

-MICK-  
HERE'S MY LETTER TO SCHERRER & HIS  
RESPONSE. GOT YOUR  
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MENT TO YOUR DAY  
LOOK FORWARD TO  
MEETING YOU IN  
NEW YORK IN  
OCTOBER.  
BEST -  
CHRIS

31 August 1987

Robert W. Scherrer  
F.B.I. Headquarters  
10th and Pennsylvania Avenues  
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Mr. Scherrer,

Thank you again for your help to Mick Andersen on his book about the coup in Argentina. Mick has now completed a draft of the book, and he has most of the loose ends in his research nailed down. There are a few questions, however, to which Mick suspects you know the answers, and he and I hope we can again enlist your aid in clearing up a few facts.

If you can help, and if you have ready answers, may I suggest that, in the interest of saving time, you phone in your responses. I have equipment handy to tape a phone conversation if giving me answers orally would be easier for you than sitting down at a typewriter or dictating to a typist.

Here are Mick's questions:

1) When you say you were informed that Firmenich was an informant for the army intelligence service for a number of years, can Mick assume this was early in the Montenero's career? Do you know when Firmenich began informing for the army? Was he associated with any one faction of the army, or was he part of it's permanent staff? Was there any definitive break between Firmenich and the Army? If so, when? Can you be more specific in your source of this delicious piece of information? Was the source credible (did you believe this person?) and was the source American or Argentine?

In July 1976, Firmenich's wife was detained, taken to the Coordinacion Federal and, she says, tortured. In contrast to the treatment of other family members of guerrilla leaders, she was not killed and she gave birth in prison to Firmenich's second child. Do you have any insight into why she was not killed? Remember, she was abducted just a month after part of the Coordinacion building had been blown up, an act which provoked a series of bloody reprisals. Yet Ms. Firmenich was not killed.

2) You wrote Mick that the Argentine intelligence services told the embassy they believed that labor leader Jose Rucci was not assassinated by the Montoneros. Was the intelligence penetration in the Montoneros deep enough at that point to make the assertion categorical? If other

Peronists were believed to be behind Rucci's assassination, who were they? Lopez Rega? Lorenzo Miguel? Victor Calabro? Was the Aerolinas Argentianas stewardess credible when she claimed she had purchased the weapon for a friend in the military? Who was the friend, and what was his rank? Was the information extracted under torture? How should the Montoneros' later claim of "credit" for the attack be interpreted? Was it merely an effort by the Montoneros to appear more powerful than they really were?

3) Did you receive from Mick a copy of his story on the Born brothers kidnapping? What did you think? Did it jog your memory at all on other details Mick did not mention in the story? Was Montonero leader Rodolfo Galimberti's name ever mentioned as a possible military informant?

4) Mick's own investigation leads him to the conclusion that the blowing up of the Coordinacion Federal was the work of the Montoneros. However, New York Times correspondent Juan de Onis says that at the time of the explosion there was speculation it was the work of hardliners around Interior Minister Albano Harguindeguy. These hardliners wanted to saw away the floor from underneath Federal Police Chief General Arturo Corbetta. Corbetta was considered to be a legalist in his attitude towards the repression. Did you know him? What was your opinion of Corbetta? What do you know about the bombing?

5) ERP leader Mario Roberto Santucho was to leave Argentina for Cuba a week before he was killed. However, he received a last minute invitation to a guerrilla summit conference from none other than Mario Firmenich. The Montonero leader asked Santucho to stay in Argentina until the meeting could be arranged. The day they were to meet, one of Santucho's lieutenants went to the house where the Montoneros said they were to hold the meeting. No one was there. Less than 2 hours later an army team burst into the apartment in Villa Martelli where Santucho was holed up. He, another ERP leader, and an army colonel were killed. At least this is the information Mick has. Does this sound correct to you, and if not, where is it wrong? Was Santucho's death another case of Firmenich betraying one of his comrades? Was Santucho's body indeed left out for display in Campo de Mayo, and were officers called out to parade past it?

6) Was the foreign drug trafficker in Cordoba who was extradited after the military coup named Francoise Chiappe? Is there any decent book or public source on the South American leg of the so-called French Connection heroin racket? Was Peronist army colonel Jorge Osinde involved in that racket, or in any other drug trafficking?

7) Does your retirement from the FBI make it possible to loosen up the ground rules on sourcing? (Mick is especially keen, Mr. Scherrer, for you to identify the source of your information regarding Firmenich.)

I know you are a terrifically busy man, and I appreciate all you've already done to help make Mick's an accurate and informative book. Please do let us trouble you further for answers to these last few details. I will call you soon regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,

*Christopher Carduff*

Christopher Carduff  
Assistant Editor  
General Books Division

CC/ms

9/18/87

Mr. Christopher Carduff  
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Dear Mr. Carduff,

A tardy response to your letter of August 31, 1987. I have been extremely busy and have not had an opportunity to thoroughly proofread what follows.

