
SILENCED

*The Unsolved Murders of Immigrant
Journalists in the United States*

Preface by Juan Gonzalez



DECEMBER 1994

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Cover photograph: The body of New York investigative journalist Manuel de Dios Unanue is removed from his favorite restaurant in Queens, where he was murdered on orders from Colombian drug traffickers. (March 11, 1992)

Photo: Humberto Arellano, staff photographer, El Diario/La Prensa

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Silenced: The Unsolved Murders of Immigrant Journalists in the United States

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CONTENTS

<i>i.</i>	<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
	First Amendment Rights: English Only? Juan Gonzalez	
<i>ii.</i>	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>ix</i>
	In Our Own Backyard William A. Orme, Jr.	
1.	<i>Overview</i>	<i>1</i>
	The Chilling Effect is Palpable Ana Arana	
UNSOLVED MURDERS		
Five Vietnamese-American Journalists Killed		
2.	Targeted by Terrorists	<i>9</i>
	Ana Arana	
	The Murder Cases	<i>13</i>
	Abuses Against Vietnamese-American Journalists	<i>20</i>
	Recommended Action	<i>24</i>
3.	The Vietnamese Press Under Siege	<i>27</i>
	Jeff Brody	

CONTENTS

Three Haitian-American Journalists Murdered

4.	A Green Light to Murder Ana Arana	31
	The Murder Cases	35
	Recommended Action	38

CASES SOLVED

5.	<i>Manuel de Dios Unanue</i> No One Follows in His Footsteps Ignacio Gómez	39
6.	<i>Henry Liu</i> Justice Is Stonewalled L. Ling-chi Wang	47

APPENDICES

A.	Journalists Murdered in the United States 1976-1993	57
B.	About the Committee to Protect Journalists	61
C.	The CPJ Board of Directors	63
D.	The CPJ Staff	64

PREFACE

First Amendment Rights: English Only?

by Juan Gonzalez

Just after 10:30 p.m. on the night of March 11, 1992, one of my editors telephoned me at home.

“Do you know anything about this Spanish-language journalist who was killed tonight?” the editor asked.

“Killed? Who? What are you talking about?”

“Some guy named Manuel de Dios. Shot in the head in a bar in Queens. Is he anybody important?”

“Manuel, dead? Of course he’s important,” I answered in disbelief. “And yes, I knew him.”

In those first hours after the assassination of Manuel de Dios Unanue, it became instantly clear to me how blind my colleagues in the English-language press have been toward the complex and growing world of foreign-language journalism in America. Here was one of the most prominent journalists and editors in New York’s Spanish-speaking community, and virtually no top editor at our newspaper had even heard of him.

At first, many journalists covering the story, even some of those who had worked with him, were skeptical that De Dios had been killed to silence his investigative reporting. The killing of journalists for political reasons is almost unheard of in this country, the skeptics said. It was prob-

The writer is a columnist with the New York Daily News.

ably sparked by some personal jealousy or someone angry over an unpaid debt, my colleagues offered.

Fortunately, a handful of us who knew Manuel banded together immediately after his death and demanded a meeting with the city's police commissioner, and at that meeting we pressured authorities to conduct a full investigation. If one of our colleagues had been killed for his work, we reasoned, it was the duty of all journalists not only to investigate what happened, but to finish what Manuel had begun and expose the inner workings of the Cali and Medellin drug cartels in New York City.

Several television stations and newspapers formed a joint investigative team, and for awhile — before competitive pressures broke up that team — we unearthed more stories about drug trafficking and money laundering in the Queens underworld than the city had ever seen. So close did we come to the police investigation at times that several of us were asked by authorities not to print certain stories.

"If it wasn't for you guys in the media keeping up the pressure," admitted one detective in the federal-state task force that eventually arrested De Dios' killers, "this case would never have been solved."

Most of the pressure, however, came from Latino journalists, both in the English- and Spanish-language press. Unfortunately, to most of our Anglo colleagues, the Spanish or any other foreign-language press in this country is not considered real journalism.

Few understand the tremendous pressures and intimidation that foreign-language journalists confront daily, whether they be Hispanic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian or Russian. Usually their newspapers and radio stations lack the resources to provide them support. The journalists themselves are universally underpaid, and the rich knowledge they possess of the structures and operations of their ethnic communities is underappreciated by the mainstream press.

Yet the face of America has been rapidly changing the past 20 years, with one of the greatest surges in foreign immigration in our country's history. As part of that change, criminal organizations of Colombians, Chinese, Vietnamese and Russians are increasingly supplanting the older and moribund traditional organized crime groups. At the same time, political intrigue and feuds from authoritarian regimes in the Third World are often spilling into refugee communities here.

The fact is that today some of the bravest, most vibrant and most important journalism in our country is being practiced in the foreign-language press, yet because of unconscious racism, mainstream journalists regard it as second-rate or unimportant.

To the arrogant and lazy practitioners of our craft, a dangerous assignment has become withstanding the stampede of TV cameramen outside the home of a Tonya Harding or Michael Jackson or O.J. Simpson. Or covering violent drug traffickers from the safety of court indictment narratives and the trial testimonies of informants.

Five Vietnamese and three Haitian journalists have been killed in this country during the past 13 years, yet both law enforcement and the media have failed to adequately investigate the growing threat to freedom of the press that their murders represent. Only the murders of Manuel de Dios and Chinese-American Henry Liu have been solved.

If 10 white mainstream journalists had been killed over 13 years, this report asks, would the silence be so deafening? How can our profession so often probe the effects of racism in society, yet not see its own racism in neglecting the murders of foreign-language journalists on our soil, most of them non-white?

Have the ideals of our profession become so dulled and decayed that even the cold-blooded killings of fellow journalists no longer rouse us to anger or action? Maybe we should just add an asterisk and a footnote to the First Amendment: "Coverage limited to English-language speech." □

INTRODUCTION

In Our Own Back Yard

by William A. Orme, Jr.

The Committee to Protect Journalists was founded by American reporters who wanted to help friends and foreign colleagues who faced constant hazards in places like Central America, Southern Africa and the Middle East. Although it was very much an American organization, the Committee didn't originally intend to monitor press freedom problems *within* the United States. We felt that was best left to the various national journalism organizations—besides, the kind of brazen physical attacks CPJ routinely responded to abroad were thankfully rare in the United States.

Not as rare as we had thought, however.

When Manuel de Dios was shot in the back in a Queens restaurant, it was obvious that CPJ should get involved. Not only did the killing take place in the city where most of us live and work, but it was precisely the kind of crime CPJ had been tracking in Colombia for years: an investigative reporter murdered for daring to write about the inner workings of the cocaine cartels.

Because De Dios reported not for CBS or *The New York Times*, but for a small Spanish-language weekly, neither the local nor federal government seemed to consider the case a priority. Had the murder taken place anywhere else, we automatically would have sent a formal letter to the appropriate authorities urging a prompt and thorough investigation. There was no reason not to follow the same procedure in New York. The concern always is that governments prefer to treat such cases as isolated criminal incidents, rather than as a deliberate effort to intimidate the

The writer is executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

media and suppress damning information.

There was another reason we decided to act. In the past, CPJ had been criticized by foreign governments — and by foreign reporters — for protesting abuses against the press everywhere in the world except our own back yard. Our annual *Attacks on the Press* reports, an encyclopedic review of press freedom violations worldwide, did not even include a section on the United States. Because of Manuel de Dios, that has changed.

After the De Dios murder, several reporters called CPJ with a basic background question: How many other American journalists have been murdered because of their work?

We weren't sure. After calling around to other U.S. journalism organizations, it was apparent that nobody else knew either.

Our preliminary research quickly revealed an astonishing fact: since the widely publicized 1976 murder of *Arizona Republic* reporter Don Bolles, at least 10 other journalists had been killed in the United States for reasons that appeared to be directly related to their work, and all but one had been immigrant journalists working in languages other than English. Even more disturbing, seven of those nine homicides remained unsolved. There was little evidence of any active FBI anti-terrorism investigation, despite strong indications that the killings were deliberate political assassinations.

We distributed these preliminary findings in 1993, together with a quickly compiled batch of news clippings and Nexis files, plus some background notes and possible sources for further research. Our intent was to prod some enterprising I-team to follow up on what seemed to us to be an important, powerful and oddly neglected story. That didn't happen. We also tried to persuade the Justice Department to reopen these cases before the trail grew cold. Attorney General Janet Reno expressed interest and concern, but the Department took little action.

In October 1993, another immigrant journalist was murdered—Dona St. Plite, the third Little Haiti radio commentator killed in Miami in two years. That prompted a few news organizations to run stories based on our earlier research. It was clear, though, that we had a responsibility to pursue these cases ourselves, just as we would if they had occurred outside the United States.

Ana Arana, CPJ's program coordinator for the Americas, began gathering more information from law-enforcement sources, from reporters who had covered the stories, and—most important—from sources

in the Haitian, Vietnamese and Chinese communities. Many people were unwilling to talk: the chilling effect of these killings was a powerful deterrent, even years later. Yet she was able to piece together enough information to advance these stories significantly and demonstrate that a) they remain eminently reportable, and b) law-enforcement authorities are in most cases not investigating energetically because, they say, there is little public pressure on them to do so.

Complementing Arana's work are background pieces by special contributors Jeff Brody, Ignacio Gómez and L. Ling-chi Wang. Brody, a journalist with long experience in southern California's Vietnamese-American community, describes the local political impact of these unsolved homicides. Gómez, an investigative reporter who covers the narcotics trade for Bogota's *El Espectador*, spent two weeks at CPJ's New York office following up on De Dios' leads about the Cali cartel's operations in Queens; Gómez's work makes it clear why De Dios was targeted for assassination. Ling-chi Wang makes the important point that while Henry Liu's murderer was convicted and jailed in the United States, the intellectual authors of the crime in the Taiwanese military escaped serious punishment, with apparent U.S. acquiescence. We would also like to thank Juan Gonzalez of *The Daily News* for his tireless work on the De Dios case, and for his organization of a symposium in July at the "Unity '94" convention of minority journalists' associations in Atlanta. The symposium brought together the contributors to this report for the first time. Greg Victor, our former publications director, gave us invaluable editing assistance; staffers Nicole Cordrey, Fiona Dunne, Sunsh Stein, and intern Mira Gajevic provided critical technical support and layout and copy-editing assistance. We would especially like to thank Robert D. Sack for his wise and generous legal counsel.

This is not intended to be the last word on the subject. To the contrary: there are many loose ends in these stories, many unresolved contradictions and unanswered (and, in some cases, unasked) questions. Initial contentions by local police that these killings were merely criminal, not political, eventually could be proved true in some cases. But without thorough investigations, those responsible for these crimes will never be brought to justice, and journalists serving ethnic communities will have cause to question whether they enjoy the same legal protections and collegial support that we in the American English-language media can usually take for granted. □

The Committee to Protect Journalists

OVERVIEW

The Chilling Effect

by Ana Arana

Eighteen years ago, Don Bolles, a reporter for the *Arizona Republic*, drove to a hotel to get information from a source about fraudulent land deals. His car exploded, destroyed by a bomb. Bolles had to have both legs and an arm amputated. He died 11 days later.

Thirty-six reporters from newspapers, TV stations and radio outlets descended on Arizona to pursue Bolles' investigation. They exposed massive corruption. They unearthed information about Bolles' killers. They established the principle that, in order to protect the right of all Americans to speak and write freely, reporters in America could not be murdered with impunity.

In 1994, that principle still holds—unless, it seems, the journalist is a member of an ethnic minority who works in the non-English press. Ten immigrant journalists have been assassinated in this country since 1981, and only two of the cases have been solved. If 10 American reporters working for the mainstream press—10 Don Bolles—had been murdered on U.S. soil over the past 13 years, the shock waves would have galvanized the media and law enforcement. Yet the assassinations of 10 immigrant journalists—assassinations specifically intended to smother fact-finding and silence dissent—have rarely produced more than ripples of protest. The death toll:

■ Five Vietnamese newspaper and maga-

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zine journalists: Lam Trong Duong in San Francisco, Nguyen Dam Phong in Houston, Tap Van Pham in Garden Grove, Calif., and Nhan Trong Do and Triet Le in Fairfax County, Va., were killed between 1981 and 1990. Right-wing exile groups have claimed credit, but the cases remain unsolved.

■ Three Haitian radio hosts and supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide: Jean-Claude Olivier, Fritz Dor and Dona St. Plite were murdered in Miami, all after receiving politically-motivated death threats from supporters of the Haitian military. Dor and Olivier were killed in 1991 by the same gun. St. Plite was killed more than two years later while attending a benefit on behalf of Dor's family. St. Plite's accused assassin is now awaiting trial; accomplices have been convicted in the Olivier and Dor cases. The men who allegedly ordered the three murders have not yet been charged.

