

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
OF INQUIRY INTO THE CASE OF THE



Testimony of RENÉ GONZÁLEZ SEHWERERT,

First of the Cuban Five to be released after completing his sentence.

Given at the International Commission of Inquiry into the case of the Cuban Five on Friday the 7th of March 2014, 15:30 to 16:50, Session 3: The activities of the Cuban five in Miami to prevent terrorist attacks on Cuba.

Please note that René was denied a visa to attend the International Commission held in the United Kingdom and therefore gave partial testimony to the Commission via Skype. This document was his full written testimony to the Commission.

I was born in Chicago, USA, on August 13 1956 to a couple of Cuban immigrants. My family returned to Cuba on October 1961 and I grew up on the island until my departure for the US on December 1990, to comply with the mission of infiltrating the terrorist groups, which with support from the US Government committed acts of terrorism and other aggressive deeds against Cuba, in violation of both international and US laws.

While growing up in Cuba, as part of my generation, I was witness to multiple acts of terrorism committed against its population, with the culprits coming from and going back to Miami. I remember the attack on Boca de Sama, which left several people dead and a young girl without her feet, by people who left from Miami and then returned to that city. I remember the armed kidnappings of fishermen by gunboats belonging to organizations with public offices in Miami, with resulting deaths and injuries. I participated, together with the Cuban people, in the burial of the few victims who could be recovered from the bombing of the Cubana airliner in Barbados, whose mastermind is still living [sic] in the open in Miami in spite of having been identified as a terrorist by the US government. I was a small child when Havana City was shaken by the shooting at a hotel on the shoreline from a boat which came from and returned to Miami. I would years later meet the gunner, Jose Basulto, when he founded Brothers to the Rescue on May 1991.

After all that experience, when I was asked to go to Miami to infiltrate those groups I didn't hesitate and consented to the mission of protecting my fellow Cubans from terrorism. All which I learned from those groups, some of it to be shared with this commission, was informed by me to the Cuban government.

I arrived in Miami on December 1990 after having stolen a crop-duster airplane. Right upon arrival I joined CUPA (Cuban American Pilots Association), led by Eduardo Ferrer, a veteran pilot from Bay of Pigs. CUPA was more of a public, social gathering of mostly old pilots from the Batista army, veterans of Bay of Pigs and mercenaries from Congo. They also were involved in some violent plots together with ex USA military of Cuban origin. In 1991 I was consulted by Ferrer on the feasibility of mounting a remote controlled airplane loaded with explosives on a sea platform, so as to launch it against Cuba, preferably on a political rally.

I met Jose Basulto through Eduardo Ferrer, on the same day that Brothers to the Rescue was publicly inaugurated. As a matter of fact I was invited as his co-pilot by Basulto himself on his first flight with the organization.

Brothers to the Rescue was founded by people from what came to be known in the CIA's terminology as the 'Infiltration Teams' in the 1960s. People like Jose Basulto, Billy Schuss and Felix 'El Gato' Rodriguez had been youngsters enrolled during the Bay of Pigs period in order to infiltrate them in Cuba in advance of [sic] the invasion so as to prepare the theatre of operations. They received training in explosives, psychological warfare, etc. Some of them were in the 1990s well established businessmen with lots of connections with the political and law enforcement agencies in Miami, both federal and state.

Initially Brothers to the Rescue was a psychological operation, which aimed to create unrest in Cuba by adding pressure to the increasing outflow of rafters that came as a result of the economic problems faced by the island. It was a perfectly conceived scheme which fed on the 'humanitarian' issue of saving lives on high seas by spotting rafters for the US Coastguard; with the added benefit that it worked as a perfect international propaganda tool, by taking journalists from all over the world on the flights so they could see how 'Cubans fly from Communism'. It doesn't mean that they didn't have other goals and means in mind: in August 1992 Jose Basulto consulted me on a location in Cuba where a small plane could land so as to place an explosive device on some electric towers. He showed me a map of the Cuban electric grid which he had marked as 'Secret', and tried to pinpoint, according to my experience as a pilot in Cuba, a place where a small plane could land next to some high voltage transmission tower. Later on, by 1993, he would become interested on buying some Russian-built war planes.

