



# The Colosio Assassination: Chronology of Events Surrounding the Assassination of Luis Colosio, 23 March 1994

*By Alex Cox*

Business had brought me to Mexico City on the day Luis Colosio was assassinated in Tijuana. The TV coverage of the event was every bit as obscure as the reporting of the JFK murder and worse than the coverage of the attempt on Ronald Reagan's life. The news video of the assassination didn't play once; instead heads talked and voxes popped...

What follows is a chronology of events relating to, or concurrent with, the assassination of Colosio, Presidential candidate of the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Internacional) in Mexico on March 23, 1993.

It is culled from printed sources, including the *Mexico City News*, *Mexico City Times*, *La Jornada*, *Proceso*, *Los Angeles Times*, AP Reports, John Ross's reports in *Mexico Barbaro* and *The Anderson Valley Advertiser*, the invaluable *Weekly News Update on the Americas*, and the book *Ya Vamos Llegando a Mexico...* by Ciro Gomez Leyva and the staff of *Reforma* (Editorial Diana, Mexico, 1995. ISBN 968-13-2837-X).

It is perhaps interesting to assassination researchers since it seems to have certain traits in common with the JFK assassination: specifically, the murder of a (presumptive) head of state on the campaign trail, competing theories of a lone assassin and multiple gunmen, photographic evidence suggesting that the accused was elsewhere, and was impersonated by a "double", the failure of a government-run "recreation" of the crime, more than a dozen attendant murders or "suicides", corruption or gross ineptitude on the part of the *magnicida's* bodyguards, and the inevitable presence

of at least one "former" agent of the CIA...

Organizations mentioned in the text:

**PRI:** Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)

**PAN:** National Action Party (Partido de Accion Nacional)

**PRD:** Democratic Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Democratico)

**CISEN:** Center for Investigations and National Security

**SEDENA:** National Defence Secretariat

**PGR:** Attorney General of the Republic

**EZLN:** National Zapatista Liberation Army ("Zapatistas")

**EPR:** Popular Revolutionary Army

## **1988**

Members of a Colombian drug cartel allegedly funnel \$200,000 into the campaign of CARLOS SALINAS DE GORTARI, Presidential candidate of the PRI. The money is given to his brother RAUL SALINAS to protect drugs shipped through Mexico. Thereafter RAUL receives \$300,000 for each cocaine shipment he protects. (From a Colombian drug dealer's deposition to the Swiss enquiry into the \$132 million RAUL deposited in Swiss banks—*El Universal*, Agence France-Presse, 31 August 1998)

**2 July** FRANCISCO XAVIER OVANDO and ROMAN GIL HERALDEZ, political aides to the PRD's Presidential candidate CUAUHTEMOC CARDENAS, are murdered in the Transito district of Mexico City, less than 72 hours before the Mexican presidential elections.

**6 July** The elections occur. By his own count, CARDENAS defeats the PRI's SALINAS by a 39-37% margin.

**14 July** Interior Secretary MANUEL BARTLETT insists that the

Federal Electoral Commission's computers have crashed, and SALINAS is awarded 50.2% of the vote. Tens of thousands of partially burned ballots marked for CARDENAS are found floating in rivers or smouldering in garbage dumps.

## 1990

**January** LIONEL GODOY, a PRD special prosecutor, announces the arrest of RICARDO FRANCO VILLA, a former attorney general of Michoacan, as the mastermind of the XAVIER OVANDO and GIL HERALDEZ murders. FRANCO VILLA is jailed; no motive is ever advanced.

FRANCO VILLA was part of a celebrated prosecutorial team that included JAVIER COELLO TREJO, later President SALINAS' drug czar, and GUILLERMO GONZALEZ CALDERONI, a Federal Judicial Police drug agent. According to *El Universal* CALDERONI said that he was asked by RAUL SALINAS to contract Gulf cartel hitmen to kill OVANDO and retrieve passwords to the electoral computers. (John Ross, *Mexico Barbaro*, 14-20 Aug 1998)

## 1992

**29 January** CARLOS ENRIQUE CERVANTES DE GORTARI—cousin of President SALINAS—MAGDALENA RUIZ PELAYO, and others are arrested in Newark, NJ, on charges of conspiracy to import and distribute cocaine. (*Weekly News Update on the Americas* #371, 9 March 1997)

**November** RUIZ PELAYO, who claims to have been the personal secretary to President SALINAS' father, RAUL SALINAS LOZANO, is convicted.

## 1993

**24 May** Cardinal JUAN JESUS POSADAS OCAMPO and six others are assassinated at Guadalajara International Airport, by members of the ARELLANO FELIX drug clan. AeroMexico flight 112 is delayed 12 minutes on the runway so that eight men carrying large canvas bags stuffed with weapons can board the aircraft via an airport bus. On board, one of the ARELLANO brothers, JAVIER (aka "EL TIGRILLO"), is repeatedly admonished by a flight attendant for spitting on the floor.

At Tijuana they are escorted off the plane, thru the departure lounge where their weapons set off metal detectors, to three vehicles with outlawed tinted windows parked illegally outside. Allegedly they also carry a black leather briefcase stolen from the Cardinal's white Grand Marquis.

The Attorney General, JORGE CARPIZO, says it is all a case of mistaken identity: in fact the bandits had mistaken Cardinal POSADAS for their rival, "EL CHAPO" GUZMAN. The Cardinal was in full regalia, sporting a prominent crucifix, in a limousine. He was shot 45 times. A right wing, anti-Liberation Theologian, POSADAS was reputed to have received drug money prior to his elevation to Cardinal in 1990. (*Anderson Valley Advertiser*, 22 Dec 1993)

**November** CARLOS SALINAS nominates LUIS DONALDO COLOSIO MURRIETA as the next Presidential candidate of the PRI. This nomination, known as the *dedazo* or fingering, means that COLOSIO will almost certainly be Mexico's next President: the PRI have not lost an election for President in 65 years.

## 1994

**1 January** NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement—becomes operative. The Zapatista rebellion breaks out in Chiapas. NAFTA is bitterly opposed by the EZLN, who believe it will benefit only 24 billionaires and further impoverish the poor.

**10 January** President SALINAS makes former Mexico City mayor MANUEL CAMACHO SOLIS head of his peace commission in Chiapas—a move seen by the media as sidelining COLOSIO.

**27 February** MANUEL SALVADOR GONZALEZ, 37 and ANTONIO TREJO, 35, are murdered on I-5 near Gorman, California. The two men are believed to have been working security for the COLOSIO campaign, probably as bodyguards. SALVADOR is said by police to be a PRI and Mexican Government official, carrying documents indicating he was "in charge of special investigations for the Government of Mexico." Also found on the bodies is a letter of introduction from JOSE MARIA CORDOBA MONTOYA, President SALINAS's Chief of Staff.

TREJO was driving their Cadillac at 75 mph south on the Golden

State Freeway when another vehicle pulled up alongside and fired five shots from a 9-mm weapon. Because all five shots were to the neck and head, authorities suspect professional assassins. (*Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1994)

**3 March** Six Anti-Narcotics police arrest JAVIER ARELLANO. Judicial Police officers, working as bodyguards for the ARELLANO FELIX brothers, intervene and kill them. "EL TIGRILLO" is freed.

**22 March** Chiapas peace negotiator MANUEL CAMACHO SOLIS—after 18 days spent promoting himself as a PRlista alternative to COLOSIO—withdraws his rival candidacy for the nomination.

**23 March** COLOSIO is assassinated in Lomas Taurinas, a poor community near the Tijuana Airport. Tijuana is the capital of the state of Baja California Norte, and a stronghold of the rival PAN party. On national TV a PRI militant accuses Baja Governor ERNESTO RUFFO APPEL; the broadcast is cut.

