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Account of the 1979 assassination of Police Inspector Damián Seco Fernández

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A policeman, Inspector Damián Seco Fernández and a neighbour Antonio Cívico, were killed in the shooting that took place at 12:30 am on May 25, 1979, among the occupants of a patrol car belonging to the Information Brigade of the Headquarters Superior of Police of Seville and four members of a terrorist command of the GRAPO, that tried to attempt against a lieutenant colonel of the army. The shooting took place on Pedro Romero Avenue in the Sevillian Polígono de San Pablo.

The facts began when inspectors of the Police Superior Corps tried to identify the four occupants of a vehicle, mark Seat 131, of red colour, that had infused suspicions, and that it could be a car used by the command of the GRAPO that they had perpetrated the last attacks in the city of Seville, mounting a special surveillance service that waited near the vehicle, located that was parked in the neighborhood of the Polígono San Pablo.



Inspector Damián Seco Frnández

Soon the inspectors observed that an individual was going to the car and trying to start it. Two police officers approached the vehicle and proceeded to identify and detain the individual. At this time the inspectors began to be shot from a portal nearby, which was located behind the back of where the servants of order were at that moment. One of the inspectors fell severely wounded reached by a burst. Immediately a strong shooting broke out among other police officers who came in support of the first and the terrorists. They approached inspector Damián Seco Fernández, who lay bleeding on the ground, and they finished him off with several bursts of machine gun. To interfere with the police action, the terrorists intermingled with a group of children who left the school, firing indiscriminately.

In the shooting, the 18-year-old Antonio Cívico Mendoza was caught accidentally passing by on the opposite sidewalk, which fell seriously wounded and entered a corpse in the hospital of the Virgen

de los Reyes. In the operation to persecute the murderers, the police caught up with one of the terrorists who died on the spot. It was Rafael Álvarez Gómez Isasi, one of the members of GRAPO, whose photograph had been broadcast days ago by the police through the Sevillian media. Three other terrorists, one of them carrying a briefcase, managed to flee, although one of them was hit by the agents with a shot in the stomach, being later arrested.

In a few minutes the entire area and its accesses were cordoned off by strong contingents of the National Police, armed with machine guns, Civil Guard and Superior Police, who took statements to some witnesses and recorded, without results, several blocks of houses in the middle of a great expectation and several cases of hysteria among the neighbours. Numerous bloodstains remained on the streets adjacent to the scene.

The statements of the arrested terrorist allowed the police to discover a safe house in the Santa María de Ordás neighborhood of the Miraflores neighbourhood of the Sevillian capital.

In its interior were found several weapons and an amount without needing explosive material of the type rubber-2 that thought to be used during the celebration of the Day of the Armed Forces that would take place the following day in the Sevillian capital. However, the tenants of the house, three men and one woman, were able to flee on a Seat-850. According to the information provided by the interior minister in a press conference held in Madrid, the intention of these terrorist groups was to assassinate a lieutenant colonel of the Army, of the Seville garrison.

With these attacks the terrorist escalation that Seville had been suffering since last May 10, when three individuals shot at a couple of the National Police, causing the death of one of them Juan Manuel Torres, and very serious injuries to his partner, Juan, continued. Torrebejano.

Days later a powerful device exploded in the headquarters of the Socialist Party of Andalusia (PSA) and another minor in a barracks of the Civil Guard, without having to regret victims. With the planned action could have reached its zenith the emotional tension sought by terrorists to mark the celebration of the Day of the Armed Forces.

As a consequence of the terrorist action perpetrated in Seville, the Sevilla-Barcelona express was detained for an hour while passing through the Córdoba station because the alleged GRAPO member was wounded and detained by the police in the shooting of the Sevillian capital, had confessed that the plan of evasion envisaged by the terrorist command included the use of this train as a means of escape, so the police stopped it as it passed through Córdoba and made a thorough search, which ended without positive results.

The deceased inspector, Damián Seco Fernández was 35 years old; he was in possession of the Police Merit Cross with a white badge; He was married and left two children. At the García Morato clinic, where his body was received, it was reported that a bullet had pierced his heart and he had died instantly.

The ardent chapel was installed in the premises of the Police Headquarters of Seville that was visited by authorities and hundreds of anonymous Sevillians who wanted to witness their grief to the police for such a treacherous murder.

At 9.30 in the morning of the following day a funeral of "corpore insepulto" in memory of Damián Seco Fernández was held at the Seville Police Headquarters in the Plaza de la Gavidia. Although in principle the exact time of the funeral was not communicated and the media was prohibited from entering it, the Police Headquarters later informed the media about the time of the Mass for the soul of the murdered Inspector.

The funeral ceremony was attended by the civil governor, military governor, chief prosecutor of the Audiencia, chief of police, colonel chief of the National Police, general chief of the Civil Guard, other authorities and various relatives of Inspector Seco, including his widow, his mother and a sister. The Mass was celebrated in a climate of pain and respect for the chaplain of the National Police Corps in Seville. The tears of their companions and friends were disconsolate.

At the end of the religious service and by express order of his widow, the coffin of Damián Seco was sealed to go to Irún, where it would be buried, an operation that took half an hour. The body was to be moved to the Guipuzcoan town by road, but the commanders of the Second Air Region, put at the disposal of the family a Military aircraft that would later move from the Tablada airfield to the San Sebastián airport in Fuenterrabía, from where by road it would be taken to the border city.