Other groups also had jumped on the rafters' wagon, although their public goals were more explicit. At the beginning of 1992 I was approached by somebody from PUND (Partido Unidad Nacional Democrática), which had created a branch to

'look for rafters' called 'Legión de Rescate de Balseros' (Rafters' Rescue Legion). PUND was led by some ex political prisoners and included Frank Fiorini, one of the former CIA operatives who had participated in the burglary on Watergate building. Their public goal was the violent overthrow of the Cuban government, and they had training camps on the Everglades and a public office on 17 Ave and 5th Street, SW Miami. The PUND was responsible for the infiltration of some armed teams into Cuba, including one which ended up killing a fisherman on Caibarien in order to take away his vehicle. We provided aerial coverage for their infiltrations as well as scouting from the planes of the Cuban defenses.

The PUND had also another, less public goal, which became evident to me as soon as I started to deal with them: drug traffic. Some of them dealt with loads of cash and their behavior was very suspicious. Their ranks were comprised mostly with recently arrived Cubans, who lived on the training camps and received \$175 a week. They were more like idle, good-for-nothing individuals, than any sort of politicized insurgent. The PUND was a mix of ex counter-revolutionaries, ex CIA operatives, unoccupied and drug dealers, with some connections with their likes in Central America. The airplane we were flying for them was constantly harassed by the US authorities and ended up confiscated on August 1992. They continued with their naval operations.

After the confiscation of the airplane I kept contact with PUND, although it didn't involve any operations. At the end of 1994 one of the PUND's leaders, who always seemed to be the guy behind the money, asked me to engage on a drug flight from Puerto Rico for a \$25,000 payment. Tony Garcia 'El Gordo' (The Fat One) told me that everything was arranged with the authorities in Puerto Rico, and the deal had the approval of the US government. It was at that instance that we agreed with our Cuban handlers to establish our first contact with the US Federal authorities in order to inform them on the drug deal. As a result Tony 'The Fat One' was arrested and returned to jail, where we learned he had been released [sic] in order to use him as a bait to entrap potential drug dealers. Apparently our flight was to be on the side without the consent of the authorities handling him, and they returned him to jail for it.

The end result of the arrest of Tony 'The Fat One' was that the PUND ended up without resources and went into oblivion. It was also through the Central American contacts with PUND that I learned of the location of Luis Posada Carriles – mastermind of the Cubana airlines bombing – in that region.

By the autumn of 1994 the dynamics of the rafter's issue were suffering a change, after reaching the climax on August of that year, when people rioted violently along the Havana sea wall, after a rumor said that some big ship would sail with migrants to the US. The Cuban government opened the shores of the island to everybody wanting to leave, bringing about the rafter's crisis which forced the US government to come to a temporary agreement on immigration on September of that

year. By refusing to allow any more rafters into their territory, all of a sudden the Americans left Brothers to the Rescue without a mission to justify their own existence. Now the US government would offer 20,000 entry permits to Cubans every year, allowing potential immigrants from the island to travel safely and legally to the United States.

Now the riots came in Miami, led by Jose Basulto and a new leader: Ramon Saul Sanchez. Both were protesting the immigration accords; which one would have expected they would have supported if they really cared for the safety and 'freedom to travel' of the Cubans on the island. All of the sudden the mission of Brothers to the Rescue changed from spotting rafters to something more aggressive: to invade the Cuban airspace at will and challenge the Cuban government's sovereignty. They were joined by a new organization: Movimiento Democracia (Democracy Movement).

