

Mr. Les Whitten
1401 16 St., NW
Wash, D.C. 20036

9/8/77

Dear Les,

If this morning's good column and the companion Post story suggest some official had an interest, this is not why I write. Nor about the coincidence with the story I heard but did not read, of a grand jury calling as a witness one of the IPS moneybags.

Rather is it about a basic approach suggested in part of my enclosed letter to Steve Bell.

I have not followed the Letelier case closely. I have read all the Post has carried, including the column.

There may be much I do not know. Probably very much.

But on the basis of what I recall of what I've read and heard if I were going to be spending any time looking into this case I'd first want to know what the FBI will not in all likelihood be anxious to disclose:

What detonated the explosive, what explosive was used and if there was any way of tracing it.

I presume that the lab work was done by the FBI and that the DC police have it as an unsolved case whether or not the FBI exercised any federal jurisdiction, as under the Civil Rights Act. From what I've seen of FBI lab reports they are minimal, evasive and uninformative, stating general conclusions that mean nothing without the testimony of the lab agents. Those who testify are experts in not telling prosecutors what they do not want them to know. No matter what they do they are immune, the prosecutor not prosecuting the prosecutor.

As I recall the initial stories there was a careful search of the crime scene. I suspect that one of the purposes was to determine if part of a detonating mechanism remained. Like parts of a radio. Or a clock or watch.

I have not kept tabs on the method of operation of the various extremist Cubans but I recall no training by our spooks that required the use of either device nor do I recall any subsequent bombing, of which there were many, in which extremist Cubans used such devices to detonate. I could be quite wrong on this. I'm repeating only what I recall.

The Miami police might be a good source on how these Cubans prefer to bomb. These police have had much experience from many bombings. (I don't know either Gerstein or his investigator, Hardis. Bud used to be friends there but may not be now from a case he is handling.)

Revanchist Cubans are logically suspect for many reasons but so are others. The content of the column is quite reasonable but it does not represent anything that can be taken to court. I'd believe this even more if it was fed or leaked to you.

This case reminds me of one in which I tried without success to interest some IPS people, a bombing in Maryland, I think Harford County, in the Rap Brown case. If anyone wanted to follow that one I think the FBI cannot withhold because there was a de facto waiver in the release of Hoover's telegram to the State Police paraphrasing the lab analysis. And I've already established that there is no secrecy on such lab work. In the Letelier case there was no such waiver of which I'm aware and it is an ongoing investigation, which is an exemption under FOIA.

I'm certain that any real investigation of the Brown case, in which a District black man named Featherstone was killed, will establish that the official account is false. It is that they were transporting a bomb that just went off on them.

Best,

Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

Tracking the Killers of Letelier

The man behind the murder of Chilean exile leader Orlando Letelier, as federal investigators have pieced together the mystery, is probably Chile's shadowy secret police chief, Manuel Contreras Sepulveda.

In one of the most complicated investigations since Watergate, FBI sleuths have traced the man who ordered the killing to Contreras' office in Santiago, Chile. They are not yet certain, however, whether Contreras gave the order or whether it came from a top aide.

Most federal sources believe the murder could not have been carried out without Contreras' direct approval. In fact, some Justice Department sources speculate that Chilean President Augusto Pinochet personally suggested the assassination.

No one working on the case will comment directly. But we have learned that the FBI has stepped up its activity among terrorists in Miami and hopes to resolve the case in the near future, complete with the names of the assassins.

Letelier was killed by a bomb, which was attached beneath his auto. The bomb exploded last Sept. 21 as he was driving down Washington's tranquil Embassy Row with two American colleagues, Mike and Ronni Moffitt.

The blast killed Letelier and Mrs. Moffitt, but miraculously spared her husband. Afterward, an anguished Mike Moffitt begged us to investigate the bombing. We have kept in close touch, therefore, with the federal investigation.

Within a few weeks, we were able to identify Chile's notorious secret police, known by the dread initials DINA, as

the probable culprits. Now we can describe the murder plot.

We are told that Pinochet expressed his displeasure with Letelier to the DINA chief. We have reason to believe that Contreras, in response to the Chilean president's wishes, dispatched a DINA officer to the United States to meet with two leaders of Brigade 2506, an organization of Bay of Pigs veterans.

Some members of the brigade, trained in violence by the CIA, allegedly have become right-wing terrorists. The DINA agent was put in touch with them, according to our sources, by a Chilean diplomat in the United States who secretly works for DINA.

We reached the diplomat, who reportedly has been interrogated by U.S. authorities. At first, he told us through an interpreter that the affair was his "private problem." Then he refused to comment, then his aide told us the charge was "ridiculous."

Investigators tell us, however, the two brigade leaders contacted, among others, a Cuban demolitions expert, Guillermo Novo, in New Jersey. At the time, he was on probation after conviction for illegal use of explosives. He violated his probation and is now a fugitive.

The assassination plot was worked out, our sources say, at a secret rendezvous near Bonao in the Dominican Republic. It was decided that a special shaped plastic charge was needed for the bombing.

The explosive was available on the streets of Miami, and the bomb materials were bought and fashioned in the United States, most sources say.

