

# LITTLE HAVANA'S REIGN OF TERROR

With more than 100 bombings in the last 18 months and an average of an assassination a week since last April, Miami's 450,000 Cuban-émigré community is in the throes of civil war

By Dick Russell

The crowds begin to gather at twilight in Miami's Little Havana. They gather by the fruit and vegetable stands, and in the sidewalk cafés over tiny cups of steaming Cuban coffee. They have always gathered like this at the close of day, mingling amiably, talking in shouted greetings. But these evenings, the shouts are absent among the Cuban exiles. There is a new tension in the faces, aloof and wary, as furtive as the steel bulges in the jacket pockets of the men—and as silent as the little displays of crucifixes proliferating in the storefronts along Southwest Eighth Street.

"Everybody's running around with a new .45 and a new mini-millimeter with a big clip," as Miami Homicide Lieutenant Gary Minium describes it. "I mean, we're not used to it. This isn't what we've had or experienced previously. It's completely new to us and hard to understand."

On an average of almost one a week since April, Cubans are being murdered in Miami's Little Havana. They are dying on Fridays, and holidays, as if by some diabolical, cultish force. In addition, more than 100 bombs have exploded over the past 18 months: bombs in the doorways of Cuban shops and newspapers, sometimes under the hoods

of Cuban cars. The most recent victim may well have been Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean Foreign Minister, who was killed by a bomb in Washington, D.C., last month. Intelligence officials are investigating several links between the bombing and extremist Cuban exile groups. Yet nobody, least of all the exiles themselves, is willing to say why the violence has erupted.

On Good Friday 1974, Jose Elias de la Torriente became the first to receive his "zero." He was watching television with his wife when the fatal bullet came through his living room window. At 69, Torriente had been among a handful of veteran leaders in Miami's Cuban exile community. A few years before, his intent to mount a major armed offensive against Fidel Castro had briefly brought him international attention. But by the time some of his supporters began wondering if Torriente's "Work Plan for Liberation" would ever get off the ground, they had their answer.

Found outside the slain leader's door was a piece of dark paper, bearing his initials and the oval symbol of a zero. The next day, a lengthy typewritten letter in Spanish arrived at various Miami media. It was addressed to "public opinion," and signed by something called "Zero group." Labeling Torriente "a traitor to the Fatherland," the statement vowed to eliminate any and all Cuban exile leaders who "block this process of liberating their homeland by working only to advance their own bastard ambitions." Torriente was but the first of many such "empty, nothing" Cubans marked for execution.

"Each in his own time and in a cool and dispassionate way will start getting his zero," the letter concluded. "An infinite zero that will adorn their soon-to-be-forgotten tomb. . . . Cemeteries are

very big and we have more than enough time to fill them."

Within a few days, a second letter went out, containing the names of ten more well-known exiles marked by "zero." In Little Havana, where the majority of Miami's 450,000 Cubans make their homes along 600 square blocks of *bodegas* and bungalows, the immediate speculation was that Castro had to be behind it. His agents, the rumor went, were simply trying to foment distrust among the exile factions. In truth, it had been years since the exiles—and their CIA sponsors—had posed much of a threat to Castro. The prospect of closer U.S.-Cuban relations had rarely seemed better since Castro's takeover.

But the death list was no fraud. By this past summer, four of its ten names had been killed. A fifth lay without his legs in a Miami hospital.

On the surface, there has been a return to normality in Miami. In Key Biscayne, the Richard Nixons have sold both their homes and Bebe Rebozo has been elected president of the Chamber of Commerce. Bernard Barker, who addressed a local Kiwanis Club on the fourth anniversary of the Watergate break-in, is a city sanitation inspector; Frank Sturgis, a general sales manager for Miami Book Manufacturing Company. What was once the largest CIA station in the world is now apparently a single office in Coral Gables, with a telephone listing conspicuously available from Information. Even Nelly Hamilton's boarding house, where the soldiers of fortune came to await their next anti-Castro expedition, has gone the way of urban renewal.

So when it comes to the marked increase in exile terrorism, the FBI, for

example, talks in generalities about personal vendettas, or feuding inside the local "Cuban Mafia." But since last December, when seven bombs exploded within 24 hours at Miami offices and government buildings, the FBI has maintained a special unit on exile violence. By May, the Justice Department was actively involved in 18 cases of bombing and assassination, and considering jurisdiction over many more. Certain exile leaders were even flown to Washington for a special conference in the Attorney General's office.

Early last summer, there came a flurry of three separate arrests. Since then, things have been relatively quiet in Little Havana. If nothing else, this should have made one thing perfectly clear: in each instance, the suspects had one thing in common. At one time or another, they were all connected with a man named Orlando Bosch.

Somewhere in the hinterlands of Latin America, this single man may hold the answer. He is a once-prominent pediatrician and 50-year-old father of five, who has seen neither patients nor family since he fled Miami two years ago in the immediate aftermath of Torriente's murder. Today, he is said to control a right-wing terrorist network that goes by many names and may extend from a clandestine hideaway in Chile all the way to the frightened streets of Little Havana.