Movimiento Democracia was led by Ramon Saul Sanchez. Sanchez had a long history of terrorism against Cuba, since his militancy with 'Alpha 66', through his leadership on 'Abdala' and 'Omega 7', and his connection with the assassination of a Cuban diplomat assigned to the United Nations, on September 11 1980. Now 'Brothers to the Rescue' and 'Democracia' joined forces on the new venture of provoking the Cuban government by infringing into Cuban territory, in violation of both US and international laws. 'Brothers to the Rescue' with its airplanes and 'Democracia' with both airplanes and boats. I joined "Democracia" as a lieutenant to the chief of aerial operations. Although my militancy on 'PUND' had separated me a little from 'Brothers to the Rescue' we still maintained some links.

1995 was the peak of the new mode of aggression against Cuba, with the most notable event being the flotilla on July 15. After repeated violations the Cuban government started to warn of their will to put an end to those incursions by exercising their sovereign right to defend the country. The conditions started to concur to bring about the tragic downing of the 'Brothers to the Rescue' planes. One of those conditions was the testing by Basulto of a fatal weapon, consisting of a device similar to a pyrotechnic flare which would instead be charged with iron balls, to be dropped in Cuba in the event some riot would come as a result of those provocations from Miami. The information about the plot was given to FBI agent Oscar Montoto by Juan Pablo Roque, another Cuban agent. As was exposed on the trial, FBI agent George Kaczynski paid a visit to Jose Basulto and gave him a 'warning' as to not continuing with the testing of the weapons. And that was all.

In the meantime at the hangar of the [sic] International Flight Center, in Tamiami Airport, where I operated as a flight instructor, some of the equipment gathered by the new paramilitary group of the Cuban American National Foundation – which included a helicopter under the care of Felix Rodriguez 'El Gato' (The Cat) – was being stored for further use against Cuba. The whole operation would become public after about a decade when Antonio Llama, a member of the Foundation who

had put forward \$1,500,000 for the purchase of the weapons and equipment, went to court demanding restitution of the money by the organization, the most powerful and well connected in both Capitol Hill and the White House of all the Cuban organizations in Miami to date. Part of the operation included the attempt on the life of Fidel at Margarita Island, off Venezuela, which was cut short when the boat taking the assassins there suffered a rupture and was towed back into Puerto Rico on 1997, opening another murky legal process which ended up on the absolution of the plotters.

Still engaged with 'Democracia', by the end of 1995 I found an old acquaintance from PUND: Hector Viamontes. Viamontes, together with Justo Regalado, had been leaders at PUND but separated apparently for 'tactical reasons'. They now led another organization, an offspring of PUND, named CLU or Comandos de Liberacion Unidos (United Liberation Commands). With a training camp on 12th Street NW and the Florida Turnpike the personnel of CLU was a leftover from PUND, and had the same behavior. Justo Regalado had already been [sic] in jail for drug traffic while Hector Viamontes was the owner of a security firm. It was Viamontes at the beginning of 1996 [who was] the second anti-Castro militant to offer me a drug deal, on this occasion by bringing a loaded airplane from Honduras. Again with our Cuban handlers we decided to pass on the information to the FBI. Hector Viamontes was arrested for drug dealings on 1997 and we didn't hear much of CLU after that.

By 1997-1998 the new mode of confrontation with Cuba had started to dwindle, after the shoot-down of the Brothers to the Rescue airplanes and due to the null results of the flotillas organized by 'Democracia'. Nevertheless Ramon Saul Sanchez insisted now and then into organizing one, while Brothers to the Rescue was only a small shadow of its past glory. In the meantime other matters occupied our attention: the bombing campaign against Cuban hotels which ended up killing Fabio DiCelmo, an Italian tourist; the localization of the means acquired by the paramilitary group of the Cuban American National Foundation; the search for some weapons caches to be buried on some Bahamas islands in order to be taken to Cuba.

Then, on the early morning of September 12, 1998, we were violently arrested and taken to the FBI headquarters. The process of the Cuban Five started.

After the arrest and initial interrogation at the FBI we were taken to the Federal Detention Center in Miami, where a 'special treatment' was designed for us. We were placed in solitary confinement without access to any of the few privileges afforded to a prisoner by the rules. Isolated in solitary confinement, first on the 13th floor and later on the Special Housing Unit (The Hole), I was to learn that it had been decided that I couldn't receive the visits of my minor daughters, the only prisoner in the whole building with such a limitation. It took months for my wife to be able to visit with me, and later on they decided that she couldn't visit on weekends or holidays – when most people visit for obvious reasons – forcing her to come on work days.