Arrested for the crime is MARIO ABURTO MARTINEZ, 23, previously a factory worker in San Pedro, California, now working at the Cameros Magneticos factory in nearby Otay Mesa. Press photos show a bloodstained young man being dragged along by several bystanders. According to news reports, he claims to be a pacifist and cries out, "I saved Mexico!" Also detained are JORGE ANTONIO SANCHEZ ORTEGA and VICENTE MAYORAL VALENZUELA, former head of the homicide division of Baja California State Judicial Police in Tijuana. Police say they are being detained as witnesses. (*Mexico City News*, 24 March 1994)

SANCHEZ ORTEGA tests positive for powder burns and has bloodstained clothing. SANCHEZ is an active member of CISEN (Center for Investigations and National Security), the successor organization to the DI—Dirección de Inteligencia—and to the notoriously corrupt DFS. DFS members trafficked in drugs and stolen cars and assassinated journalists including MANUEL BUENDIA, author of "The CIA in Mexico." The DFS was disbanded in 1985. (Andrew Reding, *The Nation*, 27 July 1995)

MARCO ANTONIO JACOME, an agent of the Baja California

Judicial Police, was instructed by his chief, RAUL LOZA PARRA, to videotape the Lomas Taurinas meeting. The tape appears to show the involvement of another man, OTHON CORTEZ VASQUEZ. (*Ya Vamos Llegando a Mexico*, p 224)

General DOMIRO GARCIA REYES, deputy chief of the Presidential military staff and head of COLOSIO's military security team, finds his path blocked by TRANQUILINO SANCHEZ, 58, a policeman from Sinaloa. SANCHEZ (no relation to SANCHEZ ORTEGA) is arrested five days later on suspicion of complicity in the crime. (*Ya Vamos...* pp 192, 235)

After the shooting, ABURTO is knocked to the ground by the head of COLOSIO's civil security, FERNANDO DE LA SOTA, and by ALEJANDRO GARCIA HINOJOSO, 25 years old. DE LA SOTA is the head of a secret governmental organization, "Grupo Omega," supposedly set up to provide additional security for COLOSIO. GARCIA HINOJOSO is also a member of the security detail and of the group. Others seize VICENTE MAYORAL VALENZUELA. Allegedly ABURTO has pointed MAYORAL out to them, saying "Fue el ruco, fue el ruco [It was that guy]." (*Ya Vamos...* pp 193, 221)

TRANQUILINO SANCHEZ, VICENTE MAYORAL, and his son RODOLFO, 24 (who allegedly obstructed the path of Colonel ANTONIO REYNALDOS DEL POZO during the shooting) were all hired as security guards by PRlista JOSE RODOLFO RIVAPALACIO TINAJERO, a member of a secret society of Tijuana cops called "Grupo Tucan." (*Ya Vamos...* p 223)

Meanwhile an Army Lieutenant, REYNALDO MERIN SANDOVAL, who like Gen. GARCIA REYES has become separated from COLOSIO prior to the shooting, disarms a man with a gun standing over COLOSIO's body. The man is not identified: however, another Grupo Omega member, RAFAEL LOPEZ MERINO, "loses" his .38 simultaneously. (*Ya Vamos...* pp 181-3, 225, 227-8)

Gen. GARCIA REYES is "photographed leaving the scene with an alleged second gunman." GARCIA REYES answers directly to President SALINAS and to his Chief of Staff JOSE MARIA CORDOBA MONTOYA. (*LA Times*, 19 June 1995)

Hours after the assassination, JOSE MARIA CORDOBA resigns from the Office of the Presidency ("en que cogobierno con Salinas [i.e. in which he co-governed with Salinas]"). He moves to Washington DC, where he heads the Mexican delegation at the Interamerican Development Bank and later works as an adviser to the World Bank. "Tenia gran ascendencia sobre ERNESTO ZEDILLO [He had great influence over ERNESTO ZEDILLO]." (*Ya Vamos...* p 217, "JC vs JC", *Reforma*, 16 June 1996)

Following the announcement of COLOSIO's death, President SALINAS calls twice to comiserate with his widow, DIANA LAURA RIOJAS. She refuses to take his call. (*Ya Vamos...* pp 196-7)

**24 March** MARIO ABURTO is transferred from Tijuana to Mexico City's Almoloya prison. According to the PGR (Procuraduria General de la Republica—the Attorney General's office), ABURTO has confessed, and has no visible signs of being beaten. Various commentators note a physical *dissimilarity* between the ABURTO photographed under arrest in Tijuana and the ABURTO now on display to the press at Almoloya.

"One of the theories surrounding ABURTO was that a double fired the fatal shots. ABURTO's mother [MARIA LUISA MARTINEZ] has lent evidence to that claim. She reportedly said that in a Judicial Police jail cell in Tijuana she had been about to embrace a man she thought was her son—but who was not." (*Mexico City Times*, 21 Aug 1996)

The US ATF states that the murder weapon, a Brazilian-made .38 Taurus revolver, was purchased in 1977 at a store in Northern California. ABURTO allegedly acquired it only a few weeks ago. (*Mexico City News*, 25 March 1994)

GRACIELA GONZALEZ DIAZ, 27, declares herself to be MARIO ABURTO's girlfriend. She claims that he was a member of a secret political group in which he was known as *Caballero Aguila*. Three days later she withdraws the accusation and denies they were romantically involved.

JORGE ANTONIO SANCHEZ ORTEGA is released after being held for 24 hours.

**4 April** Special Prosecutor MIGUEL MONTES GARCIA announces that at least seven people appear to have been involved in the assassination, based on analysis of videotapes that showed the men blocking COLOSIO's path and clearing a way for ABURTO. At least five people had been arrested and jailed in connection with the hit, he said. (*AP*, 4 June 1994)

One of the accused is HECTOR JAVIER HERNANDEZ THOMASSINY, 20 years old at the time of the assassination: he too is a member of Grupo Omega. Others are VICENTE and RODOLFO MAYORAL. (*Ya Vamos...* pp 94)

**24 April** An attempt by 60 agents of the PGR to reconstruct the assassination in Lomas Taurinas fails. The agent playing the part of COLOSIO is unable to recreate the 180-degree spin which COLOSIO is supposed to have made in between the first and second shots. COLOSIO was shot in the right temple and the left side of his body.

"They didn't ask us to participate, nor ask us anything; I saw General DOMIRO [GARCIA REYES] pulling COLOSIO along by his belt loop," said the PRI *lideresa* of Lomas Taurinas, YOLANDA LAZARO. (*La Jornada*, 24 April 1994)

Baja Governor ERNESTO RUFFO APPEL calls for more investigation into the background of ABURTO and of the ex-policemen involved in COLOSIO's bodyguard—particularly those arrested after the assassination.

**28 April** FEDERICO BENITEZ LOPEZ, Chief of Public Security in Tijuana, who has been investigating the COLOSIO murder, is assassinated by narcotraffickers. The alleged hit-men are ISMAEL HIGUERA, a principal in the ARELLANO FELIX gang, and Judicial Police agents RODOLFO GARCIA GAXIOLA and MARCO ANTONIO JACOME (who videotaped the COLOSIO Assassination). (*Ya Vamos...* pp 159-161, 221)

**April / May** One of the Attorney General's top advisers, EDUARDO VALLE ESPINOZA, quits, asking in his letter of resignation, "When are we going to have the courage and political maturity to tell the Mexican people that we suffer from a sort of narco-democracy?" His

boss, DIEGO VALADES, SALINAS' fourth Attorney General, quits a few days later.

