

Publisher's link to police cited

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A right-wing Cuban exile magazine publisher, Antonio de la Cova, apparently had easy and continuous access to confidential Police Intelligence Division files, it was disclosed in hearings Thursday before the Civil Rights Commission.

Carmelo Meléndez, the director of the Police Academy in Gurabo and former chief of the Intelligence Division, said that when former Lt. Col. Angel Pérez Casillas was chief of the department, de la Cova appeared to have the run of the department.

He said this changed after the Hernández Colón administration came into office and he became the chief of the division. However, Meléndez said, he was visited by de la Cova and "*un americano*" whose name he did not recall.

Meléndez said de la Cova introduced his friend as an aide to a congressman who wanted access to the files. Meléndez referred them to the superintendent and

did not see either of them again.

However, de la Cova's alleged access to the files did not seem to end with the change of administration because the current issue of his, *La Cronica*, carries a long article on acts of terrorism committed in Puerto Rico replete with photographs from the police files.

The article includes previously unpublished photos of the body of patrolman Julio Rodríguez Rivera who was killed Aug. 24, 1978, by Los Macheteros in retaliation for the killings by the police of Carlos Soto Arriví, 18, and Arnaldo Darío Rosado, 24, at Cerro Maravilla.

The article gives details of Rodríguez's killing that had not been made public.

Meléndez said the photos appeared to be from the police files. "It is obvious they were given to him by the police."

Another *La Cronica* story involved the murder of a pro-Castro Cuban exile, Carlos Muñiz Varela. Photos apparently taken during the Muñiz Varela autopsy were published in the magazine. Such photos are generally considered confiden-

tial and not released for publication.

Former Chief Justice José Trías Monge also testified today. He disputed contentions that the keeping of files on alleged subversives did not start during the mid-30s administration of Gov. Blanton Winship. He said he was convinced it started immediately after the American occupation in 1898.

"I think the files came about as a result of the systematic persecution of those Puerto Ricans who did not agree with U.S. doctrine," Trías Monge said. "I am speaking of acts immediately after the occupation when the legislature was abolished as were the municipal assemblies."

Trías Monge said he first heard of police files on independentistas during a meeting after the Nationalist revolt in October 1950. At that time, he said, he was an adviser to Gov. Luis Muñoz Marín. Solicitor General Vicente Geigel Polanco, University of Puerto Rico President Jaime Benítez and Sen. Víctor Gutiérrez Franqui also were at the meeting, he said.