

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 154NATION
31 August 1985

BEAT THE DEVIL

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Conspiracies From Costa Rica

On Sunday, July 28, Martha Honey, a journalist based in San José, Costa Rica, reported on the Canadian Broadcasting System's *Sunday Morning* about a right-wing group in Central America that, among other things, organized the attempted assassination of ARDE leader Edén Pastora Gómez last year.

Her chief source, a self-described anticommunist who recently left the group and now calls himself a "traitor to a dirty cause," explained that the group plots violent actions, often against civilians, which can then be blamed on the Sandinistas. He identified the person who, disguised as a Danish photographer, planted the bomb that killed three journalists and wounded two dozen others at Pastora's press conference last May.

According to Honey, the would-be assassin of Pastora was a Libyan right-wing exile. He was apparently hired in Chile early last year by representatives of the group, including an American C.I.A. agent who operates undercover as a journalist. Honey's source told her that the Pastora bombing was planned in Honduras by the leaders of the F.D.N., the main *contra* group. Also involved in the planning were another American, "a wealthy rancher," who is the chief F.D.N. and C.I.A. liaison in Costa Rica, and two Cuban-Americans who have been fighting with the F.D.N. in Costa Rica and who have ties with right-wing exile groups in Miami. Honey quoted her source as saying, "The group has the support and cooperation of a number of Costa Rican government officials, businessmen and journalists. They planted false stories in the press blaming the bombing on the Sandinistas and helped [the Libyan] get out of the country."

Honey said she had learned from the defector that the group is about to launch a series of terrorist attacks in Costa Rica and Honduras, with bombings against the U.S. Embassies in both Tegucigalpa and San José as well as against the offices of the Costa Rican President.

In an article printed in *The Sunday Times* of London the same day as her broadcast was aired on the CBC, Honey added that "in what appeared to be a further preparatory move a far-right organization, Costa Rica Libre, recently

placed advertisements in the local press saying that Costa Rican left wingers, acting on behalf of the Sandinistas, intended to bomb the U.S. Embassy in San Jose." Honey quoted a left-wing member of the Costa Rican parliament, Sergio Eric Ardon, as saying that his own political party was being set up as the supposed perpetrator of attacks on U.S. targets. Ardon told Honey he had been shown forged documents, allegedly originating from within his party, which included a plan of the embassy. "If this scenario is true," Honey concluded her CBC broadcast, "it appears that . . . [the] terrorist group [is], with the assistance of C.I.A. agents in the region, preparing a series of dirty tricks designed to give the Reagan Administration the excuse it needs to launch direct military strikes against Nicaragua." In *The Sunday Times* Honey quoted "a senior administration official in Washington" as saying, "We continue to be concerned about the connection between the communist government in Managua and known terrorist groups. It is entirely possible that stories of this nature may presage attempts on Americans perpetrated by these groups in an effort to establish a prior disclaimer."

Four days later an associate of Honey in San José, Tony Avergen, outlined some of the same material on National Public Radio. Avergen was injured in the attempt on Pastora.

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