
Where Are They Now?

The gang that banned 'Narcotráfico, SA'

On Feb. 4, 1985, a little more than a week after the publication of *Narcotráfico, SA*, agents of Venezuela's political police, DISIP, raided the apartment of *EIR*'s Caracas correspondents, Mexican citizens Carlos and Lucía Méndez, at 2 a.m. At 10 a.m. the same morning, they raided and emptied out *EIR*'s Caracas bureau office. In addition to the Méndezes, Lorenzo Carrasco and Stefania Sacchi, also *EIR* journalists visiting Venezuela at the time, were illegally detained that day; all four were held for three days, and then expelled from the country.

The Venezuelan newspaper *El Mundo* reported on Feb. 6, "The four journalists were held incommunicado by the DISIP following a complaint by the Cisneros family." On Feb. 15, Venezuelan Judge Alirio Abreu Burelli handed down a decision banning the book *Narcotráfico, SA* from circulating in Venezuela, based on a complaint filed by Gustavo Cisneros and José Rafael Revenga, vice president of the Diego Cisneros Organization and a top executive of the TV network *Venevisión* owned by the Cisneroses.

The DISIP agent in charge of the raids was one Leovigildo Briceño, a.k.a. "Comisario Amilcar," acting on a warrant issued by Judge Ana Luisa Gandica. The judge's brother, Luis Gregorio Gandica, served as a public prosecutor in the *EIR* case.

Within a few months of the raid, deportation, and banning of the book, the truth about who was behind the attack on *EIR* began to emerge. Today, it is demonstrated that almost every person involved in the operation was involved in the illegal drug business in one way or another:

- Ten days after the raid on *EIR*'s Caracas office, U.S. Customs officials seized a Venezuelan Lear jet identified as YV-12-CP, in Hollywood, Florida, and after searching it, they uncovered an undisclosed amount of cocaine in a lifeboat. The owner of the jet was a front company for Pepsi Cola of Venezuela—and the fleet it belonged to was frequently used by Pepsi president Oswaldo Cisneros.

- In April 1986, DISIP agent Leovigildo Briceño, a.k.a. "Comisario Amilcar," was suspended from the police and put under arrest, after he was caught appropriating 33 pounds of cocaine and a fortune in jewels which had been taken into police custody during raids in which he participated.

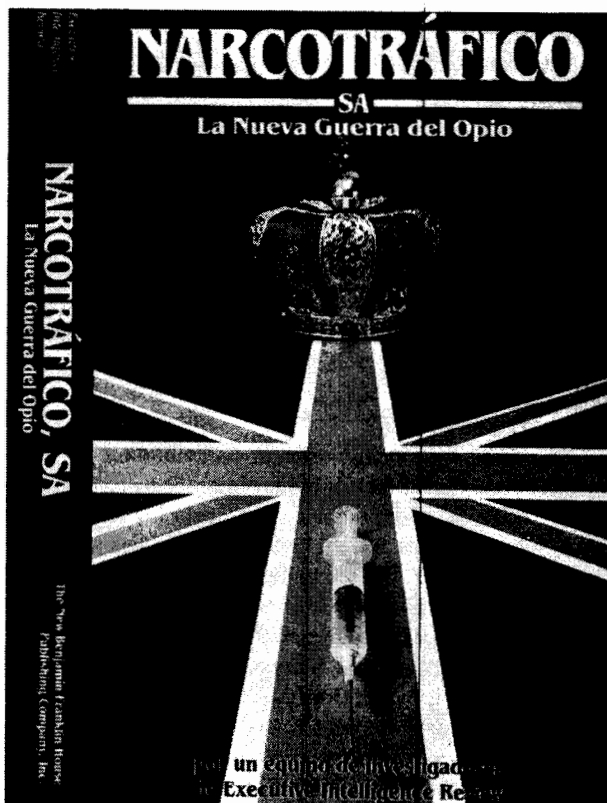
- Judge Ana Luisa Gandica, who had earlier served as legal counsel to the Cisneros-owned Pepsi Cola of Venezuela, worked as a team with "Comisario Amilcar," and ordered the raids of the jewelry stores from which 3 million bolivars

worth of jewels were later found missing. (Although "Amilcar" was charged with the theft, his lawyer claimed Judge Gandica stole the jewels.)

In March 1986 Judge Gandica was ordered off the bench because it was revealed that she had never met the educational requirements to be a judge, but continued to function as such nonetheless.

Judge Gandica was also a witness at Lázaro Rogelio Ugarte's wedding, and was involved in another scandal involving the disappearance of a considerable amount of U.S. currency, along with DISIP agent Johan Medina, a.k.a. "Comisario David," who was also a witness at Ugarte's wedding.

- Luis Gregorio Gandica was fired from his job as a public prosecutor in December 1985, for having stolen the files of a drug investigation in progress.



The Spanish language edition of *Dope, Inc.*—banned in Venezuela soon after it was issued in early 1985.