

U.S. Informant Murdered After Name Is Revealed

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A 17-year-old government informant was brutally tortured and slain by members of a West Indian religious cult in Hyattsville nine days ago after the government inadvertently disclosed his name, according to an internal memorandum from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The memorandum states that the informant's telephone number and name—Lester Domonique—appeared on a document that was introduced as evidence at a deportation hearing for one of the cult members.

Domonique's slaying, the memorandum said, may have been retaliation by Washington-area members of a group called Rastafarians, a Jamaican-based cult whose members believe in the healing powers of marijuana and who wear their hair in braids they call "dreadlocks." Domonique, a native of Trinidad, was never a member of the cult, but "used to hang around with" Rastafarians, according to the INS memorandum.

In the weeks after his identity was revealed at a Nov. 16 deportation

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hearing, according to the memo, Domonique, unaware of that fact, continued to associate with local Rastafarians. Then, on the evening of Friday, Jan. 18, he was jumped by attackers in a parking lot near the Hyattsville apartment where he lived with his parents.

One of the six attackers held off a friend of Domonique's, according to the INS account, while "two other individuals held the victim (Dominique) and the other three beat the victim with chains and metal pipes, after which the victim was disemboweled with what appeared to have been a 14-inch machete."

The INS account goes on: "One witness who came to the aid of the victim, asked the victim if he knew who had assaulted him. The victim replied, 'I'll tell you in the morning. However, the victim died shortly thereafter' at Prince George's General Hospital. At the time of the slaying, the INS agent noted, Domonique had the agent's name and phone number in his pocket.

Prince George's County police investigating the slaying have already arrested two suspects and say a third is being sought. The police confirmed that the suspects are Rastafarians. They said there may be as many as 100 members of the cult in this area.

However, the county police said yesterday that they had been unaware of Domonique's role as an INS informant and did not realize that the disclosure of his identity may have led to

In the four-page internal memorandum—dated Jan. 21 and entitled "Homicide of INS Informant"—a federal immigration officer said the public disclosure of the informant's name may have contributed to Domonique's

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"It is felt by this officer," wrote the INS agent, "that [Domonique] was murdered due to possible retaliation to [his] information, which resulted in a total of four arrests of Rastafarian Cult members."

Of the four Rastafarians arrested by federal agents with informant Domonique's assistance, two were charged with narcotics possession and the other two were said to be illegal aliens. Domonique was paid \$60 for his information, the INS memo said.

Domonique's identity apparently was disclosed when an informant's report containing his name and telephone number was introduced as public evidence during the deportation hearings for one of the Jamaicans whose whereabouts Domonique had revealed.

"Although every attempt was made to safeguard the informant's identity," the INS memorandum said, "the admission into evidence of the original [informant's report form] . . . and [Domonique's] continued association with the Rastafarian cult did ultimately lead to his murder."

The secret informant's report form—which is called a "G-123"—was introduced into evidence at the request of the defense, which was challenging the facts in another deportation document.

"G-123 contained both the subject's last name and telephone number," the INS official's memorandum concluded, "Neither was blacked out prior to admission as evidence."

Federal immigration officials refused yesterday to confirm whether Domonique had been their informant. They stressed that informants' names are always blacked out on forms to be used as evidence.

Wallace Gray, district director of INS, "categorically denied" the exis-

tance of any memorandum which disclosed the apparent slip-up by INS officials in disclosing Domonique's name.

But in an interview Friday, one official said he recalled that the name had not been blocked out. "But it should have been," he said. "It's taken from granted that the G-123 is not used for evidence because of its sensitivity. I don't know if it was an error. If I knew it was going to go into evidence, it would [have] been destroyed."

According to the memorandum, Domonique's relationship with INS began early last November when he gave the federal agents information on a Jamaican/Rastafrian woman who was in the U.S. illegally. The memo said the INS had been looking for the woman for some time before Domonique offered to help. His motive, according to the memo, was that he had once lent money to the woman but she never paid him back.

Domonique provided federal agents

with the location of the woman's apartment and said that the apartment contained "guns and drugs in green foot lockers," the memo said. It quoted Domonique as telling an INS agent that he was afraid the Rastafarians "would kill him if they ever found out" he was an informant.

After one unsuccessful attempt to locate the woman, immigration agents found her and another man in the apartment to which Domonique had directed them.

No green footlockers were found in the apartment, the memo said, and Domonique advised immigration officials that "they would in all likelihood be at (another location) owned and operated by the Rastafarians... in Washington, D.C."

"Two Jamaicans were apprehended [there] for possession of narcotics. No weapons were found," the memo said.

Domonique's parents say their son never discussed his relationship with INS. His mother said she learned by

accident when a man saying he was with the Justice Department phoned the apartment. "They called this number two months ago and asked for information that I didn't have. I'm scared to death."

"All of his stuff was with his friends," his father said, "We're still wondering why he got killed."

The INS memorandum said that Domonique's mother eventually contacted INS officials. "(She) had been afraid ever since her son had become involved with 'that group', because of her son's behavior and phone calls she had been receiving," the memo said. "She stated her son wouldn't tell her anything about what was going on, but she did state she had heard her son had been bragging about it."

The day after Domonique's death, his mother again called an INS agent, according to the memo.

"She blamed me for her son's death, that I should have moved her son out of the area, and that I should have

gotten [Dominique] a job with the Army. I advised [here] that although sympathise (sic) with her because of her son's death, there was nothing that I could have done to prevent his continued association with the Rastafarians, and his subsequent death."

Domonique's neighbors and friends say they are frightened that the Rastafarians will return.

"There are a lot of guys still around," said one, "Those people when something happen to one, they're close. They just don't bring (one) guy. They bring a whole lot of guys. When they going to kill somebody, they going to make sure they're going to kill him.

"I'm trembling speaking to you," said a relative of Domonique's."

Late yesterday, Domonique's family was still making arrangements to return his body to Trinidad.