While we were placed in the hole another hole was designed for the evidence, by arbitrarily stamping the 'secret' label on the totality of it. Every paper found at our houses was designated [sic] as 'secret' in violation of the same code we had been charged for. In order to review the evidence, which was made of thousands of pages originally in Spanish, each with its translation into English; our lawyers needed to submit a request a day in advance for whatever time – maybe a couple of hours or three – that they would have at their disposal to work with us on the following day. Then we would be woken [sic] up at 4:30 in the morning, go through the whole journey usually designed to take the prisoners scheduled for court, await on the holding cells for hours until the requested time arrived, work with the evidence for whatever time our lawyers or their investigators had at their disposal, and spend a few hours in the holding cells until the last people who went to court would be taken back to the FDC. This process was repeated every time we needed to work with the evidence, be it for the review of a single document or for a couple of hours of work at the SCIF (Secured Classified Information Facility), which was the denomination of the 'evidence's hole'. We spent 17 months on such a punitive regime, until our continuous demands to the Court made them reflect on the convenience of taking us up to the general population.

As soon as the process started the venue became an issue for us, and so we filed early motions asking for a change of venue, at least to Ft Lauderdale, a few miles north of Miami. We asked the Court for permission to have the community surveyed by Dr Moran, an expert on the subject. The judge approved of the survey, its size and the funds to pay for it. The results didn't satisfy the prosecution as they – for obvious reasons – showed the prejudice of the community towards Cuba and the defendants. So we had to have a hearing in front of the judge.

The prosecutors argued – without having to present a competing survey or anything at all besides their words – that the size was too small to be taken into account. They added that the results of the survey matched another survey previously presented by Moran on another case, which meant that the surveyor was prejudiced and had only copied from the previous survey. The judge agreed on both counts and that's how we discovered that with the tip of her tongue a prosecutor can wipe away the results of a survey and a previous decision by the Judge regarding the size of it. To add insult to injury Mr Moran refused to participate on the hearing in defense of his survey because the Judge had withheld the payment she had previously approved. We would learn more later [sic]: the Judge had had previous conflicts with Mr Moran and didn't inform the defense when we named Mr Moran as the surveyor. None of this would be accepted by the Judge to reconsider their rulings on the survey.

Another point of argument on the venue issue had to do with the hostile press coverage during the trial. The defense presented a thick dossier with all the press articles written during the pretrial period, absolutely all hostile to the defendants and

a good part with incendiary content, to no avail. We would learn something more about the press coverage latter.

The discussion of judicial precedent took long space on the issue of venue, revolving around the case known as Pamplin vs Mason. This was a well established case of community prejudice which the defense relied on to argue for a change of venue. The discussions went for long, with the prosecution arguing that Miami was a big, heterogeneous city, from where a good jury could be selected. The judge again sided with the prosecution and that's how the venue issue was settled to our disadvantage, setting the stage for the results of the trial.

Another issue was the subject of terrorism, but it was an issue for the prosecution. They were adamant into precluding the subject from going to the jury in order to prevent us from rubbing in their faces the evidence related to terrorism against Cuba. In March 2000 the government filed a motion asking the judge to preclude the subject of terrorism from being ventilated at the trial. The argument went as follows: "fighting terrorism was the motivation of the defendants, and the motivations are not an issue to be discussed with the jury". This motion didn't prosper and the way was opened for us to expose all the subject of terrorism against Cuba, and the complicity of the government with their terrorists. The prosecutors would now have to resort to their meanest behavior to compensate for the moral they would never have on the trial.