- 1) Firmenich began his cooperation with the 601 Intelligence Battalion sometime in the early 1970s, after the Montenero's began to openly become oriented toward the left. To the best of my knowledge there was no break between Firmenich and the Army. My source of Firmenich's collaboration with the Army was an Argentine Army officer who held the rank of Colonel with direct connections with the 601 Intelligence Battalion. The source was definitely credible and provided numerous items of invaluable intelligence. The reason Mrs. Firmenich's was not killed and I might add she was not tortured was because Mrs. Firmenich was protected by her husband's benefactors in the Army.
- 2) The penetration was sufficiently deep to eliminate any doubt that the Montenero's were not responsible for Rucci's assassination. Those responsible for Rucci's assassination were connected with Lopez Rega. My source believes that the Aerolinas Argentianas stewardess was completely truthful when she provided information concerning the acquisition of the Monteneros weapon which eventually killed Rucci. According to my source, the stewardess's friend was an Argentine Air Force Captain. The stewardess was not tortured and cooperated freely with government authority. From my recollection, stewards and stewardess of Aerolinas Argentianas had relatively small but profitable contraband operation going on for a number of years. These individuals were able to bring into Argentina portable TV sets, stereos, and other such items. Their activities were winked at by the Argentine Air Force, which controlled Ezeiza International Airport. In return the stewards and stewardess brought in weapons from United States which were legally purchased and delivered onboard the Aerolinas Argentianas Flight in New York and by avoiding detection by United States authorities. The claim by the Monteneros that they were involved in the murders of Rucci et al was done to make the Monteneros appear more powerful.
- 3) My recollection of specific details of the Born Brothers kidnapping is hazy at best, after so many years. I have never heard that Galimberti was an informant of the Argentine military.

CONTINUED-OVER

4) I was to have had lunch at Coordinacion Federal Headquarters the day the bomb exploded. My luncheon host with the Federal Police of Argentina Comisario Mayor Crovetto had to give an unscheduled lecture at the Army War College located near the U. S. Embassy in Buenos Aires so we had lunch at the Police Club on Calle San Maritin, near the Embassy. The Federal Police of Argentina tortured two of the perpetrators of the bombing who admitted it was done for the Monteneros. Juan de Onis's story appeared to have it's origin in the Federal Police itself; however, it was wrong. I knew General Corbetta who was certainly not liked by the Federal Police of Argentina high command since he was legalistic in his approach toward terrorism and was opposed to torture, kidnapping, etc. Due to Corbetta's poor support in the Federal Police of Argentina, he was replaced.

5) Mick's version is exactly correct. Santucho's death was the result of Firmenich's cooperation with the Argentine Army. Santucho's body was indeed displayed at a remote location at Campo de Mayo by invitation only viewing. I saw his body there myself. Several Colonels and other Argentine Army Officers took the opportunity to urinate on Santucho's body. I did not witness this personally.

6) The drug trafficker Chiappe was also brought back with several other drug traffickers on a chartered Braniff airline flight by DEA. I was present at a meeting in General Harguindeguy's office at the Ministry of the Interior accompanied by Ambassador Robert C. Hill, Deputy Chief of Mission Max Chaplin and the Agent in Charge of the DEA in Buenos Aires where General Harguindeguy was requested to cause the expulsion of Chiappe et al. I produced a photograph of former Argentine Vice President Maria Estela Martinez de Peron presiding at a meeting of the Argentine Senate. The photograph clearly depicted one of Mrs. Peron's bodyguards who was Esteban Garcia, who was a class one DEA fugitive since he had been indicted in the United States for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine. He returned to Argentina where he remained a fugitive and began working with Lopez Rega's thugs. We told General Harguindeguy that this photograph was a clear indicator that Mrs. Peron and her retinue were associating with hoodlums and criminals. General Harguindeguy asked for the photograph so he could display it to General Videla of the Junta. Subsequently, Chiappe and other narcotic traffickers were placed aboard the Braniff flight and taken to the United States. Shortly thereafter, Esteban Garcia committed "suicide" in Buenos Aires.

Probably the most authoritative book on the so called Argentine narcotic "French Connection", I believe is called "Contrabandista", which deals with the activities of Aguste Ricord in Paraguay.

I have no personal knowledge concerning former General Osinde's drug connection.

CONTINUED-OVER

7) My retirement from the FBI will not become effective until January 2, 1987; however, I cannot agree to loosening up the ground rules on sourcing since many of my sources in Argentina still reside there and their identities would be easily ascertained since I was well-known in certain Argentine Army and Federal Police circles.

I hope I have been of some assistance in trying to clarify the events of a very tragic period in Argentine history. Please feel free to call should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Scherrer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert W. Scherrer