Dr. Orlando Bosch is also a seasoned leader of the CIA's undeclared war of the 1960s against Castro's Cuba. "It was Bosch," says one exile who insisted he remain anonymous, "who got a group together at the World Congress of Exiles in Puerto Rico in October of 1973. They said, 'We have to clean the exiles of all evil; these are obstacles to obstruct the liberty of Cuba.' Out of this meeting, many things began to happen."

It is a Frankenstein image—the baby doctor gone round the bend and out to purify his struggle, eliminating those he believes have failed him and the exile cause. But privately, cryptically, Miami authorities admit it is a very real possibility. "Just say I would love to talk to him," says city homicide detective Fabio Alonso.

That is easier said than done. Since going underground in 1974, Orlando Bosch has communicated to the world through occasional messages to the Miami press. Messages from Venezuela, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Chile. He has been arrested

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here, deported there, and still he moves around the hemisphere, a bespectacled middle-aged man with a light mustache, pictured always in suit and tie. Late in 1974, the U.S. government had its last chance to seek his extradition. It refused. As if somehow, some way, Dr. Bosch had made himself immune.

For the record, Miami officials prefer not to speculate about the power wielded by Bosch—and where he might be getting it.

One old friend of Dr. Bosch is Jose Antonio Mulet, a tall, gaunt man of 55 with thin greying hair. He lives on the fringes of Little Havana, a fair distance from the sidewalk cafés and the doorways where old men toil over dominoes. His is a serene middle-class neighborhood of well-clipped lawns. Not exactly the kind of place you'd expect an attempted gangland-style assassination.

Jose Mulet is not reluctant to discuss the details of the shootout that nearly claimed his life last March. He will show you how the car pulled up to his

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fence as he stood beside his hammock in the darkness, and how the three Latin men got out and opened fire, and how one of the shots struck his shoulder and another killed his dog and a dozen more rained pockmarks into the house next door. He will explain how he ran inside to grab his .38 revolver—the same one he now keeps constantly in his pocket—and chased their screeching tires to the end of the block. Jose Mulet will talk about all this, but he will not discuss his old friend Dr. Bosch.

"Yes, they were in jail together," says Mulet's daughter, who is acting as his translator. "But since 1967, they have had no personal contact. They were good friends. Very good friends. But my father is out of politics since 1967. Nobody knows what Orlando Bosch is doing now."

She lowers her head. "Every time I got sick, I would go to Dr. Bosch," she says.

When the police arrested them in 1966, Mulet and his daughter's doctor

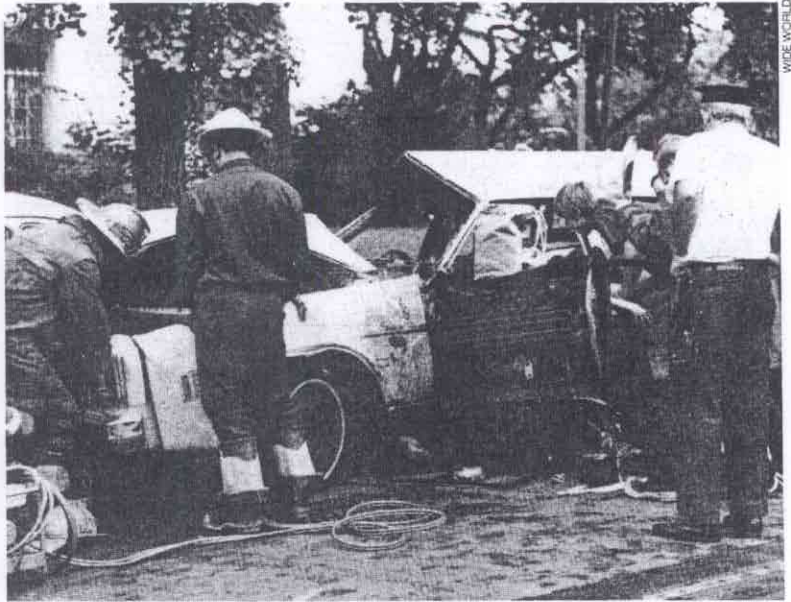
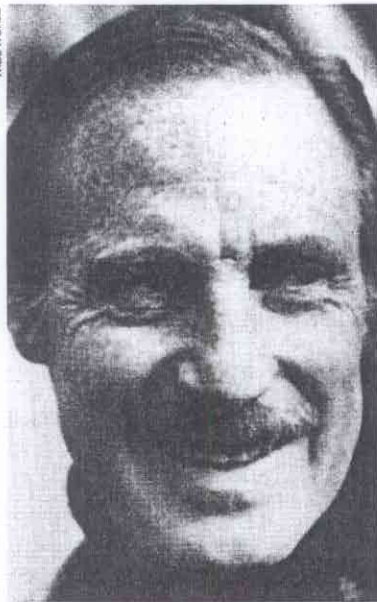
had been on their way to a secret base outside Miami, where they planned to launch a bombing attack against Castro. Bosch, then the leader of a group called Cuban Power, was at the wheel of a Cadillac that carried in its trunk six dynamite-stuffed, 100-pound surplus aerial bombs. Mulet was trailing in a station wagon. Charged with illegal transportation and possession of explosives, both men were indicted by a federal grand jury. Then, as almost always with Bosch, the eventual verdict was acquittal.

