

# CIA Accused Of Plot to Kill Marcos

## New York

An American who admits that he plotted with two other men to assassinate Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos in 1972 claims that the scheme was planned and directed by a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency operative.

The statements by R. Lewis Pincus, who is being tried in absentia in the Philippines in connection with the murder scheme, are the first connecting the agency with alleged plots against Marcos' life.

Pincus, who lives in New York City and on Long Island, made the allegation during a brief recent appearance on NBC's "Tomorrow" television show and subsequently gave details in interviews with Newsday.

During his television appearance, Pincus wore a hood because, he said, he has changed his appearance and fears that an attempt will be made on his life.

The CIA refused to discuss Pincus' allegations. A spokesman

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for the agency said, "The CIA will not dignify with a response the assertions of a man who hides behind a hood on network television."

In the *Newsday* interviews, Pincus, a heavy-set man of 36, said he was deeply involved in gambling and numbers operations in New York City in 1972 and was recruited for the assassination team through his organized crime connections.

He said he has been an informer for the FBI and a paid informer for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Pincus said that he was recruited by William Silverman of Manhattan, who was convicted in Newark, N.J., in 1972 on federal charges of interstate transportation of stolen securities and counterfeiting \$1.1 million in securities.

Pincus said Silverman told him that another American allegedly involved in the plot, Larry Tractman of California, was a CIA operative who had turned to organized crime to recruit "hit men," or professional killers, for the assassination of Marcos.

Neither Tractman nor Silverman could be reached for comment.

The CIA wanted to eliminate Marcos for a number of reasons, including the fact that he was diverting U.S. aid money into his own pocket, Pincus said he was told. Plans were laid for killing the Filipino leader, but none was ever carried out, he said.

After he was recruited, Pincus said, Silverman briefed him on the plan.

"He told me that the CIA was involved, and that there was a promise of letting us take over the casinos in the Philippines to be run by this (crime) family that he was connected with," Pincus said.

"He said that it was for God and country and that some time I may need a favor from the federal government and I would have one coming and besides that fact, there was big money involved — \$125,000 to be exact."

(Pincus said he was paid \$3800 when he left for the Philippines, \$5000 when he arrived and then was paid \$500 per week, plus expenses, for the four weeks he was in the country.)

"Tractman later also told us that the CIA was behind the hit. He said that the money we were giving to the country for aid and for the bases was going into Marcos' pocket; that they (the CIA) had evidence that weaponry that was given to the Philippines for the country's defense was being sold on the open market and again the money was going to Marcos' pocket," Pincus said.

Tractman also said that Marcos was training a secret army on a Filipino island which he used on raids that he then claimed were made by Communists so he could get more U.S. defense money, according to Pincus.

"There was a whole bunch of things he told us why the guy shouldn't live," Pincus said. "He gave us so many reasons. I mean if our government wasn't involved and they just wanted to have a guy killed, he would have given us the money to do it and that would have been it. They never give you reasons for a hit. Here, the Filipinos and Tractman showed us why he had to die ..."

A spokesman for the Philippine consulate in New York said, "Mr. Pincus is a fugitive from the Philippines. He is being tried in absentia. As far as the CIA is concerned, as diplomats we cannot comment."

A spokesman for Senator Frank Church's Senate Intelligence committee said that the committee knew nothing of any CIA ties to assassination attempts on Marcos. "We did not get into the Philippine thing," he said.

A counsel to Representative

Otis G. Pike's House Select Committee on Intelligence also said that his committee did not deal with the Marcos assassination attempts. He said he was unaware of any CIA connection, but added, "Frankly, nothing ... no scenario ... would surprise me."

The assassination plot was described in a staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1973. The report lists Pincus, Tractman and August McCormick Lehman Jr., 28, a Vietnam veteran of Nashville, Tenn., as being part of the plot, with Lehman the alleged triggerman.

There reportedly had been several assassination attempts against Marcos, the report said.

Lehman was convicted last February of plotting to kill Marcos and was sentenced to six years at hard labor. He is believed to be imprisoned at an army base in Manila.

The plotting stopped, Pincus said, when Silverman called him and warned him to get out of the country because it was taking too long to complete the assassination planning. He said that he left the country soon after the warning.

Tractman reportedly escaped the Philippines to Hong Kong. Shortly afterward, Philippine authorities announced the arrest of Lehman. (The U.S. has no extradition treaty with the Philippines covering U.S. citizens.)