

future rulers, and no one is so foolish as to put it in the official records.”

Far from dying away, the flames of scandal continue to grow. Humberto de la Calle Lombana, Samper's vice president-elect and known as one of the heads of Masonry in Colombia, has also been accused of links to the Cali Cartel. “We have conducted an investigation of the close collaborators of the vice president-elect, who are indisputably linked to the Cali Cartel,” declared French anti-drug expert Alain Labrouse on a French television program on June 27. Labrouse, head of the Geopolitical Drug Observatory, has claimed that much of his evidence comes from Colombian anti-drug investigators who had to flee their country under threat of death.

De la Calle's wife, Rosalba, has also been implicated in fraud run through Cajanal, the state agency for retirees, which she headed in 1992. According to a two-year investigation conducted by the Colombian security police, DAS, not only was more than \$30 million stolen from the agency on her watch, but under- and over-invoicing and similar illicit accounting practices were reportedly used by Cajanal to illegally import chemicals used in cocaine processing. Further, all of Cajanal's clinics were stocked with pharmaceuticals purchased from Rodríguez Orejuela's pharmacy chain, La Rebaja.

Despite the mounting evidence of corruption, Samper has received full support from outgoing President César Gaviria, whose Liberal Party sponsored Samper's presidential candidacy. First, Gaviria's Communications Ministry issued a ban against any media reproducing further transcripts of the tapes containing the explosive material on Samper. Then, in a public statement, Gaviria announced that an investigation of the tapes would be pursued, but expressed confidence that “this matter will dissipate when [the new administration] proves that the fight against drugs will continue.” In other words, Samper has already been cleared of all charges.

To make certain of that, the investigation has been handed over to Prosecutor General Gustavo de Greiff, like Samper an ardent proponent of drug legalization. De Greiff's daughter Monica was Samper's campaign manager during the early part of his 1993-94 presidential bid. It is widely expected that De Greiff, referred to affectionately as “the old one” on the tapes, will endorse López Michelsen's argument that “Samper's prestige is the national patrimony.”

The vast majority of the Liberal Party—with the notable exception of former justice minister and ex-presidential candidate Enrique Parejo González—has aligned itself with Samper, López, and Gaviria, as have the country's leading business associations. The debate in the López-dominated media has not centered on whether Samper took cartel money or not, but rather on “what were the obscure intentions of those who taped the conversations.”

And yet, for the first time in decades, an important chunk of the country's political elite—headed by the Conservative Party's Pastrana family—has taken off the gloves against this mafia which has dominated Colombian politics, with few exceptions, for 20 years. It was defeated Conservative Party presidential candidate Andrés Pastrana who quietly handed the first incriminating tape over to the government for investigation *five days before the election*. Despite the fact that it was the daily *El Tiempo*, the López-linked Liberal Party mouthpiece, which went public with transcripts of the tape, it is Pastrana who has been accused by virtually the entire political class of behaving like “a sore loser” in turning over the tapes to the authorities, instead of burying them!

Declared *Semana* magazine, owned by one of López Michelsen's sons, Pastrana's “imprudent” decision to turn the tapes over to the government “has turned the Samper

Cali Cartel on tape: millions for Samper

The current scandal first erupted around a tape-recording of three telephone conversations between “journalist” Alberto Giraldo, known as a Cali Cartel public relations man, and the brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, chieftains of the Cali Cartel.

Giraldo was a columnist for the daily *La República*, director of a television news show, and a writer for the popular magazine *Cromos*, owned by the multimillionaire Santodomingo Group, which is allied to Ernesto Samper Pizano and Alfonso López Michelsen. In 1981, Giraldo was press secretary for former President Belisario Betancur's electoral campaign. In other words, Giraldo was a “respected” journalist, although his unsavory ties to the cartel have been public since at least 1987.

It was in that year that Giraldo requested a press interview with then-Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos for the newspaper he was working for at the time, *El Siglo*. However, instead of showing up with a tape-recorder, Giraldo presented the Attorney General with none other than Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, who handled the cartel's legal affairs. At the time, brother Gilberto was in a jail cell, and Miguel had hopes of winning his brother's release.

Attorney General Hoyos reported the incident to the press, which led to Giraldo's sacking by *El Siglo* and to his being named in the book *Los Jinetes de la Cocaína*

government's honeymoon into the shortest in history, which could prove good on day one for the opposition, but which could have an immense cost for the accuser." Wrote *El Espectador* journalist María Jimena Duzán, "What bothers one is not the presence of 'hot money' in the campaign, which is an undeniable reality of the country, but the opportunistic and low way in which Pastrana manipulated the information in the cassette."

