

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 3-2WASHINGTON TIMES
7 April 1987

CIA's accuser arrested 6 times on drug charges

J By Michael Hedges
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A man who is resurrecting charges of CIA-condoned drug smuggling in Central America was working as a government informant when he was arrested for allegedly trying to put together a drug deal on the side, federal sources said yesterday.

P Michael Tbliver, 40, has charged that he flew 25,000 pounds of marijuana into Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., last year. He said he received the drugs as payment for flying a shipment of arms to the Nicaraguan resistance in Honduras.

Tbliver, who worked for the Drug Enforcement Administration, has claimed that the CIA was aware of the shipment and that Air Force personnel helped him unload the drugs at Homestead.

P His charges echo earlier claims made by Gary Betzner, 45, and George Morales, 37, both convicted on drug charges, that they were asked by government operatives they believed to be CIA agents to fly

guns into and drugs out of Central America.

Morales had talked with investigators working for Sen. John Kerry, Massachusetts Democrat, and hoped that he would be granted immunity from prosecution in return for telling his story to a Senate panel, sources said.

Law enforcement officials in Miami said convicted drug dealers often link themselves to Contra movements on the theory that they can generate public sympathy in heavily Cuban, virulently anti-communist Miami.

"It has become a common part of the criminal defense strategy for drug dealers here," said a federal attorney.

Federal law enforcement officials in Miami yesterday characterized Tbliver as "a habitual liar" who worked as a federal informant twice in a long criminal career. Both times he ended up in jail for continuing to deal drugs.

"He just can't be trusted," said a drug enforcement agent. "We couldn't control him, and when we

found out what he was doing, we had to arrest him."

According to DEA information officer Jack Hook, Tbliver has been arrested six times for drug smuggling since December 1980.

He was arrested once a year for drug smuggling over the next five years, before finally being arrested in Miami in September 1986 on charges of conspiracy to sell marijuana.

The last arrest came while he was an informant on the DEA payroll. "We found out he was double-dealing us," said a DEA agent. Tbliver was sentenced to four years in prison in January.

It was the second time he had been arrested by federal agents who had used him to make cases against other dealers, sources said. In 1982, he was working as an informant for the U.S. Customs Service when agents caught him flying 371 pounds of marijuana into South Mountain, Ga.

Tbliver is only the most recent convicted drug dealer in Miami to claim a Contra-CIA connection.

Morales, who is scheduled to be sentenced March 13 on two counts of cocaine smuggling, made widely quoted charges of his involvement with Contra and CIA drug running last year.