

~~DENY~~

LF003L

DBB

~~Chile Project (#S199900030)  
U.S. Department of State  
Release \_\_\_\_\_ Excise \_\_\_\_\_ Deny X  
Declassify: In Part \_\_\_\_\_ In Full \_\_\_\_\_  
Exemption(s) B1~~

REPUBLIC OF CHILE  
CITY OF SANTIAGO  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AFFIDAVIT OF JUAN PABLO LETELIER

RELEASE IN FULL

REPUBLIC OF CHILE )  
CITY OF SANTIAGO ) SS:

I was born in Washington, D.C. in the early sixties and raised in Bethesda, Maryland. The youngest of four boys, I was educated in Catholic Schools and by a family whose father worked in an International Organization (Interamerican Development Bank). My life was that of a normal east coast upper middle class youth. I was a Redskins and Senator's fan, was part of the school's basketball team, and spent my summer vacations with my family at Rehoboth or Bethany Beach.

I emigrated to my parents' homeland at the age of twelve, in June of 1973. Another language, another continent, no friends beyond the family and relatives.

Three months following our arrival the tumultous events of the Pinochet coup took place. My father was imprissioned in different concentration camps and one year later was expelled from our family homeland.

The family travelled and progresively reunited in Venezuela. After a couple of months we returned to Washington D.C.; the city where I was born; the country I had "grown up in"; a safe haven; home. It was February 1975.

In September of 1976, when my father was killed, I was starting my senior year at Walt Whitman High School, a public high school in suburban Bethesda, Maryland. I was 15 years old.

After years of uncertainty, I, as well as all of my family, was finally beginning to put behind me the whole traumatic experience of leaving the U.S., the military coup in Chile, my father's imprisonment and the later expulsion from Chile. It had taken a year and a half to regain equilibrium within our family.

I vividly remember the month of August of 1976, the last summer our family was together. It was the first time I felt that I was beginning to have a different, a more adult relationship with my father; a friend to friend relation. I was just getting to know my father with whom I had many things to talk about, of whom I desired to ask many things.

The assassination was a very violent and traumatic experience. I cannot forget, even today, the images of having my father blown up by a car bomb. These are images that flash back to me constantly. The pain which he endured, the pain that visited our family, and the great anger provoked in me at the loss of my father, are my constant companions. My safe haven was shattered.

The loss of my father affected me personally in many ways. I

have always felt a great loss and a great emptiness going through my formative teen and early adult years without the strong guiding presence that my father had always been. My father's assassination was particularly difficult for me, since I am the youngest of his four sons.

I remember that after the assassination, during my senior year, I worked after school to try to somehow fill up the hours of each day. I obviously felt a great distance with my peers due to the dramatic experience our family had lived. I felt alone even within my peer group. While others could enjoy the pleasures of their youth I was distant from them with my focus on the horror of my father's death.

My isolation was compounded by the hostility of many people toward myself and my family. Some of my friend's parents forced them to stay away from me out of fear that they too would become victims of terrorism. Others engaged in outrageous assaults on my father's character in efforts to protect or justify his killers.

My decision to attend college in Washington was driven by my desire to be close to my mother and to the city where my father had been killed.

I constantly yearned to have the orientation which was always absent, and despite the efforts my mother made, the

company of my father has always been lacking. His absence made it extremely difficult to regain the family unity, which was so important to us in the past. In these last 15 years, only once have I been together with my three brothers and my mother. The bomb not only tore my father apart, it tore apart my family casting my brothers far away with their efforts to deal with their own sense of loss and frustration.

The loss of my father has defined certain important decisions in my life. I can not deny that my father's assassination in what had been my safehaven introduced, with the passing of time, a painful distance between me and my birthplace. The lack of immediate justice, the results of the first trial in the US District Court, the distance from my peers, subjective and objective circumstances, all these situations together made me experience a growing detachment from birthplace and till then my homeland. My return to Chile was to seek a homeland, my father's roots and my identity with him.

After the assassination I traveled searching for answers. I travelled to Mexico in search of my latin roots at the age of 19. During the three years that I resided in Mexico, I studied Economics, as my father had also done. I lived in very marginal types of conditions, living off meager supplementary scholarships with which I could barely pay for housing and some of the costs of my studies. I tried to find an identity which had been lost,

an identity in which the presence of my father was always very important.

I returned to Chile in August of 1983. I was 22 years old. I had already obtained my Bachelors of Arts in Economics at Georgetown University and my Master's Degree in Mexico. I returned alone to Chile as a supposed young adult, a mere 22 years old. This reflects another significant repercussion of the assassination of my father. My young adulthood, and my teenage years were years in which I did not really live a full youth. I felt that I was driven by circumstances to do many things, to accept responsibilities, to answer socially to a number of demands, with the result that my youth years were not lived fully. I was not able to develop as a normal teenager. I was always being pressured, or feeling that I was being pressured, to prove that I was a worthy heir of Orlando Letelier.

I knew my father in the family context and it was that person that I so seriously missed. I learned with time that my father was a very important public figure, a man of accomplishments and great respect. I was, in my mind, being asked to replace that public person at a time when I could not reconcile the loss of the private person I knew so well. It is very hard to verbalize what this has meant to me, not being able to live my youth or teenage years with the tranquility that I would have desired by playing sports, being able to have normal

social relations with people or with young women. I always felt a need or responsibility to hurry up, to reach some goal. This was a cost which was very great for me.

