

Bomber's Confessions: Explosives Hidden in Toothpaste that Brought Down Civilian Airliner in 1976.

Explosives hidden in shampoo bottles & shoes part of a CIA sponsored program?

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Bomber's Confessions Point to Explosives Hidden in Toothpaste Tube that Brought Down Civilian Airliner in 1976. Former CIA Agent Posada Goes to Trial May 11

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Edited by Peter Kornbluh <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB218/index.htm>

Washington D.C., May 3, 2007 — A Venezuelan employee of Cuban exile and indicted terrorist Luis Posada Carriles conducted surveillance on targets “with a link to Cuba” for potential terrorist attacks throughout the Caribbean region in 1976, including Cubana Aviacion flights in and out of Barbados, according to documents posted today by the National Security Archive. At least four targets identified in the surveillance report — including the Guyanese Embassy in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad — were subsequently bombed during the bloody summer of anti-Castro violence in 1976, and a Cubana jet was blown up in mid-air on October 6, 1976, after taking off from Seawell airport in Barbados.

Posada faced charges in Venezuela for the airplane bombing, but escaped from prison there in 1985, participated in the White House- and CIA-sponsored Iran-contra covert operations in Central America in the 1980s, and illegally entered the U.S. in March 2005. He is currently free on bail in Miami, albeit under house detention, awaiting trial on immigration fraud next week.

The Archive also posted additional investigative records generated by police authorities in Trinidad following the bombing, including drawings by Posada's employee, Hernan Ricardo Lozano, and handwritten confessions by a second Venezuelan, Freddy Lugo, that describe how Ricardo molded plastic explosive into a toothpaste tube to destroy the plane, as well as Ricardo's attempts to reach Posada via telephone after the plane went down.

“These documents provide the true historical backdrop for the legal proceedings against Luis Posada Carriles,” said Peter Kornbluh, who directs the Archive's Cuba Documentation Project. “They record the unforgettable violence of Posada's lengthy career as one of the world's most prolific terrorists.”

The surveillance document, handwritten by Ricardo, recorded the addresses of Cuban embassies, travel offices, news agencies, and consulates in Trinidad, Panama, Barbados and

Colombia. It also contained detailed observations about the security systems at those buildings, and even the cars driven by Cuban diplomats. At the Cuban embassy in Bogota, Ricardo noted, "the Ambassador's vehicle is a 1976 steel grey Cadillac, with a black vinyl roof and diplomatic plates CD-0046."

Ricardo's intelligence report identified the office of British West Indian Airways (BWIA) as "the one place with a link to Cuba" in Barbados; on July 14, 1976, the BWIA office in Bridgetown was struck by a bomb. Six weeks later on September 1, the Guyanese Embassy in the capital of Trinidad was also bombed. According to declassified FBI records, the FBI attache in Caracas who subsequently gave Ricardo a visa to travel to the U.S. noted that Ricardo's passport showed that he had traveled to Port-of-Spain on August 29 and returned on the day of the bombing "and wondered in view of Ricardo's association with Luis Posada, if his presence there during that period was coincidence."

Ricardo was an employee at Posada's security firm in Caracas, Investigaciones Comerciales y Industriales (ICA). His surveillance report was reportedly found in Posada's office at ICA when it was searched by Venezuelan police after the bombing of the Cubana plane. (Venezuelan authorities matched the handwriting to notes Ricardo had penned to a girlfriend at that time.) Ricardo and another Venezuelan, Freddy Lugo, were subsequently tried and convicted in Caracas for placing bombs on the flight before they deplaned in Barbados. Posada and another Cuban exile, Orlando Bosch, were also detained in Caracas as the masterminds of the crime. Posada escaped from a Venezuelan jail in September 1985; Bosch was released after twelve years in prison in 1988.

In a confession to deputy police commissioner Dennis Ramdwar on October 19, 1976, Ricardo drew a diagram of the pencil detonator and its various timing positions and explained how "a plastic bomb was detonated." He also wrote out a list of necessities for blowing up a plane which included "false documentation," and "explosivo C-4." On a separate piece of paper, Ricardo drew a crude organizational chart of CORU, the violent anti-Castro exile coalition led by Orlando Bosch which took credit for the terrorist wave of bombings and assassination efforts in the summer of 1976.

Like Posada who illicitly returned to the Miami area in March of 2005, Bosch entered the U.S. illegally in 1988 and was detained at an immigration detention center for over a year. In July 17, 1990, he was freed by the administration of George H.W. Bush, over the objections of Justice Department officials who had determined he remained a threat to the security of U.S. citizens.

In a handwritten and signed confession dated October 21, 1976, Lugo told police authorities in Trinidad that Ricardo had repeatedly tried to call a "Sr. Pan y Agua"-Mr. Bread and Water- in Caracas after the plane went down. "I asked him who Mr. Pan y Agua was because I found it amusing that someone would have that name," Lugo wrote, "and he told me that it was a dear friend of his named Orlando Bosch." Lugo also recounted how Ricardo had called his mother and told her "to give the telephone number of the Village Beach Hotel in Barbados to Mr. Luis Posada so that he could call and to tell him that there was a problem."

In a separate statement dated October 16, Lugo told authorities in Trinidad that before Lugo and Ricardo boarded Cubana Flight 455 in Trinidad, he had seen Ricardo "playing with something that looked like dough of a whitish or beige color; he was softening it. He also had a tube of toothpaste, Colgate, on the table and it was full as if new."

Bosch has lived freely in the Miami area for seventeen years; in various interviews he has all but admitted a role in the bombing of flight 455. Posada was freed on bail on April 18; he is currently under house arrest in Miami awaiting trial on charges of lying to immigration authorities about how he arrived in the United States. A grand jury in New Jersey is also weighing evidence of Posada's role in orchestrating a series of hotel bombings in Havana in 1997, using plastic explosives hidden in shampoo bottles and shoes.

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