Despite the accusations and threats, Pastrana has stuck to his guns, insisting that "nothing will stop the change we have begun. I pledge to continue working to keep this alive." Already, his brother's newspaper *La Prensa* has begun to target Alfonso López Michelsen as "the man who introduced Ernesto Samper to the drug trade business."

How the Clinton administration responds to the Samper scandal could well determine whether Colombia succeeds

in freeing itself of Dope, Inc.'s clutches. Although there are clearly elements in the Washington which are working on behalf of the drug legalization lobby, there are also those who are horrified at the implications of a Samper presidency in Colombia. Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Morris Busby met with Samper in Bogotá shortly after the scandal broke to seek "clarifications," and yet, when Samper visited New York the last week in June, he was grilled in his hotel room by two senior State Department officials on the charges against him. According to State Department spokesman Mike McCurry, "We . . . obviously saw a need to raise the issue again. We want some very precise clarifications about allegations that have been made."

As Pastrana's *La Prensa* noted in a recent editorial, isn't this the time for "all the other tapes" in the possession of authorities everywhere to be given a public airing?

(*Cocaine Horsemen*) as the Cali Cartel's public relations man. The adverse publicity notwithstanding, Giraldo was hired by *La República*. In 1989, Hoyos was kidnapped and butchered by drug mafia assassins.

In one of the taped conversations, Rodríguez Orejuela asks Giraldo, "How's the Samper thing going?" to which Giraldo replies, "The presidency is in your hands." To win the vote, Giraldo explained to the cartel boss, "they need 5 billion pesos [\$5.8 million]. They have 2, and need 3 from you." Rodríguez Orejuela responds, "Done." In a later tape, Giraldo says the Samper campaign needs more money, and the cartel boss says, "We've already given 4" billion pesos.

The Cali Cartel's "aid" to the Samper campaign was, of course, not without strings. In addition to the "five appointments" to the Samper cabinet the cartel intended to purchase with its donation, its principal demand is that it be made clear that cartel members "are decent people, people who want to legalize their lives, who have all their lives helped people."

On the tapes, it is clear that Samper wanted the money, but at arm's length. One can hear Giraldo inform Rodríguez Orejuela that "Number One [Samper] met with Eduardo [Mestre Sarmiento] and told him: 'Do what you have to, but don't tell me about it; do what you have to.'" In response, Rodríguez demands a commitment from Samper: "This business of 'don't tell me about it,' we don't go along with that." Mestre Sarmiento is a Liberal Party regional boss with longstanding ties to Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela.

Samper's campaign treasurer, Santiago Medina, is seriously implicated in the tapes as well. "We spoke to Medina already, relax," Rodríguez Orejuela tells a ner-

vous Giraldo at one point, while referring to numerous meetings with "Santi" in another conversation. Giraldo is instructed to tell Medina that the money will arrive in two separate shipments.

Also implicated is retired Army Gen. Miguel Maza Márquez, who spent four years as director of the National Police's intelligence department and another four years as director of the state security agency, the DAS. For a long time there had been rumors that Maza worked for the Cali Cartel, and that he had privately backed Samper's drug legalization efforts. Maza was a presidential candidate in the May 29 first electoral round, and won 40,000 votes. On June 5, as the candidates prepared for the run-off vote on June 19, Maza threw his support—and presumably his 40,000 votes—to Samper. In the tapes, Giraldo asks his boss for an unspecified amount of money to give to Maza Márquez, and insists that it be in cash.

Not only was Maza Márquez notorious for his refusal to prosecute the Cali Cartel, as he did the rival Medellín Cartel, but he was also made an adviser on drug matters to Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, whose friendly relations with certain prominent Colombian narcotics traffickers is a matter of public record and who today sits in a Caracas prison for defrauding his nation.

It is noteworthy that Maza admitted to the media that he met with Samper Pizano and Samper's defense ministry appointee Fernando Botero Zéa, at the apartment of Alberto Giraldo; but neither Maza nor Samper have explained why Maza's decision to throw his support to Samper was negotiated in the apartment of the Cali Cartel's go-between. Surely the man who was director of Colombian national security for eight years must have known about Giraldo's underworld links.