

Sleuth testifies Arocena admitted Omega 7 role

NEW YORK (UPI) — Eduardo Arocena, charged with masterminding the violent anti-Castro activities of Omega 7, once admitted he was "Omar," leader of the terrorist group, a detective testified.

Detective Robert Brandt said Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan he and an FBI agent met Arocena, 41, a former New Jersey dockworker, in September 1982, when Arocena was under suspicion as a member of Omega 7.

They met at a motel near Newark Airport where Arocena first told the two law enforcement officials he was a "representative" of the infamous "Omar" — the commander-in-chief of Omega 7 who signed the group's communiques, Brandt said.

At a second meeting, Brandt said he confronted Arocena.

"I said, 'Eddie, are you Omar?'"

Arocena was at first defensive, Brandt said, then pressed his hands to his temple.

"He thought for a while," Brandt said. "Then he said, 'OK — I'm Omar.'"

Brandt said he advised Arocena of his right to remain silent, but that Arocena signed two waiver forms.

In their conversations, Brandt said Arocena admitted he built the Omega 7 bombs and orchestrated the group's mur-

ders and bomb-attacks.

Arocena also told them he ordered the 1979 machine-gun murder of a Cuban-American businessman in Union City, and defended the action because the victim supported a "dialogue" between U.S. leaders and Fidel Castro, Brandt said.

Arocena also described a planned assassination of five Cuban diplomats as they were chauffeured through New York City in 1980, the detective said. Arocena said he called off the plot at the last minute when he discovered the diplomatic driver was alone in the car, according to Brandt.

"He said he didn't want to kill one Cuban, he wanted to kill five Cubans," Brandt said.

But an Omega 7 lieutenant disobeyed orders, Arocena told Brandt, and carried out the assassination plot anyway, gunning down the driver.

In the meetings, Brandt said Arocena also admitted directing the aborted 1980 car-bomb murder of the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, as well as a score of other bombings.

Arocena is charged with 26 counts, including first-degree murder, attempted murder, conspiracy, racketeering and perjury. The charge of first-degree murder of a diplomat carries a mandatory life sentence.

Lawyers for Arocena deny he has any connection to Omega 7, and label the government's charges "a fairytale."