

Testimony of Mr. Edwin Guzman

**“Protection and Money: U.S. Companies, Their Employees, and Violence in
Colombia”**

June 28, 2007 – 10:00 AM

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International
Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight
and the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
and
House Committee on Education and Labor
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions
and the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections**

From my experience serving in the military which protected Drummond, I can attest to the fact that there was an AUC base on Drummond property which was operated openly. I have drawn a map of the Drummond property which shows the location of this AUC base. A copy of that is attached. Also shown on this map is the hacienda of AUC commander Huges Rodriquez, the financial commander for AUC Northern Bloque Commander Jorge 40.

Further, I have witnessed armed members of the AUC openly patrol the premises, driven around in Drummond vehicles and provided with food by Drummond. In essence, the AUC and the Popa Battalion jointly provided protection to Drummond.

Further, the AUC and the Colombian military shared the opinion that unions in general, and the union at Drummond in particular, represented a subversive organization and consequently a legitimate military target. As far as the military was concerned, soldiers were taught, and, as I understand, continue to be taught, to view union leaders as “guerillas,” and, consequently, as fair game for military assaults. In fact, I must confess that we in the military viewed the murders of unionists Valmore Locarno and Victor Orcasita in early 2001 as a military victory. I do not have this opinion today, but I did back then as a consequence of my military training.

I later learned, after being forcibly recruited into the AUC, that, at some point, Drummond turned to the AUC to protect its rail lines. Indeed, I personally witnessed AUC members riding motorcycles along the lines. AUC leaders “Cebolla” and “Tolemeida” told me that, in light of the perceived failure of the military to protect the rails from attack, Drummond negotiated with the AUC to protect these lines. Indeed, it was the prevailing view that 2 paramilitaries could do what 15 regular soldiers could not do – in essence, they could “neutralize” (kill) a perceived insurgent (along with that insurgent’s family) without due process of the laws, thus making them more effective at providing security.

In fact, the AUC killed many civilians on and around the Drummond property. And, it was the job of the military, and I can say this from my own experience in the Popa Battalion, to "legalize" the body of civilians killed by the AUC. That is, we soldiers were ordered, sometimes by the Colonel of La Popa Battalion himself, sometimes by Drummond chief of security Luis Carlos Rodriguez, to take civilians killed by the AUC and place guerilla uniforms and arm bands on them to make it look like they were killed in battle. I personally performed this task while serving in the Colombian Armed Forces.