EDUARDO VALLE, known as "EL BUHO", testifies to Mexican investigators in Washington that Communications and Transport Minister EMILIO GAMBOA PATRON is a point man for Mexican and Colombian drug cartels. Traffickers use GAMBOA's fiefdom of airports and highways to move drugs, VALLE claims: he also asserts that COLOSIO was murdered by drug cartel forces after he refused to meet with a brother of JUAN GARCIA ABREGO, head of the Gulf Cartel. "I cared a great deal for COLOSIO" said VALLE. "It cannot be permitted that they announce that a lone assassin killed him and that they leave it at that. I believe COLOSIO was killed because he did not [negotiate] with the drug traffickers or the 'narco-politicians'."

VALLE expresses suspicion about two COLOSIO security chiefs—former federal police officers with alleged criminal pasts—and about RAUL ZORRILLA, campaign coordinator of special events and a former transportation sub-secretary under GAMBOA. He claims ZORRILLA had "immense responsibility" in the protection of traffickers while working in the Transportation Ministry. (*Los Angeles Times*, 1 Oct 1994)

**18 May** At his first news conference since replacing POSADAS OCAMPO as Cardinal of Guadalajara, JUAN SANDOVAL INIGUEZ says that the "accidental assassination" theory is not believable, and calls for credible answers as to why the Cardinal was slain and how his killers were able to escape. (*LA Times*, 24 May 1994)

**22 May** MARIA LUISA MARTINEZ (MARIO ABURTO's mother) and six relatives illegally enter the United States.

**24 May** Six relatives of MARIO ABURTO, including his mother, brother, 19-year old wife, 1-year old son, and two sisters—apply for political asylum in San Diego. Their lawyer, PETER SCHEY, says "The facts surrounding the case are extremely murky... I think their fear is of violence by armed individuals and groups seemingly outside of the control of the government. They have no confidence that the Mexican government is in a position to protect them." ABURTO's father and brothers, who live in San Pedro, say they

have been harrassed and shot at since the COLOSIO hit. (*LA Times*, 24 May 1994)

**26 May** SCHEY announces that RUBEN ABURTO, father of the accused, is willing to give testimony to MIGUEL MONTES GARCIA if his safety is guaranteed. MIGUEL ANGEL SANCHEZ DE ARMAS, the Special Prosecutor's spokesman, says that investigators are "even willing to go to Los Angeles" to interview RUBEN ABURTO, who has said publicly that in the weeks before the shooting, his son met as many as four members of COLOSIO's security entourage. (Los Angeles is a three-hour flight from Mexico City. The return fare is around \$200) (*LA Times*, 27 May 1994)

**2 June** Reversing himself, Special Prosecutor MIGUEL MONTES announces that there is little evidence of a conspiracy in the COLOSIO murder. "It strengthens the hypothesis that the murder was committed by a single man: MARIO ABURTO MARTINEZ." The suspicious behavior of six men, on further analysis, "could be interpreted as normal." Prosecutors still have some evidence to support the theory three guards were involved, and they will remain in prison. But the cases against at least three others have fallen apart. (*AP*, 4 June 1994)

**9 June** Passed over once again as Presidential candidate by CARLOS SALINAS, MANUEL CAMACHO resigns as the Government's Chiapas peace commissioner.

**21 August** Presidential Election. ERNESTO ZEDILLO PONCE DE LEON, President SALINAS's second handpicked successor, wins.

**28 September** JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU, Secretary-General of the PRI, former Governor of Guerrero, and former brother-in-law of CARLOS and RAUL SALINAS, is shot dead with a single bullet in the neck outside a Mexico City hotel. The gunman, DANIEL AGUILAR TREVINO, is arrested.

**31 October** MARIO ABURTO MARTINEZ is sentenced to 45 years in jail for the murder of COLOSIO. Primary witnesses against him were two security officers: VICENTE MAYORAL, who claims to have tackled ABURTO seconds after the shooting, and FERNANDO DE LA SOTA, former leader of the secret Grupo Omega, now

disbanded. When their depositions were taken hours after the murder, both men testified under oath that they had not seen who shot COLOSIO. At the trial, MAYORAL and DE LA SOTA swear they saw ABURTO shoot COLOSIO twice.

**18 November** DIANA LAURA RIOJAS, the widow of COLOSIO, dies in Mexico City, of cancer. A few days previously, President SALINAS—accompanied by the press—attempted to visit her at the hospital. She refused to see him. (*Ya Vamos...* pp 142-3)

**24 November** MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU—brother of the assassinated JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU—resigns as Deputy Attorney General, alleging a government coverup in the COLOSIO case, which he blames on anti-reform elements within the PRI.

**November** SERGIO MORENO PEREZ, Federal Prosecutor for Baja California, tells reporters that the ARELLANO FELIX gang "is an invention of Mexico City; here, I haven't known anything about the ARELLANO brothers and it is not my responsibility to go around investigating them."

'MORENO PEREZ... worked for the Special Prosecutor probing the July 1988 murders of FRANCISCO JAVIER OVANDO and ROMAN GIL HERALDEZ.' (*Mexico City News*, 20 May 1996)

**1 December** ERNESTO ZEDILLO takes office as President.

**December** Two brokerage houses, one run by ROBERTO GONZALEZ BARRERA, a Monterrey billionaire and close friend of the SALINAS family, trigger massive capital flight when they suddenly begin buying up huge amounts of short-term, dollar-based *tesobonos*. *Proceso* magazine alleges that certain high-echelon PRI insiders were given privileged information about the impending Peso devaluation. (*Anderson Valley Advertiser*, 5 April 1995)

**21 December** The Peso is devalued by almost 50%. Cashing in their *tesobonos*, the brokerage houses make a killing and bankrupt the Mexican economy.

**1995**

**January** SERGIO MORENO PEREZ is replaced by LUIS ANTONIO IBAÑEZ CORNEJO as Federal Prosecutor for Baja California.

**30 January** U.S. President CLINTON guarantees a 50-billion dollar loan to Mexico to bail out the collapsing stock market. The Mexican market gambles of American companies like GOLDMAN-SACHS, a huge New York investment banking firm and one of CLINTON's principal financial donors, are thereby secured.

**24 February** The PGR announces that a second gunman in the COLOSIO assassination, OTHON CORTEZ VASQUEZ, has been arrested. CORTEZ has several links to PRI circles in Baja California.

**28 February** RAUL SALINAS, brother of the ex-President, is arrested in Mexico City, charged with ordering and financing the murder of JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU. A PRI congressman, MANUEL MUÑOZ ROCHA, has been accused of organizing the plot, but he has vanished and investigators say he may have been killed. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1995)

The arrest comes at the instigation of PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA, whom President ZEDILLO has appointed as Special Investigator in the COLOSIO, RUIZ MASSIEU and POSADAS murder cases. (*Ya Vamos...* p 218)

**2 March** MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU leaves Mexico for the US after testifying to federal police officials who believe him to be responsible for a series of irregularities in the inquiry into his elder brother's death. Also interviewed is his aide, JORGE STERGIOS, an inspector general in the PGR.

**3 March** In Monterrey, CARLOS SALINAS vows to go on a hunger strike until his reputation is cleared. He calls off the strike a few hours later.

That night, MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU is detained by customs agents at Newark International Airport as he attempts to board a plane for Madrid. He is carrying almost \$50,000 in cash, despite claiming to have only \$18,000. Mexican officials say they will charge RUIZ

MASSIEU with obstructing his own investigation and with covering up the involvement of RAUL SALINAS. (*NY Times*, 5 March 1995)

**7 March** Mexican officials say that nearly \$7 million has been found in two accounts in the name of MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU at the Texas Commerce Bank in Houston. The deposits were made by JORGE STERGIOS. (*NY Times*, 8 March 1995)

**11 March** Two weeks after he alleged that OTHON CORTEZ was an associate of Gen. DOMIRO GARCIA REYES and a driver for the President's office, AARON JUAREZ JIMENEZ dies in a car accident on the dangerous road between Tijuana and Mexicali, La Rumorosa.

