

Grand jury zeroes in on Milian case

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Miami News Reporters

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A federal grand jury will begin hearing testimony tomorrow in an attempt to solve last year's terrorist bombing of radio executive Emilio Milián.

Seven witnesses, including two FBI agents, will be called before the opening session of the grand jury which comes two months after the FBI entered the case. Miami and Metro police, who have been investigating the case for a year, are working closely with federal officials.

The grand jury probe which officials hope will lead to indictments will begin almost a year to the day since Milián, outspoken foe of terrorism, lost both legs last April 30 after a bomb exploded in his car at radio station WQBA.

Among those subpoenaed to testify tomorrow are admitted anti-Castro revolutionary and convicted bomber Hector Cornillot; Rev. Manuel Angel Espinosa, a Hialeah minister; and Juan Luis Bonich and Miguel Castellon, two of Espinosa's closest associates.

A subpoena also has been prepared for Pablo Gustavo Castillo, who was acquitted of state bombing charges. Castillo is expected to appear before the grand jury in two weeks.

The 38-year-old Cornillot was questioned extensively about the Milián bombing last summer when he was picked up here behind the offices of the Cuban exile activist group, Alpha 66, after he escaped from Glades Correctional Institution in Palm Beach County.

State officials said recently, however, that Cornillot had been cleared of any involvement in the Milián case. The grand jury probably will want to find out



Milián

Espinosa

Cornillot

what Cornillot knows about others who may be involved in the Milián bombing.

In a recent interview in the Dade County Jail, Cornillot said he was cared for by anti-Castro revolutionaries while he was an escapee, but on the day of the Milián bombing he was with a friend in the northwest section. "I was nowhere near Milián's car. I have never seen the building of the radio station," Cornillot said.

He also said Espinosa and Ramón Donestevez were feuding with Milián. Donestevez, who like Espinosa actively favored peaceful coexistence with Castro's Cuba, was shot to death April 13, 1976, just 17 days before the Milián bombing.

The feud between Milián and Espinosa began after Milián, in a broadcast, complained about Espinosa's activities and urged his listeners not to send donations to the clergyman.

Cornillot is in jail now awaiting his May 31 trial on charges that he bombed an Air Canada ticket office

in Miami Beach in 1968.

He was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison for that bombing, but that action was overturned and the new trial date set because he was not adequately represented at the first trial. He also was convicted of a series of bombings in California in the late 1960s.

Espinosa, 38, is the minister of the Christian Evangelical Reformed Church in Hialeah. He has espoused trade relations with Cuba.

A former captain in Castro's army, Espinosa came to Miami in the early 1960s and for a few years was an anti-Castro revolutionary. He became a Pentecostal preacher in 1974 and in 1975 he went to Cuba in an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate the release of 48,000 Cubans who have relatives in the United States. He claims he still maintains contacts with the Cuban government.

Espinosa yesterday said Bonich was his assistant in the church and that Bonich and Castellon were "the people closest to me." He said Miami police questioned him about the Milián bombing and he denied any connection with it.

Three times since January the 30-year-old Castillo has been a target of federal and state investigators but each time he has eluded them.

In January, Castillo was brought to Miami from Puerto Rico on a material-witness warrant for federal grand jury questioning about the July 23 attempted kidnaping of the Cuban consul in Merida, Mexico, and the murder of the consul's bodyguard. Castillo testified briefly before the grand jury which was investigating whether the Mexican incident was planned in Miami.

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Minister questioned in Milian case

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HILDA INCLAN and LOUIS SALOME
Miami News Reporters

The Rev. Manuel Angel Espinosa said last night Miami police have questioned him about "alleged threats of violence" against Emilio Milian published in his church bulletin.

However, he said he told police he considered the statements to be "only strong criticism" of Milian, a WQBA radio executive and outspoken foe of terrorism who lost his legs when a bomb exploded in his car about one year ago.

Espinosa, pastor of the Christian Evangelical Reformed Church, which he founded in Hialeah less than two years ago, was subpoenaed to appear today before a federal grand jury investigating the bombing.

One source said the statements about Milian published in the church bulletin, "La Cruzada (The Crusade)," are one of the reasons the clergyman was subpoenaed.

