

Haiti Liberte 12/6/2012:
THE KIDNAPPING OF MARYSE CINEUS
Her Family Says They Now Live in Fear
by Kim Ives

Four men, including a policeman, kidnapped Maryse Cineus, 36, from her home in Croix des Bouquets on May 12, 2012, according to her family. The business woman is presumed to be dead.

The policeman involved, Pierre Toussaint Fender, who was also her security guard, was arrested about a week later on charges of kidnapping and murder, the family says. Until now, Cineus' body has not been found.

The family believes that the kidnapping is linked to a land dispute that Cineus had with a lawyer named Jackie Saint Pierre and an associate of his named Bonhomme. On the day of her disappearance, Maryse met with Saint Pierre, according to her sister Marie Delourdes "Mamoune" Remy, 43. "Maryse went to Jackie's office in the morning," Remy told Haiti Liberte. "He wanted to make a deal with her. We don't know what happened."

Maryse Cineus returned home after that meeting. But at about 5 p.m., Fender, with three other men, returned in a white jeep with blackened windows to pick her up. She told her 13-year-old niece Farah Orius, who was home, that she was going out for a while.

But Maryse didn't come back that evening. Farah and the other young relatives living at Maryse's house were worried all night because it was unlike her to leave them alone.

The three other men in the car, according to the family, were Herve Brutus, a justice of the peace (juge de paix) who was driving, a local vodou priest (hougan) named Jean-Robert, and another man named Petiel.

The next day, Sunday, Fender came by the house at around 4 p.m. and asked for Maryse. Farah replied: "Why are you asking me? You left with her yesterday. You are the one who should know where she is."

When Mamoune learned of Fender's visit, she called him to find out what had happened. In a May 18 police report, she said that Fender told her that "he left together with my sister to go to Unibank to get some money that Gasner Dupont, a brother of mine, sent. When I pressed for details, he told me that the same Saturday he had left my sister at 9 p.m. at her father's house."

After Fender gave Mamoune that story on May 13, Maryse's family began to realize that something very bad must have happened to her.

Recognizing that family members suspected him, on Thursday, May 17, Fender, who was a policeman assigned to the Security Unit for Agrarian Reform (USRA), went to the home of Maryse's father, Willem Dupont, who is blind and suffering from Alzheimer's disease, according to Mamoune. Fender took Dupont to the Croix-de-Bouquets police station to file a report on Maryse's disappearance, the family says.

According to family members who saw the report, Fender said that the other three men in the car – Herve Brutus, Jean-Robert, and Petiel – had kidnapped Maryse and taken 90,000 Haitian gourdes and \$20,000. He claimed that as the men put him out of the car, he told them: "You better not kill her." They replied: "We're just taking her money.

She's in good hands." Fender claimed the men then took Maryse to the hougan Jean-Robert's house.

The next day, on May 18, Mamoune went with Sheelove Orius, Maryse's 30-year-old cousin, to the police to report what Fender had originally told her and then how he had taken Dupont to the police to give a different story. "I have come to file this complaint with the police so that all that is legal and necessary can be done," her police report reads.

Shortly thereafter, the Central Command of the Judicial Police (DCPJ) arrested Fender, who was jailed at the DCPJ. Mamoune hired lawyer Jean Michel Augustin of the law office of Reynold Georges to file suit against Fender. Fender is now being held in the National Penitentiary.

While in jail, Fender has told the police to look for Maryse's body in several places. " But when the police go to the places Fender sends them, they find the bodies of other people," said Bernard Pericles, who is married to one of Maryse's cousins. " Therefore, this gang has killed other people and should be charged with several murders."

But the family believes that someone other than Fender is really behind Maryse's disappearance. " Jackie Saint Pierre is the real architect of Maryse's death," said Bernard Pericles. " He may well be responsible for all the bodies the police are finding at the different grave sites Fender is revealing."

The charge is serious. Saint Pierre is a spokesman for the Lawyers Association of Croix des Bouquets. Haiti Liberte was unable to reach Saint Pierre for his response to the charges.

