

Police skeptical of Omega 7 claim to Negrin's murder

By CAMILLE KENNY

Union City police are skeptical of claims that the anti-Castro terrorist group, Omega 7, was responsible for the machine-gun murder of Eulalio Jose Negrin on a Union City street Sunday morning.

Though a caller to the Associated Press on Sunday evening claimed Omega 7 was responsible, Police Chief Herman Bolte said he was unsure about the call.

"I'm not saying it isn't Omega 7, but I'm not accepting that as gospel," the chief said. "But the murder definitely has

political overtones."

Bolte noted that in previous terrorist acts for which Omega 7 claimed credit, the call to the wire service came almost immediately after the incident. The call Sunday night came 10 hours after Negrin was shot.

"It could have been anyone," Bolte said. "The call could have been to throw us off or to steal credit for the shooting."

FBI spokesman Michael McDonald said the agency is assisting Union City detectives in the investigation of the murder, but until there is "direct evidence that Omega 7 was involved" the FBI will not assume responsibility for the case.

McDonald would not comment on whether or not the FBI is in possession of a letter threatening Negrin's life which the Cuban activist said last week he had received from Omega 7.

Negrin, a controversial figure in the local Cuban community because of his participation last year in "dialogues" with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro as a member of the Committee of 75, was gunned down outside 711 19th St. shortly before 10 a.m. Sunday morning. Police said he had just left the home of his girlfriend on 11th Street.

Bolte said an autopsy showed Negrin was hit by only two

of at least 10 shots that were fired at him. He died instantly from a bullet which entered the left side of his neck and lodged in his right shoulder, Bolte said. The other bullet entered Negrin's left side. Eight more cartridges were found in and around Negrin's car, police said. Earlier reports said five bullets hit Negrin.

Police believe the murder weapon was either an automatic or semi-automatic .45 caliber submachine gun, and that the one or two masked men believed to be the assailants were not professional gunmen.

(Continued on page 4)

Cops question Omega 7 murder claim

(Continued from page 1)

"He (the murderer) fired a minimum of 10 shots at a couple of feet and only two hit," Deputy Chief Eugene Mullen said. "I wouldn't call that professional. If he had been using a handgun, he wouldn't have hit him (Negrin)."

When he was shot, Negrin was carrying a fully-loaded .38 caliber revolver—for which he had no permit—but never had an opportunity to pull it from its holster, Mullen said. Contrary to earlier reports, Negrin was not wearing a bullet-proof vest at the time of the shooting.

Mullen added.

Bolte said there are still no suspects in the case, but that detectives are questioning witnesses, including Negrin's 13-year-old son, who were in the area when Negrin was killed.

"Even his son is a poor witness because he was down in the back seat of the car," Bolte said. "All we know is that it was a silver car with a red roof. We don't know the license number or even if they were local plates."

Bolte said Negrin had often come to his office to talk about the death threats he said

he had received and his political aspirations.

"He wanted additional police protection but he had no evidence his life was in danger," Bolte said. "I felt, on occasion, he just wanted the support to look more important. I wondered if he was using the police to increase his publicity."

Bolte said Negrin did not tell him about the latest death threat the Cuban activist said he received last week. He added that a break in the case does not seem imminent.

"It's just going to involve a lot of legwork

and talking to witnesses," he said. "We're hoping more will come forward, but people aren't anxious to talk about this kind of thing."

Funeral arrangements for Negrin remain a mystery. Police said they believe Negrin's brother, Reinaldo Negrin of Elizabeth, is making the arrangements, but they do not know where services will be held. Reinaldo Negrin would not speak to a reporter yesterday, and said the funeral services would be private.

Negrin is also survived by his son, Richard, and a daughter. He was estranged from his wife.