

Why has Benjamin Civiletti been releasing all the terrorists ?

by Robert Greenberg

The one man in the federal government who is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of terrorists in the United States has, since his tenure in office, personally interceded to secure for nearly 20 such individuals their pardon from arrest and imprisonment.

That man is Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti who as the most recent issue of the *Investigative Leads* newsletter reports, should be held personally responsible if any of the following individuals are involved in any way in terrorist or political violence.

Lolita Lebron, Irvin Torres, and Rafeal Cancel Miranda: Imprisoned for an armed attack on the U.S. House of Representatives in 1950.

Oscar Collazo: Imprisoned for an assassination attempt against President Truman in 1954.

Imari Obadele, Addis Adabba, and Karim Njabafundi: Members of the Republic of New Africa, imprisoned in 1971 on charges ranging from possession of stolen weapons to murder.

Bernadine Dohrn, Jeffrey Jones, Kathy Boudin, Carl Jones, John Jacobs, Michael Louis Speigel, Jeffrey David Powell, and Mark Rudd: Members of the Weather Underground, wanted on charges relating to the 1968 "Days of Rage" in Chicago. Previously considered armed and dangerous.

Karleton Armstrong and David Fine: Members of the Madison, Wisconsin-based New Years Gang imprisoned for the bombing of the Army Math Research Building which resulted in the murder of a student.

Eldridge Cleaver: Member of Black Panther Party faction close to the Weatherunderground. Wanted on murder charges.

The Case of the Puerto Rican 4

Regarding the September pardoning of the Puerto Rican 4, John Spanish, the parole attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, told *Investigative Leads* reporters that the release, which had been sought for many years, only occurred because of the personal interest of Benjamin Civiletti. Following an appeal for executive clemency or commutation of sentence filed by Attorney Emilio Soller and a request for appeal by Congressman Garcia's (D-N.Y.) office, Spanish initiated a review bringing in the FBI and other agencies. The review, according to Spanish, led to their release—despite the fact that government officials involved knew that this would tend to remoralize certain terrorist groupings.

A subsequent interview with Rep. Garcia confirmed that the release was effected through the efforts of himself, Balthasa Corradea Del Rio (resident commissioner for Puerto Rico) and Benjamin Civiletti. According to Garcia:

I worked closely with Civiletti. It was a question of justice and humanitarianism. Civiletti visited my office twice on the question of their release. Bell was Attorney General at the time. He was okay. But Civiletti was the brains behind it. He took a personal interest in the case. You know I know Oscar Collazo. We've been friends for years. He lived in Apartment 9, I lived in Apartment 10.

Other individuals who worked with Garcia and Civiletti included Representative Ben Gillman (D-N.Y.) and Ron Dellums (D-Cal.), and Luis Ferre of the New Progressive Party in Puerto Rico. Rep. Dellums is a member of the Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Nationalists which claimed credit for the release. The Committee was also comprised of Michael Deutch (the FALN's attorney), and such public terrorist supporters as MIT linguist Noam Chomsky, terrorist attorneys William Kunstler and Arthur Kinoy, and Jane Fonda.

The White House press statement issued after the pardon of the Puerto Rican 4 stated in part:

It is the consensus of law enforcement officials consulted that commutation would be appropriate and would pose little substantial risk of the defendants' engaging in further criminal activities or becoming the rallying point for terrorist groups.

Terrorists rally

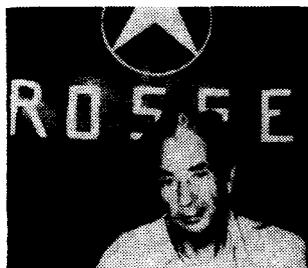
The four pardoned terrorists in fact in no way repented for their actions and stated after their release that they would not have acted differently if they had the opportunity to do it all over again. The immediate effect of the four's release was to heighten the level of terrorist activity by the FALN and other "proindependence" terrorist organizations. After their "triumphant" return to Puerto Rico, a series of attacks on U.S. military personnel commenced resulting in several deaths. This was followed by an organizing tour of the four in the United States, which took them to New York, Chicago, Milwaukee and other major U.S. cities. This coincided with brazen actions taken by the FALN, including the invasions of Carter and Bush campaign headquarters and threats to Carter campaign leaders. Many of the people who were involved in the campaigns to free the Puerto Rican 4, such as the editor of Milwaukee's *La Guardia*, Ernesto Chacon (who was the local sponsor of their Milwaukee tour), are also public FALN supporters and sponsors. Two weeks prior to the attacks on the Carter

and Bush offices, Chacon organized a support rally for the FALN which drew 500 solid supporters.

The leniency of the Justice Department concerning terrorists and their supporters also extends into the area of drug abuse. As deputy attorney general under Griffin Bell, Civiletti declared his support for the decriminalization of marijuana. He made his statement after a medical review showed that some kinds of "soft" marijuana are not harmful, a view shown to be false by numerous medical experts. After becoming Attorney General, Civiletti supported the Carter administration's deemphasis on the war against drugs and supporting instead the focus on targeting so-called white-collar crime.

Similar to the policy that was pursued under the Kennedy Justice Department, the "war on white collar crime" meant an emphasis on investigations of trade unions, local urban political machines and the law enforcement community. In August of 1979, Attorney General Civiletti announced that civil rights investigations relating to law enforcement agencies' treatment of minorities would be a major focus of the Department. Shortly thereafter, in what was to be a precedent setting action, the Justice Department filed suit against Philadelphia Mayor Rizzo and the Police Department for their "brutal" treatment of members of the MOVE cult. A year earlier, MOVE was involved in a shootout with police, resulting in the killing of one officer. The case was thrown out of court; the Justice Department is preparing an appeal.

Italy's Aldo Moro, as photographed by Red Brigades murderers.



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