However, one source told us the bomb was constructed in Chile.

It was later delivered to the Miami

area by a Chilean military official carrying a diplomatic passport and flying in a military airplane, the source said.

The device was transmitted to a member of Brigade 2506, we are told. He then carried it to New Jersey, where the assassination team was waiting for it. They used the bomb, according to our sources, to kill Letelier.

The Justice Department had no formal comment on the case. We have learned that prosecutors, however, are trying to figure how to get testimony from Chileans with diplomatic immunity, and how to extradite potential defendants from Chile.

Footnote: The Chilean government has repeatedly denied any involvement with the assassination. Spokesmen for Brigade 2506 also have sworn that their members had nothing to do with murdering Letelier. Incidentally, Chile has announced the dissolution of DINA. But our sources say its duties simply have been taken over by other organizations.

Washington Whirl—Graciela Olivarez is raising hackles inside the Community Services Administration. Not long after she took command of the new agency, she called the staff together not to outline programs to help the poor but to complain about coffee stains on the floor and waste paper in the ladies' rooms.

• President Carter has earmarked \$4 billion to create 600,000 temporary jobs. Yet a tiny office inside the Commerce Department has helped create more than one million permanent jobs in the United States on a meager \$100,000 budget. This two-man office runs the Invest in USA program, which has persuaded several foreign manufacturers to set up plants in this country.

Letelier Slaying Called Work of Cuban Exile Unit

4/8/77

By Timothy S. Robinson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Federal investigators now believe the bombing murder of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier was carried out by anti-Castro Cuban exiles at the direction of Chile's secret police unit known as DINA, The Washington Post has learned.

Letelier and a fellow employee at the Institute for Policy Studies, Ronni K. Moffitt, were both killed last Sept. 21 on Sheridan Circle NW by a bomb hidden under the car Letelier was driving. The murders have prompted an unusually extensive FBI investigation into the shadowy world of foreign intrigue that surrounded the unprecedented political assassination of a former foreign official on a Washington Street.

The Washington Post reported last February that certain anti-Castro Cuban exiles and Bay of Pigs veterans in a group known as Brigade 2506 were the major suspects in the bombing and that they may have served as assassins-for-hire at the request of then-unnamed "persons in Chile."

Now, however, investigators have determined to their satisfaction that the bombing was either directed by officials of DINA or persons acting on behalf of DINA officials, Justice Department sources said yesterday.

The Justice Department sources refused to explain why they now believe DINA was involved.

Letelier, 44, was the former ambassador to the United States, foreign

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minister and minister of defense in the Marxist government of the late Chilean President Salvador Allende.

After the Allende government was overthrown in September, 1973, the military junta now headed by Augusto Pinochet, he was imprisoned for one year.

An economist who had worked for the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington for a decade before becoming Allende's ambassador, Letelier had written and spoken widely in opposition to the present Chilean government. Its critics, including Letelier, denounced the country for alleged torture, political repression and imprisonment of its opponents.

Before its dissolution two weeks ago, Chile's Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA) had been the center of the controversy about human rights violations in Chile because of its powers to make secret arrests without charges and maintain hidden

interrogation centers where political prisoners are held.

International human rights organizations had accused the feared Chilean secret police of being responsible for the torture and disappearance of hundreds of political dissenters.

Columnists Jack Anderson and Les Whitten report in a column in today's Washington Post that investigators are able to trace the order to murder Letelier directly to DINA chief Manuel Contreras Sepulveda. However, one knowledgeable Justice Department official discounted that report as "totally incorrect" while at the same time conceding that Contreras probably would have known of any such acts carried out at DINA's direction.

The accusation that DINA is involved in the murder of Letelier could have wide-ranging effects on diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Chile, whose president, Pinochet, was in Washington for the signing of the Panama Canal treaty yesterday.

State Department officials could not be reached for comment on the allegations concerning DINA late yesterday, and Justice Department officials refused to discuss any negotiations that may be in progress between State and Justice concerning the probe.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene M. Propper of the major crimes division, who has been coordinating the Letelier investigation for the past year, confirmed only that he has consistently "maintained contact" with the State Department about the case. He said he would not otherwise comment on the case.

Since the early-morning murders last September, the investigation by a federal grand jury here and the FBI here and abroad has been conducted in unusually tight secrecy. It is known that the Central Intelligence Agency and intelligence agencies from foreign countries also have been cooperating with the Justice Department probe.

For the first few months of the in-

vestigation, there were no significant leads in the case as probes sifted through numerous theories and possible suspects. However, by late January it became clear that anti-Castro Cuban exiles who were opposed to Letelier's highly visible Socialist stand had become the focus of the probe.

One Cuban exile now living in Elizabeth, N.J., has been in jail for five months rather than testify before the grand jury after being granted immunity from prosecution.

Jose Dionisio Suarez, 38, said at the time he was refusing to testify because the Letelier investigation was being used to harass the Cuban exile community in the United States. He is a member of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, a right-wing group that operates out of the New Jersey area.

Guillermo Novo, another member of that Cuban group, has been a fugitive since June 7 after he failed to appear at a Trenton, N.J., hearing on whether his parole on a 1974 explosives conviction should be revoked.