Today, Jose Mulet is aide-de-camp for the president of Bacardi distillery, a target of recent extortion attempts by unnamed exiles. Mulet is also a close friend of Nino Diaz, the leader of a decoy brigade during the Bay of Pigs invasion. A month before the guns blazed in Mulet's backyard, Diaz had survived a similar assassination attempt. Again, their original link was Bosch. Diaz, a founder of Bosch's very first revolutionary movement, had last tried to unite the exiles against Castro in 1970. He had stopped when some exiles charged he'd used \$50,000 in "liberation funds" to start his own construction business. Now Nino Diaz, too, had come within inches of getting a "zero." And Diaz absolutely didn't feel like talking about it.

For Julius Mattson, the head of Miami's 173-man FBI, reluctance to talk has proved the common denominator in Little Havana. "It's been tough to get any cooperation here," he says, four floors above where a bomb in a brown paper bag last winter blew the doors off his headquarters. "I suppose what we encounter is characteristic of a people largely born, raised and who did business back in Cuba, where politics and law enforcement were feared. The law would be the last place they'd go in case of trouble. They were brought up to handle their own affairs."

Mattson is new in town. He was not around through the long years when exile affairs received special handling from various factions of the CIA, the Mob, and finally the Nixon White House. Indeed, the law was the last place the exiles preferred to turn. They had other mentors.

The first were the Lucky Lucianos and Meyer Lansky's. For years, rival gangs had run rampant in Havana. From 1944 to 1952, an eight-year experiment in Cuban "democracy," there were 142 political murders under one administration and half that under the next. One of the strongest, led by an eventual Bosch rival named Rolando Masferrer, was de-



The FBI is currently investigating whether Cuban exiles were involved in the bomb-killing of Orlando Letelier (left) in Washington on Sept. 21. At right, rescue workers remove the wreckage after the car exploded.

scribed by *Time* magazine as "a conspiratorial political group that resembles Sicily's Mafia." So it was only natural, after Fulgencio Batista took back dictatorial powers in 1952, that the American Syndicate should flock to this eager island only 90 miles off Florida's Gold Coast. The Syndicate was skilled at bringing order to chaos.

Then, when Batista fell to Castro's revolution on New Year's Day 1959, so did the casinos. The richest and most powerful Cubans, too, all took their money and ran. They ran to Miami in yachts and private planes, where they played loan shark to less fortunate comrades and railed against the tyrant Castro. Not because he was a Communist, not at first. Simply, he had trampled on the exiles' pride and pocketbooks. He had thrown out the rackets and would soon ask the Russians for help. And so, in that realm where politics and pragmatism merge, an alliance was forged. Fidel had to go. The Syndicate and the Cuban exiles had the method—and the CIA had the means.

This was the milieu that formed Orlando Bosch. A graduate of the University of Havana medical school, he had been a Castro lieutenant and one of the first to turn against Fidel after the revolution. When Bosch's own uprising ran out of supplies in the Escambray Mountains, he and his Movement for Revolutionary Recovery made their escape and vowed to continue the fight from Florida. By 1960, according to no less than E. Howard Hunt, hundreds of

Bosch's MIRR personnel were being schooled in sabotage by the CIA.

The CIA had its headquarters at an old Navy blimp center on the south campus of the University of Miami, cover-named Zenith Technical Enterprises and code-named JM Wave. It was a headquarters that soon became the "company's" largest, with an annual budget of over \$50 million, branch offices in 54 dummy corporations, and a permanent staff of 300 Americans who employed and controlled approximately 6,000 Cuban exile agents. There were literally dozens of exile groups under the CIA's umbrella. After the Bay of Pigs disaster, their number only increased. They were a vast army, with the best and the brightest receiving special paramilitary training at Forts Jackson, Knox and Benning. Then, not quite overnight, they were left high and dry.

Years later, sitting in the plush dining room of Washington's Army-Navy Club, the CIA's then-chief of counterintelligence James Angleton would muse: "The concept of Miami was correct. In a Latino area, it made sense to have a base in Miami for Latin American problems, as an extension of the desk. If it had been self-contained, then it would have had the quality of being a foreign base of sorts. It was a novel idea. But it got out of hand, it became a power unto itself. And when the target diminishes, it's very difficult for a bureaucracy to adjust. What do you do with your personnel? We owed a deep obligation to the men in Miami. It was a

question of, how many could remain on? We didn't have the slots. And when people found there weren't jobs to be had, we had some problems."