Although lawyer Jean Michel Augustin has requested a hearing to prosecute Fender since June, until now, after three months of delays, no hearing has been held. Each time a date is set, the judge claims he is sick. " One time he was there in October, but he said he did not feel like talking," Pericles reports.

Frustrated, on July 7, Mamoune went on the airwaves of Radio Caraibes and Scoop FM to talk about her sister's kidnapping. She was surprised to find Jackie Saint Pierre also at Scoop FM. She claims he seemed frightened about what she would say.

But Mamoune is also frightened. "I'm living in hiding at home," she told Haiti Liberte. "Men in dark glasses are always coming around my house asking for me, trying to learn my face."

"Our family is living in fear," said Pericles. " Since July, they have been terrorized."

Pericles also feels the government is dragging its feet. " The Martelly government must also be held accountable because too many people in Haiti have been kidnapped, killed, and raped," he said. " In the Brandt case, they only acted because the U.S. embassy intervened on behalf of the Moscoso kids. But who is going to intervene so that we can find out what happened to Maryse Cineus?"

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* THIS WEEK IN HAITI *

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ARREST OF BRANDT FOR KIDNAPPING EXPLODES MYTHS POLICE CHIEF ORELUS SEEKS TO REMOVE "BAD SEEDS" FROM FORCE by Kim Ives

On Oct. 22, the Haitian National Police (PNH) arrested Clifford Brandt, the scion of a prominent Haitian bourgeois family, on charges of leading a kidnapping ring which includes other wealthy Haitians as well as policemen and former policemen. The ring allegedly kidnapped Coralie and Nicolas Moscoso, aged 23 and 24 respectively, the children of another bourgeois family, for a ransom of \$2.5 million. Brandt led the police to the two bound and blindfolded abductees in a house in the Pernier section of the capital. The Moscoso kids were then freed.

Haitians welcomed the news of Brandt's arrest as vindication that poor Haitians are not behind the country's frequent kidnappings, as the media and officialdom often state or intimate. Brandt's ring suggests the culprits are more likely rich and powerful Haitians.

Last week, Haiti Liberte published a cover picture of Clifford Brandt, sharply dressed in a white shirt and blue blazer, staring at his handcuffs. The issue sold out within a day in more than one location.

It is now reported that Brandt, who owned and ran a struggling car dealership in Delmas 2, has given Haitian authorities the names of over 20 Haitian police officers who were a part of his kidnapping ring.

Haiti Liberte asked the PNH's Director General Godson Orelus about police involvement in Haiti's kidnappings in an interview in September (see the first installment of the interview in this week's Kreyol section).

"I can tell you there are false policemen," Orelus responded. "It is a tactic they use. They pretend to be policemen, but they are not policemen."

Orelus did admit, however, that sometimes “when we investigate, we find there is complicity” with Haitian policemen. “But when we find a case of that, there is zero tolerance because we don’t permit that in the police,” Orelus added. “We have a program to continue removing the bad seeds [from the police], because there is no family without bad seeds.”

Among the policemen now being held as accomplices of Brandt are Thebee “Febe” Marc-Arthur, the commander of the Presidential Security’s CAT (anti-ambush) Team, Jacques Darly, an officer with the PNH’s Criminal Affairs Brigade, and Frantz Aristil, a chief in a Port-au-Prince police station.

“There is a former police inspector, Edner Come, who is presently being sought,” said Reginald Delva, the state secretary for Public Security. “I allow myself to give his name because he is an extremely dangerous individual.”

Authorities have sealed four houses and seized two vehicles, 13 firearms (including six automatic weapons), and a large quantity of ammunition and police supplies. They also have arrested nine people, put four police officers in isolation, and are pursuing many other suspects.

“We don’t tolerate it,” Orelus added. “When we find an officer involved in those activities, we arrest him the same as we arrest the bandits, and we put them all in the same jail.”

However, Director Orelus may also have been working under the assumption that the kidnapers were from the poorer classes rather than the richer.

“If the population does not trust you,” Orelus told Haiti Liberte in September, “you will not get any information” on kidnapers because “the kidnapers live in the midst of the population, among the people.”

