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Police Informer Offered Guns to VVAW

By ROB ELDER
Herald Staff Writer

Miami Police confirmed Friday that they hired the Cuban informer who told Vietnam Veterans Against the War that he could help them buy machine guns just before the 1972 political conventions.

"We were hoping for the overt act necessary to produce a charge of conspiracy," said Maj. Adam Klimkowski, Commander of the City of Miami Police Department's Special Investigations Section.

Police Chief Bernard Garmire confirmed that the Miami informer met with the VVAW just before seven VVAW members and one sympathizer were indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to disrupt the conventions with arms, including automatic weapons.

THE indictments apparently were based on other information. Klimkowski admitted that the veterans did not respond to the weapons offer extended by the Miami informer.

The Miami police were working "very closely" with the FBI, Garmire said, but he and Klimkowski denied that their agent was a provocateur.

"At no time would we be cast in the role of a provocateur," Garmire said. But he conceded that Pablo Fernandez, an informant paid by his department, "was probably a fomentor of problems."

Klimkowski confirmed a report by The Herald last Wednesday that the mission of Fernandez, 28, a stock

clerk, was to find out whether VVAW Florida coordinator Scott Camil wanted to buy weapons from militant anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Miami. Camil is one of the defendants.

"WE DID not want Camil to actually acquire weapons," Klimkowski said. "We wanted to find out what was in the back of his mind."

The FBI refused to comment because it said the defendants are under indictment.

The police officials made

their statements after they were presented Friday afternoon with results of a Herald investigation that independently established that:

• Fernandez admits telling Camil and other VVAW members he knew of "50 submachine guns which were supposed to be for sale." What he did not tell the veterans, he told The Herald, was that he also knew "the FBI was watching those guns."

• Bob Davis, a staff member of the Metro Community Relations Board, says he at-

tended a meeting, about two weeks before the Democratic convention, opened July 10 in Miami Beach, at which Fernandez told the VVAW that "militant Cubans" might "blow up the Center for Dialogue," an anti-establishment meeting place then used by the VVAW.

It was after telling the veterans, Davis says, that Fernandez mentioned the 50 submachine guns.

• Fernandez maintains the veterans brought up the subject of weapons and he was just playing them, along for

the police and the FBI. But he admits that far from being the VVAW sympathizer he was purporting to be, he had in fact just returned from a trip to Washington with Bernard Barker and other Miami Cubans to attack left-wing demonstrators at J. Edgar Hoover's funeral.

Barker and three others were arrested June 17 when they returned to burglarize the Watergate headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. Fernandez says

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Maj. Klimkowski
... 'didn't respond'

VVAW Rejected Offer Of Guns, Police Say

HE did not accompany them on that trip.

HE WAS busy, he said, spying on the VVAW for the Miami police and the FBI.

Klimkowski confirmed Friday that "Pablo's involvement with the VVAW was with our knowledge and approval." Fernandez operated out of an office called first the Strategic Intelligence Unit (SIU) and later the Defensive Intelligence Unit (DIU), whose "exclusive responsibility was to find out plans of groups that might disrupt the conventions."

The police department first made contact with Fernandez on Dec. 17, 1971, through officer Raphael Aguirre, a plainclothes member of the DIU staff.

Beginning Dec. 21, 1971, Fernandez went to the police station as often as three times a week in a series of meetings that continued until after the conventions, Aguirre said. He said that Fernandez was paid on an irregular basis — "sometimes I might give him \$10 or \$15."

BEGINNING May 30, and acting on police instructions, Fernandez had at least three meetings with Camil and other VVAW members. "I convinced them I was a leftist," he told The Herald.

The first meeting was at a Hialeah drugstore. Fernandez wore a hidden listening device planted on him by the police. The bug didn't work,



Pablo Fernandez
... paid informant

Aguirre disclosed Friday, "because Pablo got out of range and we couldn't use it."

Afterward, however, Fernandez reported to the police what was said at the meeting.

The meeting recalled by Davis, the CRB official, took place at the Hialeah home of Alton Foss, then the VVAW Miami coordinator and now one of the defendants in the conspiracy case.

BY THAT time, Fernandez had also met on two occasions with the VVAW at the Miami police headquarters. The VVAW, which requested those meetings, thought they were negotiating with someone who could represent militant Cuban groups and work out an agreement for peaceful demonstrations at the conventions.

Fernandez told them he represented a particularly militant Cuban exile organi-

zation known as Abdala. In fact, he has told The Herald, he was spying on Abdala for another Cuban group.

Some of these meetings — it is not clear how many — also were attended by two Dade County Public Safety Department officers who had infiltrated the VVAW.

Foss says that these agents, Gerald Rudoff and Harrison Collins, tried to "set me up" on still another occasion to meet with Fernandez to discuss a weapons purchase. He refused to go to that meeting.

KLIMKOWSKI was asked Friday whether he knew, at the time the meetings were taking place, that Rudoff and Crenshaw were in fact sheriff's deputies.

"I'd rather not answer that," he said.

The Public Safety Department has denied that its officers were provocateurs.

On behalf of the VVAW, Camil said Friday that the police disclosures "just corroborate what we've been saying the whole time — that we were coming to the convention to exercise our constitutional rights, and not to cause problems, and that what problems did occur were caused by provocateurs."

Ironically, Klimkowski agreed that for all his efforts, Fernandez never brought back anything damaging to the veterans on whom he spied.

"In fact, I guess he might make a good defense witness," the police officer said.