Among the exiles, the problems began in 1963. A tense truce had resulted from the Cuban missile crisis; no longer would the Kennedy administration give anti-Castro operations carte blanche. The "irregular war," as it is still called by some exiles, soon became a sporadic, ill-financed and under-equipped one. True, among factions of the Mob and CIA, plots to kill Castro continued long after Kennedy's assassination. But by and large, the heyday of Everglades training camps and night raids in small flotillas passed into history.

Until then, Dr. Bosch himself was an almost invisible presence. Leaving the glory to exile spokesmen like Manuel Artime, he remained in the background of top-secret CIA programs like "Operation 40," which Hunt has since described as maintaining a special assassination section. But when the crackdown came to the fore, so did Bosch. For months in 1963, the CIA had been training his people for an infiltration mission at five points inside Cuba. Then, at the last minute, it had sliced the operation to a poorly-equipped, five-man crew. "We will do this if you send your mother with us," Bosch reportedly told his case officer. He wrote a long, bitter letter to Kennedy, charging betrayal. Later, after Kennedy's death, he printed it in brochure form, with pictures.

As the years passed, Bosch's mili-

tancy—some said his madness—increased. The more farfetched Castro's overthrow became, the more obsessed he was. His MIRR claimed credit for eleven bombing attacks on Cuban territory; six times Bosch was arrested and acquitted for violating U.S. neutrality laws. Legends arose around him, bizarre tales of testing torpedoes in the Miami River and near-misses against Fidel. Finally, on September 16, 1968, he was caught in the blatant act of firing a make-shift bazooka into the harbor from MacArthur Causeway, seriously denting the hull of a Polish ship. Charged with this, and with using the telegraph for threats against the governments of Mexico, England and Spain, Orlando Bosch was sentenced to ten years in the federal pen.

There at Marion, Illinois, he renewed an old acquaintance. Rolando Masferrer, nicknamed "El Tigre," was a legend in his own right, serving time for conspiracy to overthrow Haiti's "Papa Doc" Duvalier. His forte was an ability to get money out of people. When he fled Havana the day Castro marched in, Batista accused him of making off with \$30 million. In Miami, life was much the same; Masferrer had organized three invasion attempts, then excused himself from accompanying them, and laughed all the way to the bank with his contributions to the "Tiger's Invasion Fund." Even CBS sank an estimated \$200,000 into the opportunity to cover his Haitian venture. "You couldn't be neutral about him," one acquaintance recalls. "Masferrer was either a saint or a gangster, and even those close to him feared him more than they liked him."

Bosch did not fear him. And Masferrer, the man of a thousand enemies, didn't care much for Bosch. "They played gin in prison together," the acquaintance remembers. "Masferrer lost a lot. He said Bosch was on dope. If Masferrer didn't like you, you were either queer or on dope."

While Masferrer got a quick parole, Bosch did not. By 1972, a nationwide campaign of exiles was demanding why. Even Florida Governor Claude Kirk, addressing potential votes at a Latin Chamber of Commerce dinner, took up the call. "When I think of free men seeking a free homeland, I must necessarily think of Dr. Bosch," he said. "As you know, the rumor is rampant that I have an interest in his plight. I am working quietly and effectively for his release and I hope very soon to see results." On November 1, 1972, after a series of hunger strikes, Orlando Bosch was freed.

For a time, not much was heard from him. When talk of renewed trade

with Castro began in Washington, the slogan of a new group—the National Front for the Liberation of Cuba (FLNC)—soon proliferated on the walls of Little Havana. The FLNC, which claimed to be sending letter bombs to Cuban embassies, was said to model itself after the Palestinian terrorists. Within a month after its surfacing, Torriente became the first of the old guard of exiles to receive his "zero." And, curiously enough, Orlando Bosch disappeared.

He came forward in June, 1974 in a clandestine interview with the *Miami News*. "Nobody will dare raise a false flag here anymore, for fear for his own life," Bosch said of Torriente's murder. "His slaying was a good lesson to the exile community, so that no one else will now come forth with phony theories to fool and rob the people." But Bosch denied any direct link to the "Zero" group. He had simply gone underground, he said, because he'd violated his parole by traveling to New Jersey around the time Torriente was killed. Now he had larger plans. He had formed a new group called

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Acción Cubana, which he maintained had been bombing Cuba's consulates in Latin America since the previous August. They were holding merger talks with the FLNC. They were also selling bonds on the streets of Little Havana, bonds in denominations ranging from \$10 to \$1,000, redeemable upon the death of Fidel Castro. They had printed \$10 million worth, said Orlando Bosch, with \$3 million set aside for whoever could accomplish that purpose.

"I'm going underground in a Latin American country to be able to direct the internationalization of the war," he announced. "I know I will be a fugitive. But this is something we've been forced to do. We're alone in the struggle to free Cuba. We no longer have allies."