In August 2000, three months before starting the trial, another move by the prosecution was launched by attacking the heart of my family. They proposed a plea agreement to me, and the last paragraph was a reminder that my wife was just a resident, who could be taken away from the US at the will of the US government. As I refused to sign the plea agreement they went after my wife and put her in jail on August 16, subjecting her to the same conditions of confinement for three months before finishing a deportation process that sent her back to Cuba in November. She wasn't allowed an entry visa back into the US for the entire period of my sentence and supervised release.

The trial started in November 2000 with the selection of the jury. Since the beginning it was clear that the prejudices and fears in the community would make it impossible for us to have a fair trial. We had to spend our peremptory challenges on the people of Cuban origin, while the prosecution pushed to have as much Cubans as they could in the jury pool and the press, on the other side, resounded with the message to the Cubans that they had the duty to be part of it. The prosecution openly challenged every black person who would appear, blatantly making a mockery of the Batson rule against discrimination with the acquaintance of the Judge. At the end we were able to have all the Cubans out of the jury box, but ended up with 12 individuals who would never be able to render a fair verdict, some of them glancing at us with open hatred, all under the intimidation of a press corps which we would later learn was being paid for by the US government.

The seven month trial was a lesson on how a government can bully everybody on a court of law, including a Judge who to be fair did what she could to not lose the control of her Court to the prosecution. The prosecutors and their witnesses lied openly and were caught on it, even by the Judge herself. They tampered with the evidence, going to the extreme of rendering useless some depositions they didn't like. They blackmailed our witnesses to prevent again the testimonies on terrorism against Cuba, threatening openly the witnesses we subpoenaed with incarceration. They violated the same order of the Court again and again without consequences. They made it almost impossible for the defense to develop their case, by interrupting every move, opposing every motion or just interjecting themselves at any moment into the defense's time just for the sake of it. Government law enforcement officials didn't hide their indifference toward or their liking of the terrorists while testifying. What the prosecutors couldn't do because they had been precluded from by the Court's orders was done on their behalf by the press, which included the direct intimidation of the jury by videotaping their car plate numbers.

On June 8, 2001, the jury returned a verdict of guilty on all counts. No surprise to us, but some people in the room who had watched the whole trial were in disbelief: the US Marshalls couldn't stop from apologizing to us on the way back to the FDC. The staff at the courtroom were all with us and showed their support in every manner possible. As one of the Marshalls told us: "I've seen some bad things happening in a trial, but this one is the worst in my entire career."

The sentencing process showed us a Judge full of hatred against the defendants, who didn't consider a single mitigating factor in spite of the evidence. The prosecutors asked for the maximum time that could be given in all cases and the Judge obliged, sometimes breaking away from the letter of the law in ways which challenged the rules of the most elemental English language. I ended up with a 15 year sentence, but not without a special condition requested by the prosecution for my three years of supervised release:

"The defendant is forbidden to associate with or to visit places where terrorists or organized crime figures meet or are known to meet." Before doing so, and responding to the request by the prosecution for my 'incapacitation' during that period of supervised release, she gave us a lesson on jurisprudence:

"Terrorism is bad and is evil being it in Israel, Ireland, the United States or Cuba, but the terrorist acts by others do not justify the illegal and wrongful conduct of this or any other defendant."

With the stroke of a pen a Judge in America declared the right of the anti-Cuba terrorists to meet and operate without being molested.

On January of 2002 the five of us were taken to different correctional facilities to comply with our sentencing. As time passed other developments would bring to light the vindictive nature of our trial and prosecution.

One of them was the case of Ramirez vs Ashcroft. On the wake of the Elian Gonzalez saga, an official of Spanish descent took the INS to court on grounds of harassment related to his opinions on Elian's fate. This time around, now as the defendant, the government requested a change of venue to the same District Court which had handled our case. To argue their case they now resorted to the same precedent we had applied unsuccessfully before: Pamplin vs Mason. They argued that "in a case dealing with Cuba, in which the US government is seen by the community as the occasional ally of the Cuban government, it is impossible to have a fair trial in Miami". The Court granted the government the change of venue which had been denied to us. All of a sudden, in the space of about a year, in the eyes of the government and the judges Miami had been transformed from a heterogeneous, big city, into a small town where prejudices against Cuba mattered.

