

Monkey Morales shot in Key Biscayne

Mia News coll 1A

21 Dec 82 (Metro)



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Miami News Reporters

Ricardo (Monkey) Morales, a key witness in the recent Operation Tick-Talks case and an admitted terrorist, was in critical condition at a hospital today after being shot at a Key Biscayne restaurant, Metro police said.

Morales was shot about midnight at Rogers on the Green Restaurant, 4000

Crandon Blvd., a secluded eating and drinking establishment bordering a golf course near the Miami Seaquarium. Police say Morales was shot by another customer during an argument.

The man who shot Morales escaped, police said.

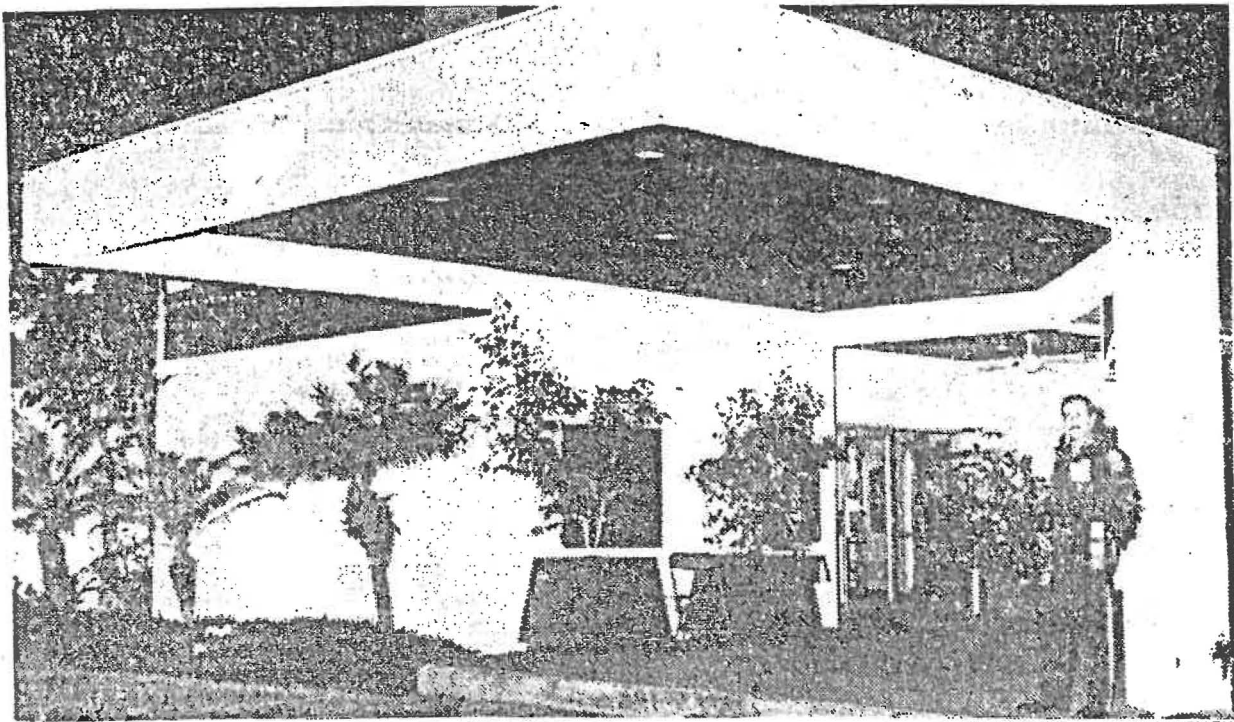
"... (Morales) was having a drink and was involved in some type of argument and was shot," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski.

Wesolowski would not reveal the name of the suspected to be the gunman, or the subject of the argument, 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. "Because I know what the argument was about, I know it doesn't involve his police activities."

Please see **MONKEY, 6A**

Ricardo (Monkey) Morales



The Miami News - LENNY COHEN

Policeman stands guard outside Rogers on the Green restaurant, scene of Morales' shooting

MONKEY, from 1A

Wesolowski would not say if Morales was accompanied by anyone else when he was shot. He also declined to identify where the bullet hit Morales or what kind of gun was used in the shooting.

Morales, 42, was transported to Mercy Hospital, where he was listed in critical condition. Detectives at Mercy said he was kept "under observation" 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.

More than 40 suspects were arrested, allegedly for participating in a massive, multi-million-dollar cocaine smuggling ring.

The prosecution of the defendants fell apart in September when Dade Circuit Court Judge Gerald Kogan dismissed crucial wiretap evidence that supported the prosecution's case.

Kogan threw out the evidence partially because he considered Morales an unreliable informant. Kogan

said the judge who originally signed the wiretap order was not aware of Morales' character.

Stripped of about 1,000 hours of tape 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, including supplying the explosives used to blow up a Cubana Airlines plane in 1976. Seventy-three people, who Morales referred to as "communist agents," perished in the mid-air explosion over Barbados.

Morales also informed the FBI in 1968 that he was involved in bombing activities with another anti-Castro terrorist, Orlando Bosch. Bosch is still serving time in a Venezuelan jail for the Cubana Airlines bombing.

Miami News reporter Manuel Mendoza also contributed to this story.