A week later, Ricardo Navarette, an ex-associate who chose to cooperate with the FBI and became the star witness against Bosch at his 1968 trial, narrowly escaped death in an explosion that ripped away the floorboards of his car. But by then, Bosch was long gone. While

a Cuban paper described his supposed 500-man army in Little Havana, reports placed him in Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile and several Central American countries. Soon other fugitives were fleeing to Latin America. Notably Humberto Lopez, former announcer for the Voice of America, a veteran of demolition training with the U.S. Army and CIA, founder of the FLNC.

In November 1974, after taking credit for two bombings in Caracas, Bosch was arrested in Venezuela. The FBI, reportedly, had been searching widely for him, and his return seemed imminent. Surprisingly, the Justice Department issued this statement: "Justice is better served by keeping him out. He is not an American citizen and as far as the U.S. government is concerned, he is an undesirable who has no legal status in this country." The decision not to extradite, according to one FBI source, was made in conjunction with the State Department.

So, only a few days after his arrest, Bosch regained his freedom when "powerful Cuban exiles" in Caracas took their case to Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez. And Bosch flew on to Chile, where the new military junta would provide him a secure base of operations. According to a Miami newsman who interviewed him there, he had a Venezuelan chief of staff and 15 well-armed Chilean bodyguards. "Bosch had a book on the life of Yasir Arafat with him and an impressive stack of cash on the table," the newsman wrote. "He told me he had all the money, friends and protection he is going to need to defeat Castro."

By July 1975, he was out to win more. In a clandestine message from Chile to a New York Spanish newspaper, Bosch quietly urged the former followers of the "Torriente Plan" to turn over their funds. And in Little Havana, one by one the other targets on the "Zero" list began to fall.

By all outer appearances, Miami's exiles long ago set about the process of Americanization. By the mid-1970s, Cubans comprised 52 percent of Miami's population, owned 8,000 businesses, had their own phone book and chamber of commerce, and boasted a dozen bank presidents, a vice-mayor, and a state Democratic chairman. Little Havana, once a decaying and forgotten segment of the city's southwest quadrant, teemed with new shops and stucco bungalows.

Beneath that facade, however, lay a deep, festering mistrust. The jealousies among the CIA's favored exile

groups were only exacerbated by the CIA's establishing a massive "counter-intelligence" office, with a \$2 million budget and over 150 paid informants in the mid-1960s: Cubans trained to spy on other Cubans, looking both for Castro agents and anti-Castro groups bent on taking the "irregular war" into their own hands. As more and more exiles arrived (368,000 over a 12-year span on Cuban Freedom Flights), Little Havana took on the appearance of wartime Casablanca. A den of intrigue, teeming with agents, double agents and informers. From this nest sprang the Watergate burglars. And less scrupulous creatures.

Indeed, while the old alliances died, their lessons were not lost on the exiles. Schooled in sabotage by the CIA, skulduggery by the Mob, and deceit by the federal government, that their ranks should produce an Orlando Bosch can come as no particular surprise. What is awesome is his apparent strength. For, seemingly, there has been little retaliatory blood-letting against his followers since the terrorism began escalating late last year. The pattern has looked like this:

●Friday, February 21, 1975: Three days after announcing his intention to return to Cuba to challenge Castro in an election, liberal leader Luciano Nieves, 43, is gunned down in the parking lot of a children's hospital as he leaves the bedside of an ailing son.

●Halloween, Friday, October 31, 1975: Rolando Masferrer, 56-year-old publisher of the weekly newspaper *Libertad*, former Cuban senator and cellmate of Dr. Bosch, is blown to bits by a high-powered dynamite bomb as he turns the ignition of his '68 Ford Torino. A communique postmarked Philadelphia and mailed to the Associated Press calls him "an old-time gangster" whose death "should serve as an example for those who disdain the cause of Cuban liberation." It states: "The secret organization Zero is responsible for the slaying."

●April 13, 1976: Days after police received word that another exile leader would die during Easter week, 40-year-old Ramon Donestevez is found slumped over his desk in his boatyard office, shot through the head. Also the publisher of a Spanish paper, six times in the past ten years he had sailed to Cuba attempting to gain the release of political prisoners.

●Friday, April 30, 1976: Exactly six months after the bomb-slaying of Masferrer, Emilio Milian, 45, survives a precise duplication in the parking lot of radio station WQBA. As the station's news director, he had urged an editorial stand against the onslaught of terrorism.

Milian loses both his legs below the knees. "They had told him to shut up or they would murder him," says his son. "But he was not afraid. He felt it was his right to criticize."

●Saturday, May 29, 1976: The bullet-riddled body of Jesus Gonzalez Cartas, onetime Cuban labor leader and fervent anti-Castro operator, is discovered in an isolated field. In Miami, it is the fourth murder of a well-known exile in two weeks.

Then there are the bombings, the worst series coinciding with last December's visit of William P. Rogers, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and an exponent of normalizing relations with Castro.

The deeds are claimed by a dozen mysterious nicknames—Zero, Youths of the Star, FNLC, Secret Cuban Govern-



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE MIAMI HERALD

Orlando Bosch, rumored to be in Chile, may control the Cuban terrorists in the U.S.

ment, Cuban Action, GIN, Omega 7, on and on. FBI sources investigating the Orlando Letelier bombing suspect a coalition group known as the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organizations, which, coincidentally enough, is led by Orlando Bosch.