■ A Chinese-American journalist, Henry Liu, was killed in Daly City, Calif., by a Taiwanese hit team in 1984 on orders of the Taiwan government. Several military intelligence and organized crime figures were convicted of the murder in Taiwan; two, however, were released from prison after serving only six years of life sentences, two others were sentenced to only two-and-a-half years in prison and one was placed under house arrest. One conspirator was extradited to the U.S., convicted of Liu's murder in 1988 and sentenced to 27 years in prison. In 1991, he

was stabbed to death in a prison fight.

■ A veteran Cuban-American reporter and Latino community publisher, Manuel de Dios Unanue, was killed in New York City in 1992 on orders of Colombian drug kingpins. The hit man was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Five Colombian co-conspirators pleaded guilty and are reportedly cooperating with investigators as they await sentencing.

De Dios Case Spurs CPJ Investigation

It was the cold-blooded execution of Manuel de Dios Unanue in 1992 that prompted the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) to turn its attention to attacks against journalists in the United States. De Dios had been editor-in-chief of *El Diario-La Prensa*, New York City's leading Spanish-language daily, and was renowned for his muck-raking exposés of drug traffickers in two upstart magazines he distributed in Queens. His assassination shocked Latinos and journalists in New York City. The killing of a reporter or editor in the United States was thought to be a rare event. The only recent cases that came quickly to mind were the murders in 1976 of Don Bolles and in 1984 of Denver radio host Alan Berg.

Many people, including some of De Dios' colleagues, initially tried to attribute his death to petty criminal motives. From the beginning, however, police suspected that drug traffickers were involved. Pressure from Latino leaders and leading New York journalists, as well as the federal government's interest in pinning a U.S. homicide on Colombia's Cali cocaine cartel, forced an all-out investigation.

A task force of 30 was assigned to the De Dios case with officers from the federal Drug Enforcement Administration and drug experts from police departments in New York, Baltimore and Miami. Two years later, the assassin and five Colombian conspirators—all said to have been working for the Cali cartel—were arrested and charged. Four pleaded guilty and one was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

The De Dios murder investigation was solved. CPJ's was just beginning. We were soon startled to learn that immigrant journalists like

De Dios have been murdered almost routinely in this country. As we dug deeper, we discovered these disturbing patterns:

- Most of the murders remain unsolved and have received little attention by law enforcement agencies or national news media.

- Violence was aimed not only at the victims, but also at the communities they served in order to conceal information about criminal activities, silence dissent and discourage open debate.

- Each murder was only a small part of a larger campaign of intimidation, terror and harassment carried out by military, government or criminal organizations.

- Despite strong evidence that these organizations operated across state and national boundaries, the murders were usually treated by authorities and the press as local crimes.

- Law enforcement sources, who have followed leads for years, believe that many of these crimes still could be solved and successfully prosecuted if the Justice Department was willing to give investigators sufficient resources.

Vietnamese and Haitian Cases Remain Unsolved

The Don Bolles murder was one of four cases that received substantial attention from both prosecutors and the press. The sweeping, follow-up investigation of his murder conducted by news organizations exposed widespread corruption in Arizona, led to the founding of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. and spurred a thorough prosecutorial effort. Suspects were identified quickly. A conviction, however, was not won until this year when Max Dunlap, a Phoenix contractor with mob ties, was sent to prison for orchestrating the murder.

In 1984, the fatal shooting by neo-Nazis of Denver radio host Alan Berg also gained national attention and prompted an intensive FBI investigation. David Lane and Bruce Pierce, members of the white supremacist group "The Order," were arrested in 1987. The two men are serving 150-year prison sentences. The case received further publicity

when Eric Bogosian used the Berg murder as the basis for his play and subsequent film, "Talk Radio."

Also in 1984, San Francisco writer Henry Liu was killed by assassins working for the Taiwanese military. His case attracted considerable coverage, especially on the West Coast and in Asia. Liu had long disparaged the repressive Kuomintang regime in Taiwan, and a short time before his death he had published a critical biography of Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo. Several military intelligence and organized crime figures were convicted for Liu's murder in Taiwan, but either received light sentences or were released from jail after serving only six years of life prison terms. One was extradited to the U.S., where he was convicted of the murder and sentenced to 27 years in jail, but was killed in a prison fight only three years after his conviction.

In each of these cases, timely and aggressive responses by local and federal authorities led quickly to suspects and, eventually, to convictions, although questions remain in the Henry Liu case as to whether the conspirators have all been prosecuted or adequately punished.

Unfortunately, federal law enforcement authorities never gave such attention to the murders of eight other immigrant journalists killed between 1981 and 1993—five of them Vietnamese in origin, three of them Haitians living in Miami. These journalists had fled repression and turmoil in their native countries only to find death in America for openly expressing their political views. Their killers have not been found. Informed investigators believe that timely and forceful investigations could have produced successful prosecutions and that a sustained effort now might still do so.

Why did the Vietnamese and Haitian cases draw less attention from law enforcement authorities and the media than the others?

■ Berg and Bolles were white journalists working for mainstream English-language news media—and their accused assassins were linked to Mafia and right-wing groups already targeted by FBI task forces.

■ The De Dios case also involved a criminal organization already under attack by U.S. law enforcement—the Cali drug cartel.

■ Both the Liu and De Dios cases involved ethnic communities too large and politically significant to ignore: the Chinese-American population of the San Francisco Bay area and the Latino community of

greater New York.

■ The Vietnamese and Haitian cases involved smaller communities, made up mostly of first-generation immigrants who had a history of conflict in their homelands. Vietnamese-Americans are often loathe to call attention to their own internal conflicts, fearful of retaliation rather than protection. Haitian-Americans in Miami are wary of a Duvalierist-based, local criminal underground that appears to operate with impunity.

The Ethnic Press is Silenced

The non-English press has always been an integral part of American journalism, just as immigration is the quintessential American experience. For two centuries, new arrivals have relied on newspapers in their own language—and, today, on radio and television programs—as their primary sources of information. These news outlets also are relied upon by mainstream media as sources for stories about changing immigrant life and American society.

Violence against immigrant journalists has robbed ethnic communities and society at large of robust and engaged dialogue about national and international issues. These new Americans cannot enjoy the fundamental American right to freedom of expression. Haitian and Vietnamese journalists, in particular, must fear for their lives if they expose crime or corruption among right-wing exile groups or simply voice a different political viewpoint.

Upon arrival in the United States, many immigrant journalists report stories or take political positions that they would not consider publicizing in their homelands for fear of retaliation. They believe that the U.S. government will ensure their rights under the U.S. Constitution. As a result, some have been killed, and many have suffered physical attack, vandalism and threats against their lives. Some have reported such incidents to the police, and sometimes — not often — suspects have been brought to justice. Others have lowered their profiles. More often, out of fear, these incidents are not reported at all. The chilling effect is palpable:

■ Haitian radio commentators in Miami, fearing further violent retribution, scaled back their criticism of the Haitian military and of people in the community with alleged ties to the de-facto military regime.

■ Vietnamese-language journalists across the country avoid clear positions on the re-establishment of U.S. trade and diplomatic relations with Vietnam, even after the Clinton administration lifted the embargo.

■ Latino journalists in Queens do not report on drug trafficking or corruption; the murder of Manuel de Dios Unanue is fresh in their minds.

CPJ Seeks FBI and Media Investigations

CPJ has appealed repeatedly to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department to launch a coordinated investigation of the unsolved murders of Haitian and Vietnamese journalists. We have spoken about the cases personally with Attorney General Janet Reno. Yet no serious investigation is underway. The Committee has found understaffed local law enforcement officials frustrated by the failure of federal authorities to treat the cases seriously.

With its modest resources, CPJ has been able to identify new leads and details in many of these cases—and we have been able to document in almost all instances that local and national law enforcement authorities are not vigorously pursuing these leads. Detailed recommendations on how law enforcement agencies should pursue the unsolved murders of immigrant reporters and editors are provided in the chapters on Vietnamese and Haitian journalists.

Absent adequate law-enforcement action, it would require the talents and resources of a professional news organization to unearth the truth about the murders of these eight American journalists. Neglected by federal authorities, these cases are likely to remain unsolved unless the news media itself spotlights the apparent unwillingness of law enforcement officials to devote their resources to these attacks on immigrant journalists and the American communities which they serve.

This report is not the final word, but only a starting point for further investigation. We invite you to join us in this effort, not only to ensure that the murderers of our colleagues do not remain unidentified and unpunished, but to bring to light these compelling stories. □

SILENCE IN LITTLE SAIGON:
FIVE VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN JOURNALISTS KILLED

Targeted by Terrorists

by Ana Arana

This summer, newscasters at a Vietnamese radio station in Southern California's Little Saigon received death threats when they broadcast BBC interviews with Vietnamese leaders. The station's owners played down the incident, but the newscasters became cautious and selective about what they aired. The incident brought back many troubling memories for Vietnamese-American journalists.

Five Vietnamese-American journalists were murdered between 1981 and 1990 during a right-wing wave of terror that left the Vietnamese community quiet and fearful. In five separate incidents across three states, right-wing exile groups claimed credit for, or were suspected of, the murders in 1981 of publisher Lam Trang Duong of San Francisco; in 1982 of publisher Nguyen Dam Phong of Houston; in 1987, magazine editor Tap Van Pham of Garden Grove, Calif; and, in 1989 and 1990, respectively, layout designer Nhan Trong Do and columnist Triet Le, both from a Vietnamese-American magazine based in Fairfax County, Va. All the murders remain unsolved. The attacks on the Vietnamese-American press also included at least four attempted murders, numerous beatings and death threats, and countless acts of vandalism against journalists and news organizations.

The murders and other acts of violence intimidated the Vietnamese-language press, which had become a vibrant and influential voice in Vietnamese-American communities. Reporters and editors began to avoid controversial topics involving their homeland, such as the potential for normalized diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam. They also shied away from covering corruption and organized

crime, which reportedly were often sponsored by the same extreme-right exile groups.

The five journalists were murdered during a decade when many newly arrived Vietnamese refugees still believed it was possible to end communist rule in Vietnam through organized resistance. Detractors have said the journalists were killed because they were communist sympathizers in a heavily anti-communist refugee community, but only one of the victims supported the communist government of Vietnam. The others were anti-communists who became targets because they or their publications favored some relaxation in U.S. policy toward Vietnam or criticized powerful, paramilitary exile groups, according to law enforcement sources and Vietnamese community members. Different factions led by former South Vietnamese army and navy officials fought for control of the resistance movement. Many of these paramilitary groups were trying to raise money among refugees for an alleged invasion of Vietnam, and there was constant discord among them during the 1980s. Journalists and other critics in the communities charged that some of these funds were being raised to finance private business ventures, both legal and illicit.

Sources in law enforcement and in the Vietnamese-American community charge that most — and perhaps all — of the victims were killed in a well-orchestrated conspiracy carried out by a shadowy death squad: the self-appointed Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate Communists and Restore the Nation (VOECRN). The suspected masterminds were influential members of the Vietnamese community and former members of the South Vietnamese government and armed forces, law enforcement sources say. Many of VOECRN's members were also active in legal anti-communist exile groups that organized political activities around the country and lobbied U.S. policy makers against making peace overtures to Vietnam, according to investigators.

There has never been a thorough federal investigation into the possible links among these murders. However, law enforcement sources told CPJ that there is strong circumstantial evidence indicating that some of the murders were contracted out to professional hit men working for Vietnamese criminal gangs, while others were carried out directly by the VOECRN itself.

VOECRN has not struck since 1990, but authorities say it is only dormant and could strike again. "We have begun to look at the group again because there is a lot of unhappiness about the new relations between the U.S. and Vietnam," said an investigator with the Garden Grove police department in Orange County, Calif., who has tracked

Vietnamese crime for ten years. (Most police sources requested anonymity because the cases remain open.) Some California law enforcement agencies went on alert earlier this year after violent demonstrations were organized against visiting communist Vietnamese performers and politicians.

No suspects have been arrested or charged in any of the murders or acts of harassment against journalists and news outlets. They occurred in a larger context of intimidation and violence that affected the entire Vietnamese community, and police have had a difficult time convincing Vietnamese-American witnesses to provide testimony, one investigator told CPJ. Hardline elements in the community exert power at the grassroots level. "It is difficult for me to push some of the people who I know can help our case against the killers, because I can't protect them from retaliation. The killers live in their communities," said another law enforcement source in California. Fear is compounded by the language barrier and a long-standing distrust of authorities which émigrés brought with them from Vietnam.

Jim Badey, a retired Virginia police investigator and a specialist on Asian crime, told CPJ that U.S. authorities often fail to solve political crimes in Vietnamese communities because they ignore or do not understand Vietnamese political feuds. "What law enforcement fails to understand is that these people are different . . . If they threaten to kill someone they will get them. They might sometimes kill their enemies in a home invasion or a robbery, but the underlying reason will be political. Police departments don't look beyond the evidence at hand," Badey said.

