

**ORIGINAL**

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date November 6, 1968

MAX GONZALEZ, also known as Max Gorman, was interviewed at the Miami International Airport. He was advised of his rights, signed a waiver of rights form, and furnished the following information:

He has been involved actively in the International Anti-Communist Brigade (IACB), also known as Secret Army Organization (SAO), for about four years. He said that, to his knowledge, FRANK FIORINI is the only IACB leader, although he feels that for the operation which ended abortively at Belize, British Honduras, FIORINI must have been working with some group or persons outside the IACB as FIORINI does not have the finances or organizational ability to mount such an operation. Upon reflection, however, he conceded that the cash outlay for this venture had been minimal in that the men were not paid for their services, furnished their own transportation, and, for the most part, their own food, lodging and equipment. He also indicated on reflection that the organizational work for the operation had actually been very slipshod and amateurish.

He said that any indication by FIORINI that the true leader of the expedition was a Colonel FRANCISCO QUESADA would be, in his opinion, a falsehood. He said that he believes Colonel QUESADA does not exist but is a fictitious scapegoat upon whom FIORINI would place responsibility for this operation in the event it misfired. In support of this, he read from a leaflet concerning QUESADA which had been furnished several months ago by FIORINI to those persons who had responded to a newspaper ad calling for volunteers to fight communism in Latin America. This leaflet described QUESADA as a Latin, born in Argentina, who had seen action in four wars, had served in all branches of the services, was a pilot, and an expert in conventional, guerrilla and counter-guerrilla warfare. QUESADA was further described in the leaflet as the "prime organizer of the underground in Latin America. A price of \$100,000 has been placed on his head by a communist government which sent agents to kill him and his

skyp

On 11/2/68 at Miami, Florida File # Miami 2-192-669

SA FRANCIS E. GIBBONS:sll Date dictated 11/5/68

"associates. He has been captured and tortured by two foreign armies. . . At the present time he is traveling throughout Central and South America and is raising funds to form a mercenary army to fight the communists throughout the Americas."

Regarding the above alleged QUESADA background, GONZALEZ noted that FIORINI considers himself an expert in conventional, guerrilla and counter-guerrilla warfare, has claimed to have seen action in several wars, is a pilot, claims to have been captured and tortured by the Japanese while serving as a United States Marine in World War II, and again, by the BATISTA government in Cuba while serving with the CASTRO forces in Cuba before the downfall of BATISTA. He further noted that FIORINI traveled in Central and South America earlier this year, reportedly in an effort to make arrangements for the exchange of political prisoners still held by CASTRO, but perhaps to also raise funds for the just-concluded unsuccessful operation against communist Cuba. He said that based on these similarities in the backgrounds of FIORINI and QUESADA, whom, to his knowledge, no one but FIORINI has ever seen, he feels that Colonel FRANCISCO QUESADA is a fictitious, and idealized, FRANK FIORINI.

Skip

He said that the IACB plan before leaving Miami was to train in Guatemala for approximately six weeks, then proceed by boat to Cuba on November 1, 1968, and to conceal themselves in a pre-arranged Sierra Maestra Mountains, Oriente Province, hideout until next January 1, when a raid to capture political or military prisoners would be carried out, these prisoners to be later exchanged for Cuba-held political prisoners. He said that he and all the others involved were aware of this general outline of the planned operation before departing from Florida individually or in small groups. He added, however, that he was not to participate in the Cuba phase of the operation. His part, he said, was to furnish his Spanish language ability during the training period in Guatemala and to give Spanish lessons

to those in the force who did not speak Spanish. He was to remain with the volunteer group until their departure for a sea rendezvous with the craft which would take them into Cuba. He was to return to his Florida home.

He said that the plans to train in Guatemala had to be changed because it was learned, after the IACB group arrived in Mexico, that communist guerrilla activity in Guatemala was too intense at the time to permit training to be undertaken there, although he spent several weeks in Guatemala "reconnoitering," escorted by an unknown Indian guide who was paid for his services and had no connection with the IACB. He added that to his knowledge, none of the other members of the IACB group entered Guatemala.

He recalled that he departed Miami in behalf of the IACB operation alone on August 16, 1968, by Greyhound Bus, to Harlingen, Texas, where an undisclosed male picked him up, by prearrangement, in a 1968 maroon two-door hardtop Chevrolet with a Florida license tag. He and his companion, whom he declined to name, entered Mexico at Matamoros, near Brownsville, Texas, on approximately August 22, 1968. He said that he entered Mexico as MAX GORMAN and showed the Mexican border guards a Florida driver's license in that name. He said that he had purchased this driver's license, already filled out, in Florida several weeks previously especially for this operation. He declined to furnish the name of the person who sold him the driver's license.

He said that he and his companion proceeded inside Mexico to Ciudad Mante for about two days, then to San Andres Tuxtla for one day, then to Oaxaca, where the driver of the car went his separate way. At Oaxaca, he picked up an M-1 carbine and some ammunition from an undisclosed person, then proceeded by bus to San Cristobal Las Casas. He looked over this area for a possible base camp but did not find a suitable site. He then proceeded to Comitán, again by bus, where he met three others of the IACB group. From Comitán, he proceeded into Guatemala, accompanied by an Indian guide, as previously mentioned, and confirmed during his several weeks inside that country

MM 2-192

previously-received information that it would be inhospitable, because of communist guerrilla activity, for IACB training purposes. Upon his return, he found an IACB base camp already set up outside Comitán, about one mile from the Guatemalan border.