Around ten thirty, covered with the National flag, the mortuary box containing the remains of Inspector Damián Seco was taken outside the Police Headquarters carried on his shoulders by several of his companions, starting a short tour of some streets from the centre of the city of Seville.

More than two thousand people accompanied the procession to Plaza Nueva, where, in front of the town hall, which had on its balconies the flags at half mast, the coffin, shouting against the terrorist assassins, alive to Spain, to the Police, a thunderous ovation and many tears of his companions was introduced in a funeral van that would lead him to the air base of Tablada from where he would fly to the airport of San Sebastian. During the retinue there was a great tension between the police officers and citizens, when a bomb alarm arose fifty meters from where the funeral procession had to pass, when checking that inside a SIMCA 1000 vehicle, which was parked, it contained inside it a suspicious package that alarmed the passers-by and caused an explosives deactivation team to move to the place, which after a tense moment proved that it was a false alarm.

The mortal remains of the assassinated Police Inspector arrived at the airport of San Sebastián where they were received by high police, military and Civil Guard commanders, relatives, friends and companions. In the midst of great emotion and silence after the prayer of several responses. The mortal remains of Inspector Seco were transferred to the Police Commissioner of Irun where the ardent chapel was installed, surrounded by numerous wreaths.

Damián Seco Fernández had resided in Irún for many years where he married Arancha Meneses, daughter of a retired Armed policeman residing in the city of Gipuzkoa. Fulfilling family wishes, from the Police Commissioner the coffin of Inspector Seco Fernández was transferred to the cemetery of Irún where he received a Christian burial.

The press office of the Police Headquarters of Seville facilitated the same Friday May 25 an informative note following the death in shooting, in the polygon of San Pablo, the police inspector, Damián Seco Fernández, and the young Antonio Cívico Mendoza who was in the street, next to the block where he lived. In relation to this fact, the note said: "Francisco Martín Valero, alias" Ernesto ", active militant of the organization and member of a command based in Barcelona, who at the beginning of April moved to Seville, has been arrested. This GRAPO command consists of three men and two women, who rented a flat in the residential area of Santa María de Ordas to use it as a center for the terrorist actions that were to begin almost immediately. " The note provided by the Police continued saying "that the detainee's participation in the following terrorist actions in Barcelona was determined in a reliable manner: assassination of a councillor in Esplugas de Llobregat; assassination of the first corporal of the National Police of the 091 service, Fernando Ramírez, in robbery committed in Barcelona to a banking entity; murder of the national police officer of the San Andrés police station Rafael Gómez Cobacho; death of a municipal policeman, murdered in Sabadell. On the other hand, it was learned that the 4,000,000 pesetas that were obtained in the two robberies perpetrated in Seville were taken by the detainee, to Valencia, where he delivered them to José María Sánchez Casas, one of the top leaders of GRAPO

On May 26, the General Directorate of State Security issued another statement detailing that the GRAPO command that had killed police inspector Damián Seco in Seville on Friday, July 25, was intercepted in Teruel. by a control of the Civil Guard, two of the terrorists were killed and three others arrested. The note also indicated other crimes committed by the commando. The text of the communiqué was the following: "The members of the GRAPO commando, who on May 25, assassinated the officer of the Superior Police Corps, Damián Seco Fernández, in Seville, have been located by a control of the Guardia Civil, resulting in a clash as a result of which the prominent members of said terrorist organization Raúl Calero Arcones and his wife or companion María del Carmen López Sánchez have died and the members and activists of GRAPO Félix Novales Gorbea and Eva María Alonso Arce have also been arrested. The events happened at 13.25 hours today, Saturday, May 26, at the junction of the 420 national road from Cordoba to Tarragona with Ademuz to Valencia, in which place

a Civil Guard control stopped the taxi registration Cuenca 6,888-8, occupied by the driver, two men and two women. In trying to identify the occupants, one of the women, wielding a pistol, fired through the window at one of the civil guards, wounding him in the arm. Repelled the aggression by the Civil Guard, were seriously injured two of the occupants and proceeded to capture the other two.

"The wounded were taken to the health centre in Teruel, where bodies were brought in. Initiated the opportune gestures were identified all of them like the components of the armed command that tried to assassinate a lieutenant colonel of the Army and to realize other terrorist actions, for what they had in a floor of Seville of great amount of explosives. Two AF submachine guns, 9 mm caliber, were found in the luggage that accompanied them. Parabelium, five pistols, three of them mark Star, belonging to the National Police and the other two Astra brand, together with a Llama revolver and abundant ammunition for all of them. In their flight from Seville, the members of this command tried to get to Teruel, from there to travel by train to Barcelona, base of performance of this command, also called "Barcelona command", responsible for the late Raúl Calero Arcones. All of them are responsible for serious and abundant personal attacks and terrorist acts among which stand out: Bank robbery in Barcelona, which killed the corporal of the National Police Fernando Ramírez, of the endowment of a Zeta car. Attack in Seville against the sub-comisario of the Superior Police Corps Francisco Beltrán Ortiz, who was seriously injured. Attack against two national police in the Plaza de Santa Cruz, in Seville with the result of the death of National Police Juan Torres León.

In accordance with Royal Decree 1404/2000, dated July 19, 2000, the Police Inspector Damián Seco was granted the Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Civil Recognition to the Victims of Terrorism posthumously. In addition, in a resolution dated March 18, 2005 (Royal Decree 308/2005), the Ministry of the Interior also granted him the promotion of employment, with honorific character and posthumously.