Some of the suspected conspirators in the murders have connections to the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam, also known simply as the Front, an exile group founded in San Jose, Calif., on Sept. 1, 1981, investigators tell CPJ. The Front spearheaded rallies and demonstrations against any leniency in U.S. policy toward Vietnam throughout the 1980s. It promoted a military overthrow of the Vietnamese government and raised money to form an army of resistance in the Vietnamese-American community. It was active in California, Texas and Virginia. In many communities, refugees were threatened with being labeled pro-communist unless they contributed money. Its leaders were Hoang Co Minh, a former admiral in the South Vietnamese navy, and Pham Van Lieu, a former colonel. Its membership includes former high-level members of the South Vietnamese army and navy. By 1984, the Front falsely claimed that it had grown from several hundred men to several thousand uniformed troops based in Thailand and Vietnam.

Taking their cue from the U.S.-funded Contra war, Minh and others in the group hoped that the U.S. government might support them if officials believed they already had soldiers in the field ready to fight. The claims brought in thousands of dollars each month from the Vietnamese community, but no U.S. aid. The Front set up a massive public relations organization, its own magazine, a fishing fleet and a worldwide chain of restaurants. By 1985, the group split as Lieu accused Minh and his followers of pocketing Front funds. Lieu also revealed that there was no truth to the claims that the Front had stationed thousands of freedom fighters inside Vietnam. Support in the Vietnamese community plummeted. In 1987, Minh attempted to lead a group of freedom fighters into Vietnam, but they were ambushed and he was reportedly killed. Twenty men who survived the attack were tried and executed by Vietnam. (Front leaders contend that Minh survived the attack and is in hiding in Vietnam.)

In 1991, a federal grand jury in San Jose indicted five top members of the Front, accusing them of conspiring to divert funds from the organization, which had nonprofit status, for their own use. The accused conspirators are out on bail. Lawyers for the Front have filed repeated motions, delaying a trial for the last four years. They have contended that the Front's activities were sanctioned by the U.S. government, and have subpoenaed officials from several U.S. agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. Preliminary inquiries that led to the indictment show that the Front had collected millions of dollars in the 1980s, but that its leaders used most of the money for personal gain and to finance its restaurants. Once the Front members were indicted, one investigator said, law enforcement agencies noticed an immediate drop in the number of politically motivated attacks and acts of harassment. "They were too busy preparing their defense," he said.

The Murder Investigations

A trail of letters, death lists and other evidence appear to tie the five murders of Vietnamese journalists to a common motive and common killers. The motive was to silence political dissent in the Vietnamese-American community. The killers, law enforce-

ment experts and community sources believe, were associated with the two right-wing paramilitary organizations: VOECRN and the Front. These exile groups operated across state and national boundaries, providing ample justification for a sweeping federal investigation into their activities.

That hasn't happened. Local police departments conducted reasonably thorough investigations of several of the murders, but cooperation among different law enforcement agencies has been lacking. Evidence in the earlier cases was mishandled; some was lost. Many of the local investigators who took an interest in solving the cases have retired. FBI investigations of some of the murders have been inconclusive and short-term. There has been no overarching federal and local task force set up with the resources and authority to pull together the evidence in all the cases, despite the existence of special FBI units specifically devoted to tracking domestic terrorism. VOECRN was not even listed among terrorist organizations targeted by the FBI until 1987, when newspapers reported that the FBI hadn't considered the group a terrorist organization, although VOECRN claimed responsibility for terrorist acts.

CASE NUMBER ONE

Lam Trang Duong
San Francisco
July 21, 1981

Lam Trang Duong was shot dead on the streets of San Francisco's Little Saigon in July 1981 by a gunman who quickly fled. Duong was the first American journalist to be murdered in the U. S. since the 1976 killing of Don Bolles. Duong had emigrated to the country as a teenager in the 1960s and became involved in protests against the Vietnam War. His politics put him at odds with newly arrived, anti-communist immigrants who were settling in the San Francisco Bay area.

A community activist and publisher of a small weekly which reprinted articles from Vietnam's communist media, Duong received many threats in the months preceding his murder. Nevertheless, the San Francisco police department treated his murder as a common homicide. Detectives overlooked key evidence, such as a letter from the previously unknown Anti-Communist Viets Organization, which claimed credit for

killing Duong. It was sent to the New York offices of the Associated Press and was postmarked in Las Vegas on the day of Duong's murder. A week later, the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate Communists and Restore the Nation (VOECRN) made one of its first appearances, also claiming responsibility in telephone calls to Vietnamese-language newspapers. California law enforcement sources say they believe that the same people are probably behind both groups.

The English-language mainstream press carried a brief flurry of reports on this first political assassination in the Vietnamese community. But interest quickly waned, leaving only the Vietnamese-language press providing regular coverage.

Duong was killed in the San Francisco Tenderloin neighborhood, a hard-scrabble area that became known as Little Saigon in the early 1980s when it became a haven for recently arrived Vietnamese refugees. A number of Vietnamese residents saw the shooting, but an American ex-Marine who had served in the Vietnam War was the only witness willing to talk to police investigators. With his description, police picked up the alleged gunman, 25-year-old Dat Van Nguyen, a cashier at the small Vietnamese restaurant that Lam had recently opened. Nine months later, he was released because the witness recanted his earlier statement. The police department lost the letter that had been sent by VOECRN, eliminating a potentially important clue from any later investigations into the group. Criminal investigators and community sources say Duong's pro-Hanoi views didn't make it easier for police to get information in the Vietnamese community.

CASE NUMBER TWO

Nguyen Dam Phong

Houston

August 24, 1982

VOEARN struck again in Houston on Aug. 24, 1982. Nguyen Dam Phong, a veteran journalist who published the weekly *Tu Do*, (*Freedom*), was shot dead in the driveway of his home. Phong was an anti-communist who had fled Hanoi in 1975 with his wife and 10 children. He was an influential member of the Vietnamese community in Houston, where people were beginning to

complain about the fund-raising methods employed by exile groups which claimed they were planning a massive military offensive against Vietnam.

The community was rife with gossip about what was happening to the money. Phong and other local journalists wrote reports on scams carried out in the name of Vietnamese nationalism, and they warned émigrés to be careful with their money. Phong received several death threats. A few days before he was killed, a male caller told Phong that he would die if he printed any more articles about local exile groups or gangs. Phong had just published a series on the California-based National United Front for The Liberation of Vietnam.

Phong's assassin surprised him at home. Police say he opened the door and met his killer. In his house, police found a hit list from the Vietnamese Party for the Annihilation of Communism and for the National Restoration. Law enforcement officials say the organization is VOECRN with a different English translation. In 1990, gunmen executed Triet Le, a columnist for the Virginia magazine *Van Nghe Tien Phong* (*Art and Culture Vanguard*), one of the journalists included on the death list found in Phong's home.

A retired Houston police investigator who worked on Phong's case said it was difficult to get help from the community. The Houston police department did not have a Vietnamese-speaking officer and was ignorant of the cultural and political undercurrents in the community. "The idea that there was an organized Vietnamese criminal organization was new at the time. We had no trained specialists," said the investigator, who asked not to be identified. The FBI was involved, but the case remained unsolved. Asian crime specialists with knowledge of the murders say the Houston case could have provided the best leads in the killing spree. "The ties between the killers, the financiers and causes were much clearer. There was a group of Vietnamese military types who were settling down in the area. Their involvement could have been traced easier then; evidence would have been gathered," said one Justice Department source.

The Houston investigators were confused from the start. "There was a lot of violence in the community, and the political killings were mixed up with gang turf warfare," said the retired Houston officer.

In 1984, two years after Phong's death, his wife and several other Vietnamese witnesses told the President's Commission on Organized Crime that 13 Vietnamese criminal gangs were operating around the country at the time. One former member said gang operations were located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and Houston. He said the

gangs masked their criminal activities by claiming they were anti-communist groups raising money for guerrillas in Vietnam. "My husband was killed for exposing these gangs," said Mrs. Phong.

Between 1982 and 1986, there were several acts of harassment and one attempted murder against Vietnamese-American journalists in Texas. A group of them issued a joint statement on May 30, 1986, demanding special protection from Houston-area police departments. Police intensified their surveillance, but no arrests were made. Most of the journalists who signed that statement are now retired.

CASE NUMBER THREE

Tap Van Pham
Garden Grove, Calif.
August 7, 1987

The next victim was Tap Van Pham, editor of *MAI*, (*Morning*), a glossy entertainment magazine. Pham was murdered in 1987 in a deliberately set fire at his office, where he also lived, in Garden Grove, Calif., part of Southern California's Little Saigon. Pham had received an anonymous letter warning him against running advertisements from Canadian-based companies which promoted cash transfers and travel packages to Vietnam. Several other Vietnamese weeklies also received the letter, Vietnamese editors told CPJ. Refugees considered these agencies fronts for the communist government in Hanoi. In 1985, VOECRN had claimed credit for firebombing the Montreal offices of one of the agencies.

Investigators ruled out robbery as a motive in Pham's murder because they found more than \$50,000 in gold, cash and jewelry after the fire. The arsonists lit the fire at the entrance to the magazine's office, the building's only exit. The fatal fire was the seventh in a 13-month period.

VOECRN wrote a letter five days later taking credit for Pham's murder. It also claimed responsibility for several other acts of violence, including the 1981 murder of San Francisco journalist Lam Trong Duong. Local law enforcement agencies determined that the VOECRN letter was authentic and requested help from the FBI. Preliminary investigations positively tied the group to the Montreal firebombings of the cash-exchange companies. The FBI opened an investigation, but a full operation was not launched until 1989.

Political debate intensified in the Vietnamese-American community between 1987 and 1990. With the collapse of communism in the Soviet bloc, Vietnamese-Americans began to openly discuss the possibility of re-establishing diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Journalists, lawyers and other influential members of the community traveled to Vietnam to visit relatives. But extreme sectors in the community retaliated. Two journalists were seriously wounded. On April 30, 1988, Long Vu, one of Vietnam's most famous writers, was seriously beaten outside a Vietnamese shopping center as he left a restaurant in Westminster, just south of Los Angeles. The assailants were three young men who had just left ceremonies marking the 13th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. Vu, who lives in Paris and was visiting California at the time of the attack, was left permanently paralyzed.

On Aug. 21, 1989, Doan Van Toai, a controversial writer and head of the liberal Institute for Democracy in Vietnam, based in Washington, was shot and seriously wounded in the farming community of Fresno in Northern California. Toai, who lives in Fresno but travels extensively, had reportedly received several death threats in the past after publishing articles calling for the re-establishment of diplomatic ties with Vietnam. An article he wrote for the institute was reprinted before the attack in several Vietnamese newspapers, creating a furor in certain community circles. The FBI investigated the incident, but found no cooperation from the Fresno Vietnamese community, which considered Toai a "communist dupe."

By 1989, the FBI also had set up a task force with the police department in Garden Grove, where investigators believed many of the terrorist acts were planned. Several agents were assigned to the force for six months, but the investigation did not bear fruit. Jeff Brody, a reporter who covered the Vietnamese community for the *Orange County Register*, said the agents seemed competent but disconnected from the community. "The problem with investigations with agents who are not experts is that

they generate a lot of paper but not much more," said one local investigator.

CASE NUMBER FOUR

Nhan Trong Do
Fairfax County, Va.
November 22, 1989

The attacks continued. In Fairfax County, Va., Nhan Trong Do, the 56-year-old layout designer for the conservative, national biweekly magazine *Van Nghe Tien Phong* was found fatally shot in his car. A former lieutenant colonel in the South Vietnamese Army, Do came to the United States in 1981 after fleeing Vietnam by boat. He was not a controversial figure at the magazine, which often wrote scathing reports about the Vietnamese community. He probably was killed, according to police, because he often misrepresented himself as a higher-ranking employee at the newspaper. Local investigations into his murder were inconclusive. His colleagues at the newspaper thought his death was a warning to the editors, although no one claimed responsibility for his murder.

CASE NUMBER FIVE

Triet Le
Baileys Crossroads, Va.
September 22, 1990

The killers struck again against *Van Nghe Tien Phong* nearly a year later, on Sept. 22, 1990. Triet Le, the magazine's controversial columnist, and his wife Tuyet Thi Dangtran, were fatally shot as they parked their car in front of their home in Baileys Crossroads, Va. Le's name had appeared on a VOECRN hit list found in 1982 by Houston police at the home of Nguyen Dam Phong, another Vietnamese journalist who was killed for political reasons. The name of Nguyen Thanh Hoang, *Van Nghe Tien Phong's* publisher, was also

on the list.

A retired Arlington County government employee, Le often wrote caustic columns attacking various sides in the Vietnam debate. He criticized both the Front and the communist government of Vietnam. Among Le's last articles were three articles on the Front and its operations. Le and his publisher had been early supporters of the Front, but turned against it in the early 1980s. They criticized the group's leadership and alleged corrupt practices. The newspaper's offices had been fire-bombed in 1980 and 1989.

