive to commit these crimes; one person had the opportunity to commit these crimes," Yoss told the jury. "That man is Rolando Otero," he said, pointing at the defendant.

Yoss said Otero bombed the Miami police and Dade State Attorney's offices because they played a part in the arrest and prosecution of Roberto Lopez, a Cuban exile who in 1975 lost his hands when a bomb he was building to fit inside a hollowed-out book exploded accidentally.

"Otero idolized Lopez," Yoss

said. The motive for the bombing at the FBI headquarters in Miami, Yoss said, was that the FBI returned Lopez from the Dominican Republic.

What happened to Lopez, Yoss said, "caused a spark" of vengeance in Otero that was first nourished when the U.S. failed to provide aerial support during the 1961 Cuban exile invasion at the Bay of Pigs. Otero spent 22 months in a Cuban prison after his capture.

So far, little news has been revealed in this trial that was not brought out in the federal court trial of Otero in August. Otero was acquitted of the bombing acts in the federal trial because the evidence against him was circumstantial.

In the federal trial the defense took a more passive role in representing Otero. Clay and Rosenblatt, by contrast, are questioning the truthfulness of law enforcement testimony and plan to build a theory that Castro agents, not Otero, are responsible for the Miami bombings because Castro had the most to gain from disorder in Miami's exile community.

After Clay persisted, Wells summoned defense attorneys and prosecutors into his chambers and barred reporters from entering. Sources said he threatened to send the trial transcript to the Florida Bar if Clay did not produce testimony to substantiate his claims of involvement by foreign agents in the bombings.

Clay, continuing with his open-



Rolando Otero cuando lo arrestaron

Fijan fianza de

Mia New (S) of 1

Por **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Redactor de El Miami Herald

Rolando Otero, veterano de la invasión de Bahía de Cochinos saldrá de la cárcel mientras se prepara la apelación de su condena por el atentado dinamitero de 1975 en los armarios públicos del Aeropuerto Internacional de Miami, caso de que sus partidarios en La Pequeña Habana puedan reunir la suma de \$15,000.

Este dinero se utilizaría para pagar la prima sobre la fianza de \$150,000 fijada por el juez del condado de Okaloosa Walter Wells, quien decidió el viernes que Otero podría salir en libertad mientras la Corte Suprema de la Florida revisa su caso, con tal de que pague esa fianza.

"Por ahora no sé dónde vamos a conseguir ese dinero, pero sé que lo conseguiremos", dijo Bill Clay, abogado que representa a Otero.

Según Clay, el juez Wells quedó aparentemente impresionado por las declaraciones hechas ante él por diez residentes de La Pequeña Habana, quienes se comprometieron a servir de custodios de Otero si éste es puesto en libertad.

\$150,000 a R. Otero

14 Oct. 78

Los 10 están relacionados con una organización fraternal cubana que en un principio fue erróneamente identificada como orden masónica.

Otero está detenido actualmente en la Institución Correccional del Estado en Avon Park.

"Estaba de buen humor cuando hablé con él," dijo Clay.

Otero fue encausado inicialmente en Miami por un jurado investigador federal siendo acusado de dinamitar la oficina en Miami de la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI), dos oficinas de correos, las oficinas de la Seguridad Social, dos bancos, el Departamento de Policía de Miami y la oficina del Fiscal Estatal. Estos hechos se produjeron en octubre y diciembre de 1975.

Un jurado federal absolvió en Jacksonville a Otero de todas estas acusaciones, después de un proceso de tres semanas que fue presidido por el juez de distrito Norman C. Roettger.

Las autoridades estatales arrestaron entonces a Otero y presentaron contra él una serie de acusaciones, relacionadas con los mismos incidentes dinamiteros.

Otero Wants Social Work As 'Career'

Mia Hen (F) Col 6

3B

15 Oct 78

By JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writer

Rolando Otero, convicted bomber, has turned social worker after 19 months in prison.

"If I get out, it is because of the will of the people," Otero said Saturday in a telephone interview from Avon Park State Correctional Institute. "Therefore, I want to work for the benefit of the people."

Otero may get out of jail by the will of a Panhandle judge and the money of 10 Little Havana residents.

Circuit Judge Walter Wells of Okaloosa County, ruled Friday that Otero can be released from prison on \$150,000 bond while the Florida Supreme Court reviews his case.

Wells is the judge who sentenced Otero to 40 years in prison for the 1975 bombing of a locker at Miami International Airport. The case was moved from Miami because of heavy publicity here.

