

# Trujillo Assassins Implicated CIA

By Jack Anderson

Dictator Rafael Trujillo was gunned down May 30, 1961, thus ending his 31-year tyranny over the Dominican Republic. His military police efficiently rounded up the assassins and tortured them to death.

We have now learned that before they died, they gave detailed confessions implicating the Central Intelligence Agency in the assassination plot. The tortured men believed the CIA not only supported them but would save them.

According to their confessions, the CIA was supposed to prevent the tyrant's murderous son, Ramfis, from returning to Santo Domingo. Nevertheless, he flew home in a chartered plane and directed the torture.

His father had been bushwhacked on a lonely highway by a few military and civilian marksmen, backed by a conspiracy of 20 to 40 others, with supporters in the hundreds. The military security hauled in dozens—some say hundreds—for torture. From their agonized confessions, a detailed summary was written and presented to Ramfis, who has since died.

The existence of the summary is confirmed by sources close to the surviving Trujillo family members. We contacted the family, which refuses to discuss the CIA's role in the assassination.

Family members would say only that they regret Rafael Trujillo was not informed by the CIA of the plot. "After all, he was not an enemy. He should have been told," a family spokesman said.

One Trujillista veteran, now a respected business executive, acknowledged that he helped compile the summary. "The CIA helped get the guns and gave the plotters encouragement," he said in a statement.

He charged that the plotters "were urged on by Lear Reed," a former U.S. embassy aide in Santo Domingo, who was regarded by colleagues as a CIA agent. Reed left the Dominican Republic about eight months before the assassination.

After he left, according to the confessions of the assassins, they kept close contact with two U.S. diplomats whom they called "Mutt" and "Jeff" after the comic strip characters.

Messages were carried from the plotters to the CIA, according to the confessions, by a young Dominican pediatrician, Dr. Robert Reid. After the assassination, Reid hid three of the plotters. When the secret police closed in, the doctor committed suicide.

"The assassins believed that the CIA was going to head off Ramfis . . ." the former Trujillo aide said. "But he chartered a plane and got back to Santo Domingo in time to take over the old man's apparatus. I can't swear that the CIA ever tried to delay Ramfis, but the plotters

under torture—and it was very, very ugly—swore they'd never have killed Trujillo unless they thought the CIA was going to save their skins somehow."

Footnote: U.S. intelligence sources confirm they were aware of the plot and kept abreast of it in a general way. But they deny that the CIA was a direct participant. Lear Reed is dead. One of the surviving conspirators, Gen. Antonio (Tony) Imbert has denied that the CIA helped kill Trujillo. But denials or not, the tortured men thought they had U.S. approval and they expected U.S. help.

**Puff Bags**—Rep. John Moss (D-Calif.) is making a behind-the-scenes attempt to obtain former President Nixon's White House tapes to see if they contain any reference to auto air-bag safety.

The puff bags, according to federal data, would save 10,000 lives a year, prevent countless injuries, and salvage the nation's drivers and insurance companies \$4 billion annually in hospital and other costs.

Both Ford and Chrysler have fought strenuously against the bags for years. General Motors has been lukewarm.

In a letter to Special Water-gate prosecutor Henry S. Ruth, Moss, House Commerce Investigations chairman, suggested that meetings between the Nixon administration and Ford and Chrysler officials may have been behind the air bags' political problems.

Moss asked Ruth to "review White House tapes . . . to determine whether conversations took place (on) air-bag standards."

The tapes are presently tied up in the courts.

In 1971, we told of an April 27 meeting between Henry Ford II and Nixon on auto safety. A confidential Moss subcommittee memo said this and other meetings were held amid "talk of Henry Ford (playing) a role on behalf of Nixon's re-election."

After one meeting, attended by White House aide John Ehrlichman, Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe "retired with the White House staff" and later told a top aide, "We are in trouble on the air bag."

Volpe was right. The White House shelved the air bag for at least five years by replacing it "temporarily" with the ill-fated starter interlock belt system that was installed on 1974 cars. It was so unpopular with drivers, it was scuttled.

A few days ago, President Ford bucked his Transportation Department and questioned whether the air bag was "cost-effective."

Footnote: The Transportation Department plans hearings on air bags in a few days, once again with heated auto-industry opposition to the safety device.