When I went back to Chile it was a personal decision. I returned to a country which was politically hostile and which was hostile to me due to the military government which existed there. It was hostile to me above all, not because of who I was but due to the fact that I was a son of Orlando Letelier. I attempted with great difficulty and with great effort to assimilate into Chilean society. It was a very difficult experience. Everyone expected things from me, friend and foe alike. I suffered through a period of very difficult self-definition and a search for my roots. After the first year that I was there, I experienced great psychological tension. I saw a number of psychologists to try to understand what I was experiencing and to help confront my great solitude.

In Chile, above all else, I was alone. My mother and my brothers were in the United States. It was in this self-imposed solitude that I searched for my identity. The pressures I felt to respond to the expectations of what my father's son should be caused me to seek the aid of the psychologist over many months. While I bore the burden of my father's legacy I never received any of its benefits. To the contrary, doors were constantly closed in Chile for different reasons. For those who did not

share my father's ideas I was an outcast. I became active in the movement for a return to democracy in Chile and was jailed on many occasions, my house was repeatedly ransacked, many of my personal belongings were stolen, including my car on one occasion. These actions were the result of my political activism; and in particular my vocal attitude in regard of the need for justice in my father's and Ronnie's assassinations.

While I suffered under these types of pressures from the agents who supported the military government and the secret police, I was also confronted with pressure from those who were against the Pinochet government. They had the perception that the family of Orlando Letelier had many resources and hence did not need any type of support and should be expected to draw on family resources to do what my father had done. I lived alone for the first four years in Chile, initially in an uncle's apartment who is preist, and later I moved to another apartment in a marginal section of Santiago, which was where I could afford to live. Since I moved to Chile I always sought work and worked to maintain myself.

The loss of my father has been very hard on me. I still search and seek an orientation, someone who can guide me and share with me his experiences. I chose to become involved in Chilean politics and was elected to the Chilean House of Delegates. Now that I have a political profession I miss the

guiding hand of my father. I am keenly aware of how important he would have been to me as a mentor and advisor. This is something, once again, that is very difficult for me to verbalize and to express in a plain manner. Many times I am asked if what I do is what my father would do in political terms. Many times when I give my opinions I have to think twice, considering that many people look to me as representing the views and opinions of my father.

These are some of the losses I have experienced. There are other factors which are more difficult to grasp. How do I explain to my children why they do not have a grandfather, that their grandfather was assassinated, that he was blown up? It is very difficult to have to explain why they will never know their grandfather, or why there could be so much hate in a society. It is very difficult to explain when they see images of his blow-up car on the evening news that there were people in our country who governed and did these things to other people because they thought differently. It is very hard to explain because I myself cannot explain it.

The lack of my father has been determinative in my formation, in my search for roots, in my search for orientation. Every year, on the anniversary of the assassination, I walk and I speak with my father asking him for orientation, asking him to help us to reunify our family, asking him to help our family

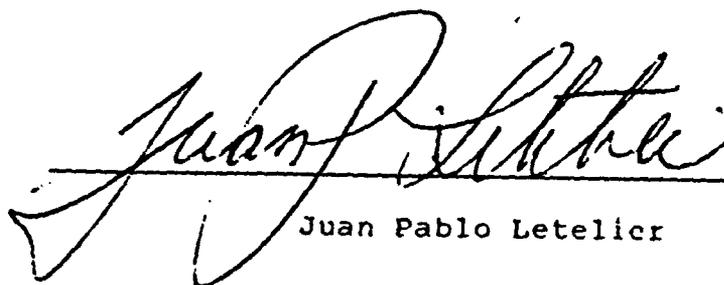
again bring respect to the Letelier name.

The fact is the absence of our father has made it very difficult for us in economic terms. Not because we would not have worked as we have in these years, but without a doubt things would have been different. I perhaps am the only one that just has obtained a stable job for the first time in all of these years, but living constantly with the pressure of how to help out my brother José, who has recently returned to Chile, and who has had many doors closed to him for the same reasons that they were closed to me in the first six years that I was living in Chile.

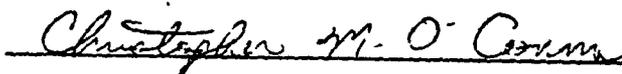
If my father had not been assassinated I have no doubt that things would have been very different. I say again; not that we would not have worked as we had since our young adulthood, since we were teenagers, but rather we would have had orientation and support which would have made without a doubt these efforts to be successful and stable in society, to be able to have a normal family, to bring up children in a normal way, to be able to be together would have been extremely different.

The loss of my father has marked me in emotional terms, has left me much more solidarity, has affected my formation and my political options, has conditioned the way I have to act in politics and socially in Chile, and without a doubt has conditioned the capability I have had along with all of my

family, to settle into society and to a normal way of life.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Juan Pablo Letelier

SUSCRIBED AND SWORN TO  
before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of **AUG 2 1991**, 1991.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Notary Public

**Christopher M. O'Connor**  
VICE CONSUL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA