

# Paroled Cuban exile back in custody

By GINO PONTI

Of The STAR Staff

Cuban exile Antonio de la Cova, 35, was arrested by federal marshals near Los Olmos Condominium in Río Piedras Tuesday morning for alleged parole violations.

De la Cova was sentenced to 15 years in prison in Florida in August 1976 after being convicted of seven counts of conspiracy and possession and transportation of explosives. He was paroled in 1982 and moved to Puerto Rico. One of the conditions of his parole was that he not become involved in politics.

However, de la Cova became editor of the right-wing Cuban newspaper *Crónica* and wrote for the publication. He was forced to relinquish the post by federal authorities who felt this was a violation of the ban on political involvement.

Tuesday, U.S. Marshal Robert Salazar said deputy marshals arrested de la Cova at about 7:30 a.m. as he was about to get into his car. Salazar said de la Cova offered no resistance and is being held at the State Penitentiary in Río Piedras

pending a hearing for possible revocation of his parole.

Salazar said his office received a warrant for de la Cova's arrest Monday from the U.S. Parole Commission in New York. The warrant, Salazar said, made a reference to the violation as participation in political activities but it did not go into detail or give any specifics.

De la Cova is also facing a civil suit in San Juan Superior Court for \$75,000 in damages over publication of autopsy photos in *Crónica* of slain travel agent Carlos Muñiz Varela, also Cuban. Also named in the suit, filed by Muñiz Varela's widow, are *Crónica*, the University of Puerto Rico's Institute of Forensic Medicine, and Pathologist Rafael Criado, who reportedly released the autopsy photos.

An attorney for Muñiz's widow, Rubén Nigaglioni, told Judge Peter Ortiz that the photos of the autopsy, published in two editions of *Crónica*, should be returned to the institute from which they were "illegally and improperly" taken.

De la Cova admitted in court that he was the person who obtained the photos from Criado, signing the name Antonio

González Abreu. However, he insisted that he informed Criado that he wanted only "public documents" and that he had been sent by his wife, Gloria Gil, who is also the editor of *Crónica*.

Muñiz Varela, 26, a supporter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, used to organize trips to Cuba for his countrymen through his agency, Viajes Varadero, in Puerto Nuevo.

On April 28, 1979, Muñiz Varela was gunned down by men in a passing car near his home in Guaynabo. He died at the Río Piedras Medical Center two days later and an anti-Castro clandestine exile group, Comando Cero, took responsibility for the murder in a telephone call to a Miami radio station. To date there have been no arrests in the killing and the civil suit concerning the autopsy photos is still pending.

Last week, however, in a separate court action on an injunction petition by Muñiz Varela's widow, Superior Court Judge Peter Ortiz issued an order prohibiting *Crónica* from further publication of the photographs and ordered them returned to the Institute of Forensic Medicine.