OTERO SAID Saturday that he was amazed and overjoyed at Judge Wells decision to allow him an appeal bond.

He said he thinks Wells "has become more politically aware of the world situation."

"I think he may have learned something since my trial in 1977," Otero said.

Wells blocked a political defense offered by Otero's trial attorneys, Bill Clay and Robert Rosenblatt. They wanted to show that intelli-



OTERO

gence agents for Fidel Castro had framed Otero because he had participated in two attempts to assassinate the Cuban dictator.

Otero was one of the youngest men to take part in the abortive invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. He was a paratrooper, captured and held for two years in Cuban jails.

He remains popular with many Cuban exiles in Miami. Otero's attorney, Clay, is working with 10 Little Havana residents to raise the \$15,000 premium for Otero's bond. They expect to free him this week.

IF RELEASED, Otero said he doesn't know where he would work.

"I am going to be free, but I have no idea what I am going to do," Otero said. "I don't know who can hire me."

Otero worked as a truck driver and electronics technician before his arrest. But he noted wryly on Saturday that "There is not much call for my real specialty."

That specialty is anti-Castro intelligence work, Otero testified in court.

In prison, Otero said he has translated an alcoholic-rehabilitation program into Spanish.

"The Latins don't understand the program in English and so I am trying to help," Otero said.

If released, he said he hopes to continue social service work of some kind.

While he waits, Otero said he keeps busy translating his alcoholic program, reading history books and writing letters to newspapers on political issues.

Sorprendido de que le admitan fianza

Miami (Sp) Col 2 p. 2 15 Oct 78

Quiere R. Otero trabajar por el pueblo

Por **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Redactor de El Miami Herald

Rolando Otero, convicto de un atentado dinamitero, se ha convertido en trabajador social después de 19 meses en prisión.

"Si quedo libre es por voluntad del pueblo. Por eso quiero trabajar en beneficio del pueblo", manifestó Otero el sábado en una entrevista telefónica desde el instituto correccional estatal en Avon Park.

Es probable que Otero salga del presidio, por dictamen de un juez del norte de la Florida y con la ayuda económica de 10 residentes de La Pequeña Habana.

Walter Wells, juez de circuito del condado de Okaloosa, falló el viernes que Otero podrá ser puesto en libertad bajo una fianza de \$150,000, mientras la Corte Suprema de la Florida revisa su caso.

Wells es el juez que sentenció a Otero a 40 años de cárcel por el atentado dinamitero de 1975 en los armarios públicos del Aeropuerto Internacional de Miami. El caso fue juzgado fuera de Miami debido a la amplia publicidad que recibió en esta ciudad.

Otero expresó el sábado que estaba sorprendido y sumamente contento por la decisión del juez Wells de permitirle prestar fianza.

Manifestó que considera que Wells ha aumentado su "conciencia política en cuanto a la situación mundial".

"Es posible que haya aprendido algo desde mi juicio en 1977", aseveró.

En el juicio, Wells bloqueó la defensa política

presentada por los abogados de Otero, Bill Clay y Robert Rosenblatt. Los abogados quisieron demostrar que los agentes del servicio de inteligencia de Fidel Castro habían tramado la incriminación de Otero, porque éste había participado en dos intentos de asesinato contra el dictador cubano.

Como paracaidista de la Brigada de Asalto 2506, Otero fue uno de los participantes más jóvenes en la infructuosa invasión de Bahía de Cochinos en 1961. En esa ocasión fue capturado y estuvo preso en cárceles cubanas durante dos años.

Otero continúa siendo muy popular entre muchos exiliados cubanos de Miami. Junto a 10 residentes de La Pequeña Habana, Clay, su abogado, está tratando de reunir \$15,000, la porción de la fianza total de Otero que hay que prestar en efectivo. El grupo espera lograr que Otero sea puesto en libertad esta semana.

