

who's who

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DANILO BLANDON

AGE: 45**NATIONALITY:** Nicaraguan

PERSONAL: Youngest son of wealthy Nicaraguan landowners. Married, wife Chepita. Two daughters. Bachelor of arts degree, National University, Nicaragua. Master's degree in marketing, University of Colombia, Bogota. Has relatives in Bay Area and Miami.



CURRENT RESIDENCE: Managua and San Diego.

POLITICAL: Supporter of former dictator Somoza since college. In-laws were prominent figures in Somoza's Liberal Party. Worked for Somoza government in late 1970s. Raised money for Contra army in U.S. during 1980s.

PROFESSIONAL: Full-time DEA informant. Runs timber export company in Managua. Owned rental car business in Miami, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, which went bankrupt in 1991. Owned restaurants in Miami and San Diego, car lots in Los Angeles and Florida, import-export businesses on both coasts, motels in Managua.

CRIMINAL: Pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine in 1992. Shows up in DEA files as a drug trafficker as early as 1981. Admits distributing coke for Norwin Meneses and selling it to Rick Ross. Sold cocaine in California, Florida, Oklahoma City, and New Orleans. Arrested in police raids on home and businesses in 1986, but no charges filed. Arrested by Los Angeles police in late 1991 on money laundering charges, but case was dropped at federal request.

QUOTE (from a DEA undercover tape): "Just remember, your daddy has the connections, all the connections down there ..."

NORWIN MENESES

AGE: 48**NATIONALITY:** Nicaraguan

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Tipitapa Prison outside of Managua, serving his fourth year of a 12-year sentence for cocaine trafficking.

PERSONAL: One of 10 brothers. Married five times. Fluent in English and Spanish. Three of his brothers murdered since the late 1970s. Many relatives in the Bay Area. Friends with

Colombian cocaine cartel bosses, Nicaraguan politicians and American agents.

POLITICAL: Family close to deposed Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza and his National Guard. Fled Nicaragua in 1979 after Sandinista takeover and became adviser to the military commander of U.S.-backed Contra forces.

PROFESSIONAL: Businessman and investor. Owns properties ♦ including motels, restaurants, a canning factory, used car dealerships and homes ♦ in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, San Francisco, Florida and elsewhere.

CRIMINAL: Linked by Nicaraguan police to Colombian drug dealers since 1972. Allegedly ran a ring that stole luxury cars from the U.S. during the mid-1970s, reportedly on behalf of Nicaraguan government officials. Known to American law enforcement agencies since 1974 as a drug smuggler. Indicted by U.S. grand jury for cocaine trafficking in 1989, but never arrested. Convicted by a Nicaraguan court of conspiracy to import cocaine in 1992, his only conviction. Eligible for release summer 1996.

QUOTE: "I'm not going to tell you I'm an angel."



"FREEWAY" RICK ROSS

AGE: 36

NATIONALITY: American

PERSONAL: Grew up poor in Troup, Texas, and then moved to South-Central L.A., where his mother and family still live. Dropped out of Dorsey High School in his senior year. Dropped out of L.A. Trade-Tech to take up cocaine dealing. Has seven children by four different women.

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Metropolitan Correctional Center, San Diego, where he has been held without bond since March 1995.

POLITICAL: No political involvement or interests.

PROFESSIONAL: Successful cocaine trafficker since he was 19. Bought massive amounts of real estate, including hotels and several businesses. By 1987, had one of the largest crack cocaine distribution networks in the country, selling in California, Louisiana, Texas, Ohio, Missouri and Indiana.

CRIMINAL: Arrested on auto theft charges in 1979. Convicted of cocaine charges in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1991 and sentenced to 10 years. His sentence was cut in half after he agreed to testify against L.A. narcotics agents accused of corruption. Also served eight months on a Texas narcotics charge in 1994. Arrested as part of a DEA sting in 1995 ♦ a



sting his old supplier, Danilo Blandon, helped arrange. Convicted of conspiracy to distribute cocaine in March 1996; sentencing scheduled for Aug. 23.

QUOTE: "You know how some people feel that God put them down here to be a preacher? I felt that He had put me down to be the cocaine man."

ADOLFO CALERO

AGE: 65

NATIONALITY: Nicaraguan

PERSONAL: A 1953 Notre Dame graduate, Calero was the manager of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Managua before the Sandinista Revolution.