Police and employees of *Van Nghe Tien Phong* explained that Do, the layout artist, was probably killed in 1989 to send a message to Le and the publisher. In late 1990, the magazine published three articles written by a former member of The Front accusing three top members of the group of ordering Le's murder. The Front members filed a libel suit against Nguyen Thanh Hoang, the magazine's publisher, and the former Front member who wrote the articles. Also named as a defendant in the lawsuit is Vu Ngu Chieu, a Texas-based Vietnamese book publisher, who published a book by the same author. A trial on the case is scheduled for Dec. 5, 1994, in the Superior Court of Santa Clara County in San Jose, Calif.

The FBI investigated this case extensively. With only modest leads after six months, however, federal investigators returned the case to the Fairfax County police department, who say the case remains open. But local investigators in California who have made inquiries about it say the Fairfax murder investigations are practically inactive.

Abuses Against Vietnamese-American Journalists

Yen Ngoc Do

Editor, *Ngoi Viet Daily News*

Death Threats

Santa Ana, Calif.

April 1990

The name of Do, editor of the largest Vietnamese newspaper in California, was included on a death list circulated by anti-communists. In a typewritten message, an unidentified group threatened to execute Do and other Vietnamese community leaders on the anniversary of the fall of Saigon, which is commemorated every April 15. Copies of the communique were mailed to several Vietnamese-language dailies in Orange County and San Jose, Calif. Do had been threatened before because of his moderate position on U.S.-Vietnam relations.

Status: Unsolved

Ngoi Viet Daily News

Delivery truck firebombed

Santa Ana, Calif.

April 24, 1989

Unidentified men set fire to a *Ngoi Viet* delivery truck parked in front of the newspaper's offices. A message was scrawled in Vietnamese on a wall of the newspaper building: "Ngoi Viet, if you are VC (Viet Cong) we kill." The attack was provoked by a local Vietnamese cable television show produced by Yen Ngoc Do, editor of *Ngoi Viet*, which had inadvertently broadcast footage showing the communist flag.

Status: Unsolved

Doan Van Toai

Writer

Attempted Murder

Fresno, Calif.

August 19, 1989

Toai was shot and seriously wounded as he walked home in Fresno, Calif. The shooting was apparently provoked by an editorial Toai wrote for an English-language policy newsletter, which he claimed was mistranslated into Vietnamese and published by local community newspapers.

Toai is a controversial figure in the Vietnamese community because he supported the Vietcong during the war. When the communists overtook Saigon, they sent him to re-education camp, but the refugee community in the United States has not forgiven him for his early activism on behalf of the left. He also has criticized the former leaders of South Vietnam and refugee leaders in the United States.

In the mid-1980s he received several threats after writing a controversial article for the *Los Angeles Times* magazine, which called for the United States to re-establish diplomatic ties with Vietnam. One threat was mailed to him accompanied by a bullet. In the article, he also accused leaders of some anti-communist groups of pocketing funds that were allegedly being raised to finance a guerrilla resistance force against Vietnam.

Status: Unsolved (despite an FBI investigation)

Tu A Nguyen

Publisher, *Viet Press*

Death Threats

Westminster, Calif.

August 3, 1988

Nguyen and two other persons were “sentenced to death” in posters tacked to telephone poles in the commercial area of Little Saigon in Westminster. The threats came after Nguyen and the others visited Vietnam.

Long Vu

Novelist

Severely beaten and paralyzed

Westminster, Calif.

April 30, 1988

Novelist Vu suffered partial, life-long paralysis after a severe beating by

anti-communists in Westminster. Vu had been imprisoned for six years in Vietnam after the communist takeover in 1975. But rumors spread among refugees that he had collaborated with the communists. After his release from jail, he and his family were granted political asylum in France. His attack occurred as he visited Southern California under the auspices of the conservative congressman, Rep. Robert K. Dornan, a Republican whose district headquarters are in Garden Grove.

Status: Unsolved

Thinh Nguyen
 Editor, *Dan Viet*
Harassed
 Houston
 August 4, 1987

The corpse of a German shepherd was left on Nguyen's driveway with a note in which his life was threatened.

Status: Unsolved

Tran Trung Quan
 Editor, *Saigon Thoi Bao*
Attempted Murder
 Houston
 May 18, 1986

Quan was wounded by a stranger on May 18, 1986.

Status: Unsolved

Nguyen Ngoc Linh
 Xay Dung
 Hoang Minh Thuy
 Thinh Nguyen
 Phan Huu Tao
 Editors
Threats, vandalism and harassment
 Houston
 May 30, 1986

These editors complained in a public communique of a campaign of intimidation and violence. Describing telephone threats, vandalism and harassment, the editors asked local police to look at all the incidents carefully.

Status: Cases unsolved

Bach Huu Bong

Publisher

Small Vietnamese weekly

Attempted Murder

Los Angeles

January 5, 1982

A lone gunman shot repeatedly at Bong from a moving car—and missed—after Bong left a restaurant in Chinatown. The shooting occurred days after Bong ran a story on a gangland shooting in Orange County. The story identified the gang as “The Frogmen,” a group of former members of an elite Vietnamese-navy, underwater demolition team. He identified Tai Huu Nguyen, known as “Mr. Tai” as a leader of the gang. The Frogmen allegedly extorted money from Vietnamese immigrants in Orange County.

Status: Solved. Bong identified Tai as the gunman. Tai was tried and convicted, but his jail term was suspended because Tai had no prior criminal record in this country. Bong ceased publishing his newspaper.

Van Nghe Tien Phong

Firebombed

Arlington, Va.

January 1980

The North Arlington home and newspaper office of Nguyen Thanh Hoang, publisher of the magazine *Van Nghe Tien Phong*, was firebombed while he and his seven-year-old daughter were in a basement room. Both

Hoang and the child escaped unharmed. Damage to the house was estimated at \$125,000. The newspaper had been critical of exile paramilitary groups.

Recommended Action

The murders of Vietnamese journalists could be solved within a year if the following steps are taken, according to law enforcement sources and Asian crime experts:

- The FBI needs to set up a national task force, which would work in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies in the cities where the killings occurred or where paramilitary exile groups were known to be organized. The task force would need to share information across state lines. According to one investigator, any investigation that does not include an interstate component will fail, because the gangs hired to carry out the murders are mobile and operate across state lines

The task force must include a sufficient number of agents who speak Vietnamese or are Asian crime experts. The murder of Alan Berg in Denver was solved within a year because the FBI deployed up to 50 agents, many of them experts on white-supremacist groups. The Manuel de Dios murder was solved after 30 experts on drug trafficking from the Drug Enforcement Administration and local drug enforcement agencies from New York, Miami and Baltimore worked together for a year.

Previous FBI attempts to investigate Vietnamese murders were headed by small contingents of agents with little background on Asian crime. These investigations were not afforded the same priority in the FBI infrastructure. FBI investigations were often short-lived. In many cases, federal agents ended all inquiries a couple of months after each incident.

Previous FBI investigations also failed because they did not effectively share information with local investigators. Much of what has been unearthed by local law enforce-

ment agents in each city can be used to decipher the overall pattern used by the assassins, according to Asian crime experts.

■ Investigators could focus on two upcoming trials: In 1991, a federal grand jury indicted five members of the Front for the Liberation of Vietnam for posing as a non-profit organization and not paying taxes. The investigation revealed that the Front's leadership used money raised among exiles for personal expenses. The Front is appealing a preliminary sentence. A new trial is expected in a few months.

On Dec. 5, 1994, a trial is scheduled in Superior Court in San Jose, Calif., on a libel suit brought by leaders of the Front against Nguyen Thanh Hoang, editor of the Virginia-based *Van Nghe Tien Phong*. The Front leaders sued following a 1990 article published by the magazine directly implicating the Front in the 1990 assassination of *Van Nghe Tien Phong*'s columnist Triet Le and his wife. □

THE RIGHT WING KEEPS UP ITS ATTACKS

The Vietnamese Press Under Siege

by Jeffrey Brody

It was a familiar story for those of us who have covered the Vietnamese community. This past June, within days of broadcasting interviews with government leaders in Vietnam, a Vietnamese-language radio station in Southern California came under attack for “aiding the communist cause.”

The owners and employees of Little Saigon radio in Orange County received anonymous death threats. Callers said the station would be bombed. The red-baiting, McCarthy-like extremists were at it again, trampling on the First Amendment by threatening to take lives if anyone dared to exercise free speech in a way they didn’t approve.

The station became more guarded in its news coverage and I waited to see if the extremists would make good on their threats as they had in the past. In August, about 100 protesters, calling themselves the Committee to Protect Human Rights in Vietnam, marched in front of the station and denounced the Vietnam broadcasts, which were conducted by correspondents of the British Broadcasting Corporation and had been aired worldwide by the BBC.

Freedom of the press was once again under attack in Little Saigon, the name given to Orange County’s Vietnamese community, which is the largest in the world outside Vietnam. While a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll showed a majority of Vietnamese refugees in Southern

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California supported restoring relations with Vietnam, a small minority continues to hold the Vietnamese press hostage with intimidation and terror.

Since 1981, five Vietnamese immigrant journalists have been killed in the United States by purported right-wing, anti-Communist groups. Vietnamese-language newspapers have been firebombed and editors' and reporters' lives threatened for exercising their constitutional rights. Each time, the journalists appeared to have angered right-wing extremists in the émigré community who want to set the political agenda for all Vietnamese living overseas. It has been almost 20 years since Saigon fell, but some elements want to continue the war against the communists.

Before joining academia last year, I had covered the Vietnamese community for more than 10 years, and had written some 400 articles for *The Orange County Register* about Vietnam and refugee life. A number of those articles were about Tap Van Pham, the editor of a local magazine called *Mai*, who was murdered when his office was set on fire. Despite threats, Tap had refused to stop running advertisements by Canadian companies that offered to exchange Vietnamese currency. An anti-communist group claimed credit for his assassination.

Never once was I threatened. But my colleagues at Vietnamese newspapers in California and across the country have been silenced and forced to operate under different rules. Although many refugee journalists have become U.S. citizens, they must act as if they are still in Vietnam without constitutional protection. This has had a chilling effect on reporters and has limited available news coverage, especially for Vietnamese immigrants who can't read English and rely exclusively on the Vietnamese-language press.

When President Clinton lifted the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam last winter, journalists from around the world converged on Hanoi to witness renewed commerce between the former enemies. It was an historic event, especially for the refugee community. Yet, Vietnamese journalists were scared to return to their homeland to cover the story. Yen Do, the editor and publisher of *Nguoi Viet Daily News*, the largest Vietnamese-language newspaper in this country, told me he wouldn't dare go back because of the political climate in the United States, not in Vietnam.

Yen Do had every right to be wary. His life has been threatened, and one of his newspaper delivery trucks was firebombed in 1990. The truck was torched because of an inadvertently offensive image aired on a cable television program affiliated with the *Nguoi Viet* newspaper. The cable program featured a music video, much like those shown on MTV, with lyrics by a Vietnamese singer and a montage of pictures from Vietnam. The lyrics and body language of the singer were inoffensive.

What offended extremists and triggered the firebombing was a shot of a city scene that showed the Vietnamese flag flying on a distant building. There were no close-ups of the banner. It was clearly in the background, but extremists interpreted the red flag as a message that *Nguoi Viet* was pro-Communist. A meeting was held and Yen Do apologized. That didn't matter. A few hours after the meeting, the truck was bombed to teach Yen Do and the film editors a lesson.

The pressure on Yen Do continues—and recently took its toll: On Sept. 28, 1994, he resigned as editor of *Nguoi Viet Daily News* after 300 right-wing demonstrators marched in front of the newspaper's offices and threatened to boycott it. The demonstrators were angry about comments Yen Do made in a recent *New York Times* article about Vietnamese-American refugees doing business with Vietnam. He remains publisher of the daily.

The tension among Vietnamese-American journalists has been so pervasive at times that some editors have carried weapons. Nguyen Tu A of Westminster, Calif., kept guns on every level of his house, in his car and at his newspaper office. Known for his moderate views, he left the newspaper business in the late 1980s. He told me he wanted to live a "normal" life.

Because newspapers fear reprisals, stories that cast a good light on Vietnam or stories about refugees who favor normalizing relations with their homeland almost never appear in the émigré press. If they do, they are never written by staff reporters. Vietnamese journalists rely on American reporters in much the same way that journalists in other countries rely on American correspondents to break stories that would be censored in their homelands. I have received many tips from Vietnamese editors about stories that were too hot for them to handle.

The editors wanted me to print controversial stories first, so that they could translate them and attribute every fact to me or *The Orange*

County Register. I became accustomed to reading translations of my stories which had my name mentioned in almost every paragraph. The Vietnamese version of the story would read, "Jeffrey Brody said this," or "the following was reported by Jeffrey Brody." I would scan the pages of Vietnamese-language newspapers and see my name printed 20 times. The editors did this so that if anyone complained, they could say they had only reprinted the story. They could blame me or *The Register* for the content.