In the words of Lieutenant Tom Lyons, head of a special tactical investigation bureau to combat terrorism set up by the Metro Public Safety Department: "Even trying to identify a group and its membership is almost impossible. A few years ago, there were about 105 different groups. Now the names have changed. Some people hold multi-memberships. We're getting death lists with 15 to 30 people on each, all of them different. All from different organizations, or maybe they're the same organization with different names. What can I tell you?"

If the intent is to create a climate of fear in Little Havana, it has certainly succeeded. The most prominent exiles now keep odd hours, travel in different cars and skip town for days at a time. The editor of *Replica*, the most successful Spanish magazine in America, has wired and steelplated his offices from the inside. When he ventures out the back door, it is with a bodyguard armed with two shotguns.

"There is a massive schizophrenia about what is happening here," says Rafael Villaverde, director of the Little Havana Community Center. "People don't want to talk because they don't know what's going on. In this state of fear, many of us are carrying weapons. It is a sad story about the Cuban refugees."

But if Bosch is really the demon, how is he getting away with it? In Miami, there are numerous rumors about possible sources of Bosch's funding. At his last trial in 1968, a telephone tape transcript indicated strong interest in his cause from a Mr. Hunt—"the one of the wells," as Bosch phrased it. This could only refer to the Texas oil family of the late billionaire H.L. Hunt, a ready financier of various right-wing causes.

Today, many point to Carlos Prio Socarras, the millionaire elder statesman of the exiles. Cuba's ruler before Batista, Prio's regime was the most corrupt of all. At 73, he is still called the "Presidente Cordial." As late as 1972, when he headed up Miami's Cuban-Americans for Nixon campaign, Prio was still openly voicing support for Bosch. As one veteran Miami journalist says, "Prio has so much money and so many ties, it's hard to tell where he is or isn't. As unreal as it seems, he's still jockeying to maintain political viability in case something happens in Cuba to spring him back into the realm of power."

The most likely explanation for Bosch's success, though, is also the simplest. "It's the old Chicago gangland style, nothing new," says Jay Mallin, a *Time* correspondent and author of several books on Cuba. "If you don't pay, he puts a bomb outside your office. Bosch is an extortionist, not a patriot. There is no real militant patriotic activity anymore, it's been reduced to criminal."

Another veteran observer, a soldier of fortune type named Gerry Patrick Hemming sees it like this: "Bosch organized his own PLO to straighten out some old scores. To get cooperation from certain elements involved in criminal activities, he's hitting some targets that are of no use to the Cuban Mafia. It's one hand shaking another. And it's just warming

up now. Things are gonna get real interesting."

The idea that Bosch might be working hand-in-glove with elements of organized crime is not farfetched. For one thing, Miami is today the cocaine capital of the world. Most of that \$8-billion-a-year business is run by Cuban exiles, and most of the cocaine is coming in from Latin America through a vast armada of private boats and planes. It's an incredibly lucrative field: a kilo worth between \$3,000 and \$5,000 in fertile Colombia can bring more than \$800,000 when cut. No one really knows how extensive the traffic has become, only that its cash flow is sunk in dozens of legitimate businesses. Drug dealings and politics, the authorities admit, have become fingers on the same hand.

Coincidentally, the most recent assassinations in Little Havana seem to have been drug-related: the owner of two Cuban clinics shot in his luxury high rise, a British "sailor of fortune" gunned down across the street, even Masferrer's death have all been privately linked to the "coke factor."

The fine line between Bosch, the Cuban Mafia and their original mentors is difficult to decipher. South Florida has long been regarded an "open area" for America's various Mob families. According to Miami's Organized Crime Bureau, at least 2,000 Mob-connected individuals, representing 15 of the nation's 27 major families, reside there permanently or seasonally. Meyer Lansky, now 78, has come back from his exile in Tel Aviv to live in luxurious retirement in a Miami Beach condominium called Imperial House, where for "health reasons" he is apparently immune from prosecution. There are many more—Gambinos, deCavalcantes, Provenzanos—all soaking up the sunshine and soaking into the restaurants, hotels and groceries. In Tampa, Santos Trafficante Jr. remains the boss of all he surveys. Once, through the casinos and the drug traffic, his star had ascended in Cuba. Once, with the help of the CIA, his men had done their utmost to eliminate Fidel and bring Cuba home again. Once, certain exiles had learned a lot from Santos Trafficante Jr.

The CIA's legacy is more tangible. Earlier this year, when the reign of terror began to escalate in Miami, the Metro Police placed an unusual request to CIA headquarters. They wanted a list of all exiles trained in bomb-making and, if possible, an accounting of all C-4 and C-3 plastic explosives left behind when the CIA closed school. So far, the list has not been received. "We pursued the

matter in Washington," says the FBI's Mattson. "We got a reply, but . . . I'm in a difficult spot talking for publication."