The same day CARLOS SALINAS flees Mexico, supposedly to exile in Massachusetts, Canada, or Cuba, in a Falcon executive jet supplied by PRlista industrialist ROBERTO GONZALEZ BARRERA.

**20 March** DANIEL AGUILAR TREVINO and three co-conspirators are convicted of the murder JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU and sentenced to 50 years in prison. Four others are convicted on lesser charges.

**14 April** TRANQUILINO SANCHEZ is released from high security prison; his sentence for participation in the COLOSIO homicide having been reversed. (*Ya Vamos...* p 235)

**3 August** The *New York Times* reports that FERNANDO DE LA SOTA, the head of Grupo Omega and director of COLOSIO's private security force, was a paid informer of the CIA from 1990 to 1992.

"Mexican officials say they were unaware of DE LA SOTA's CIA connection, and that they do not believe it was relevant to their investigation." He was fined \$7,000 for making false statements to investigators. DE LA SOTA, 45, is a former DFS agent with a criminal record (he apparently accepted a payoff from the leading drug trafficker—and DFS Zone Commander—in Ciudad Juarez, RAFAEL AGUILAR GUAJARDO). (*El Financiero*, 7-13 Aug 1995)

**December** The Pentagon releases a partially-censored report by US Military Intelligence regarding the terrorist threat in Mexico.

Three paragraphs are devoted to the "probable scenario" for the deployment of US troops in Mexico. Two paragraphs indicate that "due to the history of Mexico-US relations it is highly improbable that the Mexicans could look with favor on the presence of US forces in their territory." But "it is conceivable that an eventual deployment of US troops in Mexico might be received favorably if Mexico's government confronted the threat of being overthrown as a result of widespread economic and social chaos." (FOIA request by Jeremy Bigwood; *La Jornada*, 31 Sept 1996)

## 1996

**7 February** VICENTE and RODOLFO MAYORAL apply for political asylum at the San Ysidro port of entry to California. Having spent more than a year in prison before a federal judge cleared them of aiding MARIO ABURTO, they say they fear they are once again suspects as a result of new witnesses implicating them in court hearings in Mexico City the previous day.

**23 February** Gunmen in Mexico City shoot to death SERGIO ARMANDO SILVA MORENO, operations chief for the Federal Judicial Police in Baja California until January. He had worked under SERGIO MORENO PEREZ.

**February** DR JORGE MANCILLAS, a professor at UCLA and supporter of the ABURTO family, claims that new photographic evidence (taken by American photographer ROBERT GAUTHIER of the *LA Times*, and analyzed by DORA ELENA CORTES and MANUEL CORDERO, investigative reporters for *El Universal*) shows MARIO ABURTO about 12 to 18 feet away from COLOSIO, standing right beside VICENTE MAYORAL.

"We took the photographs of the assassin and compared them to a man who was killed four hours after COLOSIO and there is a direct resemblance. His name is ERNESTO RUBIO and he was also 23 years old." According to *El Universal*, RUBIO worked for the Federal Judicial Police and for Grupo Omega chief / CIA informant FERNANDO DE LA SOTA.

The RUBIO murder was being investigated by FEDERICO BENITEZ, head of the Municipal Police in Tijuana—himself assassinated on 28 April 1994. (AVA, 14 Feb 1996)

*El Universal* also employs a French criminologist and expert in facial reconstruction, DR JOSIANE PUJOL, to compare photographs of the man arrested at Lomas Taurinas and the man in custody at Almoloya jail. Her conclusion is that the two "ABURTOS" are completely different persons.

"The criminologist's report reinforces the popular version that the man arrested in Lomas Taurinas was killed the same night of 23 March, in a mechanic's shop in Tijuana." (*Reporter*, San Pedro, March 1996)

**March** Despite requests by the Mexican Government and Special Investigator PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA, the United States refuses to extradite MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU to Mexico. Instead he is released on \$9 million bail and remains, under police guard, in New Jersey.

**21 March** COLOSIO's father, LUIS COLOSIO FERNANDEZ, announces in an interview with a Hermosillo newspaper, that former Presidential Chief of Staff and World Bank official JOSE CORDOBA MONTOYA, "tuvo mucho que ver [had a lot to do with]" the murder of his son. "I hope the President won't hide when the investigation focuses on CORDOBA MONTOYA." (*El Imparcial*, 21 March 1996)

**17 April** ARTURO OCHOA PALACIOS, Baja California's former Federal Prosecutor, is shot four times at close range at a Tijuana jogging track. Police say the killing appears to be a "professional" hit.

OCHOA was appointed Baja California's top law enforcement authority in June 1993. He was removed from the job in May 1994, just weeks after he began investigating the COLOSIO murder.

"OCHOA had been involved in the early stages of the COLOSIO investigation, in which investigators believe a cover-up took place to hide a conspiracy to kill the politician." (*Mexico City News*, 20 May 1996)

OCHOA was also under investigation for corruption within the PGR. "Specifically, investigators and documents reviewed by the Times have linked OCHOA to millions of dollars in suspected payoffs to

Mexico's former second-ranking law enforcement official, MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU. OCHOA and RUIZ MASSIEU... were friends and colleagues, Mexican investigators said." (*LA Times*, 18 April 1996)

**24 April** The PGR reports that it has captured the presumed killers of Cardinal POSADAS. MANUEL ALBERTO RODRIGUEZ RIVA and JOSE GUADALUPE ARMENTA VALDEZ were arrested by Federal Police.

MANUEL CAMACHO SOLIS calls for an opposition coalition against the PRI. "The former PRI leader also denounced former Chief of Staff JOSE CORDOBA MONTOYA for listening in on telephone conversations between him and... LUIS DONALDO COLOSIO. Claiming that CORDOBA could offer information on COLOSIO's thoughts at the moment of his death, he repeated the call for CORDOBA to testify before the Federal Attorney General's Office..." (*Mexico City News*, 25 April 1996)

An El Centro immigration judge turns down the MAYORALS' request for asylum.

**3 May** DANIEL AGUIRRE LUNA, representative of Special Investigator PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA, asks the judge to condemn alleged second gunman OTHON CORTEZ to 50 years' imprisonment.

**6 May** CARLOS SALINAS meets political journalist JORGE G. CASTANEDA in Dublin, Ireland, where the ex-President now claims to reside. Rumours immediately circulate that SALINAS has discussed the possibility of ZEDILLO's resignation.

"CASTANEDA believes JOSE MARIA CORDOBA MONTOYA has returned to Mexico with a view to once again reassume his role, as it was during the SALINAS administration, as the power behind the presidential throne..." (*Mexico City News*, 22 June 1996)

**15 May** SERGIO MORENO PEREZ, the former BC Federal Prosecutor, and his son OSMANI are kidnapped in Mexico City by heavily armed men.

**18 May** The bodies of MORENO PEREZ and his son are found in a car in Naucalpan, a western suburb of Mexico City. They have been

tortured.

**22 May** The PGR announces the arrest of "EL NAHUAL" aka ALVARO OSORIO OSUNA, another of Cardinal POSADAS' presumed killers, in Sinaloa. "OSORIO OSUNA is a member of the 'Frog Gun Gang' that protects the ARELLANO FELIX brothers," the PGR say.

"EL NAHUAL" confirms the PGR's theory of "mistaken identity" in the POSADAS assassination, two days before the third anniversary of the murder. "There was a lot of confusion and his car was mistaken for GUZMAN's... We were told that "EL CHAPO" would be inside a white Marquis car... then we realised it was the Cardinal."

JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU's personal security head, MIGUEL VILLAREAL AYALA, testifies to RAUL SALINAS' defense team that there was bad blood between the two men. VILLAREAL says tensions ran especially high on the day of RAUL SALINAS' marriage to PAULINA CASTANON. (RUIZ MASSIEU was married to SALINAS' sister ADRIANA, whom he later divorced.) (*Mexico City News*, 23 May 1996)

**24 May** Guadalajara Cardinal JUAN SANDOVAL, in a television statement, urges that former President CARLOS SALINAS be investigated for links to POSADAS' murder. SANDOVAL says POSADAS had a heated argument with SALINAS just a week before he was gunned down, and that then-Social Development Secretary COLOSIO and Mexico City Mayor CAMACHO SOLIS were also at the meeting.