The same practice applied to sources. I recall writing a story about refugees who had abandoned the strategy of armed struggle in favor of peaceful accommodation with Vietnam. I quoted a colonel who had belonged to a resistance group about his shift in thinking. After the article was published, the colonel came to see me and said he would be killed if he didn't recant what was printed in *The Register*. The colonel wasn't asking for a correction; my reporting was accurate. His solution was to call a press conference for Vietnamese journalists to explain that he had been misquoted. The ruse was necessary to save his life. The colonel would otherwise have needed around-the-clock protection.

Law enforcement agencies have made little progress in identifying extremist groups, and they have failed to stop terrorist acts. A joint task force of the FBI and local police in California, which was set up to investigate the killing of Tap Van Pham and other acts of terror against Vietnamese émigrés, produced a few leads but no arrests. Investigators have told me they had difficulty winning trust among Vietnamese and finding informants who could penetrate the shadowy world of right-wing groups. They believe those responsible for the attacks have ties to former South Vietnamese military and intelligence organizations.

Attacks against outspoken Vietnamese-Americans have occurred across the country—in San Francisco, Boston, Houston, Orange County and elsewhere. Five Vietnamese journalists have been murdered. So it seems to me that the story has national significance. Yet it has generated little interest among the national media. Most journalists know of Don Bolles, the Arizona reporter killed in 1976 for reporting on corruption. Few know of Tap Van Pham. His story and that of other Vietnamese émigrés need to be told in order to galvanize pressure for more thorough investigations. But they have not captured the hearts of American editors. Unless that changes, the murderers of fellow journalists may never be caught. □

TALK RADIO UNDER ATTACK: 3 HAITIAN-AMERICANS KILLED

A Green Light To Murder

by Ana Arana

Three Haitian radio hosts have been shot dead in Miami over the past three years: Jean-Claude Olivier, Fritz Dor and Dona St. Plite. All three hosted Creole-language programs which criticized Haiti's military regime and its supporters in South Florida. The three had received death threats because of their outspoken allegiance to then-exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Olivier and Dor were killed four weeks apart in 1991 with the same gun; St. Plite was murdered more than two years later while attending a benefit concert for Dor's family.

The murders of the three journalists are seen as political assassinations among Haitian-Americans throughout the United States. They are considered extensions of the wholesale massacres of political opponents sponsored by the Haitian military in Haiti itself. This belief was reinforced in March when a fourth local Aristide supporter, Daniel Buron, also was fatally shot in Miami's Little Haiti. Buron and two of the journalists were active in *Veye Yo* ("Beware of Them"), a grassroots Haitian-American organization that was founded in Miami in 1980 and supports President Aristide.

The four murders have provoked concern among both journalists and non-journalists and have lent credence to the death threats received almost daily by Haitian broadcasters in the United States. Haitian-Americans are concerned that violence against Aristide supporters on U.S. soil will escalate in retaliation for the U.S. occupation of Haiti. The chilling effect in the Haitian-American press is widespread. The Creole-language media continued to criticize Haiti's de-facto military regime and to endorse President Aristide, but news outlets refrained from directly

criticizing prominent, American-based opponents of Aristide who are alleged to have ties to the Haitian military. Haitian-American journalists say they are still taking precautions: They vary their routes from work to home, and some stay away from their houses every few nights.

Former and current top military leaders and their paramilitary supporters have second homes in Miami and have been known to shuttle between Miami and Port-au-Prince. Two of the radio hosts were murdered weeks after President Aristide's 1991 election, when Miami was tense as Haitian army supporters and Aristide clashed on the airwaves and in the streets.

Miami police and state prosecutors are hesitant to acknowledge publicly any possible political motives in the murders of Olivier, Dor and St. Plite. Three years after the first murder, they continue to insist that the men were killed because of internal business disputes in Miami's Little Haiti. They hint at drugs and other shady affairs gone sour. They have brought to justice only accomplices in these cases, but none of the main assassins or those who ordered the killings.

Government sources in Miami have told CPJ that they suspect the three journalists were ordered killed by local supporters of the Haitian military, who contracted the murders to Bahamian-Haitian gangs which operate in Little Haiti. The gangs are known to control drug trafficking and other illicit businesses, and their involvement initially oriented the police toward purely criminal investigations. These same sources said the murders probably were ordered within the context of heightened political animosity between supporters of President Aristide and the Haitian army's wealthy backers in South Florida. Pro-army Haitians living in the United States became angrier and more active as the Florida press focused largely on the pro-Aristide Haitian exile community, and its response to the U.S. army occupation of Haiti and the expected return of President Aristide. Many of the pro-army exile groups are said by Haitian community sources to be made up of former *Ton Ton Macoutes*, the feared Haitian paramilitary force that grew powerful under the Duvalier dictatorships. Some of these groups are allegedly financed by members of the Haitian oligarchy, as well as middle-class professionals who have fled Haiti's political instability over the years.

Sources with knowledge of the investigation and Haitian community activists said it is suspected Olivier and Dor were ordered killed because the journalists damaged the business of a well-known, pro-army supporter by urging the largely pro-Aristide Little Haiti community to

boycott his business. This mix of politics and business has complicated the investigations into their deaths, but the police have chosen to overlook the possible political connections of these killings.

"I can't say why the journalists were killed, but what bothers me is that the police are not even willing to accept the possibility that there were political reasons. That only gives the green light to the murderers," said Marcus Garcia, editor of Miami-based *Haiti en Marche*, a leading community weekly.

Growing Tensions in Little Haiti

The Haitian-American community in Miami is the second largest in the United States. Little Haiti moves to the music of the island nation and the cadence of the Creole language. Legal immigrants and undocumented aliens live alongside long-time Haitian-American residents who fled to the United States during previous political crises. Each military coup and wave of repression has sent more exiles to South Florida. Military men and their supporters among the Haitian oligarchy favor the area for vacation and retirement homes. Tension between pro- and anti-Aristide immigrants is palpable.

Nowhere is this tension more evident than on the airwaves of Little Haiti. In Miami, as in Haiti, radio is the communication lifeline of the Haitian community. Forty to 60 Creole-language radio programs air each week. Haitian broadcasters rent air time at local radio stations for \$250 per hour and pay their bills with advertisements or subscriptions. Most radio programs are pro-Aristide, since approximately 90 percent of Little Haiti supports the elected president, according to community leaders.

Little Haiti is poor and mostly populated by recent arrivals who depend almost solely on Creole-language radio for information. Pro-army Haitians are wealthier and generally speak English, so they have access to English-language media. But this summer, in an attempt to counter pro-Aristide Creole radio, supporters of the Haitian political paramilitary group called the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (the Creole acronym is FRAPH), began broadcasting a pro-military program every Sunday afternoon in which Aristide activists were accused of being on the payroll of the Central Intelligence Agency. The assertion was rather ironic, given the CIA's acknowledged payments to the leaders of FRAPH in Haiti. The program went off the air in late August, after the

station received complaints from listeners.

The FRAPH radio program is just one part of a new effort by pro-army Haitians to increase their visibility. FRAPH membership in Haiti was estimated at nearly 10,000, including armed thugs who intimidate the civilian population and are believed responsible for killing hundreds of Aristide supporters, according to *The Nation* magazine. In a recent article the magazine said the group reported to Port-au-Prince police commander Lt. Col. Michel Francois, one of the hard-line officers who left for the Dominican Republic shortly after U.S. forces occupied Haiti.

FRAPH membership in the U.S. includes powerful and wealthy army supporters who left Haiti after the Duvalier dictatorship ended in 1986. In an early 1993 organizing meeting in the New York City borough of Queens, FRAPH's objective in the United States was defined as gaining more favorable media attention in the United States. FRAPH opened offices in Miami, New York, Boston and Montreal. FRAPH is said to have used these offices and their connections to wealthy Haitians in the United States to raise money for operations in Haiti.

FRAPH attempted to open an office in Miami's Little Haiti but backed off after mass demonstrations. The group held two small demonstrations of its own in Key Biscayne, Fla., an enclave of wealthy Latin American entrepreneurs and political exiles, and in North Miami.

Several other openly anti-Aristide groups have emerged in South Florida. The Movement for the Development of South Haiti criticizes those who express pro-Aristide sentiments. A Fort Lauderdale-based group called Concerned Haitians United for Development began approaching newspapers in Broward County to complain that news coverage does not reflect the opinions of the entire Haitian-American community in the United States.

Law enforcement sources in Broward County say some of the Haitian groups in South Florida were smuggling weapons to the Haitian military. In May, Fort Lauderdale police arrested Patrick Loiseau—identified by law enforcement sources as the brother of Joel Loiseau, an officer of the Haitian armed forces—as he attempted to ship to Haiti 110 frozen turkeys stuffed with small-caliber guns.

Little Haiti became especially tense immediately after the U.S. occupation. Radio broadcasters received death threats almost every day. The fact that three radio personalities have been assassinated—and that their assailants remain at large—forces broadcasters to take the threats seriously.

Samedi Florvil, a part-time Miami radio host and political activist, says he is concerned for his safety and that of his colleagues. Florvil is a member of Veye Yo, the pro-Aristide group to which Dor and St. Plite belonged. Veye Yo was founded in Miami in 1980 as an anti-Duvalier organization and later developed a strong following in Haiti. The organization continues to broadcast three radio programs a week in Little Haiti.

"There is a higher sense of insecurity because of the stand-off between the military and the United States," said Marcus Garcia of *Haiti en Marche*, who has lived in the United States since he fled the Duvalier dictatorship in 1980. "Many Ton Ton Macoutes are traveling to Miami."

CASE NUMBER ONE

Jean-Claude Olivier

Miami

Feb. 18, 1991

Jean Claude Olivier, 47, a Haitian music promoter, was a part-time radio host on Radyo Pep La, where he was known as "Division Star." He was an outspoken supporter of President Aristide and of Veye Yo, the pro-Aristide organization.

Olivier was gunned down outside a popular Haitian nightclub where one of his bands was playing. A man walked up to him and fired at point-blank range. Days before his murder, Olivier and other Haitian radio personalities urged pro-Aristide Haitians not to support the local army supporters. Investigators and Haitian journalists told CPJ that Olivier's assassination was a contract hit carried out by a Bahamian-Haitian gang.

A man named Hitler Fleurinord was accused of driving the assassin to the scene. He was convicted of manslaughter in February and sentenced to 25 years in prison. An appeal hearing has been scheduled for November 1994.

Coverage of Olivier's murder by local media was initially extensive but soon waned. Miami and Dade County police publicly deny that Haitian politics or political groups played any role in the slaying.

CASE NUMBER TWO

Fritz Dor
Miami
March 15, 1991

Fritz Dor, 33, was shot with the same gun that was used to kill Jean-Claude Olivier a month earlier. He was killed as he stepped into his car. Dor had been an active supporter of Aristide and was a member of the Veye Yo board of directors. He also constantly identified local army backers who had businesses in the community and urged Haitians to boycott their businesses.

Dor broadcast on Miami's WKAT and often criticized the Ton Ton Macoutes in Miami. He ran an immigration office, where he helped local Haitians apply for green cards or passports, and arranged for funerals. Four days before his murder, an armed man walked into the WKAT studios and threatened to kill Dor because of his support for Aristide. Investigators who caught up with the man after Dor's murder were startled to learn that he was a former Haitian vice consul in Miami named Alix Ottinot. Ottinot had once worked for Gen. Williams Regala, a former defense minister who was accused of ordering a massacre of military opponents in 1987. Ottinot was questioned but is not a suspect in Dor's murder.

On June 8, 1993, Glossy Bruce Joseph, a 20-year-old Bahamian-

Haitian, pleaded guilty to manslaughter for being the lookout when Dor was killed. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison. The triggerman is still at large. Law enforcement officials publicly deny that the murder could have been politically motivated, although they suspect a Bahamian-Haitian gang was involved. Again, local news coverage evaporated after an initial period of interest.

Both Olivier and Dor were killed just as Aristide assumed power. Little Haiti was charged with political tension, as former government and military officials took refuge in South Florida. Among them were the former defense minister, Gen. Regala, and Gen. Prosper Avril, a deposed president who had been accused of torture and other human rights violations.

CASE NUMBER THREE

Dona St. Plite

Miami

October 24, 1993

St. Plite also had a radio program on WKAT. He was killed while attending a benefit concert for the widow and children of his colleague at the station, Fritz Dor. The day St. Plite was killed, an anonymous caller reached him at the radio station and warned him that he would die if he attended the benefit concert. St. Plite's name had appeared on a death list circulated in Little Haiti a few days before. The list of names included this message, scribbled in Creole: "Bravo Americans. Make Aristide pay. Long live the Army. These people must be shot before or on Oct. 30, in Miami and in Haiti." October 30, 1993, was the date President Aristide was originally scheduled to return to power under the later-abrogated Governor's Island accord.