Our lawyers picked up on the Ramirez vs Ashcroft case and went back to the Judge, arguing that either the government lied to her before or else they had lied to the court on Ramirez. Now they were acknowledging the same thing they denied before: that somebody linked with the Cuban government in the eyes of the Miami community didn't have the chance of a fair trial in that city. The judge didn't seem to care much and again denied our request for a review of the venue issue. Now again, in the eyes of the judge and the prosecutors, the city had returned to its original, big and heterogeneous condition.

Another new development came to light, magnifying the injustice of the case: in 2006 it became public that the local Miami journalists covering the trial, directly responsible for the massive, incendiary reporting on the Five, had been under payment by Radio Marti – a government's broadcasting station designed only for international propaganda – without the payments having been disclosed to the public. In other words, at the time of the prosecution the same prosecuting government was paying the supposedly independent local journalists covering the trial, who not only spent all their efforts vilifying the defendants, but directly participated in the intimidation of the seated jury. The issue of the surreptitious payments to journalists is still pending with the judge, together with other grounds of appeal on the Habeas Corpus or 2255 motion.

Time has passed and the process has taken its course slowly and painfully for us and our families. After an initial hope when the first appeals panel reversed the convictions based on the "*perfect storm created when the surge of pervasive community sentiment, and extensive publicity both before and during the trial, merged with the improper prosecutorial references*", a further realignment of judges and the concerted actions of the judiciary and the executive soon overturned that decision, ending with the refusal by the Supreme Court to hear a case where a

record number of Amicus briefs were presented by prestigious people and organizations from all over the world, which included 10 Nobel Prize winners.

For the five of us completing our entire, unfair sentences continues to be the future prospect [sic]. Two of us have already done so and the rest would have to go through it if the US government is not convinced to put an end to this injustice by the clamor of the decent people of the world. This would include the natural death or Gerardo Hernandez in prison for a crime even the prosecutors admitted he is not guilty of.

As for myself, as the completion of the incarceration period approached I had to deal with the prospect of going to a halfway house – with the benefit of an early release – and the pending three years of supervised release imposed by the judge. Both issues had to take into account the consequences of having to return to my place or origin: the very city of Miami where the terrorists were shielded from me by the special condition imposed by the Judge, but at liberty to approach me and do me harm protected by the complicity from the authorities. My first step was to request a move to another district, more to the north of Florida, where some friends were willing to give me shelter. Provided that the move would be approved, I would then be able to benefit from the 6 months of halfway house earned by my good conduct, thus leaving prison in April 2011.

In the meantime we resorted to another recourse: asking the Judge to allow me to complete my supervised release in Cuba. Before filing the motion with the Court my lawyer approached the prosecutors to have their input on the matter. They told him that they would be inclined to accept provided I renounced my US citizenship. Although I hesitated at first into renouncing a birthright under the pressure of the prosecutors, later on I reconsidered and by the beginning of 2011 my lawyer approached again the prosecutors. They seemed to agree on the renunciation and went into the motions of finding a US consulate anywhere so that, according to the laws, I could travel there to renounce my US citizenship. Initially they seemed to consider Bahamas or Havana. In spite of it the motion was filed by my lawyer, while apparently the prosecutors would be working on the logistics of my renunciation to the US citizenship.

As April approached I was notified that the relocation to a place in northern Florida had been denied, which forced me to complete the whole sentence in jail instead of going to the halfway house on April. Then the prosecution filed a response to my motion to do my supervised release on Cuba. Basically they opposed it on the grounds that it was premature, and I needed some time of supervised release in order to show the Court that my behavior was to the satisfaction of the Judge. To my numerous humanitarian arguments they responded that according to the law even under supervised release I could travel to Cuba to see my family, which would remedy the impossibility of seeing my wife, banished from the US. In spite of the

government's response in opposition, we continued working with them on the logistics of traveling to a US consulate somewhere to renounce my US citizenship.