The arrest of the Brandt ring seems to belie this notion of kidnapers living “among the people.” Haiti’s bourgeoisie lives in splendid walled mansions built in the cool mountains heights above the capital city of Port-au-Prince. They generally do not mix with or live among the other 99% of the Haitian people.

The Miami Herald 

Posted on Tue, Mar. 06, 2012

Study: Violent crime has spiked in Haiti's cities

By TRENTON DANIEL



Ramon Espinosa, file / AP Photo

FILE - In this April 8, 2010, file photo, police officers enter a house during a gang operation in Port-au-Prince. Haiti has seen a dramatic increase in violent crimes in the shanties of the Caribbean nation's major cities and Haitians have lost faith in their police force over the past six months, according to a study authored by social scientists Athena Kolbe and Robert Muggah released on Sunday, March 4, 2012.

Haiti has seen a dramatic increase in violent crime in the shanties of its major cities over the past six months, helping undermine faith in the country's police force, according to a study released Sunday.

The preliminary findings in the report titled "Haiti's Urban Crime Wave?" speak to rising concerns among Haitians that their country is entering a period of political turmoil that could thwart efforts to help rebuild in the aftermath of the powerful January 2010 earthquake.

Homicides in the heavily populated areas of Haiti's biggest cities appear to have increased sharply from August 2011 to last February, according to the study authored by social scientists Athena Kolbe and Robert Muggah, and backed by the Canadian government's International Development Research Centre and the Brazil nonprofit, the Igarape Institute.

While the homicide rate in Port-au-Prince is lower than that of some other Caribbean cities, Haiti's capital saw 60.9 murders per 100,000 residents over the year leading up to February 2012, the highest recorded murder rate since 2006, according to the study. For example, the Bel Air district of Port-au-Prince saw homicides jump from 19 per 100,000 people in 2010 to 50 per 100,000 people near the end of 2011.

"This murder rate is not just high - it's enormous," Kolbe said.

In comparison, New York City's homicide rate was less than 7 per 100,000 in 2011, while Oakland, California, had 23 homicides per 100,000 residents.

The bulk of the Haiti murders happened in densely populated areas in the cities where there are high levels of social marginalization and poverty, which included Cap-Haitien, Les Cayes, Gonaives, among others.

Police chief Mario Andresol said he needed to review his crime statistics to see if they reflected the findings of the report but conceded that Haiti has long seen a spike in crime when political instability takes hold.

"When you have political turmoil you have problems with insecurity," Andresol said by telephone. "There is a kind of destabilization of society."

Haiti is at a fragile moment in its history with quake reconstruction effort advancing slowly and hundreds of thousands of people still living in rough-and-tumble camps. Also, Haiti's prime minister abruptly resigned last month because of infighting with President Michel Martelly and it's unclear when a successor will be approved by Parliament. Meanwhile, thousands of supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide recently rallied in the streets to bash Martelly's reconstruction efforts.

According to the authors of the study, there is no single factor to explain the rise in violent crime but they point to a frustration that stems in part from the many international humanitarian groups that came to Haiti after the earthquake.

Many aid groups came to urban neighborhoods and pumped in money and resources, before withdrawing just when they were needed most, said Kolbe, a doctoral candidate in social work and political science at University of Michigan.

This interrupted social networks in these neighborhoods, she said.

"You have people coming in from aid agencies, giving money to some groups within the community and not others," Kolbe said in an interview at her home in the Port-au-Prince area. "This disrupted the community, and then there's been this abrupt pull out now of the funds."

Muggah is a fellow of international relations at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Kolbe and Muggah collected their data from interviews with 3,000 households in Haiti's major cities. The survey used random sampling methods.

The study also noted that for the first time since 2007 confidence in the Haitian National Police force has plunged among city dwellers, which is in contrast to the faith that was found in the force in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Almost one in five respondents expressed concerns that police officers were unable or unwilling to protect them from crime.

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Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/03/04/v-print/2675790/study-violent-crime-has-spiked.html#storylink=cpy>