



Charles Edmund Horman
Unknown - September 18, 1973

2 AMERICANS SLAIN IN CHILE: THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

By Marvine Howe

Special to The New York Times

SANTIAGO, Chile, Nov. 5— Two quiet young Americans met violent death in the troubled aftermath of the military coup d'etat here two months ago, and the reason is still unclear.

Investigations into the deaths of Charles E. Horman, a 31-year-old filmmaker from New York, and Frank Teruggi, a 23-year-old economics student from Chicago, raise disturbing questions, in the opinion of friends of the victims, about the role of some United States officials in the crisis and about the failure to protect American citizens.

It is generally believed that more than 2,000 people were killed in the turmoil and repression that followed the overthrow of the democratically elected Marxist President, Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens, on Sept. 11. Most of the dead were Chileans and other Latin Americans, executed because they were said to have tried armed resistance or were believed to be leftist activists. But Mr. Teruggi and Mr. Horman, according to many friends and relatives questioned, were, while deeply committed to the Allende cause, pacifists and gentle intellectuals not involved in Chilean politics.

Accident Widely Doubted

Of course there were many accidents in the troubled weeks after the coup, and there is nothing to rule out accidental shooting in the cases of Mr. Horman and Mr. Teruggi. But on the basis of the mild personalities of the two Americans and the discrepancies in the official reports, the theory is widely doubted.

"It can't be a complete mishap because the authorities called both of them by name - Teruggi in the stadium, where he was a prisoner, and Horman at the homes of two friends," said an American resident in Chile who knew both men well and has been investigating their deaths. There is no evidence that the killings were connected other than the fact that the two men are said to have died in the same violent way. They were acquainted and had a number of mutual friends, but they were not close friends.

Both were associated with North American News Sources, a group of young Americans who published a small nonprofit magazine on the United States for the local leftist press. The

articles were often critical of the negative United States position on the Allende Government. The group disbanded after the first attempted military revolt at the end of June.

Working On a Cartoon

"Charles was a poet at heart, totally involved in the cultural revolution and a fervent believer in Chile's experiment of socialism in freedom," one of his former colleagues said.

Mr. Horman and his wife, Joyce, came to Chile in June; 1972, and were working on an animated cartoon called "The Sunshine Grabbers" for a small Chilean movie company. Mr. Horman had also written a script on the history of imperialism in Chile and was doing research for a book on Chile's "transition to socialism."

In the beginning the Hormans lived in a large, comfortable house in Las Condes, a fashionable Santiago suburb. It was a permanent open house for Chilean and foreign artists, Marxist-Leninist discussion groups and other intellectuals and their children.

Recently the Hormans' funds had run low and they moved to a working-class district, Vicuña Mackenna, at the beginning of September, and their easy-going, gregarious lifestyle changed.

On the weekend before the coup Mr. Horman took Terry Simon, a houseguest from New York, to see the sights of Valparaiso and the coast.

By most accounts, the armed forces' moves against the Allende Government started with the navy at Valparaiso. When the military took control and established a curfew, Mr. Horman and Miss Simon were stranded with a number of other Americans at the resort of Viña del Mar.

Ride With Navy Man

Mr. Horman and Miss Simon were given a ride back to Santiago on Sept. 15 by Capt. Ray Davis, chief of the United States military mission here, who says he had gone to Valparaiso to check on the safety of his people at the United States Navy station there.

According to Mrs. Horman, her husband brought with him information on American activities at Valparaiso on the eve of and during coup. This information has been relayed to friends.

"Charlie's information is interesting as part of the general picture of United States intervention in the Chile crisis, but it did not warrant killing him off," said a friend who has had access to the information. Mr. Horman's report is said to include a description of special activity at the Valparaiso port at the time of the coup, as well as conversations with American civilians and military men there. A retired American engineer who had been at the 15th Naval District headquarters in the Panama Canal Zone was quoted as saying "We came down .to do a job and it's done."

Mrs. Horman has indicated that this was a reference to the coup; however, it is not known whether Mr. Horman obtained proof that the engineer was speaking of the military take-over.

United States Government sources have firmly denied any role in the coup and insist that there were no navy vessels in Chilean ports or scheduled to bring in military equipment. On Mr. Horman's return from Valparaiso, he discussed the situation with his wife and they decided they should leave Chile as soon as possible, Miss Simon said.

On Monday, Sept. 17, Mr. Horman registered in a downtown hotel. Then he and Miss Simon tried to get airplane seats. They were told to go to the embassy, which was said to be drawing up a list of Americans who wanted to leave. At the embassy they were told to go to the consulate, in another part of town.

Never Seen Again

Two hours later Mr. Horman was arrested in his home by military men, taken away and never seen again.

Alone at the time, he had gone to get the family's belongings. His wife was doing some final shopping and Miss Simon had gone to the consulate, there to be told by a consul that he knew no special measures to get Americans out and that she should inquire at the airline, Braniff. Neighbors reported that military men broke into the small house rented by the Hormans at 5:30 P.M., using a ladder to scale the wall. They raided the house and took Mr. Horman toward the National Stadium, according to a witness.

"When I got back at 8:30 the next morning, I found the house in shambles, the mirrors broken, the gas and electricity cut, the beds ripped apart," Mrs. Horman said in an interview a few days later. She had been caught by the early curfew and had spent the night of the 17th with a friend.

"They stole everything we had of value," she added.

On the morning of the 18th Chilean military-intelligence officers called two of Mr. Horman's friends and asked them to visit the police and give information about him. Neither went, but one of them, a United Nations official, says he called the American consul, Frederick D. Purdy, to report the incident. Mr. Purdy denied to newsmen having received the call.

Mr. Horman's father, Edmund, a semiretired businessman, appealed to United States congressmen and press and business circles to put pressure on the embassy in Santiago and the Chilean military authorities to find his son. Finally he came to Santiago to press the search, assisted, by Americans at the embassy.

It was Captain Davis who appeared to be leading the embassy investigation into the case. He asked Mrs. Horman for a picture of her husband and a detailed description. He also asked for a list of their friends, which she refused.

Finally on Oct. 19, the Chilean military-intelligence agency officially informed Mr. Horman that his son had died by gunfire and was buried in the National Cemetery. Identification was made, they said, by fingerprints. Yet military intelligence officers denied having picked Charles Horman up, nor, according to his father, was there any record of him at the stadium or in any prison.

Mr. Purdy says he was informed that Mr. Horman's body was picked up in the street by a military patrol on Sept. 18.

Members of the Horman family have not seen the autopsy report, which is said to give as cause of death "multiple bullet wounds," nor have they been given any explanation of the circumstances. ...
[*The New York Times, Monday, 19 November 1973*]