

Negrin likes the media spotlight...

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...But the previously-obscure Cuban exile says he doesn't enjoy the heat

By PAUL MOSES

Eulalio Negrin slouched on a bench in the Union City police station yesterday afternoon, sucking a hand-rolled cigar while discussing his explosion into prominence—and seeking relief from the enemies he believes are out to kill him.

With intense brown eyes and dark hair that flips over his forehead, Negrin shook his head slowly, as if in disbelief.

For years, the 38-year-old Cuban exile struggled to get into the public eye, running disastrous campaigns for the state Senate and for mayor of Union City, where he lives. But in a region where political might is highly respected, he was a bluffer; a politician with many ideas, but no supporters.

Negrin, who said he still works at the General Motors plant in Englewood, finally crept into the spotlight when he joined a group of exiles who were negotiating the release of prisoners from communist Cuba.

And then anti-Castro revolutionaries, who believed him to be a traitor, bombed a tiny Weehawken community action storefront he ran, according to the FBI.

The papers and television stations called him a leader because of the bombing.

Some members of the Cuban exile community in North Hudson said it was absurd for Negrin to be considered their spokesman. When they saw how he rocketed to public attention, they said the bomb must have been planted by Castro sympathizers in order

to build up Negrin's image as a leader in the English-language media.

Negrin had been referred to as "only token opposition" in news accounts when he ran for mayor in 1978.

However, at a news conference Tuesday, he was able to call his shots, charging local police with failing to protect him and the Rev. Andres Reyes, a fellow exile who negotiated with Castro.

Because of the bombings, Union City's 15-man detective bureau must deal with the high-powered cloak-and-dagger atmosphere of revolutions besides handling the normal accumulation of purse-snatchings, burglaries, tire-slashings and shoplifting.

Detective Capt. Wilbur Nelson said, "We're sitting on a powderkeg," while his men interviewed a friend of Negrin's. "We're going to be extremely careful, and we're doing our job."

The department already anticipated at least one bomb threat against Rev. Reyes' parish, Holy Family Church, and had searched a hall containing 300 people before the threatening call was made.

Negrin, meanwhile, sits in the hallway outside Nelson's office and complains he is not given protection.

But the danger he is in apparently doesn't deter him from discussing the "mafia" that is allegedly after him.

"I don't care about all the publicity," he continues. "I've got a job to do."



Eulalio Negrin
Says his enemies want to kill him