

# Otero Defense Attacks Missing Accuser

1-12-77-1B

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-

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-

Turn to Page 8B Col. 5

# Not Trying Castro, Judge Tells Defense

1-12-77-86

## FROM PAGE 1B

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.

# Not Trying Castro, Judge Tells Defense

1-12-77-86

## FROM PAGE 1B

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.