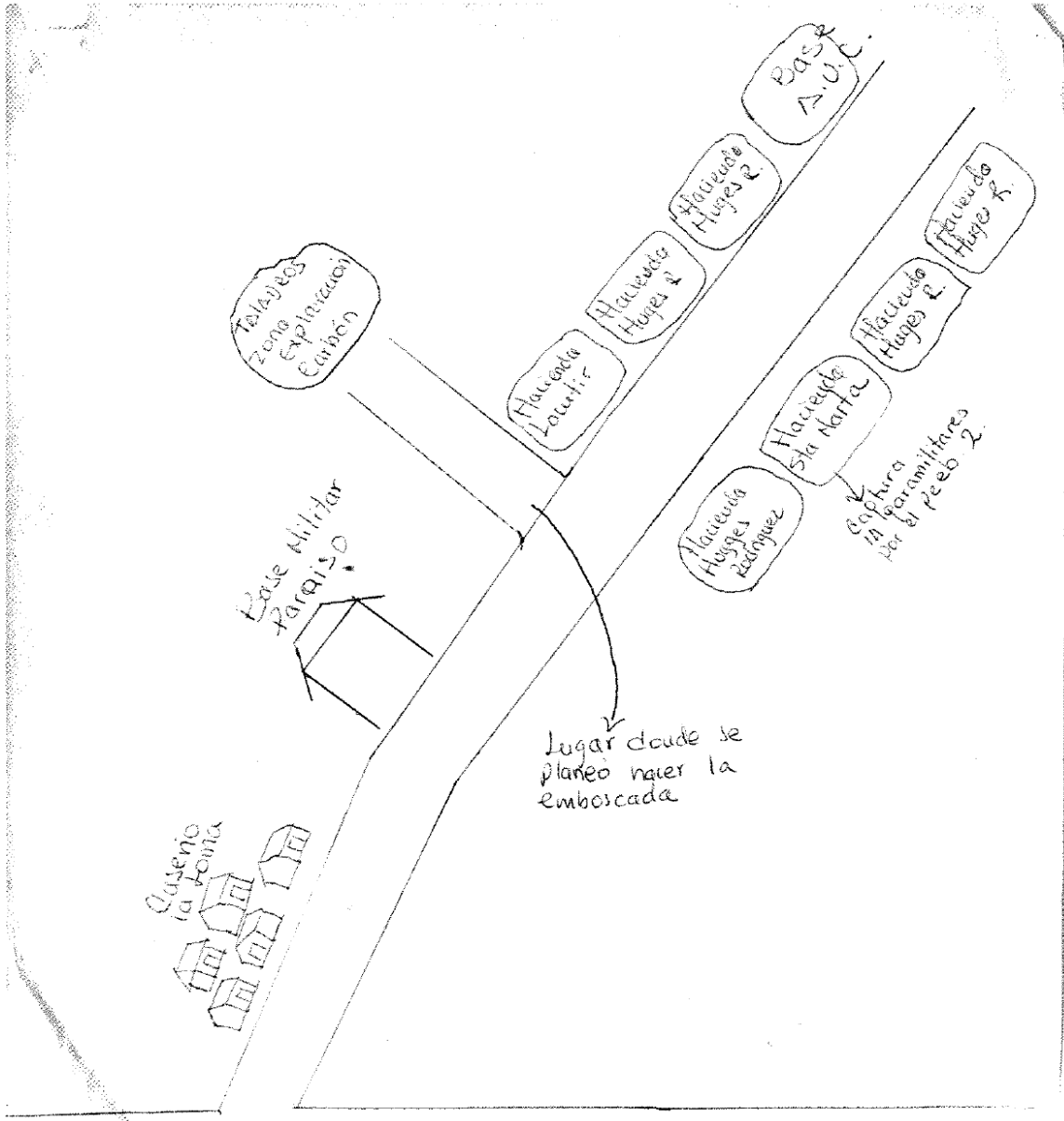
Later, when I was a member of the AUC, Commander "Cebolla" told me that the AUC killed unionists Valmore Locarno and Victor Orcasita. While a member of the Colombian Armed Forces guarding Drummond, I personally witnessed "Cebolla" meeting with a top Drummond official, who I knew then as Mitchell or Michael, and who was shown on a Drummond supervisory chart to be one of the top supervisors at the Drummond mines. I now believe this individual, who was an American, to be Drummond official Jim Mitchell.

I understand that after the murders of Valmore Locarno and Victor Orcasita, Drummond Ltd. President Augusto Jiminez held meetings with workers in which he stated that, "The fish that opens his mouth dies." In my experience, this is a threat, commonly uttered among members and leaders of the AUC, indicating that if anyone talks (in this case, about the murders), they will be killed.

Sometime shortly after the murder of Valmore Locarno and Victor Orcasita, I decided, while then serving as the head of three patrols of La Popa Battalion, to ambush a paramilitary unit which was on Drummond property. However, before I was able to carry out the assault, which at that time I viewed as my duty as a member of the Colombian Armed Forces, I was confronted by Drummond security chief Luis Carlos Rodriguez who pulled up to where my patrols were encamped. Mr. Rodriguez asked me what I was doing, and I told him that I was planning to ambush the paramilitaries. In response, he told me that I had no authority to carry out such a mission and that he did not want any attacks against his friends. Mr. Rodriguez then called my commander to tell him about the situation, and my commander then called me and ordered me to stand down. Shortly thereafter, I was demoted.

Later, in 2002, Luis Carlos Rodriguez asked my patrol to pick up the corpse of a civilian killed by the AUC on Drummond premises and take that corpse to the police outside of the Drummond area so as to protect Drummond from being implicated in the killing. I was in fact involved in removing the body.

Also in 2002, on the day that Colonel Meija became the commander of the Popa Battalion which guards Drummond property, I personally, as the individual in charge of organizing military security for Colonel Meija, accompanied him to a meeting with Jorge 40 and the chiefs of staff of the AUC.



Via Bosconia - Bucaramanga.

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