

Panama Report by Carlos Wesley

Bush's occupation creates new Sodom

Panama now rivals Peyton Place with tales of incest, buggery, and theft, while drug trafficking flourishes.

The American military occupation of Panama has not ended. You may remember that back in February, George Bush said he was pulling out the troops he had sent to invade Panama. He lied.

Instead, the American GIs in Panama have taken up a new avocation: robbing banks. At least, these were the charges attributed to Leslie Loaiza, chief of Panama's secret police, the PTJ, and aired by Panama's Channel 2 TV on Aug. 23. The report said that soldiers in the American Army were behind a wave of bank robberies now plaguing Panama. Reportedly, the secret police chief said that the U.S. military Southern Command based in Panama, had set up a special unit to rob banks. According to the reports, Loaiza said his agents discovered the operation when they caught several American soldiers involved in the robberies, but were forced to release them on orders of the U.S. occupation forces.

Two days later, the Panamanian press confirmed that the PTJ had indeed detained three American GIs in connection with a bank robbery. Unlike the televised report, the press reported that the U.S. military was collaborating with the investigations. A Southern Command spokesman, Col. Bruce Bell, was quoted as saying that the soldiers, whose names were not released, could be subjected to a court martial if the charges were proven true.

Armed robberies, particularly bank robberies, were virtually unknown in Panama before the Dec. 20, 1989 invasion. So far this year there have been 23 bank robberies. On Aug.

30, yet another robbery took place, this one at one of the branches of Exterior Bank in Panama City, which was robbed by three armed men who got away with \$400,000.

Some wags suggested that Bush ordered the soldiers to start robbing banks as a way of shutting down Panama's drug money offshore banking center.

But others were blaming the poor cops of the whistle-and-nightstick constabulary set up by the U.S. occupation to replace the former Panama Defense Forces (PDF) led by Gen. Manuel Noriega. Panama's Second Vice President, Guillermo "Billy" Ford, a banker, complained in a speech to the Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 21, that the police were behaving like "faggots" and that they "should stand tall, like real men" in the face of criminal activity.

Not much chance of that. On Sept. 5, the police force got its third chief in as many weeks when the puppet government fired Lt. Col. Fernando Quezada after he accused banker Roberto "Bobby" Eisenmann of committing incest. Quezada made the accusation after *La Prensa*, Eisenmann's newspaper, reported information, which it said was obtained from "U.S. intelligence," that the chief of police had personally used drugs and had once accepted a \$25,000 bribe.

"I deeply regret that you have to do this 'lobbying' to prevent the information in those boxes from coming to light," said Quezada in his open letter to Eisenmann, an agent of Project Democracy, the drug-running gang that brought you Ollie North's Iran-Contra follies. The ousted chief of police was

referring to the 15,000 boxes of materials removed from Noriega's PDF intelligence files after the U.S. invasion, which, he said, contain the information about Eisenmann's alleged incest. "The Bible condemns incest. Genesis (19:31-38) tells us about Lot's relations with his oldest daughter," said Quezada in his letter, published on the front page of Eisenmann's own *La Prensa* on Sept. 5.

Quezada's predecessor as chief of police, Col. Eduardo Herrera, was fired Aug. 22 while on a trip to Miami. Herrera is an admitted CIA agent who is at the center of an international scandal involving a shipment of Israeli weapons found earlier this year at a ranch owned by Colombian drug kingpin Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, the late chief of the Medellín cocaine cartel. He was fired the same day that the daily *El Siglo* leaked the contents of a report from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) which also tied Rodríguez Gacha to the man Bush installed as the President of Panama, Guillermo "Porky" Endara.

According to the DEA report, in 1989 Endara's Banco Interoceanico, also known as Interbanco of Panama, laundered millions of drug dollars for Rodríguez Gacha. Endara has remained on the board of the drug money-laundering bank, even after Bush installed him as President of Panama and despite the fact that earlier this year, it was revealed that the same bank had previously been caught laundering drug funds by U.S. law enforcement agents working undercover. "It was shocking to learn that our Republic's current President, Guillermo Endara," was an officer of the bank, "just as Attorney General Rogelio Cruz was an officer of First Interamericas Bank, owned by Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela," the Cali Cocaine Cartel kingpin, said *El Siglo* on Aug. 22.