SANDOVAL further alleges that baggage handlers at Guadalajara Airport have been threatened by police officers to keep quiet about the murder. He says of the PGR accidental death theory, "I am sure that Cardinal POSADAS was not killed in the midst of confusion or a shootout. These theories are infantile and do not convince anyone." (*Mexico City News*, 25 May 1996)

**23 June** CBS' *Sixty Minutes* reports that RAUL SALINAS has been linked to 70 bank accounts in 70 countries that could contain more than \$300 million. His personal banker at Citibank, AMY G. ELLIOT, tells US, Swiss and Mexican investigators that SALINAS said \$100

million came from a recent sale of a construction company. (*Mexico City Times/Reuters*, 23 June 1996)

**23 June** The PRI's Federal District branch lodges its monthly protest with Attorney General (and member of the PAN) ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA, 27 months after the COLOSIO hit. The PRI also questions the re-assignment of the COLOSIO case special prosecutor, PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA. "Why has the special prosecutor been assigned to duties that are specifically distinct from the (COLOSIO) investigation?" (*Mexico City News*, 24 June 1996)

**28 June** A new masked, armed group appears—the Popular Revolutionary Army, or EPR—at a memorial for peasants massacred by police in Guerrero.

**2 July** Seven of MARIO ABURTO's family members are granted political asylum in the US by immigration judge NATHAN GORDON, who says, "It appears to me that this family fled... because the sins of a son, if true, have been inflicted on them." ABURTO's mother, MARIA LUISA MARTINEZ, 45, her four other children, RUBEN, 24, JOSE LUIS, 22, ELIZABETH, 16, and KARINA, 10, and JOSE LUIS' wife ADELA ALVARADO 20, and their 3-yr old son, LUIS JOVANI will be allowed to apply for permanent resident status. (This is a different group from that which allegedly crossed the border on 22 May 1994. It does not include ABURTO's wife and son.) (*Mexico City News*, 3 July 1996)

**1 August** Gen. DOMIRO GARCIA REYES is given command of military zone number 32, based in Valladolid, Yucatan, according to TV Azteca. Out of active service since the assassination, he takes over the Yucatan post from Colonel ELIHU VIDAL NAVARRO. (*Mexico City Times*, 22 Aug 1996)

**7 August** OTHON CORTEZ, 20, accused of being the second gunman in the COLOSIO hit, is acquitted and freed by Second District Court Judge MARIO PARDO ROBELLEDO. The half-page verdict follows a trial of 18 months with more than 112 witnesses and 130 documents. It is described in both the *SF Chronicle* and the *LA Times* as a huge blow to the credibility of Attorney General ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA.

The judge also acquits FERNANDO DE LA SOTA and ALEJANDRO GARCIA HINOJOSA of perjury: both had been charged with lying to investigators by claiming they saw MARIO ABURTO fire two shots at COLOSIO.

HECTOR SERGIO PEREZ, CORTEZ' lawyer, said that the evidence showed his client, "who is right-handed, had his right hand on the shoulder of COLOSIO's chief of security, an army general who has also been investigated in the slaying" (*LA Times*). The *Times* does not name GARCIA REYES or mention DE LA SOTA's CIA connection. The *Chronicle* piece concludes, "doubts have also been raised about whether the ABURTO arrested at the scene of the killing is really the same person now in prison for the crime." (both articles 8 August 1996)

**16 August** Attorney General ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA fires 737 commanders and beat cops of the Federal Judicial Police (PJF)—out of a total 4,400 members—on grounds such as unlawful possession of arms and illicit enrichment.

**17 August** Gunmen in Tijuana murder JESUS MARIA MAGANO, 48—one of the first Federal Prosecutors to question MARIO ABURTO after the COLOSIO hit. He is the fifth senior official from the PGR's office in Baja California to be killed this year. (*Mexico City News*, 20 Aug 1996)

**20 August** A taped telephone conversation between MARIO ABURTO MARTINEZ and his father is broadcast on *Radio Red*: "I was forced to write the confession in Tijuana... They took me to an office and dictated it to me. The director of the Federal Judicial Police, ADRIAN CARRERA FUENTES, was there and he... is witness to the fact that I was forced to write it."

ABURTO says it was not "mere coincidence" that COLOSIO and RUIZ MASSIEU were killed within six months of each other. "There are people in the upper echelons of government who want the public to believe I'm the only assassin... The government doesn't want this case to escalate, because its party [the PRI] would be the one most damaged and they could lose the elections." The government, he claims, has three goals: "First, to convince everyone that I'm the only shooter; second, to claim that I'm crazy;

and third, to assassinate me... and say I killed myself. That way everyone can forget about the COLOSIO case." (Michelle Chi Chase, *Mexico City News*, 21 Aug 1996)

RUBEN ABURTO, father of MARIO, shares his son's fears that he will fall victim to a "suicide."

The same day an editorial in Mexico City's Roman Catholic Archdiocese newspaper *Nuevo Criterio* claims that the COLOSIO hit was the result of a conspiracy within the PRI. "The resources used to carry out the crime, but especially the way it was handled afterwards, make it clear that... the mastermind was in the highest circles of power..."

Without directly accusing CARLOS SALINAS, the editorial says, "There is much evidence of the violent and vengeful way in which SALINAS DE GORTARI resolved his difficulties with other people."

**21 August** Attorney General LOZANO GRACIA insists that OTHON CORTEZ is the second gunman in the COLOSIO murder. His office is reported to have delivered 18 photographs to a court in the State of Mexico that show CORTEZ next to COLOSIO at the time of the murder.

Political analyst ALFREDO JALIFE tells the *Mexico City News* "Those on top are pulling the strings. OTHON CORTEZ is a pawn—he's nothing." One of COLOSIO's campaign advisers and senior PRI deputy, SAMUEL PALMA, agrees: "The conspiracy theory has never hinged on CORTEZ ... The theory is backed up by an investigation of impartial scientific analysis which has proved there was a second shot and a second weapon".(David Abel, *Mexico City Times*, 22 Aug 1996)

**22 August** HUMBERTO LOPEZ MEJIA, former independent investigator and employee of the PGR, says on public radio that he deciphered a coded message sent to the offices of the President just after the COLOSIO hit. "Mission accomplished in the campaign," said the alleged message, sent from one operative code-named "EL PINO" to another called "EL ROBLE." LOPEZ MEJIA claims that the message was from COLOSIO's security chief Gen. DOMIRO GARCIA REYES to former President SALINAS.

"General REYES is no stranger to such allegations. Earlier this month he published an autobiographical aptly titled *Domiro* in which he set out to defend his integrity... Written for him by three prominent national journalists, the general's book adds to prevailing public speculation that COLOSIO's death was planned by then-government officials.

"In one particularly emotional excerpt REYES tells of an alleged conversation between himself and Federal Attorney General ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA in which LOZANO GRACIA intimated knowledge that COLOSIO had been 'eliminated' because he wasn't toeing the party line in his campaign. REYES claims the Attorney General told him following the assassination, 'I understand that President SALINAS DE GORTARI insinuated to you that COLOSIO must be eliminated.' LOZANO GRACIA responded to the book... calling General REYES a liar and a man without honor." (Pav Jordan, *Mexico City News*, 23 August 1996)

**28/29 August** In a broad, coordinated assault, the EPR attack police, military and government targets in six states—Oaxaca, Guerrero, Chiapas, Tabasco, Puebla, and Mexico. At least 16 people are killed and 23 injured.