The statements were published after a Milian radio commentary in which he criticized Espinosa for taking money from the members of his church to finance the costs of bringing their relatives here from Cuba, when, in fact, none was ever brought here.

Espinosa said he uses the money for his travels to the Cuban consulate of Jamaica in behalf of his church

members and their relatives in Cuba. He also financed a boat trip to Cuba in 1975 with that money, he said.

After Milian's first criticism of him, Espinosa wrote in the church publication that before he became a minister, he acted improperly but that "the blood of Christ cleansed me from all sin."

In a March 15, 1976, issue of the publication he wrote that after arriving in Miami from Cuba in the early 1960s and working at a number of odd jobs, he joined the "little groups of liberators, the leaders of this land, our Miami ...

"I started drinking, and in large quantities ... started telling tall tales, lies, issuing false checks and phony war communiques, and there are leaders here who signed them and newsmen who read the press releases on the air who know what I'm talking about. I became the scum of the earth."

Milian continued to criticize Espinosa on the air through March and April of last year.

Espinosa denied having any animosity toward Milian. He said the popular newscaster gave him radio time to respond to his criticism and also broadcast the church's public service notices.

Espinosa said Miami police questioned him twice: after the Milian bombing, and later after former Bay of Pigs Combatants Association President Juan José Peruyero was slain as he walked outside his home

Jan. 7.

Police, Espinosa said, singled him out for questioning "probably because of my revolutionary background."

Espinosa's past has been both anti-Castro and pro-Castro and has included admitted associations with terrorists.

Before 1959, Espinosa was a captain in Castro's rebel army. In the 1960s, he joined exile revolutionaries to fight Castro.

"I was a member of the Committee of Help to the Cuban Resistance," said Espinosa. He said the exile group engaged in anti-Castro propaganda.

Espinosa said he met with Dr. Orlando Bosch and other revolutionaries from groups like Alpha 66, which actively fought Castro, nearly every night to discuss plans of action against Castro. The meetings took place at Las Esquina de Tejas, a restaurant at SW 12th Avenue and 1st Street.

He said he never was a member of Cuban Power, the terrorist group led by Bosch, convicted terrorist fugitive.

Now Espinosa has switched back and is demanding the lifting of the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba, "to reunify the Cuban family." He said he became disillusioned with the anti-Castro struggle in 1970 and went to Bronx, N.Y., to train at the "Institute of Love, Power and Grace" to become a minister.

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Convocan a numerosos testigos

Jurado investiga atentado a Milían

Por GLORIA MARINA
Redactora de El Miami Herald

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Un año menos un día después del atentado dinamitero en que el popular comentarista radial Emilio Milían perdió ambas piernas, un gran jurado investigador federal comienza hoy sus indagaciones en el caso citando por lo menos a siete testigos.

Uno de los "numerosos" testigos que comparecerán ante el fiscal federal Jerome Sanford en las próximas semanas es Gustavo Castillo.

De acuerdo con una declaración jurada, la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI) tiene testimonio de un cubano con antecedentes penales que dijo haber oído decir a Castillo que Milían sería uno los objetivos de un ataque terro-

rista, antes del atentado contra el periodista el 30 de abril de 1976.

Castillo, un exiliado de 30 años de edad, recibió una citación judicial para comparecer ante el jurado investigador el 13 de mayo. Castillo, quien recientemente fue declarado inocente por un jurado estatal de haber colocado una bomba en la Universidad de Miami, negó rotundamente las acusaciones.

Estas son las primeras indagaciones del jurado investigador federal sobre el atentado contra Milían, y vienen dos meses después que el Secretario de Justicia, Griffin Bell, facultó a las autoridades federales para investigar el caso. Milían se recuperó del atentado y camina ahora con piernas artificiales.

Entre los testigos citados para hoy se encuentran dos agentes de la Oficina Federal de Investigaciones (FBI). También han sido citados el reverendo Manuel Angel Espinosa, tres asociados suyos, y Héctor Cornillot Llano, un exiliado de 38 años.