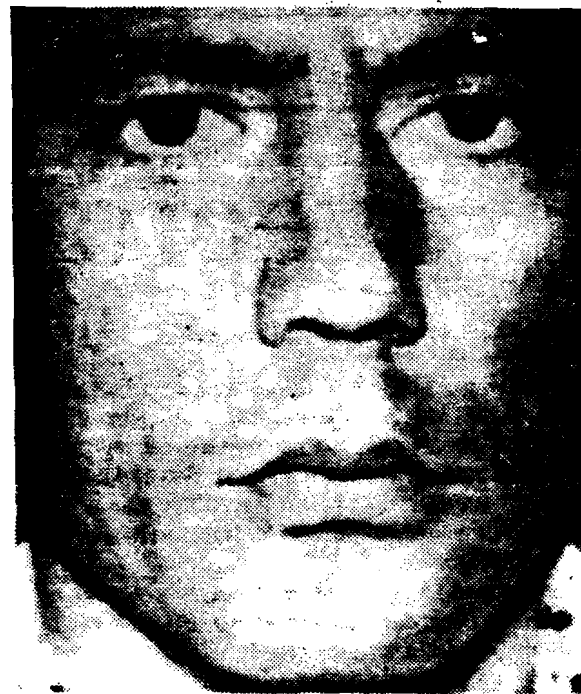
Otero manifestó que no sabe dónde trabajará al salir de prisión.

"Voy a quedar libre", dijo, "pero no tengo idea de lo que voy a hacer. No sé quién podrá contratarme".

Otero trabajó como chofer de camión y como técnico electricista antes de ser arrestado. Pero apuntó el sábado con ironía: "No hay mucha demanda para mi verdadera especialidad".

Esa especialidad es la del trabajo de inteligencia anticastrista, según declaró el propio Otero ante un tribunal.

Durante sus meses en prisión, explicó, se ha dedicado a traducir al español el material de un programa de rehabilitación de alcohólicos.



Rolando Otero

"Los latinos no entienden el programa en inglés, de modo que estoy tratando de ayudar", dijo, agregando que, si queda libre, quisiera continuar en alguna labor de servicio social.

Mientras espera el momento de su liberación, Otero indicó que se mantiene ocupado con las traducción del programa contra el alcoholismo, leyendo libros de historia y escribiendo cartas a periódicos sobre temas políticos.

Once amigos tienen su custodia

Mia Neu (Sp) col 1 p 2
22 Oct 78

Liberan a Otero, bajo fianza

Sonriente y bronceado, Rolando Otero regresó a Miami este fin de semana, puesto en libertad bajo fianza, pendiente de la apelación de su condena bajo cargos de terrorismo.

Otero, de 34 años, fue recibido en el aeropuerto

El Viernes 20 de octubre,
a las 11:30 PM.

de Opa-locka por su madre, Margarita, y varios amigos, mayormente de la Brigada 2506, que recaudaron los \$15,000 necesarios para prestar la fianza de \$150,000 ordenada por el juez de la corte de circuito Walter Wells, mientras la Corte Suprema del Estado de la Florida revisa su caso.

Acusado de haber puesto una bomba en una taquilla pública del Aeropuerto Internacional de Miami, el 17 de octubre de 1975, Otero fue juzgado por un tribunal federal de Jacksonville, declarado inocente y puesto en libertad. Pero entonces, en corte estatal fue juzgado y condenado por otra serie de cargos, relacionados con varios actos de terrorismo. Había empezado a cumplir la condena a 40 años en la cárcel de Avon Park cuando se produjo su libertad bajo fianza.

Un grupo de residentes de Miami, amigos suyos, abogaron ante el juez Wells por que Otero fuese puesto en libertad bajo fianza, y bajo la custodia de ellos. En el grupo figuran Armando López Estrada, Humberto López Pérez, Alfredo Guerrero, Pablo Ramírez Porta, Rosa Ramírez, Berta Reyes, Gloria Corbo, Rena Baquero, Margot Sardiñas López y Lázaro Pruneda. Los 11 convencieron al juez de que Otero no huiría del país si se le concedía la libertad bajo fianza, mientras espere su vista ante la Corte Suprema de la Florida.

Mientras estuvo encarcelado, Otero se dedicó a traducir publicaciones del inglés al español, para que los confinados de habla hispana pudieran utilizarlas. Ha dicho, además, que de salir en libertad trataría de dedicarse al trabajo social.

Afirman que la DINA pensó

Mia Nua (Sp) p. 2 col 2
25 Oct 78
Por JOE CRANKSHAW
Redactor de El Miami Herald

Un abogado de Miami reveló el martes que la policía secreta de Chile (DINA) consideró en una ocasión matar al exiliado cubano anticastrista Rolando Otero porque éste había rehusado asesinar al sobrino del depuesto presidente marxista de Chile Salvador Allende.

En su lugar, expresó el abogado defensor de Otero, Bill Clay, los chilenos entregaron a Otero a la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI) para que fuese juzgado por una serie de atentados dinamiteros durante los años 1975 y 1976 en Miami.