Authorities have indicted another Bahamian-Haitian, Francky St. Louis Joseph, as one of St. Plite's assassins. His trial is pending. Local

news coverage of the case has been spotty. National media attention has been virtually non-existent.

Recommended Action

The FBI should set up a combined task force, including agents who speak Creole, with police departments in South Florida's Broward and Dade counties and:

n Investigate alleged ties between prominent local Haitians, the FRAPH and the Bahamian-Haitian gangs suspected of murdering the journalists. Is it true, as some law enforcement sources contend, that these Bahamian-Haitian gangs control various illicit businesses in Miami, the Bahamas and Haiti? If these gangs are hired to carry out killings, who pays for the contracts?

n Actively court sources in the Haitian-American community, so investigators can better understand the political context in which Haitian-American journalists are being murdered. In an intensely polarized community like Little Haiti, the distinction between business rivalry and political enmity is often blurred. Both factions frequently see personal disputes as direct extensions of the ideological battles and power struggles taking place in Haiti itself.

n Follow leads outside of the United States—in the Bahamas, in Port-au-Prince, or wherever the trail might lead. As with the unsolved murders of Vietnamese-American journalists, this could require cooperation among the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, the State Department, the CIA and military intelligence services. q

MANUEL DE DIOS UNANUE

No One Follows in His Footsteps

by Ignacio Gómez

On March 11, 1992, reporter and editor Manuel de Dios Unanue was fatally shot in a New York City restaurant. His murder shocked the Latino community and surprised the mainstream press, much of which later portrayed him as a “crusading” newspaperman, a sort of gadfly, who had nipped at the heels of powerful drug traffickers once too often and paid with his life. But Manuel de Dios was not so much a “crusader” as a dogged investigative journalist, determined to unravel the mysteries of the drug trade in his adopted home community—the borough of Queens in New York City. He did what he set out to do, for which he was killed.

The month before his murder, De Dios had published the first issue of a new crime magazine with one of the most revealing articles ever printed on the men who later ordered his assassination: the leaders of Colombia’s Cali cocaine cartel. The magazine report made De Dios a target for these men, who control up to 80 percent of the world’s cocaine trade, and gross an estimated \$25 billion a year in profits, according to law enforcement estimates. De Dios had become a threat because he had penetrated the inner sanctum of the cartel’s most important center of operations, located in Queens. De Dios’ reporting was beginning to reach the new nucleus of the largest and richest criminal organization in the world. It was no ordinary feat. The Cali cartel operates as a clandestine political organization, partitioned into cells which are kept ignorant of each other’s existence.

The writer is an investigative journalist for the Bogotá daily newspaper, El Espectador. He researched and wrote this report for The Committee to Protect Journalists.

As it turned out, killing De Dios was both a defeat and a victory for the Cali group. The cartel lost its first U.S.-based processing lab when police looking for De Dios' killers raided a Queens warehouse. But it won a reprieve from the type of relentless media coverage De Dios had provided. No one has picked up where De Dios left off, and it's not hard to figure out why.

De Dios Kept Chasing the Story

Manuel de Dios Unanue was best known in New York City's Latino community as the editor who transformed *El Diario-La Prensa*, turning it from a small-circulation newspaper into New York's largest Spanish-language daily. Trained as a criminal lawyer, De Dios was a Cuban exile who grew up in Spain and Puerto Rico and was fascinated by crime and how it had encroached on New York City's Latino community.

By the mid-1980s, De Dios' *El Diario's* exposés on drug traffickers were legendary. He published a toll-free number which readers could call to report drug dealers. He dedicated an entire section of the paper to drug-related stories. He was convinced that drugs and drug-related corruption were strangling the New York Latino community, according to former colleagues. His publishers, however, were worried that the newspaper was becoming too much of a soapbox against drugs.

"They weren't happy. They hassled him constantly until they forced him to leave," said Rossana Rosado, a former colleague who resigned from the daily after De Dios was killed. In 1989, De Dios left the paper, dissatisfied with the soft-news approach preferred by the publishers, Rosado said. De Dios' dream was to publish his own newspaper or magazine, where he could fight corruption, drug trafficking and other social ills in the Latino community of Queens. "[De Dios'] wish," recalls one of his closest Colombian friends, "was to cover the Queens Hispanic community beyond the social events."

After leaving *El Diario*, De Dios tried for a short time to host a Spanish-language radio program, but he soon returned to publishing. By the time of his murder in 1992, he had founded two magazines—circulated at irregular intervals due to financial difficulties—entirely focused on corruption in the Latino community of Queens. *Cambio XXI* first came out in late 1989; its slogan was, "We publish what others keep silent

about.” It ignored the proms, birthdays and social club events—the mainstay of other Spanish-language community newspapers. Its specialty was naming the names of corrupt and drug-connected community leaders and local politicians.

His second magazine, *Crimen (Crime)*, hit the streets only weeks before he was killed. The first edition’s 10,000 copies sold out. Printed in old-style linotype, the magazine seemed targeted for the underworld market. The first issue featured an advertisement from lawyers who defended drug traffickers and a small ad with a telephone number for readers to order a pamphlet with advice on how to become the perfect drug trafficker (including tips on how not to be detected by drug-enforcement agents). Among the articles was a detailed synopsis of a federal raid against an important Queens drug-distribution and money-laundering cell. The cell belonged to Helmer “Pacho” Herrera, a top leader of the Cali cartel, and was operated by his younger brother Ramiro “Matasiete” Herrera Buitrago. The story was accompanied by a complete organizational chart of the Herrera operation in New York, one of the cartel’s most important enterprises.

One of the six men accused of conspiring to kill De Dios, John Harold Mena Córdova, said in court that this article had sealed De Dios’ fate. Cartel leaders were already angry with De Dios’ hard-hitting coverage of their operations. Besides Pacho Herrera, another influential Cali kingpin, José Santacruz Londoño, had been personally exposed in print by De Dios. “They told me the Cali people and that man (Santacruz Londoño) were very annoyed because De Dios was again messing with us (the Cali cartel) . . . that he had published something about the Herrera family,” Mena Córdova testified before agreeing to a guilty plea. Mena Córdova was Santacruz Londoño’s Queens representative.

Santacruz Londoño was especially incensed when De Dios published his photograph for the first time in *Cambio XXI* in 1992, investigators say. That snapshot, taken in the early 1970’s by undercover police, showed an overweight Santacruz Londoño strolling with a female friend in the Queens neighborhood of Woodside. Santacruz Londoño and other top cartel figures had spent a few years in New York City in the 1970s laying the groundwork for the Queens operation center. “They were much sloppier then,” recalls a detective with the Drug Enforcement Administration, who surveilled their operations then and is now amazed at how effective and secretive the cartel has become. “We had no idea we were seeing the birth of one of the most important criminal organizations,” he said.

The *Crimen* article ruffled other egos among cartel operatives, as well. Ramiro Herrera was a man with aristocratic bearing, concerned about his image in the community, according to law enforcement sources. He was known as a wealthy real-estate agent, not as the killer described in the magazine who ran an operation that often eliminated small-time traffickers who missed drug payments. Unlike the Medellín cartel, whose members used to revel in their criminal reputations, the Herreras were part of the Cali cartel's royal family—a group of traffickers who cultivated their polished, business-like images.

The top Cali leaders become especially enraged when someone sullies their family names. Their children use these names to attend prestigious U.S. universities. And their wives make periodic millionaire shopping sprees in the U. S. To preserve their image, Cali cartel leaders had previously been known to lash out against people who wrote about their activities. In 1986 cartel henchmen confiscated the entire Cali edition of the Bogotá daily *El Espectador* because the newspaper carried an article identifying the Cali leadership by name.

So in Cali, a tropical city 150 miles southwest of Bogotá, the cartel leadership—composed of Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, Helmer “Pacho” Herrera, José Santacruz Londono and Orlando Henao—asked their people in Queens to send a picture of De Dios and ordered him killed, according to sources in Cali and Queens. De Dios was tolerable as long as he had focused on small-time operatives in Queens, but now he was reaching toward the top, they said.

The Cartel Couldn't Take It Anymore

De Dios was not afraid of the traffickers' threats, and throughout the years he received many of them, according to former colleagues. Among his sources were drug enforcement agents and people connected to cartel businesses. He knew the threats were not idle. The 1990 assassination of his friend and printer, Pedro Gómez, a Colombian immigrant, had a special impact on him. Gómez was shot to death on Aug. 8, 1990, by a band of *sicarios* (hit men) called “the Palestinians.” These hired guns were brought from Colombia to carry out murder contracts in the United States. After months of investigation, De Dios had identified the gang members, and he planned to run a feature on the gang in his next edition of *Crimen*.

De Dios believed Gómez was killed because Gómez printed

Dios' *Cambio XXI* magazine. Gómez also had constantly complained about drug activities in Queens as treasurer of the Queens chapter of New Liberalism Movement, an anti-drug, Colombian political movement connected to the traditional Liberal Party. The movement was founded in 1982 by Luis Carlos Galan, a presidential candidate who ran on an anti-drug platform and was killed in August 1989 on orders of Medellín kingpin Pablo Escobar. Five years after Gómez' murder, police have leads on his assassination, but no suspects have been brought to trial.

The cartel finally took action against De Dios, as well, and he was gunned down while eating dinner at his favorite restaurant in Queens. Initially investigators followed up on numerous possibilities. De Dios could have been murdered by any of a number of people who had been stung by his work. A short time before his death, he had testified against Puerto Rican authorities accused of murdering two Puerto Rican leftists. He had written about a corrupt Immigration and Naturalization Service inspector who promised documents to illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic. He also was an enemy of several anti-Castro groups.

Investigators dug deep in Little Colombia which includes the Queens neighborhoods of Jackson Heights and Corona, where up to 100,000 Colombian-Americans live. The community also has extended into Woodside and Elmhurst, where more middle-class Colombians have settled. De Dios knew this community well, having moved to the neighborhood in the 1970s. The Colombian community, the second-largest Latino group in New York City, grew large in the 1960s and 1970s when Colombians left home in large numbers, fleeing political and drug violence. De Dios considered himself a spokesman for his friends, the majority of whom were law-abiding citizens overwhelmed by the drug traffic.

Roosevelt Avenue is the heart of Little Colombia. There are legitimate businesses: Colombian restaurants, real estate and legal offices and night spots which play Colombian music. But the telltale signs of the drug trade are there, too: Telephone arcades where one is guaranteed the privacy to do business without fear of telephone taps; and an inordinately high number of money-exchange houses, which wire money outside of the country without asking too many questions.

Law-enforcement agents say it is difficult to penetrate the Cali drug underworld, because those working in the business have a guarantor

in Colombia—usually a family member—who would be killed if the person in New York attempts to steal or go to the police. De Dios' investigations surprised the members of the Cali cartel. They never expected such scrutiny, according to sources in Queens and in Colombia. Ironically, by having De Dios killed, the cartel brought even more attention to its Queens operation and lost the largest cocaine-processing laboratory ever set up in the United States. It was raided by police as they sought suspects in De Dios' murder. Mena Córdova, one of the men who later pleaded guilty to killing De Dios, was captured during the raid in an industrial building where the cartel was processing 1,000 pounds of cocaine paste. It was the first time federal agents had found such a set-up. Previously, they had believed that the cartel was processing all of its cocaine elsewhere and shipping only the finished product to the United States.

On March 16, 1994, 19-year-old Wilson Alejandro Mejía Vélez, alias "El Mono," or "blondie" in Colombian slang, was sentenced to life in prison without parole for shooting Manuel De Dios Unanue. Five other conspirators, including Mena Córdova, have pleaded guilty and are currently awaiting sentencing. No charges have been filed yet against Cali leaders. A cartel aide identified as Guillermo Leon Restrepo Gaviria, who lived in Queens but fled to Cali, has also been charged. Investigators are continuing to pursue ties between the killers and Cali cartel leaders.

The Chilling Effect of Terror

The Cali cartel, despite losing its largest cocaine laboratory, largely accomplished its goal when it killed De Dios. Today, local coverage of the booming drug trade in Queens is virtually non-existent. "No one has picked up where De Dios left off," said a Queens investigator.

A reporter who investigated De Dios' murder for an English-language daily in New York found out why local reporters stay away from drug stories. The journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, said she learned about an attack against a food writer who gave a bad review to a local restaurant, apparently owned by a local trafficker. "The owner threatened the writer and told him he would never see another meal again," said the journalist. "A few weeks later, a *sicario* came up to the man as he walked in Jackson Heights and threw acid on the man's face." The man was blinded and so terrified that months after the incident he begged the journalist not to write about the case.

Even English-language journalists who started investigating De Dios' murder were intimidated and harassed. Juan Gonzalez of *The Daily News*, one of the journalists who made a big effort to push the investigation, wrote about the threats he received. "Police officers warned me on several occasions to stop writing about drug traffickers if I want to stay alive," Gonzales said. Paul Moses, who coordinated an investigation for *New York Newsday*, said his team knew when they were getting close to a good lead by the number of threatening calls they received.

