

Detective courted two Tick-Talks informants

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By JOHN KATZENBACH
Herald Staff Writer

On the one hand, there was Ricardo (Monkey) Morales Navarette, admitted terrorist, spy, murderer and trafficker in narcotics. On the other, there was Carlos Fernando Quesada, dapper, confessed cocaine dealer, onetime government informant and prosecution witness.

In between, playing one man against the other, was a Miami police officer.

Detective Diosdado Diaz, lead investigator in the state's huge Operation Tick-Talks probe, describes

Thursday how he cultivated Morales and Quesada as informants in late 1980, before deciding to use information from Morales and make Quesada the target of the probe.

Last August, Quesada was among 48 persons arrested by detectives in the sweep that became known as Tick-Talks because of the positioning of a recording device in a wall clock.

It was Quesada's house that Miami police bugged. The charges against the Tick-Talks defendants are based largely on evidence from telephone taps and the device planted in Quesada's clock.

Defense attorneys are trying to have those recordings — more than 1,000 hours worth — suppressed by Dade Circuit Judge Gerald Kogan.

Charges are not being pursued at this time against seven of those arrested. The other 41 are to go on trial in August.

Diaz has been testifying in the suppression hearing off and on for the last two weeks. The hearing itself has gone on five weeks, and is expected to continue for two to three more weeks.

Morales is scheduled to take the witness stand next week. In deposition, he has admitted killing an anti-

Castro rival, carrying out 15 to 25 bombings in the Miami area and, while chief of counterespionage for the Venezuelan secret police in 1976, helping supply the material for a bomb that blew up a Cubana Airlines DC-8, killing 73 persons.

Defense attorneys are trying to show that Miami police had no reason to resort to wiretaps to penetrate the drug-smuggling organization they believed Quesada headed, because he already was cooperating with Diaz. Under Florida law, police must dem-



Morales

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Informant's credibility doubted

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onstrate that they have exhausted every other investigative means before they turn to wiretaps.

In a halting, frustrated manner prompted in part by the apparent animosity between him and defense attorney Doug Williams, Diaz told Thursday how he learned from Morales of Quesada's operation. "There was a rift between Morales and Quesada," Diaz said. "It was over the heroin matter."

Morales has said that he split with the organization because his associates decided to smuggle heroin. This offended his sense of right and wrong, he told police and prosecutors.

How did Quesada feel about Morales? "According to Mr. Quesada, Mr. Morales was acting crazy," Diaz said.

Quesada had been a federal informant in 1978. He and Morales had been friends and associates for a number of years. Quesada watched Diaz's testimony from the audience, occasionally shaking his head, apparently in disbelief.

Complicated relationships among

police, drug dealers and terrorists form a backdrop to the Tick-Talks suppression hearing. CIA agents, assassinations and international acts of sabotage all have been bandied about the courtroom with impunity.

The Tick-Talks case relies to a great extent on the credibility of Morales. The 42-year-old onetime CIA operative is now in hiding. Diaz testified that only he and two other Miami policemen know where Morales is. He said Morales will testify next week.

Defense attorneys have questioned Morales' credibility even before he takes the stand. Williams announced to Judge Kogan that he hopes to call prominent lawyers George Yoss, Hank Adorno and William Richey to testify concerning Morales' truthfulness.

"Each will testify that none of the three of them would believe Ricardo Morales under oath, [without] substantial, objective, extensive corroboration," Williams said.

Yoss is chief assistant Dade state attorney. Adorno and Richey formerly held that No. 2 spot in the Dade state attorney's office.