

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1967

U.S. INDICTS SEVEN IN HAITI RAID PLOT

Jury Accuses 3 Cubans, 2
Haitians and 2 Americans

MIAMI, Feb. 27 (UPI)—
Three Cuban exiles, two Haitian exiles and two Americans were indicted today by a Federal grand jury on charges of conspiring to invade Haiti from the Florida Keys last Jan. 2.

The authorities arrested 75 persons in a uniformed expeditionary force in a cove near Marathon eight weeks ago.

Among them were Rolando Masferrer Rojas, 49 years old, a former Cuban Senator, and the Rev. Jean-Baptiste Georges, 47, former Haitian Minister of Education.

Mr. Masferrer and Father Georges are among the seven indicted today. They had no immediate comment.

Two of the seven had never been arrested or publicly charged. They are Mitchell Livingstone Wer Bell 3d, 48, of Powder Springs, Ga., and Julio Aton Constanzo Palau, 30, a Cuban living in Miami.

Mr. Wer Bell, reached at his home in Powder Springs, said: "I don't know what it's all about. I did nothing indictable."

He said his only connection with the group had been as an adviser to a television network

that was filming a documentary.

Mr. Palau, interviewed at his home here, said he had been in the invasion force but escaped capture Jan. 2.

Calling the grand jury's action "totally unjust," he said:

"Our purpose was not to break American laws. We were trying to overthrow Fidel Castro's Communist regime by getting rid of Haitian dictator Duvalier and setting up a base in Haiti."

He was referring to Haiti's President-for-life, Francois Duvalier. Father Georges, a Roman Catholic priest, was to have replaced Dr. Duvalier until elections could have been held.

The others indicted are Col. Rene Leon, 32, a Haitian living in Elmhurst, N. Y., Antonio Leon Rojas, 52, a Cuban living in Miami, and Martin-Francis Xavier Casey, 28, of Miami and Philadelphia.

Charges against the 70 others have apparently been dropped.

The indictment said the defendants had conspired to set up a military training camp in southern Florida and to bring arms and ammunition to Miami from New York and Atlanta.

The seven were indicted under a law making it a crime to prepare or initiate from this country any military expedition against a nation with which the United States is at peace.

If convicted, each faces a possible maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

On Wer Bell, see also AP A125WX,
27 (?) Feb 67 1036 AES;

SFC 12 Feb 75 [Agence France-Presse]

See 15 Nov 67 et seq