Finally, about a month before my release on October 2011 the prosecutor informed my attorney that the deal to travel to a US consulate somewhere to renounce my US citizenship was no longer on the table. Some days later the Judge ruled against my motion to modify the supervised release so it could be done in Cuba. On October 7, 2011, I was discharged from Mariana Correctional Institution to start my supervised release on a semi-clandestine condition at the Southern District of Florida, seat to the terrorist and violent organizations I'd been watching on for eight years.

The period of supervised release on South Florida was an absurd year and a half of inhuman limitations, derived from the combination of conditions of supervised release and the threat to my life represented by the terrorists in Miami. I only relied on my discipline so as not to disclose my location. I couldn't have a single document – other than a passport – so as not to disclose my address on any public record. I was unable to obtain a driver's license or a credit card for the same reason. I was unable to befriend any neighbor because on doing it the rules forced me to tell him about my legal status, which could open the way to his knowledge of the case. I had to rely on a handful of friends who knew of the case and sympathized with our cause. My days were spent in a house, showing up as little as possible, going on a bike for the groceries, and jogging every other day very early in the morning. I had to fill the house with traps in order to put some security to my sleep. It was an additional punishment with the use of my US citizenship to extend my sentence for three more years.

By the end of February 2012, four months into the supervised release, I was already working with my attorney to file the new motion to modify it and finish it in Cuba. It was then that my brother fell gravely ill and we had to change plans: a motion to travel to Cuba for 15 days to see my dying brother was filed at the end of the month. Unsurprisingly the prosecutors, once again, opposed the motion in spite of their arguments the previous year telling the judge that I was at liberty to ask for a leave to travel. This time around they claimed that it was a risk to the US if I used the leave to receive instructions from the Cuban intelligence. They also claimed that the judge didn't have the power to make me return to the US once I was in Cuba. In spite of the government's opposition the Judge this time around gave me a two week leave to travel and I did so on March, returning to my absurd supervised release on April 2012. My brother died in Cuba on June of that year.

It was in June of 2012 when at last I was able to file the new motion for modification of my conditions of supervised release, after having shown to the Judge that my behavior wasn't a danger to the public. It was the first time that an offer came from me to the Court on the issue of the US citizenship: I offered the Judge to travel to Cuba, provided the Court approved of it, and then renounce the US

citizenship in the US Interest Office in Havana to remain in Cuba with the approval of the Court.

The prosecutor's response – of course in the negative – came with a new argument: they now claimed that my word wasn't to be trusted, and that once in Havana I could resort to not going to the US Interest Section to make good on my word of renouncing my citizenship. That in spite of my having been to Havana and returned to the US a few months earlier.

Time went by as the motion was considered by the Judge. Then my father died on April 2013 and we had again to ask for a leave to be with my family for a couple of weeks. We filed a motion to travel and this time around the prosecution limited themselves to give a hesitant nod to the judge to decide [sic] by herself. On April 22 I arrived in Havana with permission from the Court for two more weeks.

Once I was in Cuba, my lawyer in Miami filed a motion offering the Judge that at any moment, with her permission, I could present myself at the US Interest Section in Havana to renounce my US citizenship, provided the Court then would authorize me to complete my supervised release in Cuba. Caught unguarded and without argument the prosecution decided not to respond to the new motion. The Judge agreed on my request and by the beginning of May I had renounced as promised, with the Court then allowing the requested modification of my supervised release.

My legal case is now officially closed, but the uphill battle to afford justice to my four brothers is still on. They are still facing all the hatred that my story shows was unleashed on me, a hatred which has reached the characteristics of a personal vendetta. A year and a half of an inhuman supervised release is all the victory we can claim against this injustice and it came at the price of my father's life and my forced renouncing to my birth citizenship. We can't allow ourselves to pay the price of Gerardo dying in prison for a crime even the prosecutors know he didn't commit.

We count on you to put an end to this tragedy, derived from the most sordid and immoral instincts some human beings can harbor. Humanity should be more than that.

Thank you very much for your patience.