He said that the base camp near the Guatemala-Mexico border was broken up about the 23rd of October, no real training actually having been conducted, and those, number not disclosed, encamped there had proceeded to Merida, Mexico, to join other IACB members already at Merida. All 13 in the force finally converged at a beach encampment near Progreso, a port city a short distance from Merida. This encampment was called Camp Sand, in contrast to the mountain encampment, which had been called Camp Mud.

Around the 28th of October, they boarded the "Amigo," a Mexican charter fishing boat, at Progreso, and headed to sea for a rendezvous with another craft. The others were to transfer to the second boat and proceed to Cuba, while he was to return to Progreso in the "Amigo," then to return to Florida. He said he had no information concerning the identification of the second boat or its passengers.

He said that the captain of the "Amigo" was not intimidated in any way, was paid in Mexican pesos the equivalent of about \$250 American money, and cooperated fully with the IACB group in attempting to effect the sea rendezvous with a second craft. He said the problem was that FRANK FIORINI was too secretive with the "Amigo" captain about their sea destination as regards the course which had to be set to reach it. He had the feeling that they were a little early and that FIORINI was directing a zigzag course as a means of delaying their arrival at the rendezvous point. At any rate, the "Amigo" eventually ran aground on the Turneffe Islands near Belize, British Honduras. He recalled that the "Amigo" captain had warned FIORINI that he, the captain, was unfamiliar with these waters. It was obvious to GONZALEZ, from previous course settings by FIORINI, that the vessel was off course prior

7  
skp

to the grounding, but FIORINI insisted on directing movements of the "Amigo."

skip  
J

He said that the "Amigo" had to limp into Belize as a result of the grounding for refueling and repairs. At Belize, those aboard the "Amigo" were detained, after several inspections by British Honduras Customs and Immigration authorities. These and the expedition members who had been left near the site of the grounding, awaiting the return of the "Amigo," were eventually charged with illegal entry into British Honduras and were jailed at Belize. Their arms and ammunition were seized and, after a hearing at Belize on November 1, 1968, all were ordered deported from British Honduras.

He said that contrary to public reports, no automatic weapons were seized by British Honduras authorities, nor were any in the possession of the IACB group at any time, to his knowledge. He added that he had carried no arms or ammunition of any description into Mexico with him and knows of no other IACB member who transported arms or ammunition from the United States into Mexico.

He said that he knows of no stolen or rented cars possibly involved in the IACB operation and added that he had only seen one car in use in Mexico by the group. He declined to describe this car but said that it was not new and apparently belonged to one of the IACB members.

He said that he had not been issued, in connection with this IACB operation, a blank birth certificate, United States Army honorable discharge papers, or a blank Florida Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title, and knows nothing of any of the others being issued any of these documents.

He said that the 13 Americans arrested in British Honduras were the only persons involved, to his knowledge, in the IACB operation, outside of any participants who may have been aboard the craft with which the "Amigo" failed to rendezvous.

He said that RAY SANDSTROM, a Fort Lauderdale, Florida, attorney, is the legal advisor for the IACB. He said that he has met SANDSTROM only once or twice and added that SANDSTROM took no active participation in preparations for the IACB operation and was not seen by GONZALEZ at any of the preparatory meetings which he attended.

He said that GERALDINE SHAMMA, who resides in Hollywood, Florida, had been associated with FRANK FIORINI and the IACB for several years in unsuccessful attempts to arrange for the ransom of political prisoners in Cuba, but had reportedly terminated her relationship with FIORINI some months ago over the latter's plans to conduct military operations against Cuba. SHAMMA reportedly felt that such efforts were futile. GONZALEZ described SHAMMA as a United States citizen who had lived in Cuba for many years. She had been married to a wealthy Cuban businessman and was imprisoned by the CASTRO regime for counter-revolutionary activities. In approximately 1963, she was one of those ransomed through the efforts of a New York attorney (JAMES DONOVAN), and since that time has involved herself in plans to ransom other Cuba-held prisoners.

He said that the owner of the West Side Democratic Club, Miami, where several IACB meetings were held to make plans concerning the just-terminated operation, has no connection with the IACB and was even unaware of the IACB, as such.

He said that he has considered the possibility that the whole operation was a hoax perpetrated by FIORINI as a means of obtaining publicity. However, he has been unable, since the British Honduras arrested the group, to extract any information from FIORINI which might substantiate this theory. He continued that if the operation was a hoax, he had been completely taken in as, until the past few days, he was convinced that the expedition had a landing in Cuba as its objective and that a rendezvous with a second boat would have taken place had it not been for the "Amigo" running aground.

MM 2-192

He said that due to his participation in the IACB operation, he had missed a Miami court date regarding non-payment of a long overdue bill for newspaper advertising in connection with a former business venture. He said he expected to be arrested by the Dade County Department of Public Safety in connection with this missed court date, but felt that satisfactory arrangements could be made for a new court date without his being jailed in the interim.

The following description of GONZALEZ was obtained from interview and observation:

Name	MAX GONZALEZ
Alias	MAX GORMAN
Date of birth	December 29, 1929
Place of birth	New York City
Height	5'6"
Weight	130 pounds
Hair	Brown, receding at temples
Eyes	Blue
Characteristics	Broken, discolored teeth
Residence	3015 Northwest 170th Street, Miami, Florida
Occupation	Salesman
Last employment	GM Used Cars, 2480 Northwest 36th Street, Miami, Florida