

Tick-talks figure MIA New 1B col 2 23 Dec 82 dies of his wounds

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Ricardo (Monkey) Morales Navarrete died in sterile hospital surroundings Wednesday, blessed by a priest and surrounded by family.

The rumors, the gossip and the intrigue did not die with him.

His brain not functioning since a bullet smashed into his skull Monday night, Morales, 43, was pronounced dead at 1:32 p.m.

He stopped breathing almost immediately after Dr. Jorge Picaza disconnected the life-support system, with the permission of the family.

"Two sons, a daughter and other relatives were at his bedside," said Mercy Hospital spokesman Herb Kelly.

"The kids are all mixed up," said

a family friend. "They are very upset. They just loved their father."

Many people did not.

Morales was a spy, a killer, a terrorist and a drug trafficker. He admitted murder and bragged of his part in the bombing of a Cubana Airlines flight in which 73 persons died.

Double, and even triple, agent, a man who worked for the CIA and was a top Venezuelan secret police official, Morales was "a real-life James Bond," said his attorney, John Komorowski.

Metro-Dade police say the would-be James Bond's fatal caper was a barroom brawl, not so pure, but simple.

Immediately after the shooting at Cherry's, a bar at Roger's on the

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Police trying to find witnesses MIA New 2B col 1 23 Dec 82

MORALES / From 1B

Green Restaurant in Key Biscayne, police announced they knew who did it and the gunman was being sought.

No one has been arrested yet. And Wednesday, an arrest did not seem imminent.

"We have a lot of legwork to do," said Homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski. "We have to go slow and be meticulous and compile all our facts."

A major impediment to the investigation, he said, is the disappearance of many witnesses. They ran away.

"Everybody there knew who Morales



was," said one detective who was at the scene.

"We will have to locate all of them, probably 10 to 15 people and hope they will cooperate," said Wesolowski. The task, he said, will not be simple.

Controversial and feared, Morales' life was a labyrinth.

He often switched sides, repudiating friends and causes. The witnesses, said Wesolowski, "might not have liked Morales and they might not want to get involved. It's gonna take time."

Roy Black, a high-powered, high-priced criminal defense attorney, has talked to police. He said his client, Rogelio Novo, a suspect, is innocent.

Novo, one of the owners of the restaurant, has not talked to detectives. Police say Novo left before they arrived.

"There is no question," said Black. "My

to Morales shooting

client absolutely did not shoot Monkey Morales. He [Novo] is a nice, cultured gentleman who runs this restaurant and bar. He is the last person in the world that one would suspect would shoot somebody.

"It really is just a barroom shooting," Black said. "It is simply bizarre because of the people involved."

Black says Novo never met Morales.

Morales drove his flashy blood-red Cadillac to the Key Biscayne bar the night he was shot. His companion was Nancy Lamazares Cid, a long-time associate and the widow of a slain drug trafficker.

Cid, hysterical and screaming, was still with Morales when police found him drowning in his own blood on the carpeted floor of the mirrored bar Monday night.

Morales exposed his shadow, life to the

spotlight of public scrutiny in 1980 when he became a state informant in the Operation Tick-Talks narcotics probe.

In an eight-week long hearing to suppress more than 1,000 hours of wiretap evidence against nearly 50 defendants, Morales' crimes made headlines.

Circuit Judge Gerald Kogan agreed with defense attorneys that Morales' word was not reliable and the cases were thrown out.

William Cagney, one of the attorneys who had vehemently opposed the credibility of Morales and the use of his testimony, said Wednesday that the dead man "lived his life much as he left it, mired in intrigue and broken friendships."

Herald Staff Writer Ana Veciana-Suarez contributed to this report.