Nevertheless, coverage of the Queens drug trade by English-language media is mostly limited by lack of interest. One editor for an English-language newspaper said it was difficult to sell stories on drugs to his newspaper. Several English-language dailies have attempted to publish local pull-out sections in Spanish, but none of them cover the community the way De Dios did. "Manuel [De Dios] was always in touch with what was the most important problem for us. He was a rebel, but he knew what to do for us. He lived among us," said Stela Bolaño, president of Colombians in Action, a Colombian civic group in New Jersey. "Now there is no one who does this for us."

Most Queens Latino readers get their news from *El Diario-La Prensa*, which has a city-wide circulation of 70,000, less than when De Dios was editor; *Noticias del Mundo*, which is owned by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, which has a circulation of 30,000; and the weekly *Panorama*, a locally distributed magazine.

The Colombian community has two free weeklies, *El Sol* and *El Resumen*, which run stories on sports, anniversaries and major news in Colombia — the type of stories De Dios ignored. There is also a local Spanish-language cable channel, *Canal 66*, and a radio program, *Noticiero Colombiano*, both owned by Jorge Alarcón, a prominent Jackson Heights businessman who owns the Chibcha Nightclub. "The traffickers knew well who they were killing. Since De Dios, no one is following in his steps," said New York City police Sgt. William Perlitz.

"Manuel was not a crusader, as everyone calls him. Neither was he obsessed with drug trafficking. What he was is a great journalist, and his obsession was his work. This is what the white journalists who covered his death have not understood," said Rossana Rosado.

"Few anglos penetrate the drug world of Queens the way Manuel did," she continued. "If they could, they would not say he was looking for his death throughout his career, but would understand how good he was. He did the same thing that journalists who are experts on the Italian mob

do: he mingled with the people he investigated. But few in the English language press know the Cali cartel and how vicious it is. Latino journalists lost a great colleague." □

THE MURDER OF HENRY LIU: A TAIWANESE HIT

Justice Is Stonewalled

by *L. Ling-chi Wang*

Silencing a journalist by assassination is the ultimate form of censorship. Most Americans would not believe it could occur in this country or that the media and government would condone such un-American behavior. But the fact is, journalists have repeatedly been murdered in Asian-American communities in recent years, and government agencies and mainstream media have reacted with indifference. This is about just one of those murders.

Chinese-American journalist Henry Liu was silenced on Oct. 15, 1984, by assassins sent to the United States by the government of Taiwan. His is not an untold story. In fact, the case was well publicized, especially in the Chinese-language press. But the full truth remains concealed at the highest levels of the Taiwan government, and the identity of some of the conspirators—like those involved in several recent murders of Vietnamese-American journalists—remains shrouded in mystery.

Henry Liu Is Shot to Death

Buried in the "Bay Area Roundup" column of *The San Francisco Chronicle* on Oct. 16, 1984, was a five-sentence article. It said that a Daly City man had been shot to death the previous day in the garage of his home by an unknown assailant. The man, Henry Liu, 52, was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced

The writer is a professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and was chairman of the Committee to Obtain Justice for Henry Liu. This article is excerpted from remarks he made on July 28, 1994, at the Unity '94 Conference in Atlanta, the first joint conference in the United States of African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American and Native-American journalists.

dead a short time later. The article ended, "Police have no suspects or theory on a motive."

The ignorance and indifference of the mainstream press could not have been more glaring. Big events in minority communities have a way of becoming non-events in the hands of the mainstream press. So I called the editor of the *Chronicle* that day to complain about the woefully inadequate and insensitive coverage of what I told him was "the biggest political assassination story of the year." President Reagan was campaigning against international terrorism at the time, and Henry Liu was an American victim of international terrorism on American soil. The editor was courteous and promised to assign a reporter to look into it.

The next day, on Oct. 17, the *Chronicle* ran a story under the headline, "Henry Liu's Death May Be Political." It featured a picture of his widow, Helen, pointing toward a picture of Jiang Jingguo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, who was then the president of Taiwan, as she suggested that Jiang might have instigated the assassination. That afternoon, *The San Francisco Examiner* carried an article headlined, "The Book Caused His Death," suggesting that Liu's biography of President Jiang might have triggered the murder. Both articles were based on interviews with scholars and friends of Henry Liu who were familiar with his writings in the Chinese-language press. All of the interviewees requested anonymity, but neither of the newspaper reporters understood or noted this peculiarity.

The Chinese-American press and Chinese-language media in Asia knew better. They treated the killing much more prominently, but cautiously. The murder was headline news for weeks. That's because they knew Henry Liu, an American citizen, as a writer whose frequent reports and commentaries on politics in Taiwan and China had appeared in Chinese-language newspapers and magazines in the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. They also knew he had just published, five weeks before his death, an unauthorized, critical biography of President Jiang, and two exposé articles in a New York-based quarterly journal, *Taiwan and the World*, critical of Chiang Kai-shek's mistreatment of Wu Guojing, the governor of Taiwan in the early 1950s. Chinese-language reporters made it clear, without stating it directly, that the assassination was political.

The reasons for such a conclusion, to most Chinese-Americans, were self-evident. The Taiwan government had repeatedly tried to discourage or prevent publication of Liu's biography of President Jiang, as it had many other books and articles critical of the regime. The government had succeeded in delaying the publication of Ross Koen's book on the China lobby for 14 years, because it implicated the Taiwan government in wrongdoing. Chinese-Americans also knew that several newspapers and magazines that had carried excerpts from Liu's articles about President Jiang and Governor Wu had been ordered shut down in Taiwan. Asian-community journalists in the United States had long before concluded that, for their own safety and the safety of their loved ones living in Taiwan, they had better shut up or remain anonymous when criticizing the Taiwan regime. So they didn't have much to say about possible government involvement when Taiwan's leaders repeatedly and vehemently denied any role in the killing of Henry Liu.

Taiwan Imposes "Coerced Self-Censorship"

The Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan traditionally has claimed legal jurisdiction over Chinese outside of Taiwan, and it has agents sprinkled throughout the Chinese-American community. Asian-American journalists knew the boundaries within which they could report the murder of Henry Liu. They knew how to use varied sources and "hearsay" to keep the story alive without endangering their safety or the safety of persons they interviewed. Even though they are American citizens working in the United States, Chinese-Americans are expected by Taipei to be loyal and obedient to the Taiwan government.

Stepping outside of Taiwan's extraterritorial rules can result in boycott, intimidation, forced closure or physical violence. Memories remain vivid of political intimidation and economic boycotts which led to the demise of a string of publications, beginning in the 1950s with the *China Daily News* in New York and *Chung Sai Daily* in San Francisco. Three other San Francisco publications eventually died: *Chinese World* in the 1960s; *Pacific Weekly* in the 1970s; and *East-West Weekly* in the 1980s. *The China Times* in New York, reported by *The New York Times* to have a \$20 million investment in the United States, was shut down by the Taiwan government in 1984 because of its indiscretions in reporting Chinese news, including its coverage of the Henry Liu case.

Staying within the boundaries can be characterized as coerced self-censorship, a long-standing tradition in the Asian-American community press—especially the Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese media. Sadly, the mainstream press fails to recognize and appreciate the repressive conditions under which Chinese-American journalists must operate, and how real political intimidation and harassment are to them. To most Chinese-American journalists, the guarantees of free speech, free press and free association offered by the U.S. Constitution are no more than words on paper. Asian-American history has taught them that the U.S. government cannot be counted on to protect them from the repressive long arms of their homeland governments.

This “big chill” is why no one agreed to be quoted by name in the mainstream press about Henry Liu’s assassination. Even the membership of the Committee to Obtain Justice for Henry Liu had to be kept confidential. Only Mrs. Liu, Jerome Garchik, her attorney and I, the chair of the committee, spoke for attribution. I had no choice. If the committee was to be effective, it had to keep the story alive in the media, work with the Daly City police, the FBI and U.S. Attorney General William French Smith, lobby the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Congress, and President Ronald Reagan, and be prepared to take appropriate legal action in Taiwan and in the United States. We did all of these things with varying degrees of success between 1984 and 1989.

I agreed to head the committee and risk my life because I felt the time had come for Chinese-Americans to put an end to the extraterritorial repression exercised by the Taiwan regime with the approval of our own government. The legacy of racism and Chinese exclusion—the Chinese, in 1882 were the first nationals specifically prohibited by law from emigrating to the United States—routinely allow newspapers in our community to be intimidated or shut down under pressure, and journalists to be harassed or threatened. Chinese-Americans will remain second-class citizens as long as their constitutional rights are not fully protected and as long as the Taiwan government is allowed to extend its long, repressive arm into Chinese America with impunity.

I had been threatened myself twice before in San Francisco. I received a thinly-veiled death threat in 1968, after publicly criticizing both the indifference of the Chinatown establishment to the area’s socio-economic problems and the interference of the Chinese Nationalist government in the internal affairs of the Chinese-American community. In 1971, I was forcibly ejected from a press conference held by Chinatown

leaders because I advocated the admission of China to the United Nations and normalization of U.S.-China relations. As I was being thrown out of the press conference, a leading figure in the community, who also served as an advisor to Chiang Kai-shek, yelled, "Kill him! Kill him!" Korean-American and Filipino-American papers and reporters have likewise been subjected to extraterritorial domination, and several Vietnamese-American reporters and leaders have been silenced by assassination by forces of reaction within their community. Over the years, I have learned that my sole defense is to do and say everything publicly in the mainstream media, and pray that they will spotlight my causes enough to offer me some protection.

Suspects Arrested, But Justice Is Stonewalled

On Oct. 18, 1984, I agreed to serve as the chair of the Committee to Obtain Justice for Henry Liu. I immediately appealed to U.S. Attorney General William French Smith for help, urging him to make the investigation and prosecution of the case a top priority. I told him that the U.S. system of justice was on trial in the eyes of Chinese-Americans and Chinese worldwide. Mr. Smith did not respond. He also ignored inquiries made on the committee's behalf by several members of Congress from the San Francisco Bay area.

In the meantime, the Henry Liu case was being treated as a criminal matter and was being handled very professionally by the Daly City police and the FBI. By early November, they quietly circulated a list of possible suspects based on anonymous tips from community sources in Monterey Park in Southern California. The list was later narrowed to three: Chen Chi-li and two associates, Wu Tun and Tung Kuei-sen, all leaders of the *Zhulienbang*, the United Bamboo Gang, which was the most powerful underworld organization in Taiwan. All of the men, we found out later, were recruited and trained by Taiwan's military intelligence. All three were given a VIP homecoming at Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek International Airport after completing their assignment, according to a confession later recorded by Tung Kuei-sen. Each was rewarded \$20,000 cash. The three men proudly declined the cash awards, and said they merely had been performing their duty as patriotic citizens.

Tipped off about the progress of the U.S. investigation, the secret police in Taiwan arrested Chen Chi-Li on November 12—more than two weeks before Daly City police and the FBI issued warrants for the arrests

of Chen Chi-li and his two associates. To prevent the three men from fleeing Taiwan and disclosing the government's complicity, the Taiwan government acted swiftly—first by arresting Chen Chi-li, the Bamboo Gang godfather, and then by sweeping up hundreds of his followers in the next three weeks. Tung Kuei-sen escaped the dragnet and remained a fugitive until he was arrested the following year in Brazil. He released his taped confession while a fugitive.

Acting on the information provided by the FBI, I urged President Reagan to treat the case as a crime of international terrorism, which he had declared to be his primary foreign policy concern. I called on him to demonstrate his determination to protect the constitutional rights of Chinese-Americans by seeking the immediate extradition of the suspects named by the FBI. Like all earlier inquiries, this one also was stonewalled.

In early January 1985, *Wen Hui Po* in Hong Kong and *Hua Yu Kuai Bao* in New York simultaneously reported that Chen Chi-li had prepared a taped confession. In the tape-recorded message, Chen reportedly claimed that several high-level Taiwan intelligence officers had enlisted and trained him to kill Henry Liu in order to “teach a lesson” to all ungrateful and disloyal Chinese overseas. This sensational disclosure in the Chinese-community press was promptly picked up by the mainstream press worldwide.

The disclosure of the taped confession, said to have been planted by Chen Chi-li to protect himself against possible betrayal by Taiwan agents, compelled the Taiwan regime to undertake immediate damage control. The government arrested the three top officers in Taiwan's military intelligence agency—Admiral Wang Hsi-ling, Major General Hu Yi-min, and Colonel Chen Hu-men—and accused them of taking part in the assassination. All eyes now turned to Washington for the next move.

On Jan. 14, I flew to Washington on behalf of the Liu committee with three basic demands: 1) immediate and unconditional extradition of all conspirators from Taiwan; 2) an apology from the Taiwan government to both the Liu family and the United States; 3) just compensation for the Liu family. We successfully lobbied Congress to schedule a public hearing on the case for Feb. 9, and we urged political leaders of both parties and officials in the Justice and State departments to press Taiwan to meet the three demands.