This much is certain: The CIA trained its people well. "Those guys were good, really good," remembers retired sheriff's official Charles Zmuda. "I met them at our bomb disposal area in northwest Dade. We had a problem with some explosives we didn't know how to detonate. They showed us how. They really knew their stuff. Of course, they didn't identify themselves as CIA agents, but we knew who they were."

Today, the bombings are so expert that a Miami "Bomb Squad" conducts special training sessions to keep up with the methodology; the murders so easy they seem the work of professional hit men. And there are some who believe they see a yet more ominous pattern to all the madness.

Bill Johnson, a huge mustachioed man who used to run with Frank Sturgis and now runs a used car lot in North Miami, is sitting behind his desk at the close of a long day and reminiscing about his halcyon days with Orlando Bosch. Johnson says he was a CIA pilot then, a contract operative who flew Bosch on bombing raids against the Cuban sugar mills. Even now, remembering, shaking his head in amazement, he cannot resist a grudging admiration.

"He's proved he can raise money with and without the CIA," Johnson says. "I'm sure he's already got all the arms and equipment he needs to do the numbers he wants. He's got a lot of Cuban ex-GI's under his control—and a lot of connections in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua. I believe the CIA let him go to Chile and stay, because he could operate from there. Fidel's not about to send anybody into Chile. Orlando Bosch knows the ways of the CIA very well. They supported him with every kind of weapon he wanted, and high explosives."

"And he did what he said he was gonna do. It's as simple as that. If Bosch asks somebody for money now, they'll give it and keep their mouth shut. People with big mouths in Little Havana have shut their mouths. You watch—when he starts knocking off Cubans inside Cuba, which he can do, it'll make him a hero. You'll see Bosch up front every day, saying 'That's my group.' Then things will stop here in Miami. The terrorism will quit."

Suddenly this summer, the federal government began to close in. Not on Bosch himself, but against some of his key people. The first had been FLNC

leader Humberto Lopez, extradited from the Dominican Republic last October and sentenced to 15 years on bomb charges. But as he awaited trial, three bombs had exploded in Miami Dominican offices and a fourth outside Lopez' prison cell. With the next man that the U.S. went after in the Dominican Republic, Latin authorities were not so cooperative. Rolando Otero, once among the youngest participants in the Bay of Pigs, had fled Miami in January after a wave of bombings. After the FBI issued a warrant for him, Otero was taken into custody in the Dominican Republic and then abruptly released by order of its president. Like Bosch, he moved at will from country to country. Finally, in mid-May, the FBI discovered his hiding place in Chile and induced that government to declare him an "undesirable alien." Sporting a fuzzy black goatee, Rolando Otero was flown home in handcuffs and leg irons. In June came a 17-count indictment charging him with nine bombings or attempted ones, including the State Attorney's office and Miami police department.

But on August 24, Otero was acquitted of all federal charges in a Jacksonville district court. He was held by U.S. marshals at the request of state prosecutors, who plan to try him later on similar charges.

The next in custody was Hector Cornillot Llano. He, too, had been a devoted follower of Bosch. Until April, he had been serving 30 years at the Belle Glade Correctional Institution for bombing a Miami Beach Air Canada ticket office for Bosch's Cuban Power group. Then, eleven days before the bomb severed the legs of Emilio Milián, Llano had escaped from a prison dairy where he was considered a model prisoner, and sped away in a car waiting on a nearby highway. The FBI caught up with him on June 18, in a cottage behind the offices of another violent exile group called Alpha 66, on the eve of his departure from American soil. And he became the major suspect in the Milián car bombing.

Slowly, the pieces in this intricate chain had begun to unravel. On May 3, only hours after Florida Senator Lawton Chiles criticized the FBI for its failure to quell the terrorism, the Bureau announced the arrest of three young would-be bombers outside a Little Havana porno bookstore. In many ways, this arrest was the most intriguing of all. Tony De La Cova, a 25-year-old former history teacher at Miami's Inter-American Military Academy, was taken into custody with Blas Jesus Corbo and a white straight-A physics student from

Florida Atlantic University. The three were charged with taking a small, tight-packed pipe bomb from their car to the bookstore doorstep, and were held in lieu of \$200,000 bond.

From his prison cell, Corbo told of twice meeting Bosch associates who tried to induce him to join commando activity in Chile. A month before his arrest, Corbo said, he had been target practicing in the Everglades with the local chapter of Bosch's *Acción Cubana*. The question was—how close were Corbo's ties to De La Cova? And might they be the youthful arm of Bosch's Miami connection?

For months, ever since he lost his teaching job for failure to discipline his eighth grade class, the FBI had been watching Tony De La Cova. They had seen him on a red Honda near the scene of two firebombings, wearing dark clothes and aviator glasses. They had seen him hanging suspiciously around the bombed offices of a leftist Spanish magazine called *Arieto*. And when they went through his apartment after the arrest, they also found he'd been working to identify undercover officers in organized crime.

