

Friend of Murdered Miami Man, Hiding in Fear of his Life, Tells his Story Exclusively for Enquirer Readers.

Diego Gonzales Tendedera, once a well-known Havana newspaperman and now an exile from Castro's Cuba, was the Miami correspondent for El Tiempo, a Spanish-language paper in New York. He was in Miami on February 22, when his friend, anti-Castro freedom-fighter Eladio del Valle, was brutally murdered.

Diego Tendedera believes del Valle's murder was directly connected with President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Here he explains why.

By Diego Tendedera

On February 22, a Cuban refugee named Eladio del Valle was brutally murdered in Miami. I knew the victim well. And I am convinced he was executed because he had information about a conspiracy that led to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

I do not say this lightly. For I believe that del Valle's killers plan to silence me, too. Anonymous callers have threatened my life.

That's why I'm in hiding as I write this for The Enquirer.

But the story of Eladio del Valle and his death must be told, for it has a strange, unexplored role in the tangled web of intrigue under investigation by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison. The facts, briefly, are these:

In exile from Castro's Cuba, del Valle flew scores of bombing raids over the island until U.S. agents confiscated his private plane in 1961.

His pilot ~~was~~ the Miami-based raids was David Ferrie who, according to DA Garrison, was to have flown Lee Harvey Oswald from Dallas to Cuba on the day of the President's assassination.

And del Valle was murdered in Miami the same day Ferrie was found dead in bed in New Orleans -- at the very time Garrison was about to arrest and pin down Ferrie on his links with Oswald.

The pattern of deaths among those with possible connections in the assassination seems to clear to be coincidental.

Lee Harvey Oswald is dead.

Jack Ruby, his killer, is dead.

David Ferrie is dead.

And Eladio del Valle is dead.

Del Valle -- nicknamed "Yito" -- was well-known in the Cuban exile community in Miami, just as he had been in Cuba.

Before Castro set up his Communist dictatorship, del Valle had been a Cuban Congressman and a City Councilman in Havana, where I ~~was a correspondent~~ as a newspaperman got to know him.

Del Valle fled Cuba with most of his wealth a week before Castro took over on January 1, 1959. In Miami, he continued the fight against Castro, gathering freedom fighters and procuring guns, grenades, bombs and sabotage equipment.

He set up a grocery store as a front for his operations. And after I fled to Miami in May, 1960, I became a frequent visitor at the "store."

It was there that I met Ferrie. As a free-lance pilot, he was flying scores of missions with del Valle to drop bombs on Cuba.

For six months I saw Ferrie and del Valle together almost every day.

They'd take off two or three times a week in del Valle's twin-engined Apache to drop incendiaries on strategic targets and rescue anti-Communist Cubans who wanted to escape.

Del Valle told me he gave Ferrie \$1,000 to \$1,500 per flight, depending on whether they would just drop bombs or would have to land on some highway to pick up refugees, a far more dangerous mission.

I never really trusted Ferrie. And del Valle didn't either.

He once told me: "Ferrie has guts. We've saved dozens of our friends. But I don't fully trust him. He'd sell us out if he could."

No one knows who sold del Valle out. But U.S. Government agents put a stop to his raids early in 1961 by confiscating the Apache plane.

After splitting up, del Valle stayed in Miami and Ferrie went to New Orleans, where he met Lee Harvey Oswald.

How much del Valle knew of Ferrie's dealings with Oswald and others in New Orleans no one may ever know -- for both men died before they talked to authorities.

There are still open questions about Ferrie's death on February 22. A coroner called it "natural" -- but Garrison calls the pilot's death an "apparent suicide."

There is no question, however, about del Valle's death.

Someone hacked a machete or hatchet down on his head, splitting his skull open crosswise from ear to ear. Finally, even though already dead, he was shot through the heart.

His maimed body was found found in his car in a Miami supermarket parking lot just after dawn on February 23.

I heard the news on a radio broadcast and sped to the scene, which was swarming with police when I drove up. I flashed my credentials as Miami correspondent for El Tiempo of New York, stepped to del Valle's car -- and nearly vomited when I saw him.

Then the police finished their investigation at the scene, I followed the corpose to the morgue. There, medical examiners told me he had been killed about 6:30 the night before.

The Miami police still say they have no idea why del Valle was killed.

But I am convinced his questioners wanted to learn how much he knew of Ferrie's connections with Oswla and the New Orleans group under investigation by Garrison in the assassination plot.

Five days after del Valle's death a highly reliable informer confided in me that del Valle had been murdered in the Miami house of a women who subsequently disappeared. The police are still looking for her.

I drove to the house and neighbors told me the police already had been there.

Neighbors also told me del Valle had been a frequent visitor at the house before his death. He played cards there with other refugees.

They neighbors recalled how police carted away a sofa and bathtub, complete with plumbing, from the murder site. And one man told me how at 6:30 a.m. the morning following the murder he glanced out the window and saw the woman of the death house load a suitcase and two heavy lamps into her car and drive off with a companion.

On the day he died, del Valle had apparently been lured to the house on the pretext of playing cards.

But on y killers were awaiting him. And they later drove his body to the supermarket parking lot.

Who killed Eladio del Valle? Cuban regurees in Miamo believe agents of Fidel Castro were responsible.

Manuel F. Artime, who commanded the abortive Bay of Pigs invastion against Cuba, also believes del Valle was killed on orders from Castro.

I personally believe del Valle ~~knew~~ and David Ferrie knew too much about the circumstances surrounding JFK's assassination.

If Ferrie had ralked to DA Garrison, del Valle probably would have been questioned soon after.

As things stand, neither man will ever talk again.

And they may not be the last. I myself may be one the killers' list -- not so much for what I know, but for what I believe and may say.

In Miami, I received dozens of anonymous phone calls threatening my life unless I keep my nose out of the del Valle investigation.

That's why I've moved with my family into a large Manhattan hotel, where I'm hiding.

~~Meanwhile~~ Meantime, the Miami District Attorney has clammed up on the case -- something he wouldn't do if it were an ordinary gambling or narcotics rubout.

The question ~~is~~ why.

The answer, I'm convinced, has to do with President Kennedy's assassination.