CURRENT RESIDENCE: After the Sandinistas lost the 1990 Nicaraguan Presidential elections, Calero returned to Nicaragua.

POLITICAL: Had been political leader of the Contras.

PROFESSIONAL: Though an outspoken opponent of the Somoza regime, he has always been closely tied to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. According to an affidavit filed with the World Court on Sept. 15, 1985 by former FDN director Edgar Chamorro, Calero "had been working for the CIA in Nicaragua for a long time. He served as, among other things, a conduit of funds from the United States Embassy to various student and labor organizations." Testimony during the Iran-Contra hearings showed he was receiving \$12,500 a month from the CIA while he was serving as the Contra's political leader. In his memoirs, former Contra leader Eduardo Pardo-Maurer said Calero held "the key position between the Contras and the Americans. He remained the pivot around which the military and civilian wings of the Contra movement turned. He controlled the cash, the stores, the camps and the bureaucracy in Miami."

CRIMINAL: None

QUOTE: "He is a creation of the USG (U.S. government) and so he is the horse we have chosen to ride." -- Robert Owen, a courier for Lt. Col. Oliver North, wrote to North in 1986



COL. ENRIQUE BERMUDEZ

AGE: 58

NATIONALITY: Nicaraguan

PERSONAL: Two shots to the head in the parking lot outside the Intercontinental Hotel in Managua killed him on Feb. 16, 1991, a murder that is still unsolved.

POLITICAL/MILITARY: A 1988 General Accounting

Office document showed that Bermudez earned at least \$2,750 monthly in CIA salary. When he joined the Contras' political arm in August 1988, Bermudez received \$180,000 a month in CIA "political funds."



PROFESSIONAL: A career officer in Somoza's National Guard, he later became the military leader of the FDN. In the years before the Sandinista Revolution in 1979, he was the dictator's military attache in the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, where he worked with the American military establishment to maintain the high levels of U.S. support for the Guard. After the revolution, Bermudez and other ex-Guardsmen took to the hills and began assembling a guerrilla army to combat the Sandinistas. But it wasn't until 1980, when the U.S., Argentine and Honduran governments came to the rescue that Bermudez and his ragtag band became a legitimate military threat. Bermudez was selected by the CIA as the FDN's military commander and remained so throughout the war. But it was mostly a title. In actuality he carried out the orders of his American CIA handlers, former Contras have said.

CRIMINAL: None

QUOTE: "There were a lot of people who would have benefited from having my dad put away -- the Sandinistas, the (Chamorro) government, the United States. My dad died with a lot of information." -- Bermudez's daughter Claudia, a Bay Area resident in a 1994 interview with the Miami Herald

MARCOS AGUADO

AGE: Unknown

NATIONALITY: Nicaraguan

PERSONAL: Married to Marisol, daughter of former Sandinista war hero Eden Pastora.

CURRENT RESIDENCE: El Salvador

POLITICAL/MILITARY: Has a long, surprisingly public, history of working with the CIA. A 1994 book by journalist Martha Honey said Aguado was one of a number of Contra pilots trained in Panama by the CIA, and received about \$5,000 a month from the CIA for his services.

PROFESSIONAL: According to Honey's book, Hostile Acts, Aguado and other pilots who flew for the Contra's southern army (ARDE) "underwent training at Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador, where they gained combat experience by going on bombing raids with the Salvadoran Air Force. From late 1982 on, ARDE had munitions warehouses and transport planes at Ilopango. According to an ARDE official based at Ilopango, all the logistics were handed on a rotation basis by six CIA agents from the US Embassy." Testimony in Norwin Meneses' 1992 Nicaraguan cocaine trafficking trial said Aguado was the chief aide to the deputy commander of

the Salvadoran air force.

CRIMINAL: Meneses' former secretary, Enrique Miranda, testified that Aguado had bragged of using Salvadoran Air Force bombers to attack cocaine warehouses owned the cocaine cartel of Medellin, on behalf of the rival Cali cartel. Aguado was implicated, but never charged, in Meneses' alleged conspiracy to import 750 kilos of cocaine into Nicaragua in 1991. Meneses testified that Aguado sold him an auto transport trailer, which prosecutors said Meneses was going to use to haul cocaine-laden Mercedes Benzes into the U.S.

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