To my surprise and outrage, I was again stymied. The White House counsel and officials from the Justice and State departments steadfastly refused to meet with me, even under pressure from both of California's senators, Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson.

I flew home angry and depressed, concluding that the Reagan administration, in spite of its outspoken denunciations against international terrorism, either did not care about Henry Liu's life and Chinese-American constitutional rights or had some other national interests involved in its relationship with Taiwan. I subsequently learned during the Iran-Contra hearings that Colonel Oliver North, at around that time, was busy trying to illegally solicit millions of dollars from the Taiwan government for the Contras, who were fighting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. To this date, I do not know if Chinese-American rights were traded away in a *quid pro quo* arrangement for the money North received from Taiwan.

Reagan Administration Buries the Case

The assassins and their co-conspirators in Taiwan were never extradited. The Reagan administration barely lifted a finger to help. It ignored a nearly unanimous Congressional resolution calling for the extradition of the conspirators. It even helped the Taiwan government discourage an investigation in Taiwan by a visiting U.S. team of representatives from the Daly City police, the FBI and high-level officials in the U.S. Department of Justice, according to an account by investigative reporter David E. Kaplan in *Fires of the Dragon*, his 1992 book about the Liu murder.

The Reagan administration was concerned about the case because U.S. foreign policy was at stake, State Department liaison Mary Von Briessen told the visiting team of investigators, according to Kaplan's account. The indifference of the Reagan administration left Chinese-Americans wondering if they had any rights at all as U.S. citizens. As for free speech and free press in Asian-American communities, the message was loud and clear: exercise it at your own risk; don't count on the U.S. government for protection.

The ring leaders were hastily convicted in Taiwan in 1985 in a courtroom drama carefully staged for American media consumption. They were ceremoniously sent to jail for "life". All of them have been free since January 1991 and are doing well in Taiwan. Chen Chi-li has become

a highly respected businessman doing multi-billion-dollar projects in manufacturing and real estate. None of the three convicted military officers was discharged from military service. In fact, some of them were promoted after release from prison. Taiwan's *China Times Weekly* in May of this year ran a cover story about how all the conspirators were successfully rehabilitated. History is being re-written, and the truth is being buried, as the assassins are re-packaged and celebrated, again, as national heroes.

The Liu family did manage to sue the Taiwan government in U.S. federal court for the murder of Henry Liu. In September, 1990, the Taiwan government settled the case out of court for a modest \$1.45 million. Ironically, one of the officials involved was President Jiang's son, Zhang Xiaoyan, director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission. To date, the whole truth of this case has remained securely under wraps, thanks to excellent cooperation between the Reagan administration and the Taiwan government. The Taiwan government has yet to apologize to the Liu family or the people of the United States.

Chinese-American journalist Henry Liu did not die in vain, however, and the struggle to obtain justice for him was a just and worthy cause. In five years, we managed virtually to end the repressive extraterritorial rule so freely enjoyed by the Taiwan government in Chinese America, and to make it easier for Chinese-Americans to freely exercise their constitutional rights. The community is now more open than ever before. Everywhere I travel, Chinese-Americans tell me how the work of the committee has made them breathe easier and how it helped liberate them from fear.

In Taiwan, dissidents and opposition groups effectively used the case to expose official corruption and deliver a mortal blow to the military dictatorship and the Chiang Kai-shek dynasty. This helped pave the way for the opposition groups, the *dangwai*, to surface in 1985, which led to the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the founding in 1989 of the first opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party. On at least three occasions, Xu Xinliang, the immediate past chair of the DPP, told me both privately and publicly of the opposition's indebtedness to the struggle for justice for Henry Liu. The case was a catalyst for the demise of the Chiang dynasty and for the rise of democratic reform in Taiwan. Even the special issue of the *China Times Weekly* which seemed to celebrate the conspirators concurred with this assessment. What remains to be done is for the new democratically elected government to investigate and fully disclose the truth behind the assassination of Henry Liu.

Asian-Americans Suffer Dual Domination

The assassination of Henry Liu revealed how Asian-Americans live under a structure of dual domination: they face racial discrimination from U.S. society, and they come under the extraterritorial power of their homeland governments and cultures. Their communities become *de facto* colonies of foreign governments and enclaves of second-class citizens.

This structure of dual domination is a legacy of racial oppression. Asian-American rights and privileges in white society have been permanently suspended in the land of freedom and democracy. Confined to Chinatowns, Japantowns, Koreatowns and Manilatowns and kept at a social distance from the mainstream, Asian-Americans have been governed by a rigid hierarchy of feudal social organizations and by representatives of homeland regimes, whose repressive domination has been condoned by our government.

After World War II, social progress gradually set the stage for middle-class Asian-Americans to move into some of the newly emerging suburbs and establish new communities in surroundings quite different from those of the historical ghettos. But the success of middle-class Asian-Americans, like Henry Liu, does not mean they are free from racial discrimination or extraterritorial domination. Henry Liu was not the only Asian-American journalist who was attacked or killed in recent years, and anti-Asian violence in general is on the rise.

Changing U.S. relations with Asian countries have also had a major influence on the lives of Asian-Americans. Ideally, U.S. foreign policy in Asia would not affect the domestic welfare and rights of American citizens of Asian descent. But because of racism, Asian-Americans find themselves victims of U.S. policies toward Asian countries. The most glaring example was the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. More recently, Asian-Americans have been attacked because Asian countries are perceived as taking jobs away from American workers. The Henry Liu case is an especially powerful reminder of how foreign policy affects domestic racial politics and Asian-American constitutional rights.

Journalists Still Serve with Courage

Despite the long reach of repressive Asian regimes and the U.S. government's indifference to the rights of Asian-Americans, many journalists in Asian-American communities perform outstanding service with courage and ingenuity. They do so without the high pay and prestige enjoyed by many mainstream Asian-American journalists. Self-censorship under duress occurs daily, but crucial information still manages to get out. The community press coverage of the Henry Liu case was an outstanding example of how journalists can evade repression and make their voices heard. And although Henry Liu is dead, his death has led to more freedom for Chinese-Americans and for the people of Taiwan.

Mainstream journalists have an obligation to understand the difficulties facing their colleagues in Asian-American communities and to lend moral and professional support, as they ultimately did in their coverage of the Henry Liu case. Asian-Americans will not achieve the status of full citizenship until we are liberated from repression abroad and racist indifference at home when our constitutional rights are threatened. □

Journalists Murdered In the United States 1976 - 1993

Dona St. Plite

October 24, 1993

Miami

St. Plite was killed while attending a benefit concert for the widow and children of his colleague, Fritz Dor. St. Plite's name had appeared on a death list circulated in Miami's Little Haiti by supporters of the former Haitian military regime. One Bahamian-Haitian man has been indicted in connection with the murder; his trial is pending.

Manuel de Dios Unanue

March 11, 1992

New York

De Dios, 49, was shot twice in the head at point-blank range, reportedly on orders of the Cali cocaine cartel in retaliation for his coverage of its drug trafficking and money-laundering operations. A gunman was convicted and five co-conspirators pleaded guilty. Investigators are pursuing ties between the murder and members of the cartel.

Fritz Dor

March 15, 1991

Miami

Dor, 33, fled Haiti after becoming a target of the notorious security police of the former Duvalier regime. A radio broadcaster, he was shot and killed probably because of his political views in support of then-exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. One Bahamian-Haitian pleaded guilty to manslaughter for his role as the

lookout and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. The triggerman is still at-large.

Jean-Claude Olivier

February 18, 1991

Miami

Olivier, 47, a popular radio personality in Miami's Haitian community, was shot and killed outside a Miami nightclub. It is widely believed that Olivier also was killed because of his opposition to the former Haitian military regime. The driver of the getaway car was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 25 years in prison. An appeal hearing is scheduled for November 1994. No one else has been charged.

Triet Le

September 22, 1990

Baileys Crossroads, Va.

A controversial columnist for the Vietnamese-language magazine, *Van Nghe Tien Phong*, Le, 61, and his wife, Tuyet Thi Dangtran, were gunned down in their car in front of their home. Le had received many threats on his life because of his views. It is believed that an anti-communist refugee group was responsible. In late 1990, the newspaper accused three top members of a paramilitary group of ordering Le's murder. The members sued for libel. A trial on the case is scheduled in a Santa Clara County, Calif., civil court for Dec. 5, 1994. The case remains unsolved.

Nhan Tong Do

November 22, 1989

Fairfax County, Va.

Do, layout editor for the Vietnamese-language magazine *Van Nghe Tien Phong*, was found dead of gunshot wounds in his car outside his Virginia home. No one claimed responsibility. It is believed that an anti-communist refugee group was responsible. Unsolved.

Tap Vam Pham

August 7, 1987

Garden Grove, Calif.

Pham, editor and publisher of the weekly Vietnamese-language magazine *Mai* in Orange County, was killed when his offices were set on fire. Pham had been receiving threats from anti-communist organizations. Unsolved.

Henry Liu

October 15, 1984

Daly City, Calif.

Liu, who had written many books and articles in which he criticized the Taiwan government, was shot by several gunmen as he sat in his car in his garage. Several military intelligence and organized crime figures were convicted of the murder in Taiwan; two, however, were released from prison after serving only six years of life sentences, two others were sentenced to only two-and-a-half years in prison and one was placed under house arrest. One conspirator was extradited to the U.S., convicted of Liu's murder in 1988 and sentenced to 27 years in prison. In 1991, he was stabbed to death in a prison fight.

Alan Berg

June 19, 1984

Denver

Berg, a popular Denver talk-show host whose call-in show incited heated debates on controversial issues, was gunned down outside his home. Two white supremacists were convicted.

Nguyen Dam Phong

Aug. 24, 1982

Houston

Phong, 48, founder of the newspaper *Tu Do*, was shot to death out-

side of his home. Phong had received numerous threats on his life, apparently as a result of the many articles he wrote about local groups that claimed to be raising money to overthrow the Hanoi government. Unsolved.

Lam Trong Duong

July 21, 1981

San Francisco, Calif.

Lam Trong Duong, editor of a Vietnamese newspaper in San Francisco sympathetic to the Hanoi government, was shot to death on a busy San Francisco street. A group calling itself the "Anti-Communist Viets Organization" claimed credit. Unsolved.

Don Bolles

June 2, 1976

Phoenix

Bolles, 47, a reporter for the *Arizona Republic*, died of injuries caused by a car bomb that exploded in a hotel parking lot where he had gone to receive information on allegedly fraudulent land deals involving Arizona's top politicians. A Phoenix contractor with mob ties was convicted for orchestrating the murder.

What Is CPJ?

The Committee to Protect Journalists is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization founded in 1981 to monitor abuses against the press and promote press freedom around the world.

How did CPJ get started?

A group of American correspondents created CPJ in response to the often-brutal treatment of their foreign colleagues by authoritarian governments and other enemies of independent journalism.

Who runs CPJ?

CPJ has a professional staff of 12 at its New York headquarters, including an area specialist for each major world region. The Committee's activities are directed by a 30-member board of prominent American journalists.

How is CPJ funded?

CPJ depends on private donations from journalists, news organizations and independent foundations. CPJ accepts no government funding.

The press is powerful; why does it need protection?

On average, at least one journalist gets killed on the job every week somewhere in the world. Scores of journalists are imprisoned every year because of what they have reported. Hundreds more are routinely subjected to physical attack, illegal detention, spurious legal action, and threats against their lives.

How does CPJ "protect" journalists?

CPJ investigates and publicizes abuses against the press and acts on behalf of imprisoned and threatened journalists. Staff experts organize international protest campaigns, arrange emergency legal counsel, lead fact-finding missions, and find threatened journalists safe refuge abroad. CPJ advises local press groups on how to document violations and mobilize

international support. CPJ publishes articles and news releases, special reports, a quarterly newsletter, and the most comprehensive annual report on attacks against the press around the world. CPJ makes sure that no one can violate the rights of journalists with impunity.

Where does CPJ get its information?

Through its own reporting. CPJ has full-time program coordinators monitoring the press in the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. They track developments through their own independent research and first-hand contacts in the field, including reports from other journalists. CPJ shares information on breaking cases with other press freedom organizations worldwide through the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a global e-mail network.

When would journalists call upon CPJ?

When they or colleagues get in trouble. CPJ has developed a vast network of media and government contacts and can intervene any time a journalist is endangered.

When traveling on assignment. CPJ is in regular contact with local journalists around the world and is happy to put them in touch with each other. CPJ also can brief correspondents on upcoming assignments.

When covering the news. Attacks against the press are news, and they often serve as the first signal of a crackdown on all freedoms. CPJ is uniquely situated to provide journalists with information and insight into press conditions around the world.

When becoming a member. A basic membership costs only \$35 and each donation helps assure that CPJ will be there to defend you or a colleague if the need arises. Members receive CPJ's quarterly newsletter, *Dangerous Assignments*, and a discount on other publications.

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