Espinosa, un ministro pentecostal de 38 años de edad, fue capitán del ejército rebelde de Cuba y después formó parte de distintos grupos anticastro. Ahora, Espinosa aboga por reclamos entre Washington y La Habana.

Espinosa dijo que lo habían citado ante el jurado investigador "por el mismo motivo por el cual, cuando sonó la bomba, me llamaron tres veces a la estación de policía. Porque soy una persona controversial".

Sus tres asociados también citados ante el jurado investigador son: Juan Luis Bonich, Miguel Castellón y Armando Fojón.

Cornillot fue convicto en 1972 y condenado a 30 años de cárcel por colocar una bomba en las oficinas de Air Canada en Miami Beach en 1968. Cornillot se escapó de la cárcel el 19 de abril de 1976, fue capturado el 18 de junio e interrogado intensamente por la policía en relación con el atentado a Milían.

Cornillot ahora aguarda un nuevo juicio por el atentado de 1968, ya que su primera condena fue revocada por no tener representación adecuada durante el juicio.

Manuel Ortega alega en declaraciones hechas en noviembre del pasado año ante el FBI y Sanford, que Castillo, un cubano de 30 años, a quien él identifica como miembro del Frente de Liberación Nacional de Cuba (FLNC), le dijo, "antes de abril de 1976", que se llevarían a cabo tres atentados en la lucha contra el gobernante cubano Fidel Castro.

Uno de los objetivos que, según Ortega, Castillo mencionó, era Milían. Las declaraciones de Ortega no acusan a Castillo de participar en ninguno de los tres atentados.

Según los documentos del FBI, Ortega explicó que el atentado contra Milían se debía a su crítica de dos miembros del FLNC quienes ahora están cumpliendo condenas por posesión de explosivos.

"Milían era un objetivo porque había estado hablando mal de Luis Crespo y Humberto López, dos miembros del FLNC, y por hablar en contra del terrorismo", declaró Ortega según los documentos.

Castillo negó las acusaciones de Ortega, afirmando que "ni tengo conocimientos en el caso de Milían, ni sé quiénes son los culpables".

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Miami Herald

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Federal Grand Jury Probe

TWO FBI Agents, 5 Others

Testify on Milian Bombing

By GLORIA MARINA
And JOE CRANKSHAW
Herald Staff Writers

Two FBI agents and five other persons, including a controversial Cuban Pentecostal minister, testified Friday before a Miami federal grand jury investigating the April 1976 bombing of W/QBA radio announcer Emilio Milian Friday.

All five of the Cuban Americans said they were questioned about Mario Solano, a 25-year-old Cuban exile with a lengthy record of convictions for grand larceny and breaking and entering.

Hector Cornillot Llano, now awaiting a new trial on his conviction in the 1968 bombing of the Air Caspida offices on Miami Beach, did not testify.

CORNILLOT, who was to have been the first witness, was sentenced to 30 years for the Air Caspida bombing. He escaped from the Belle Glade Correctional Institute April 19, 1976, 11 days before Milian was maimed.

Cornillot Llano, his lawyer, Max Lurie, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jerome Sanford spent about 40 minutes in a witness room.

He said he left, saying that his client had been excused until a later date.

His legs would be an "extended" and exhaustive investigation into the Milian case and political terrorism in South Florida.

THE REV. Manuel Angel Espinosa said that Solano had asked him about Belle Glade and if he could go there with the minister to "see a prisoner," but then did not go when he learned that he would have to be fingerprinted.

Cornillot later escaped from prison and met a waiting car, which sped him away.

The Rev. Espinosa said he knew nothing of Solano's alleged criminal record until shown Solano's picture by police after the slaying of Juan José Peruyero.

The controversial minister, who favors renewed relations with Cuba, was quizzed for an hour-and-a-half about his views that differed with those of Milian.

Another witness, Armando Fojón, 53-year-old factory worker, said the panel quizzed him about

his son, Armando Fojón Jr., and his escape from Cuba, and about Solano.

Cuban officials and if he was receiving instructions from the U.S. State Department.

The Rev. Espinosa also said the jury questioned him about his trips to Jamaica, his contacts with Solano's landlord, Isidoro Rodriguez-Capel, also was quizzed about his former tenant.