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According to a Nov. 1 UPI report, evidence continues to accumulate on the involvement of Ramon Medina, a Cuban-American residing in San Salvador, in the 1976 explosion of a DC8 Cubana airliner resulting in the deaths of 73 persons. Medina was identified by Eugene Hasenfus captured by Sandinista soldiers on Oct. 6 after his plane was shot down in southern Nicaragua as one of two Americans in charge of the contra airlift supply operation out of the Salvadoran Ilopango military air base. Hasenfus reportedly identified a photo of Luis Posada Carriiles as the man he knew as Ramon Medina. Since then reports by several sources, including the Cuban government's press agencies have published accounts of Medina's past. UPI reported that Medina's true identity seems to be that of Luis Posada Carriiles, an escaped prisoner from a Venezuelan maximum security prison. He was incarcerated in October 1976 on suspicion of organizing the attack on the Cubana airliner which was destroyed in flight when a bomb (dynamite) exploded. The news agency stated that Medina was identified as Posada Carriiles on the basis of records of telephone calls in El Salvador, and interviews with some of Posada's friends in Miami and persons who worked with him in the past. According to UPI, during an interview in May with a Venezuelan television reporter in El Salvador, Posada alias Medina said he had undergone plastic surgery in order to adopt a new identity. In the same interview, he said he was engaged in a war against communism in Central America. Posada's wife, who saw the interview, was said to have recognized her husband despite his changed appearance, augmented by spectacles and a beard. Another source, located via tracing down telephone calls made by Posada from his home in San Salvador, said he had been working in the contra supply network for a short time, and was channeled into the same by a Cuban-American called Ramon Medina. Medina had rented a two-story house in the elite Colonia neighborhood in the Salvadoran capital city. Neighbors said he received many American visitors. Records of telephone calls in July and August from the Colonia residence showed calls to Posada's wife, and Posada's friends in Miami. The friends denied they had received telephone calls from the Cuban-American. On Nov. 2, the MIAMI HERALD reported that a Cuban exile, suspected of a dynamite attack against a Cuban plane, escaped from the Venezuelan prison with the assistance of the Nicaraguan contras. After he escaped, Posada Carriiles, alias Medina, joined the contra effort. Friends of Luis Posada Carriiles said he was trained by the CIA, and was appointed chief of operations for the CIA in Venezuela. His escape last year from prison was made possible through pay-offs to several individuals. An unidentified wholesaler in Miami who knew Posada in Venezuela before he was incarcerated, said that Posada's friends working in the contra supply network gave him a Salvadoran passport with the name of Ramon Medina, thereby permitting him entry into El Salvador.

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