Otero fue declarado culpable de haber colocado una bomba en una taquilla pública del Aeropuerto Internacional de Miami y condenado a 40 años de prisión. Actualmente está en libertad bajo fianza, mientras apela la sentencia.

"Nunca fui en ninguna misión para matar a Andrés Pascal Allende", expresó Otero el martes, después que informaciones publicadas indicaban que él había suministrado el grueso de los datos sobre la conexión entre la DINA y los exiliados cubanos anticastristas. "Y nunca he dado ninguna información a nadie sobre cubanos o actividades anticastristas".

Las declaraciones de Otero fueron respaldadas por Eugene Propper, abogado del Departamento de Justicia que dirige la investigación sobre la conexión de DINA con exiliados cubanos, que resultó en el asesinato del ex canciller y ex embajador de Chile en los Estados Unidos Orlando Letelier y de su ayudante Ronni Moffit, en Washington, en 1976.

Propper declaró que Otero no había suministrado mucha información que pudiera ser utiliza-

matar a Otero

da en los esfuerzos de los Estados Unidos por someter a proceso de extradición al general Manuel Contreras y a otros ex funcionarios de DINA para traerlos a Washington y someterlos a juicio por el asesinato de Letelier y Moffit.

Otero declaró que cuando fue a Chile a fines de 1975 y principios de 1976, para recibir entrenamiento de funcionarios de DINA, le ofrecieron un "arreglo" mediante el cual los chilenos suministrarían armas y otros materiales a cubanos anticastristas, a cambio de que los cubanos le hicieran ciertos "favores" a los chilenos.

Otero afirmó que había rechazado el encargo de asesinato porque no podía ver en qué forma ello podría ayudar la causa de los cubanos anticastristas.

June 2, 1979, p. 2B.

Pickets Support Prisoners

By **JOE CRANKSHAW**
Herald Staff Writer

The transfer of the alleged ring-leader of a hunger strike at the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) in Homestead prompted a march of pickets outside the Miami federal courthouse Friday.

The 20 pickets, including convicted bomber Rolando Otero, were protesting the transfer of Gustavo Castillo from FCI to the West Palm Beach city jail last Wednesday.

Tom Keohane, FCI warden, ordered the transfer because he said Castillo was leading a strike of prisoners in the maximum security section of the plush, medium-security facility.

But friends and relatives said Castillo wasn't the ring-leader, merely the only person willing to translate the Cuban prisoners' complaints to the prison staff.

Castillo and Gaspar Jimenez were being held together at FCI while the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decides if they must be extradited to Mexico to stand trial for the June 1976 murder of the bodyguard of the Cuban consul in Merida, Mexico.

The two men have been in FCI since March 1978 when they were captured in the United States after escaping from a Mexican prison.

Federal authorities say that the two men were among four anti-Castro Cuban exiles who went to Merida in 1976 to kidnap the Cuban consul and hold him in exchange for

anti-Castro exile prisoners being held in Cuba.

THE CONSUL escaped, but his bodyguard was killed.

Castillo and Jimenez and a third man, Orestes Ruiz Hernandez, were captured by Mexican authorities. Hernandez is still in prison in Mexico, waiting a trial which officials there say won't take place until Castillo and Jimenez are extradited.

Marching in a circle outside the Miami federal courthouse Friday were Otero, Jimenez' wife, Castillo's mother, and 23 other persons. They carried signs urging Keohane to reconsider his decision to transfer Castillo, to allow the press to interview prisoners at FCI, and protesting Castillo's innocence in the incident.

OTERO, WHO was convicted of the October 1976 bombing of a Miami International Airport locker, is out on appeal after serving two years of a 35-year sentence. He said he was protesting because of his familiarity with the "abusive treatment of prisoners at FCI."

Keohane said that the new Privacy Act prevents him from talking about specific prisoners unless they sign written statements allowing him to discuss their case with the press. He said, however, that his investigation leads him to believe the hunger strike has nothing to do with the quality of food.

"We have two prisoners here, whom I am not naming, that have been in the jail as marshalls' prisoners for more than a year. I believe they just got dissatisfied with what is happening to their case, and seized on a meal that wasn't as well prepared as they would like to start a hunger strike.

"BECAUSE THEY have been here so long they are well-liked and some 80 other prisoners in the jail decided to go along with them. We got all kinds of complaints, protests, and comments about the quantity, quality and method of service of the food, but I believe it is something else entirely."