

Notes from 12/6/90 interview with FBI, DOD, and State
on Buckland

* Buckland was provided a limited immunity during his recent interview by FBI. The hope was to put his mind at ease that there would be no legal consequences.

* Buckland says that he was not pressured to recant his statement.

* He denies any prior knowledge of the murders.

* he cannot account for why he made the "prior knowledge" statement. He says he felt "pressed up against the wall." He repeated the words of his commanding officer at Ft. Bragg that he "was broken like a prisoner of war." DOD states that Buckland was not saying that he was abused by FBI -- rather he felt pressured by the entire situation.

* During the recent interview of Buckland, the FBI went over his statement line by line...asking Buckland after every sentence whether he would change anything.

* Essentially what remains from the "prior knowledge" statement is the following:

Aviles asked Buckland to go with him to the Military Headquarters sometime at the end of October (Buckland is not sure whether there was one trip or two. He recalls being there during the day and at night...) Aviles seemed preoccupied. Buckland did not question him before or after the meeting. Aviles did tell Buckland that he was on a mission from Ponce.

* Buckland knew it was at the end of October because he had a PT test (?) coming up.

* Buckland does not recall hearing anything about the Jesuits prior to the murders. He had the impression that the "church in general" was viewed with suspicion -- but does not remember the Jesuits ever being singled out.

* On the night the Jesuits were killed, Buckland was in his quarters (his room). He heard shooting that night coming from all over.

* Apparently at one point previously, Buckland asserted that he heard shooting from the UCA. He says he came to that conclusion sometime in January after seeing a map and description of the shooting. Although, at the time of the murders he does not remember being able to pinpoint where the shooting was coming from.

* The FBI states that a cable was sent to the Embassy and Aronson on the 13th of January. The cable to Aronson was hand delivered. The Embassy also received a briefing.

* The cable to the Embassy was classified (LHM) -- but not "Top

Secret." There were no instructions to burn the documents or not to pass them on to the Salvadoran government.

* FBI did not characterize "prior knowledge" statement as not credible. In fact, on January 24, a cable was sent from FBI agent Marty Hale to Embassy urging further questioning of Aviles and requesting additional materials so that they (the FBI) could better evaluate and analyze Buckland's statement.

* Buckland says that after January 12 when he went back to Ft. Bragg -- he talked with no one from the Embassy or State Department. He did talk to FBI agent Marty Hale and say he was not comfortable with his statement and wanted to recant.

* On January 18th, Buckland recants. From that time until recently, Buckland talks to no one except occasionally to DoD, House Intelligence staff and Moakley people.

* FBI says that they were not directly involved with investigation other than to carry out requests from Salv. Gov. and US Embassy. After the Buckland interviews in January it was not their job to do follow-up unless specifically asked.

* Sometime between Jan. 12-18, Buckland's commander at Ft. Bragg, Gen. Birado (?) talks with Buckland about his wanting to recant. The Gen. tells him it sounds like you were broken...like a prisoner of war. The General also suggests that Buckland might want to discuss the matter with the base psychologist. No one knows whether Buckland did.

* When asked about Buckland's mental health, no one in the room said there was any basis to believe that Buckland was crazy. They are unaware of any psychological profile which might exist on him.

* FBI said embassy recently informed them that Cristiani knew about all this and actually saw the video. They did not know a date. No one else was informed to their knowledge. Although Chidester alluded to the fact that the Judge knew in advance, according to FBI. They did not clarify that.

* FBI also said that embassy said Judge Zamora was acting strangely. Written documents delivered to the judge were not acknowledged until a week after they were delivered. Indeed, when asked about them, the judge denied having them.

* The Judge was offered to view the video at embassy. In fact, they are making a Spanish-dubbed copy for the judge. They will also provide him with a written transcript of the video. They are hesitant about releasing the tape because it will appear on CNN. In fact, the judge himself cautioned not to give it to him for fear that it might leak out to the press.

* None of the agencies present saw any problem with having Buckland testify again before the judge. They all pledged to make it happen -

- but have not received any requests.

* Buckland reiterated that he and Aviles had a good relationship.

* He sticks to his January 2 statement fully.

* Buckland was asked whether he told anybody other than his roommate and sister about his Dec. 20 conversation with Aviles -- he again said no.

* One last point, (last week) in an effort to see whether Buckland could remember some of the officers who might have been around the Estado Mayor when he went there with Aviles at the end of October, he was shown some pictures of different officers. He could only identify one, who he said he knew anyway.