**31 August** LUIS RAUL GONZALEZ PEREZ is appointed new Special Prosecutor in the COLOSIO case.

**8 September** LUIS COLOSIO FERNANDEZ, father of the murdered candidate, unveils a monument to his son in Tepic, Nayarit. "I still believe in justice and reason," he says, "even though I know many people are skeptical of the new Special Prosecutor." (*Mexico City News*, 9 Sept 1996)

**10 September** Foreign Secretary JOSE ANGEL GURRIA tells the Mexican Congress that he has declined American Ambassador JAMES JONES' offer of intelligence and military assistance against the EPR.

**11 September** Reuters reports that US bank accounts belonging to RAUL SALINAS may have been used to launder drug money. According to PGR documents, one of the accounts is at the Laredo National Bank in Texas, owned in part by Mexican billionaire

CARLOS HANK RHON.

PRI member and President of the Chamber of Deputies' COLOSIO Case Commission ALFONSO MOLINA RUIBAL calls for the return and testimony of CARLOS SALINAS, JOSE CORDOBA MONTROYA, and former PGR prosecutor EDUARDO VALLE ("EL BUHO"). This is the first official, all-party consensus calling for ex-President SALINAS' testimony. (*Mexico City News*, 12 Sept 1996)

**12 September** Police raid the Mexico City offices of *El Universal*, formerly a pro-PRI newspaper which has recently criticized ZEDILLO and SALINAS. They arrest the owner JUAN FRANCISCO EALY ORTIZ for tax evasion.

Political analyst ALFREDO JALIFE calls this selective prosecution: "If the government went against *El Universal* why did it not go against all the others? It is a common fact that certain other papers are evading taxes; some are even involved in drug trafficking."

JALIFE also doubts that SALINAS, CORDOBA or ZEDILLO will give evidence in the COLOSIO case: "It's a smokescreen. Attorney General ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA belongs to the system, and the system doesn't want to know anything about the real perpetrators of the crime."

On a legal level, JALIFE says there is no longer any evidence to convict the culprits of the crime: "Within the structure of the Attorney General's office, all the evidence has been extinguished. I have counted around 20 people belonging to the case who have been murdered." (Robert Randolph, *Mexico City Times*, 14 Sept 1996)

**14 September** 28 days after becoming BC Federal Police Commander, ERNESTO IBARRA SANTES is machine-gunned to death in a taxi in Mexico City. He was in the process of updating "most wanted" posters with recent photographs of the ARELLANO FELIX brothers. (Anne-Marie O'Connor, *LA Times*, 16 Sept 1996)

IBARRA was killed with three bodyguards while leaving Mexico City Airport: in his pocket were \$50,000 U.S. dollars. The previous week he had led fruitless raids on abandoned ARELLANO FELIX safehouses. (*Wall St Journal*, 7 Oct 1996)

GERARDO CRUZ PACHECO, a Mexican lieutenant who served in the Presidential Guard of CARLOS SALINAS, later confesses to assisting the ARELLANO FELIX cartel. He says that lawyers in the Tijuana Federal Attorney General's office told the assassins when IBARRA was arriving in Mexico City, and names a military captain who hid the killers' assault rifles. CRUZ also claims that Mexican Army privates have unloaded Colombian cocaine shipments at remote airstrips in Oaxaca state. (Anne-Marie O'Connor, *LA Times*, 5 February 1997)

**9 October** Investigators of Special Prosecutor PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA, with the help of a paid psychic, FRANCISCA ZETINA, aka "LA PACA", discover a dismembered and decomposed body at *La Encantada*, RAUL SALINAS' ranch. CHAPA claims this is the corpse of vanished PRI legislator MANUEL MUÑOZ ROCHA, 44.

**18 October** Forensic specialists announce that the corpse cannot be positively identified.

The same day the *Orange County Register* reports that the United States plans to give the Mexican Army 73 UH-1H "Huey" helicopters and various C-26 aircraft "to help fight the drug war." Tulane University Professor RODERIC CAMP and PETER SMITH, chairman of Latin American Studies at the University of California, San Diego, both comment that if the Mexican Army becomes further involved in the anti-drug effort, it will likely be corrupted by bribes.

SMITH: "No other military or law enforcement structure in Latin America has been able to resist, and it is not realistic to believe that the Mexican army would not be corrupted after having close encounters with drug rings."

CAMP notes that, though the helicopters are supposed to be deployed along the US-Mexican border, their ultimate destinations may be Guerrero and Chiapas. (*AP—Las Vegas Sun*, 19 Oct 1996)

**5 November** *La Jornada* reports that CASPAR WEINBERGER, President REAGAN's defense secretary, has written a book predicting the possible invasion of Mexico by the USA. *The Next War*, containing fictionalized "scenarios" for the wars WEINBERGER considers most likely to occur over the next 12

years, describes a US invasion after the Mexican government is taken over by a "charismatic populist professor linked to the drug cartels." His date for the invasion is 14 April 2003. MARGARET THATCHER, in her introduction, calls *The Next War* "an important book." (*La Jornada* electronic edition 5 Nov 1996)

**19 November** PABLO CHAPA orders the arrest of RAUL SALINAS' wife, PAULINA CASTANON, on charges of giving false testimony in the RUIZ MASSIEU case; she has reportedly fled to Europe. RAUL SALINAS' bodyguard, Lt. Col. ANTONIO CHAVEZ RAMIREZ, testifies that he disposed of a vehicle belonging to MANUEL MUÑOZ ROCHA on 30 Sept 1994. His testimony contradicts that of other government witnesses, including clairvoyant "LA PACA", and police informant RAMIRO AGUILAR LUCERO, who claims he saw RAUL SALINAS beat MUÑOZ ROCHA to death with a baseball bat. (*La Jornada*, 24 Nov and 15 Oct, 1996)

**27 November** CARLOS SALINAS is interrogated, regarding the COLOSIO murder, by Mexican federal investigators at the Mexican Embassy in Dublin. The questioning is led by LUIS GONZALEZ PEREZ, the fourth Special Prosecutor to investigate the COLOSIO hit. Official sources say that SALINAS' testimony will remain sealed for some time. (*LA Times*, 28 Nov 1996)

**2 December** President ZEDILLO fires Attorney General ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA, replacing him with former Human Rights Commissioner JORGE MADRAZO CUELLAR. PABLO CHAPA is also dismissed.

The decision to fire LOZANO is so sudden that it comes while a PGR spokesman is talking to reporters. The phone rings; the spokesman answers, hangs up: "We've resigned." "Is this a joke?" the reporters ask. "No, we've resigned," the spokesman answers, "I don't understand President ZEDILLO; the Attorney General is the most loyal of his officials." (*La Jornada*, 3 December 1996)

A recent poll of journalists, academics and analysts ranked LOZANO fourth for competence among 23 top Mexican officials; ZEDILLO came in eighth. (*Washington Post*, 3 December 1996)

**3 December** MADRAZO signs off on ZEDILLO's appointment of Army General JOSE DE JESUS GUTIERREZ REBOLLO—a member of the elite Presidential Guard—as "Mexico's new drug czar." GUTIERREZ replaces a civilian, FRANCISCO MOLINA.

**5 December** Journalist YOLANDA FIGUEROA, her husband FERNANDO BALDERAS, and their three children aged 9 to 18, are bludgeoned to death at their home in Pedregal, Mexico City. FIGUEROA was the author of a recent book, *"Boss of the Gulf: the Life and Capture of Juan Garcia Abrego"*, which alleged that RAUL SALINAS and the COLOSIO and RUIZ MASSIEU assassinations were linked to Mexico's drug cartels.

BALDERAS, her chief collaborator on the book, was an adviser, specializing in drug trafficking, to the Federal Prosecutor's office until 1994. (*LA Times*, 7 Dec 1996)

(Family servants are later accused of the murders by police.)

