

2 indicted in death of exile here

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Two sealed indictments have been handed down by the Dade Grand Jury in the first breakthrough in connection with the six assassinations of well-known Cuban exiles during the terrorist campaign of the past 30 months.

Jesus Lazo and Valentine Hernandez were indicted Sept. 29 for the Feb. 21, 1975 murder of outspoken Cuban exile Luciano Nieves.

Both Lazo, 30, and Hernandez, 33, have been suspects in the case since Nieves, 43, an advocate of peaceful coexistence with Cuba, was gunned down Feb. 21, 1975. He was shot to death about 1 p.m. in the parking lot of Variety Children's Hospital where he had brought his ailing 11-year-old son.

Sources said the whereabouts of Lazo and Hernandez were unknown. Other sources said the two men were hiding in Latin America, but there were reports they were still in this country, though not in Miami.

A police bulletin issued here Monday said the two were wanted for first-degree murder.

The bulletin said: "Lazo should be considered armed and dangerous, and may be in the company of Valentine Hernandez." Lazo was described as 5-feet-7, 130 pounds, with black hair and hazel eyes.

Hernandez "should be considered armed and dangerous and is known to use explosives," the bulletin said. Hernandez was last seen in the area of 13655 NE 3rd Ct. Apt. 1, North Miami.

He is described as 5-feet-8, 155 pounds, with black hair and dark eyes. He sometimes sports a mustache and wears glasses. Authorities said both men are members of Pragmatista, a small Cuban exile group dedicated to the overthrow of Castro.

About a month after Nieves' murder, warrants were issued for the arrest of Lazo and Hernandez on other charges.

Lazo is charged in an outstanding warrant with violation of probation stemming from an incident in 1974 when he was charged with carrying a concealed firearm.

Hernandez also is being sought on extortion and aggravated assault charges filed in 1973. Three

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2 men named in slaying of Cuban exile

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years ago, Hernandez was arrested and brought to trial for allegedly breaking a chair over Nieves' head in a Little Havana restaurant. But during that trial, Hernandez disappeared and police have not seen him since.

At the time of the alleged assault, Hernandez reportedly said he hated Nieves because of his philosophy of coexistence with Castro.

Nieves was hit in the chest with at least six .45 caliber bullets fired by two gunmen, three days after announcing in a Spanish magazine that he would return to Cuba and challenge Castro in an election.

Although few took him seriously, he was recognized in the exile community to have angered the large and vehement anti-Castro element.

In trying to solve the almost continuous series of killings, by bombs and guns, in the past 30 months, police determined that Cuban politics, as well as criminal extortion and drugs, have played a part in the terrorism.

The Lazo and Hernandez indictments are the first charges brought against anyone in connection with the murder, although three men have been convicted in connection with attempted bombings.

The reign of terror and death in Miami began with the murder of anti-Castroite Jose Elias de la Torriente, 69, April 12, 1974.

This was followed by Nieves' murder; then came the Oct. 31, 1975 bombing death of Rolando (El Tigre) Masferrer, 58; the shooting of Ramon Donestevéz on April 14, 1976; the murder of Andres Purriños in downtown Miami May 20, 1976 and the slaying of Jesus Gonzalez-Cartas, known as "El Extranño" (The Stranger), May 30, 1976.