



Lloyd Spalnhower—St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Murder suspect Rosado: A life of crime despite a new identity

## Your Cover Is Showing

Informers are to criminal justice what uranium is to a nuclear reactor—they make the system go, but they're an awful lot of trouble to dispose of afterward. In 1970, Congress tried to deal with the problem by authorizing funds that were used to establish new and secret lives for criminal witnesses who feared retaliation by organized crime. Since then, the "alias program," as it is known, has grown like a weed into a \$12 million-a-year operation that has given at least partial assistance to 2,333 endangered witnesses and more than 5,000 of their kin. Along the way, the program has garnered so many citations for irresponsibility, mismanagement and outright corruption that it has become the subject of an eighteen-month Justice Department investigation—and a separate review of the whole program's efficacy.

The most shocking allegation against the U.S. marshals and deputies who run the program is that some have been blowing the covers of their charges—at a reputed fee of \$5,000 per name—and diverting funds intended for their maintenance and protection. One U.S. marshal goes on trial for embezzlement next month in Grand Rapids, Mich., and four others have resigned, two "for reasons of health." Four ex-stoolies have been murdered in six years, and six others died from such ambiguous causes as drug overdoses, suicides and an auto accident. On the other side of the ledger, the marshals have been accused of doing their job almost too well—that is, of providing ex-hoods with such effective cov-

er stories—and grouping so many of them in one place—that many are able to return to their criminal trades with some impunity.

\* In Orange County, Calif., just south of Los Angeles, for example, two ex-witnesses, apparently graduates of the New York-New Jersey mobs, are under indictment, accused of murdering Steven J. Bovan, 36, last month—the climax of a woolly, Runyonesque adventure involving the Hare Krishna sect, kidnapping, extortion and possibly a little narcotics trafficking on the side.

**Protection:** Police weaved together this account of the shadowy story: several Hare Krishnas have been pumping millions of dollars—obtained from dope-smuggling—into small California businesses through a holding company called Prasadam Distributors, Inc. But so many of Prasadam's investments were leaking away that company officers called in some free-lance auditing help—five tough-talking easterners with phony Italian names, who did little to staunch the hemorrhage of funds but did cut themselves in for increasing shares of Prasadam's revenues in the name of "protection." When a major Prasadam "investor" was kidnapped last August, the Italians took over the ransom operation. After cryptic negotiations with the kidnapers, the Italians got \$100,000 from the office safe—paying \$30,000 for the victim's return, keeping \$70,000 for themselves and collecting a \$15,000 fee on top of that.

In the process, they recognized one of

the kidnapers—the klutzy Steven Bovan, who had worked in a low-level job for one of Prasadam's companies. When the Prasadam officers allegedly put out a contract on Bovan and four suspected accomplices, the Italian fix-its took on that job too, the police say. Now police have murder indictments (and a confession) against three of the Italians; whose credentials identify them as Jerry Peter Fiori, 41, Anthony (Little Tony) Marone, 23, and Raymond Resco, 28. Though the U.S. marshals won't reveal who they really are, NEWSWEEK has learned that Little Tony is Anthony Manfredonia Jr., son of a relocated East Coast mobster who was involved in another Orange County drug racket a year ago.

Other relocated witnesses are also suspected of returning to thuggery—including Benjamin Rosado, a New York robber with a 23-year record who has been charged with murdering an auxiliary policeman in his new hometown of St. Charles, Mo. If this sort of recidivism were the only embarrassment in the alias program, it would have to be written off as part of the risk of using and protecting informers. But the other charges against the marshals—corruption, betrayal and extraordinary bureaucratic sloppiness—are not so easily dismissed.

■ James Baskin, a deputy marshal in Grand Rapids, has been charged with embezzling \$5,500 in funds designated for five protected witnesses. He is the only official to be indicted so far, though four others have resigned under pressure in Miami, Phoenix and Newark in the past year. "The word was you could buy the location of a witness for \$5,000 in Jersey," one marshal reports. One Jersey stoolie, Gerald (Chicken Delight) Festa, whose testimony led to the conviction of more than 40 mob figures, was set up to be killed as he entered a courthouse in Dunmore, Pa. Alert marshals prevented the murder, but the hit man—who became a witness himself—told officials that the tip had come from deputy marshals in the Newark office.

■ An internal audit of the program by the Justice Department found case files in dangerous disarray and accessible to too many people. Daniel Joseph, a stool pigeon with the alias of Jay Chapman, died last June in Richmond, Va., of a drug overdose after being in the program only two months. NEWSWEEK has been told that at least five people knew of Joseph's cover and his whereabouts. "I wouldn't go into the program myself and I would be hesitant to put someone else in it," an assistant U.S. attorney said last week. "I wouldn't feel safe."

■ According to a Federal source, a deputy marshal on the East Coast became involved in the cocaine trade with another deputy (both have since resigned). They enlisted four relocated stoolies in Orange County, including Manfredonia Sr., to help them expand drug operations to the West Coast. When one potential buyer—who was actually a middleman for the

Drug Enforcement Administration—arrived without money, the partners subjected him to gross sexual indignities, later kidnapped him and tried to extort money from his father. After the victim told his story to the DEA, the original deputy confessed and became a protected witness himself when he agreed to help trap his partner; no charges have been brought against either man.

