

1-26-2005

Enrique Salinas de Gortari, Brother of Former President, Found Strangled

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Enrique Salinas de Gortari, Brother of Former President, Found Strangled." (2005). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4822>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Enrique Salinas de Gortari, Brother of Former President, Found Strangled

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 2005-01-26

The family of former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) was again in the spotlight following the murder of the younger brother Enrique. His body was discovered in a car in early December with a plastic bag over his head and bruises on his face. The vehicle was parked on a residential street in the community of Huixcuilcan in Mexico state.

The victim, an engineer by profession, is thought to have been murdered by someone attempting to extort money or information or collect on a debt. "I don't think we're talking about a politically motivated crime," said Alfonso Navarrete Prida, who heads the Procuraduria General de Justicia del Estado de Mexico (PGJEM).

Enrique's murder is the latest chapter in the drama surrounding the Salinas family since Carlos Salinas left office in 1994. The former president's older brother was arrested in 1995 in connection with the murder of Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, a high-ranking official with the then governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Ruiz Massieu was the former husband of Salinas' sister Adriana (see SourceMex, 1995-03-08 and 1999-01-27).

Raul Salinas, who is serving a 50-year sentence in a Mexican federal prison for the Ruiz Massieu murder, has also been linked to money laundering, drug trafficking, and embezzlement (see SourceMex, 1997-05-21, 1998-07-22, and 2002-08-07).

Carlos Salinas has not been directly implicated in any of the charges of criminal activity levied against his brother Raul. The former president, however, remains a hated figure in Mexico because he is widely blamed for the devaluation of the peso in 1994 and the ensuing economic crisis in 1995 (see SourceMex, 1995-01-04 and 2000-10-25).

Investigation focuses on possible extortion

Enrique Salinas kept a low profile and stayed out of politics during his brother's administration and in the ensuing years. Enrique and another brother, Sergio, were, however, involved in business deals with Raul and Carlos. In early December, French authorities confirmed that they were investigating Enrique Salinas and his ex-wife Adriana Lagarde in connection with money-laundering charges brought against Raul.

The French government had not issued a formal order for Enrique's and Adriana's arrests but had sent a note informing Mexican authorities of the investigation, said the Procuraduria General de la Republica (PGR). Authorities are not certain whether Enrique's murder has any connection to the French case, although one theory being investigated involves a link to a separate case involving Raul.

Authorities are investigating whether Enrique may have been the victim of an extortion attempt after Swiss authorities returned US\$7 million to him. The funds were returned after Switzerland determined that Enrique's funds were not involved in the fraud charges brought against Raul, who stashed millions of dollars in now-frozen Swiss bank accounts. Raul has continued to have an influence in Enrique's finances even while in jail. T

he Mexico City daily newspaper El Universal reported that Enrique had visited Raul in jail just days before his murder. At that time, Raul demanded that Enrique pay back a US\$2 million loan and also settle an outstanding debt of US\$1 million to Nuevo Leon businessman Enrique Regules Uriegas. Enrique had borrowed the money from Regules, a close friend of both Raul and Carlos Salinas, so he could invest in the petrochemical project El Fenix (see SourceMex, 2004-10-27).

The project was put on hold with the departure of Raul Munoz Leos as director of the state-run oil company PEMEX (see SourceMex, 2004-11-03). Enrique also reportedly owed a large sum of money to businessman Roberto Gonzalez Barrera, owner of the giant food company Grupo Industrial Maseca (GRUMA).

Enrique's financial difficulties included other family obligations. He owed an undetermined amount of money to Carlos Salinas and had promised to give his three children up to US\$3 million for education and personal investments.

Actions of local police under investigation

Authorities have uncovered some leads in Enrique's murder, but are far from solving the case. Navarrete, who is coordinating the case with the federal Procuraduria General de la Republica (PGR), said his office is trying to determine whether the municipal police of Huixcuilcan had anything to do with the murder.

The Huixcuilcan police officers who first found Salinas' body appear to have stolen his wallet and altered security-camera footage used as evidence in the case. "We are certain the first steps taken by the municipal police have caused problems," Navarrete said. "They did not preserve the scene of the crime, which is fundamental to any investigation. They opened up the car and moved the body."

Navarrete has summoned the five police officers and two civilians who investigated the scene where Salinas' body was found. Another theory circulating in Mexican newspapers suggests that Enrique hired members of the Agencia Federal de Investigacion (AFI) to help him get out of a divorce settlement with his ex-wife, but the officers then tried to extort money from him when Enrique didn't pay them.

Federal Attorney General Rafael Macedo de la Concha dismissed this theory as mere speculation. "At this moment, we have no proof that would allow charges to be brought against any member of the AFI," said Macedo de la Concha. Whichever direction the investigation takes, authorities are putting strong emphasis on the theory that extortion was a factor in Enrique's murder. Among those the PGJEM expects to question is attorney Mariano Flores Arciniega, who is said to have recommended that Enrique hire police agents to help work out a settlement with his ex-wife.

In an interview with the Mexico City daily newspaper El Universal, Flores denied knowing the perpetrators of Enrique Salinas' murder. "I do not know these people, and I have no idea who they could be," Flores told the newspaper. "If I knew these people, I wouldn't be alive today." The PGJEM also insists it has uncovered evidence that some members of the Salinas family knew about the extortion attempts that cost Enrique his life.

The Mexico City political newspaper La Crisis said authorities are investigating the possibility that Raul Salinas and Adriana Lagarde may have plotted to kill Enrique. The rumors of a Salinas' family involvement in the murder were fueled further by the family's decision to quickly have Enrique's body cremated and by the fact that authorities took no action to prevent the cremation in the midst of a homicide investigation. (Sources: Reuters, Copley News Service, 12/07/04; The New York Times, 12/07/04, 12/08/04; El Financiero, 12/09/04, 12/10/04; Los Angeles Times, 12/11/04; Agencia de noticias Proceso, 12/06-09/04, 12/13/04, 12/14/04, 01/19/05; El Imparcial, 01/19/05, 01/22/05; The Herald-Mexico City, 12/07-09/04, 01/07/05, 01/19/05, 01/20/05, 01/24/05; Spanish news service EFE, 12/08/04, 12/09/04, 01/19/05, 01/24/05; Notimex, 01/19/05, 01/24/05; La Cronica de Hoy, 12/07-10/04, 12/14/04, 12/15/04, 12/17/04, 12/29/04, 01/07/05, 01/25/05; La Crisis, 12/07-10/04, 12/14/04, 12/15/04, 01/06/05, 01/07/05, 01/11/05, 01/20/05, 01/25/05; La Jornada, 12/07-10/04, 12/15/04, 01/06/05, 01/07/05, 01/11/05, 01/20/05, 01/25/05; El Siglo de Torreon, 12/31/04, 01/25/05; El Universal, 12/08-10/04, 12/13/04, 01/06/05, 01/07/05, 01/19/05, 01/20/05, 01/24-26/05

-- End --