## 1997

**5 January** Tipped off by insiders in the military, AMADO CARRILLO FUENTES, head of the Juarez drug cartel, escapes a raid at his sister's wedding at El Guachimalito, Sinaloa.

**17 January** PABLO CHAPA is fined by a Mexico City court for failing to appear regarding the RAUL SALINAS case. His wife says he is "out of the country." RAUL predicts that he himself will soon be released.

President ZEDILLO nominates two senior Army generals to take over civilian airports near Mexico City which have allegedly been frequented by drug traffickers. "These appointments—and dozens of others in which military officers have quietly assumed key federal law enforcement posts, including the unannounced naming last year of an admiral to run Cancun's international airport—are fueling a debate here about the worrisome new civilian role of Mexico's enigmatic armed forces." (*LA Times*, 10 February 1997)

**20 January** CARLOS SALINAS is again questioned by agents of the Attorney General at the Mexican Embassy in Dublin. A news release says he has been interrogated for 16 hours, this time

regarding the RUIZ MASSIEU case. (*LA Times*, 29 January 1997)

**31 January** Mexico City prosecutors arrest "LA PACA", whom PABLO CHAPA paid \$130,000 to locate a corpse on RAUL SALINAS' property. They allege that the remains are actually those of JOAQUIN RODRIGUEZ RUIZ, the elderly father-in-law of "LA PACA", and charge her with grave-robbing. Her son in law, various relatives, and RAUL SALINAS' ex-girlfriend are also arrested. (*LA Times*, 5 February 1997)

**January** Gen. JOSE GUTIERREZ REBOLLO is welcomed at the White House by US anti-drug czar General BARRY McCAFFREY, who extolls his firmness and incorruptability. He is briefed in Washington by the CIA and DEA regarding operations, tactics, personnel, and timetables related to joint US-Mexican drug interdiction plans. In Mexico he is also briefed as to the identities of US intelligence agents. (*Unclassified*, No 40, Spring 1997)

**4 February** Mexico City prosecutors issue a warrant for the arrest of PABLO CHAPA, who has not been seen publicly in a week.

**18 February** Anti-drug czar Gen. JOSE GUTIERREZ REBOLLO is charged with taking bribes to protect AMADO CARRILLO's Juarez Cartel. The General is sent to Almoloya jail.

The former military commander of drug-riddled Sinaloa and Jalisco, Gen. GUTIERREZ pursued the cartel of HECTOR PALMA and JOAQUIN "EL CHAPO" GUZMAN, but allegedly protected both "Lord of the Skies" CARRILLO FUENTES and the ARRELLANO FELIX brothers' gang. His troops preceeded police officers to the Cardinal POSADAS murder scene, and he played a key role in the ensuing investigation. (John Ross, *Mexico Barbaro*, #58, 16-23 March 1997)

**26 February** *The New York Times* carries new information that the SALINAS family is linked to drug traffickers. According to leaked FBI documents from the MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU grand jury investigation, MAGDALENA RUIZ PELAYO claims that she was personal secretary to CARLOS SALINAS' father, RAUL SALINAS LOZANO, from 1982 to 1988; and that during that time she repeatedly handled drug-related payoffs for SALINAS LOZANO.

Secret witnesses in the RUIZ MASSIEU indictment also charge that LUIS COLOSIO was connected to Sonora drug lords.

**27 February** Swiss Federal Prosecutor CARLA DEL PONTE writes Attorney General JORGE MADRAZO CUELLAR a confidential letter saying that RAUL SALINAS "received enormous sums of money for his help in connection with drug trafficking." She has testimony from a Mexican drug trafficker, working for Gulf Cartel head JUAN GARCIA ABREGO, who delivered \$20 million in 1994 to fugitive PRIista banker CARLOS CABAL PENICHE, "and personally delivered a smaller amount in cash to RAUL SALINAS." (*Miami Herald*, 3 April 1997)

A certain JOHN HALL of the US Embassy in Mexico warns the National Defense Secretariat (SEDENA) that the *Miami Herald* is about to publish a story charging that Gen. MARIO ARTURO ACOSTA CHAPARRO ESCIPATE, a counterinsurgency expert, and Gen. FRANCISCO QUIROZ HERMOSILLO are involved in drug trafficking. (*Proceso*, 27 July 1997)

**4 March** President CLINTON recertifies Mexico as a US ally in the drug war, citing the GUTIERREZ REBOLLO arrest as evidence that President ZEDILLO is rooting out corruption.

**15 March** A federal grand jury in Houston allows the US government to confiscate most of the \$9 million MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU deposited in a Texas bank. (*NYT*, 16 March 1997)

**23 March** *Proceso* reports that PABLO CHAPA is hiding in Chile, where he was spirited illegally, on a private plane. His escape was organized by officials of the PAN with the help of Chile's right wing National Renewal (RN) party—lest he give testimony damaging to ANTONIO LOZANO GRACIA and the PAN before the 6 July elections. (*Proceso*, 23 March 1997)

**30 March** CARLA DEL PONTE and VALENTIN ROSCHACHER, head of Switzerland's anti-narcotics police, arrive in Mexico to continue their investigation into \$84 million deposited by RAUL SALINAS in Swiss bank accounts. RAUL has a total of at least \$100 million in Swiss accounts, along with \$30 million in France, \$30 million in Germany, \$30 million in the US and \$5 million in Panama.

The developing scandal implicates big US banks like Citibank and Chase Manhattan in money laundering. (*Miami Herald*, 3 April 1997, *Wall St Journal*, 1 April 1997)

**9 April** *El Universal* reports that DEL PONTE has linked CARLOS SALINAS, RAUL SALINAS, MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU, and JOSE CORDOBA MONTOYA to the drug cartels. The previous week she interviewed "EL CHAPO" GUZMAN—currently in the high security prison of Puente Grande—and ex-Federal Judicial Police Commander MARCO TORRES, now in the US witness protection program. Both men swore that they witnessed millions of dollars sent to the SALINAS brothers at Los Pinos, via JOSE CORDOBA "and an ex-Attorney General of the Republic."

TORRES also swore he saw RAUL SALINAS pay four million dollars to MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU, at his Agualeguas ranch in Nuevo Leon, for the protection of the Gulf cartel under JUAN GARCIA ABREGO. (*La Opinion*, AFP, 9 April 1997)

**11 May** *Proceso* prints excerpts from declassified Pentagon documents indicating a close relation between US and Mexican military intelligence as far back as mid-1993. The DIA (US Defense Intelligence Agency) had accurate information about the clandestine insurgency in Chiapas as early as 9 June 1993. "This Mexican guerrilla group is tentatively identified as the Zapatista National Liberation Front," a cable reports.

**16 May** PABLO CHAPA BEZANILLA is arrested by Mexican and Spanish agents after leaving a restaurant in Villafranca del Pardillo, near Madrid. He is held without bail while the Mexican authorities begin extradition proceedings.

**30 May** A US immigration judge denies the US State Department's request to deport MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU to Mexico. Although a US jury has found that millions of dollars belonging to RUIZ MASSIEU was linked to drug trafficking and bribe taking, Judge ANNIE GARCY rules there is not enough evidence to warrant his deportation. This is the fifth deportation attempt which RUIZ MASSIEU has defeated.

Special Prosecutor LUIS GONZALEZ reports to legislators that

narcotraffickers were involved in the COLOSIO assassination. PAN deputy ANTONIO TALLABS claims GONZALEZ is attempting to shield the PRI groups which participated in the hit.

**2 July** Gen. JESUS GUTIERREZ REBOLLO writes to Amnesty International stating that the charges against him are false and that he was imprisoned "for having discovered that drug trafficking has reached even to the President's Office... I am a political prisoner, someone persecuted by the narco-officials." The General claims to have evidence of the ARELLANO FELIX brothers' involvement in the COLOSIO assassination. (*La Jornada*, 11 July 1997)

**3 July** AMADO CARRILLO FUENTES allegedly checks into the Santa Monica clinic in Polanco, Mexico City, for a massive plastic surgery and liposuction session. Supposedly he dies of a heart attack during the operation.

