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# Monkey Morales

## Key Biscayne quarrel



Ricardo (Monkey) Morales

Ricardo (Monkey) Morales, a key witness in the recent Operation Tick-Talks drug case and an admitted terrorist, was fighting for his life today at Mercy Hospital after being shot in the head at a Key Biscayne restaurant, Metro police said.

Morales, 42, was shot once during a quarrel just before midnight at Cherry's, the lounge at Rogers on the Green restaurant, 4000 Crandon Blvd., a secluded eating and drinking establishment bordering a golf course near Crandon Park, police said.

The man who shot Morales escaped, but police said they know who he is and were searching for him today.

Doctors would not discuss Morales' condition, but Metro homicide Detective Steven Roadruck, lead investigator in the case, said Morales' chances of surviving the shooting are "very slim." He said doctors do not expect Morales to live.

"... (Morales) was having a drink and was involved in some type of argument and was shot," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski.

Wesolowski would not reveal the name of the suspected gunman, but he said the shooting was not related to Morales' activities as a police informant.

"I have nothing to lead us to that," Wesolowski said.

# shot in head

## wounds Tick-Talks witness

• This report was compiled by Miami News reporters Luisa Yanez, Manuel Mendoza and Betsy August.

A preliminary investigation indicates the dispute was over payment for a drink by a woman who was with Morales, Roadruck said.

"It's going to be a spur-of-the-moment, get-out-your-gun, shoot-'em-up," he said.

Roadruck said Morales had a gun, but didn't reach for it.

Police would not say how many people accompanied Morales or what kind of gun was used to shoot him.

About 15 people were inside the lounge when police arrived, but many customers left immediately after the shooting at management's request, Roadruck said.

Detectives at Mercy said Morales was kept "under observation" by doctors early this morning and had not undergone surgery.

The widely publicized police informant served as the state's star witness earlier this year in Operation Tick-Talks, a controversial drug investigation conducted by Miami police.

The prosecution fell apart in September when Dade Circuit Court Judge Gerald Kogan dismissed crucial wiretap evidence.

Kogan threw out the evidence partly because he considered Morales an unreliable informant. Kogan said the judge who originally signed the wiretap order had not been aware of Morales' character.

Stripped of about 1,000 hours of taped evidence, Dade State Attorney Janet Reno decided not to prosecute.

In April, during pre-trial depositions in the case, Morales garnered headlines by admitting that he had committed a long list of terrorist acts in the 1960s and '70s.

Morales, an ex-CIA agent and anti-Castro terrorist, said he had a hand in 15 bombings.