Agency officials in Washington insist that they are cleaning house as fast as they can—that the current Justice De-

partment investigation, in fact, was requested eighteen months ago by Arthur Daniels, the program's eleventh chief in six years. Daniels argues that some of the agency's shortcomings, such as the lack of security in personnel files, have already been cleared up. But he says that he considers his real problem to be not corruption but "lack of sufficient trained people." Until recently, for example, one overworked credentials expert was supposed to supply new documents for about 50 persons a month. The program

has had only seven specialists in witness security, though Daniels expects this force to quadruple in three months. Still, Daniels does not dare predict when the agency's scandals will end. "When I was talking to the FBI two weeks ago," he sighed, "they said that every time they think they have it wrapped up, something new crops up and they go off in a different direction."

—RICHARD BOETH with DAVID C. MARTIN and MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN in Washington and MARTIN KASINDORF in Los Angeles

## PSST! VIET SECRETS?

On the evening of April 30, 1975, Frank Snepp, a young CIA agent, walked up to the door leading to the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. He looked aside as a marine shoved a group of Vietnamese out of his way. Then he went through the door to an evacuation helicopter and flew out of the besieged city. Back home at Langley, Va., the CIA gave him its Medal of Merit; but his conscience, stricken by the operatives he had left behind, gave him bad dreams. "I saw the faces of Vietnamese who had depended on me—people who had made the mistake of trusting us," he told friends. So he quit the CIA to write a book documenting a bleak thesis: that top U.S. officials ignored vital intelligence reports predicting an attack in force on Saigon, thereby contributing to a panicky American evacuation. "We just got out with our underwear," says Snepp.

The book,\* published this week, was prepared in a secret collaboration between Snepp and Random House. To avoid injunctions, restraining orders and demands for deletions by the CIA, Snepp first took pains to persuade a CIA caseworker assigned to him that he didn't have a publisher. He held meetings with his editor in a vest-pocket park off Madison Avenue in New York City, and he enlisted an actress friend to serve as courier for his manuscript. Random House dispensed with galley proofs and advance review copies, and sent 15,000 copies of the book unannounced and unordered off to the bookstores.

**'Disgrace':** The book itself is an intriguing company man's view of the final days of South Vietnam. In the pell-mell rush for the doors, Snepp contends, the CIA abandoned the 400 members of South Vietnam's Special Police Branch and about 400 agents of its Central Intelligence Organization, hundreds of high-level North Vietnamese defectors and thousands of clerks, computer operators, transla-

tors, clandestine radio operators and collaborators. "It is not too much to say that in terms of squandered lives, blown secrets and the betrayal of agents, friends and collaborators, our handling of the evacuation was an institutional disgrace," he maintains. "Not since the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 had the agency put so much on the line and lost it through stupidity and mismanagement."

Snepp, 36, blames much of the mismanagement on Henry Kissinger. He reports that in the spring of 1975, Kissinger fell for Russian misinformation and an enticing deal: a coalition government in South Vietnam. Snepp maintains that instead of preparing an orderly evacuation, Kissinger and CIA station-chief Thomas Polgar pursued that will-o'-the-wisp ardently while the most reliable CIA sources were reporting that the North Vietnamese were intent on a "blood scent." On April 8, the Saigon station's best spy reported that the talk of a negotiated settlement was, ac-

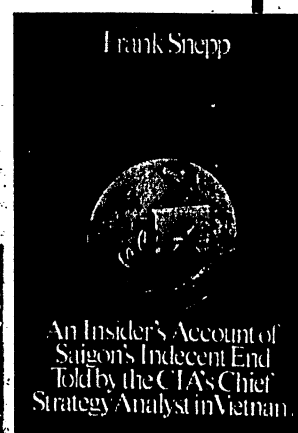
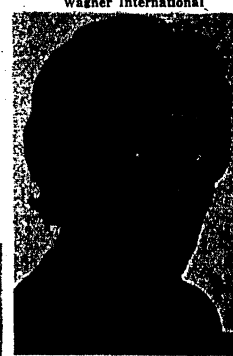
ording to Snepp, a "ruse to confuse the South Vietnamese and to sow suspicion between them and the Americans." Kissinger, he maintains, ignored the tip until too late. After the fall, Snepp says, he stewed angrily while Kissinger leaked selected information to pet newsmen varnishing his performance during the collapse.

**Unrepentant:** CIA boss Stansfield Turner said angrily last week that Snepp had violated his CIA oath of secrecy as well as a promise to submit the manuscript for security clearance. Turner has asked the Attorney General to study legal steps against Snepp. Unrepentant, Snepp maintained that he had used no agent's names, codes or classified information. "I don't pretend to be a reformer," he told NEWSWEEK. "But if station chiefs in the future think, 'I may have a sonuvabitch like Snepp on my staff,' when they evaluate intelligence reports, I will have made a small measure of reform."

—TOM MATHEWS

*Evacuation of Saigon, author Snepp: 'I saw the faces of those who had trusted us'*

Wagner International



\*"Decent Interval," 580 pages, Random House, \$14.95.