

HAITI: Assassinated Cop Led Kidnapping Ring from Police Station

Police officials never moved against him despite kidnapping victim's complaint

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Heavily armed assailants gunned down Police Division Inspector Yves Michel Bellefleur in a hail of bullets on the morning of Fri., Nov. 9 near the Gérald Bataille circle in Tabarre.

A police spokesman and some media have presented the killing as a response from criminals to the Oct. 22 arrest of prominent Haitian businessman Clifford Brandt and several others - including policemen and ex-policemen - for kidnapping.

However, a former police official told *Haïti Liberté* that Inspector Bellefleur was in fact working with Clifford Brandt's criminal organization and led a kidnapping ring based in the police station of Pernier, which, not coincidentally, is the same neighborhood that Clifford Brandt's abductees, Coralie and Nicolas Moscoso, were found and freed (see *Haïti Liberté*, Oct. 31, 2012).

Most alarmingly, a kidnapping victim of Bellefleur had denounced the cop and some of his associates to the Haitian National Police (PNH) immediately following his release last April, but apparently no action was ever taken.

"I think that Bellefleur was rubbed out because, if he was arrested, he might have revealed the names of powerful people, as Brandt is maybe doing now," said the former police official, who requested anonymity.

A few hours later in the afternoon of Nov. 9, another policeman, Johnby Mathieu, was shot dead by unidentified armed men near the police outpost at Portail Saint-Joseph, in the capital's commercial center.

"These assassinations are happening in a context of struggle against major criminality," said Frantz Lerebours, the PNH's spokesman.

The lack of action against Bellefleur reflects, at the very least, negligence on the part of the PNH's former Director General Mario Andrésol and his successor Godson Orélus, who replaced Andrésol on Aug. 15, 2012.

"In April 2012, Emame 'Jacques' Jean-Louis, the owner of Sourire Rent-a-Car in the capital's Tabarre district, was kidnapped," reported *Haïti Liberté* on Aug. 15, 2012. "His family eventually paid the kidnapers about \$800,000 in ransom, and he was freed. But, immediately following his release, Emame took legal action against the PNH for the involvement of police officers in his kidnapping, according to the former high-ranking police

official who requested that he not be named. Emane provided the license plate number of a police vehicle used and the names of several of the policemen involved. Up until now, there has been no action by the police to arrest any of those that Emane accuses of having helped kidnap him.”

In his complaint, Jean-Louis denounced Inspector Bellefleur as the leader of the kidnapers based in the Pernier police station.

Haiti Liberté asked Chief Orélus about Jean-Louis’s complaint again in a Sep. 16 interview. “We have zero tolerance” for cops found to be involved in kidnapping, Orélus responded. “When we find them, we arrest them, and we put them in prison.”

The question remains: did either Orélus or Andrésol investigate Jean-Louis’s complaint. If not, why not? If so, why wasn’t he arrested?

“Bellefleur was working alongside Clifford Brandt in kidnappings,” said the former police official. “Six months ago, Emane Jean-Louis gave to authorities, in a formal complaint, the names of the policemen, including that of Yves Michel Bellefleur, who kidnapped him. Why was nothing ever done to arrest them? It seems it wasn’t until the Moscoso kids were kidnapped that the police took any action, and that was apparently only done because the U.S. authorities became involved.”

On Nov. 13, Mario Andrésol gave an interview to Radio Kiskeya to denounce the death threats he claims have been made against him and the Internet rumors that he was placed under house arrest. He dismissed rumors that he had been interrogated by FBI agents, who are presently in Haiti, about the Brandt affair. Andrésol said that his security detail had been reinforced by the PNH because of death-threats he has received in recent weeks.

Andrésol also saluted “the memory” of the late Inspector Bellefleur. Is it really possible that he was unaware of Emane Jean-Louis’s complaint against Bellefleur?

When he was riddled with bullets, Bellefleur was still the head of the Pernier police station, located near the old military academy on the northern fringes of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

“Bellefleur had just dropped his children at school, he was in civilian clothes, and he was killed by gunmen traveling in a vehicle with tinted windows and a ‘service of the state’ [government] license plate” said PNH spokesman Lerebours. According to witnesses at the scene, Bellefleur was hit by many bullets, his attackers had automatic weapons, and they were in a Toyota all-terrain vehicle, commonly called in Haiti a “Zoreken” (Shark bone).

According to Radio Vision 2000, Lerebours said on Nov. 13 that “the first elements in the police investigation” into Bellefleur’s murder “reveal links with organized crime networks in the country,” but he “was still not able to say whether it involved [Brandt’s] powerful gang network recently dismantled by the police.”

Are the police incapable of establishing the links between Bellefleur and Brandt’s organization, or are they trying to cover-up the links?

Meanwhile, PNH spokesman Lerebours told the press that Johnby Mathieu, 29, was an Agent I with the Central Command of Street Police (DCPR). He was killed by four bullets, two in the throat, two in his arms. Mathieu had graduated with the PNH’s 21st promotion. He was

dressed in civilian clothes when shot by assailants who got away. Justice of the peace Fritz Dilia inspected the crime scene before the body was removed.

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