"Questions persist about the assertion by Chilean officials that they were shadowing the traffickers and investigating CARRILLO's suspected presence. How could they have not spotted CARRILLO if they were indeed following the gangsters, who set up front companies and made million-dollar investments? ... It is also unclear why CARRILLO went back to Mexico for plastic surgery; Argentina and Brazil have booming plastic surgery industries." (*LA Times*, 20 August 1997)

**4 July** CARRILLO's body is seized by the PGR for fingerprinting and DNA tests.

**6 July** Local elections deny the PRI its congressional majority for the first time ever, while the PRD's CARDENAS is elected Mayor of Mexico City with 50% of the vote.

The DEA announce that the corpse seized by the PGR in Sinaloa is that of AMADO CARRILLO FUENTES. Speculation continues that CARRILLO has faked his own death.

**16 July** Mexican federal judge RICARDO OJEDA BOHORQUEZ throws out money-laundering charges against RAUL SALINAS. OJEDA rules that the PGR has failed to present sufficient evidence. The ruling gives RAUL access to more than \$100 million he

deposited in European banks under various false names. The European governments say they will keep the accounts frozen while their own investigations continue.

**24 July** LUIS RAUL GONZALEZ PEREZ, latest PGR Special Prosecutor in the COLOSIO murder case, announces that the government is going back to its original "lone assassin" theory. He says the finding does not rule out a conspiracy.

*El Financero* carries statements by a former Mexican police agent, and current DEA agent, ENRIQUE PLASCENCIA, that he has evidence that the real assassin is ABURTO look-alike JORGE ANTONIO SANCHEZ ORTEGA, an agent for CISEN. He is now said to go by the name TOMAS JASO. (*El Diario—La Prensa*, 28 July 1997)

**29 July** A motorcyclist assassinates law clerk IRMA LIZETTE IBARRA NAVEJAT in Guadalajara. A former Miss Jalisco, she had also received death threats after being named as a key witness in the case against Gen. GUTIERREZ.

**13 August** The PGR announces it has asked criminologist JUAN PABLO DE TAVIRA Y NORIEGA to resign: the previous week DE TAVIRA had declared that CARLOS SALINAS was the intellectual author of the COLOSIO murder.

**12 September** US and Mexican officials announce that the US has frozen \$26 million in a New York Citibank account as part of an investigation into money-laundering by CARRILLO FUENTES. A Citibank spokesman tells the *Wall Street Journal*, "We believe no Citibank accounts... have been part of a money-laundering apparatus by the CARRILLO drug cartel." (*Los Angeles Times*, 13 Sept 1997)

## **21 September**

President ZEDILLO cancels a scheduled meeting with Amnesty International General Secretary PIERRE SANE, who has flown in to warn him that Mexico is in the throes of a "human rights crisis."

**2 November** The bodies of JAIME GODOY and RICARDO REYES—plastic surgeons who operated on AMADO CARILLO—

are found in cement-filled oil drums along the Mexico City-Acapulco highway. Their fingernails have been torn out and their bodies burned.

**4 November** Assassination attempt against San Cristobal bishop SAMUEL RUIZ of Chiapas fails; three catechists are wounded.

## 1998

**May** RAUL SALINAS is cleared of charges of money laundering, but remains charged with "inexplicable enrichment" and involvement in the assassination of JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU.

**December** CHARLES INTRIAGO, a former US federal prosecutor who edits the newsletter *Money Laundering Alert*, says that delays by the US government may have sabotaged a possible money laundering case against RAUL SALINAS and Citibank. According to INTRIAGO, the statute of limitations for such cases is five years, with some limited exceptions, so that "the investigators have now lost the right to present as evidence some of the first transactions." (*La Jornada*, 27 December 1998)

## 1999

**21 January** Judge RICARDO OJEDA BOHORQUEZ convicts RAUL SALINAS of masterminding the JOSE FRANCISCO RUIZ MASSIEU assassination. He gives him the maximum sentence of fifty years. OJEDA rejects the PGR's contention that RUIZ MASSIEU was killed for interfering in SALINAS family projects: he blames RAUL's resentment over a business deal with RUIZ MASSIEU and over the latter's divorce from ADRIANA (RAUL and CARLOS' sister). *La Jornada* reports that OJEDA has previously issued "decisions that were particularly sensitive for the national political system." (*La Jornada*, 22 Jan 1999)

**24 May** A commission of representatives from the Mexican federal government, the government of Jalisco, and the Catholic Church mark the sixth anniversary of the POSADAS murder by releasing a new report on the case. Jalisco state government secretary FERNANDO GUZMAN reads from the report that there was no plot to assassinate the Cardinal.

Cardinal JUAN SANDOVAL, a commission member, disagrees: he charges that "big fish" are "impeding the investigation" and that former Attorney General JORGE CARPIZO has suppressed videos connected with the case; he also charges that some of the witnesses are being protected by the US and others by the Mexican government. A *Reforma* poll shows that 83% of 400 Guadalajarans refuse to believe POSADAS was shot accidentally. (*La Jornada*, 25 May 1999)

**15 June** The ZEDILLO administration announces it has been granted \$23 billion in foreign loans from the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the US Eximbank, and a little-known bailout mechanism, the North American Financial Agreement (NAFA).

The bulk of the package—\$16 billion—reschedules (i.e. delays) debt payments. Newspapers and opposition politicians claim that the additional debt is being acquired to delay another economic crash—so that the PRI can win the 2000 presidential election.

The *Financial Times* calls the new loan package "excessive ... It looks like ZEDILLO is expecting something worse than what the markets predict." (John Ross, *Mexico Barbaro*, 21-30 July 1999)

**August** The US government announces its intention to prosecute MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU, who remains under house arrest in Palisades, New Jersey. The *New York Times* claims, fantastically, that the Mexican government has refused to extradite him from the USA.

**15 September** MARIO RUIZ MASSIEU is found dead by his wife, MARIA EUGENIA BARRIENTOS, at their home. US Justice Department officials and RUIZ MASSIEU's family claim he has committed suicide by taking an overdose of anti-depressants. He had been scheduled to travel to Houston on 16 Sept for his first court appearance on drugs charges. Today is Mexico's Independence Day. (*La Jornada*, *New York Times*, 16 Sept 1999)

**16 September** RUIZ MASSIEU's US attorney, former federal prosecutor PEGGY FLEMING, and his widow make public his alleged suicide note at a press conference in New York. "I am

absolutely innocent of all the charges made against me," he wrote, saying that "my murderers" were President ZEDILLO and a series of Mexican prosecutors and Attorneys General. "To find my brother's murderers, an investigation has to be started that begins with ZEDILLO. He and I knew that he wasn't uninvolved in the two political crimes of 1994." (*El Diario-La Prensa, NYT, WSJ, 17 Sept 1999*)

**17 September** Insurgent Sub-Commandante MARCOS of the EZLN claims RUIZ MASSIEU isn't dead at all. "We've already seen this movie," he writes in a communique. "The 'suicide' isn't one. It's called a 'Witness Protection Program,' is a frequent practice in the US judicial system in international drug trafficking cases, and announces that surprises are coming for the one who will be 'ex' after 1 Dec of the year 2000."

ERNESTO ZEDILLO is scheduled to leave office on 1 Dec, 2000. (*La Jornada, 18 Sept 1999.*)



*This article, in a longer form, first appeared in the British parapolitical journal Lobster. Like the rest of us, the editor of that publication, Robin Ramsey, got into these topics through an original interest in the Kennedy assassination.—Eds.*