There were dozens of mysterious odds and ends in Tony's apartment. Eventually, the FBI hauled away 70 boxes and the inventory alone took 64 typed pages. Much of this is still classified. For De La Cova was a collector. He collected the correspondence of a federal court judge and a private FBI file concerning Frank Sturgis. He collected jail records and confidential police investigative reports. He had three such reports on the assassination of Ramon Donestevéz. And he had a copy of the death certificate of Rolando Masferrer. Nobody knew how Tony De La Cova came to acquire such a unique collection.

Alone in his living room, sipping Cuban coffee at midnight, that is what Gordon Winslow is trying to figure out. Winslow, the self-acknowledged historian of Little Havana's intrigues, is a gaunt and rather wispy presence in his mid-thirties who used to believe he understood the exile mentality. Tonight, the Organized Crime Bureau has been to see Winslow again. Since the arrest of his friend De La Cova, they have been coming around a lot.

"What can I tell them?" Winslow says, throwing up his hands. "One night Tony and I were sitting here talking about what's been happening. I said to him, 'I think it's a young group, fed up with everything. They want to get rid of all the old leaders and try to unite under

something else.' Tony said, 'I never thought of that.' Now I don't know. I remember another time, rapping about some Cuban who got shot through his window. 'He got what was coming to him,' Tony said.

"But I was amazed at the arrest. Tony had all kinds of weird ideas, but he was a quiet kind of guy really, a historian. Then when I saw him at the hearing, he looked like he'd suddenly become the great Cuban liberator Jose Marti."

Nobody knew quite what to make of De La Cova's background either. In college, after a trip to Northern Ireland, he had been considered something of a pacifist leader among *pro*-Castro intellectuals. Almost overnight, he underwent an apparent metamorphosis—sporting a Palestinian armband and high knee boots, even exchanging gunfire with four students he said had attacked him in a campus parking lot. Then, chameleon-like, he changed colors again. By day, he taught history; by night, he worked feverishly on a master's thesis about the 26th of July Movement that brought Castro to power. Finally, he be-

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### The bombings are so expert that a Miami Bomb Squad conducts special training sessions to keep up with the methodology

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gan to spend hours hanging around the newspaper offices of Rolando Masferrer.

"He looked rather harmless, a studious type of person," Masferrer's wife Lucilla would recall. "He was constantly asking Rolando questions, and carrying notes and clippings. It never occurred to me that he might be violent."

There, at Masferrer's offices, Gordon Winslow first encountered De La Cova. "I was planning to do a book on Masferrer and Tony said he was doing research on him, too. Now I'm told it was Tony who planted some dope in Masferrer's house. Two DEA agents came and found it, and threatened to revoke Masferrer's parole unless he came up with the names of some cocaine importers. So he gave a few names, and the word got out, and Masferrer got hit."

Winslow takes a long pensive sip of Cuban coffee. "Tony told me once that he'd been invited to the Dominican Republic," he muses. "And about an assassination attempt against Fidel, scheduled for some place in Mexico. He knew a lot about a lot of things. The thing about Tony, though—say I was head of a

group. Well, he'd join it. He'd be Masferrer. He'd be CIA. He was very much influenced by strong personalities. Like, if you were a father image, you could get him to do anything."

In August, a Miami judge sentenced Tony De La Cova to 65 years; his partner, Gary Latham, got 35, and Corbo was convicted and awaits sentencing.

If Dr. Orlando Bosch was indeed the father image for Tony De La Cova, we may never know it. The last anyone knew for certain, Bosch was in Costa Rica. He traveled there last February where, during a visit by Henry Kissinger, he was jailed for traveling under a false passport.

According to the testimony of police Lieutenant Lyons before a Senate subcommittee, a confidential source had informed his department a few weeks before that an attempt might be made on Kissinger's life there. The FBI and Secret Service were notified, and Bosch was then arrested. It was also rumored he might have been planning to assassinate Andres Pascal Allende, the exiled nephew of the late Chilean president. At any rate, after Kissinger departed, the Costa Rican Supreme Court ordered Bosch deported to the Dominican Republic. In Little Havana, the word is that he has since returned to Chile.

And none of the recent arrests seem to have affected the planned crusade of this man without a country. Late in June, five exile organizations met in an undisclosed location in Central America. They announced an imminent terrorist campaign directed against the diplomats and property of Cuba's foreign embassies. Their spokesman—the only identified spokesman—was Dr. Bosch.

Fidel Castro retaliated in June with a speech, avowing that the CIA could no longer control its agents and threatening to break the 1973 hijacking agreement with the U.S. The only response from Washington was the subsequent release of testimony given before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee on internal security in May, in which Miami authorities described the recent reign of terror as emanating from anti-Castro exiles who "use Dade County as a base for international terrorism against allied governments of Cuba, Cuban shipping, Communists, purported Communists and individuals who take a stand against their terroristic-type tactics."

But the thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations had once again become an iceberg. Somewhere in the hinterlands of Latin America, Orlando Bosch must have smiled. ●