

Exile tormented before fatal

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Plagued by joblessness and the demise of a family fortune that triggered depression during the day and nightmares at nights, José Braulio Alemán yielded to his family — making an appointment for today with a psychiatrist.

But the unburdening of his mind was scheduled a day too late.



Alemán/62

Alemán's nightmares ended yesterday. He was killed by police after he went berserk — shooting and killing an aunt and wounding three cousins shortly after daybreak yesterday.

Alemán — the only son of the late José Manuel Alemán, a Cuban minister of education under the pre-Batista government of President Grau-San Martín, was a tormented man.

As heir to one of Cuba's wealthiest, land-holding empires, he went from riches to rags.

Relatives say he had been bothered lately over

some bad business deals — the loss of a family fortune, estimated at between \$29 and \$200 million, which once included holdings like the Miami Stadium and the Miami Sun Sox of the defunct Florida International Baseball League, the land that is now Crandon Park and most of the land on the southern tip of Key Biscayne, as well as rental properties on Miami Beach.

Friends say Alemán's father built the empire on cattle in Cuba and expanded it on ocean-front real estate in Miami.

Alemán lost the fortune. A political activist, he struggled against the regimes of Batista and Castro and bankrolled plots to overthrow the regimes of both men while feeding, clothing and sheltering Cuban exiles.

His mother, Sylvia Candarez, a woman in her 70s who had taken him in three months ago when he could no longer pay the rent on his apartment, complained repeatedly to relatives that his tossing and turning and getting out of bed in the middle of the night awakened her.

"He was looking for a job, but he couldn't find a job so he was depressed all the time," says a cousin who would not give her name, but who said she visited Ale-

man daily. Beginning in the late 1960s and up until four months ago, friends say Alemán held executive jobs with oil companies.

"He had been married twice and was divorced from both (wives). He had five children from one marriage and one child from the other," said the cousin. "I spoke with him yesterday. He seemed very normal but I could tell he was depressed. Lately, he hasn't been talking much, he's been depressed."

It was minutes after 7 a.m. when gunshots pierced the morning stillness in the Miami neighborhood where the 50-year-old Alemán shared a one-story house, at 3097 NW 2nd St., with his mother, aunts and cousins.

It is a working-class, predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of homes with tiny porches and postage-stamp yards bordered by fences.

Inside the gray frame house Alemán went berserk, shouting about communists. He grabbed a 9-millimeter automatic handgun and threatened to kill his mother, neighbors and relatives said. Then he opened fire on his aunt and three cousins, neighbors and relatives said.

"Relatives said he woke up acting incoherent and he began ranting and raving. Then, he grabbed a gun

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and he started shooting at family members," said Miami homicide investigator Sgt. Ernest Vivian.

Five of Alemán's relatives bolted out of the house. He barricaded himself and an aunt inside the house.

Vivian said a call went out that officers were needed at a "hostage situation." Fifteen police units responded, including an eight-man SWAT team and two canine units. Two fire-rescue units transported wounded relatives to Jackson Memorial Hospital.

SWAT team hostage negotiator Rodolfo Arias "kept trying to talk the subject into giving up the gun and coming out. (Arias) tried to ascertain the condition of the female still inside the house. But the subject wouldn't talk," Vivian said. "He spoke of communism, the breakup of the family and he said people are trying to get him."

Vivian said Alemán fired three shots at police and hurled vases, bottles, glasses and other household articles out of the front window during the negotiations, which spanned more than two hours.

Then, at 9:07, four SWAT team officers sneaked in

Please see SLAIN, 7A

SLAIN, from 5A

a back door.

When Alemán saw them he fired a shot that missed. "The officers returned five shots, striking the subject once in the stomach," Vivian said.

Alemán was pronounced dead at the scene.

His aunt, Maria Candarez, was found dead by police. She was sprawled on a dining room floor and bleeding from bullet wounds to the head, Vivian said. A Dade County medical examiner was to complete autopsies on both bodies today.

Wounded were Alemán's three cousins, Maria Gonzalez, 36, who was shot in the neck; her daughter, Carina, 6, who was shot in the head, and Sofia Ampudia, 74, who was wounded in a hand. They all were in stable condition last night

at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

The three narrowly escaped death by dodging out of the house and into the home of a next door neighbor, their wounds dripping blood that left paths of scarlet stains.

Perhaps luckiest were the two occupants of the house who escaped injuries: Alemán's mother and a 14-year-old cousin, Kevin Gonzalez (whose mother and sister were hit with bullets). Both ran out a back door and into a neighbor's house.

Neighbors said Kevin Gonzalez is staying with relatives while his mother and sister recuperate.

Although she didn't receive physical injuries, relatives said Alemán's mother was taken to the crisis intervention unit of Jackson Hospital yesterday evening because of mental anguish.