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INFORME ESPECIAL

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El superagente Mazur

Robert Mazur, the legendary DEA official who is credited with bringing to justice the largest money laundering bank in the world that catered to the drug traffic, uncovered a new outbreak of the disease in Costa Rica. To stop the malady, he traveled to San Jose and risked his life for a year. 28 suspects were arrested. He is more than a super agent. He is an actor with an agent's badge, capable of fooling the most experienced treasurers of the drug cartel, even if it means putting his life in harms way.

Robert Mazur was 43 years old at the conclusion of this latest accomplishment. He owns the greatest trophy of the war on drugs waged by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). He brought down the largest money-laundering bank in the world catering to the drug traffic. By exposing the surreptitious dealings of the Bank of Credit & Commerce International (BCCI), responsible for laundering 20 billion dollars, he shook 30 countries around the world. When BCCI fell, it took down politicians, military officials, local bosses and the personal banker of Manuel Antonio Noriega, the jailed Panamanian dictator.

The BCCI job should have been sufficient for Mazur to quietly retire in a secluded town somewhere in the United States. Nobody would have questioned his leadership in the fight against money laundering operations. But, Mazur, who initiated his career battling drug traffickers in the streets of the largest U.S. cities, wanted something more. And he got his wish.

He dismantled another extensive net of money launderers that operated in two continents. This time, 27 suspects were sent to jail in Florida. In Costa Rica, he placed Randolph Brenner, a Guatemalan national, in jail. Randolph Brenner is a Guatemalan national who is a long term resident of Costa Rica. He is related by marriage to a prominent Guatemalan political family.

Brenner owned CEDELSA COSTA RICA S.A., a company in San Jose that specialized in trading dollars. Mazur assures Costa Rican authorities that Brenner accepted \$200,000 after he told Brenner the money came from drug trafficking. Mazur testified in Costa Rica that the first transaction was for \$100,000 in Miami. The transaction was completed in the presence of a second DEA agent, per DEA rules. Mazur established that Brenner transferred the money to an account at the Panama office of Merrill Lynch. Brenner had absolutely no idea Mazur was an undercover agent when he created the account. Now there is a new group of money launderers in jail, including various officials from the Merrill Lynch office in Panama.

MAZUR'S SECRET

What is Mazur's secret? He obtains a cover name, assumes the role of a high executive of the drug Mafia and flashes plenty of money. He always makes a strong impression. His bosses

cater to his requests. He is allowed to have everything, from Lear Jets to the large sums he needs to become an authentic money launderer.

He frequents the banking, legal and political circles. He rents expensive hotel suites and hires secretaries. He has the ability to make the right moves. Later, when he is deep in the net of money launderers, he turns over hundreds of thousands of dollars to them, and plans the final assault.

To finalize his operations, he calls upon his associates in the United States of America. Then, he prepares a large and resounding event and invites all the launderers. When all the guests have arrived, he exposes his DEA badge and, without pity, sends them to jail.

He labeled the operation in which he captured Brenner and another 27 accomplices, "PROMO". Five years before, when he uncovered the dirty BCCI scheme, he had labeled it "C-CHASE".

"PROMO" was a copy of "C-CHASE". The first item in his agenda was to change his name. He assumed the cover name of Robert Baldasare. It was under this cover that he traveled to Costa Rica. Later, utilizing phony documents, he established a fake business in Florida called "Avid Mortgage Corporation". Slowly, he disguised himself as an impressionable money launderer, and he began to offer his services to the Colombian drug traffickers.

The "PROMO" operation was born in 1992, when Mazur obtained confidential information on money laundering schemes in Panama. Consequently, in 1993, he started to take long trips to that country, where he leased a suite in an El Dorado hotel and hired a secretary. He became an authentic money launderer.

With time, he obtained strong leads on his objectives. That led him to retain Ricardo Leyton, a Panamanian lawyer who incidentally was one of the geniuses behind the money laundering net. Swiftly, he gained Leyton's confidence. Leyton would have fainted if he had known that his new employer was actually Mazur, the famed DEA agent responsible for bringing down BCCI.

Little by little, Mazur gained the confidence of his new friends. He gave them money and they laundered it with extreme proficiency. He got to the point of trusting them with more than \$2 million. Within ten days, the money was channeled to a ghost Panamanian Company that his friends had helped him establish. He was paying a 6 to 7 point commission for the transaction. The DEA was ready to front all of Mazur's outlandish expenses. They knew that Mazur had no equal when it came to apprehending money launderers.

During his early dealings with the launderers, he became cognizant of the main approach of the laundering scheme and the identity of the principle players, which included various Colombians of the Cali Cartel. Eventually, he got the Colombians to give him money to launder.

HE SLID INTO THE TRAP

As Leyton became more trustful he slid deeper into Mazur's trap and started to reveal his big secrets. Leyton told Mazur that he knew of two individuals in Costa Rica that could participate in the scheme. One was Randolph Brenner, a long-term Costa Rican resident originally from Guatemala. Brenner invited Mazur to Costa Rica on Leyton's request.

Mazur arrived in Costa Rica the 24th of March 1993, utilizing the cover name of Robert Baldasare. Leyton joined him one day later. They met in private with the Panamanian national Cedrick Hodgins, who directed a Costa Rican firm known as "Sed de Latinoamerica S.A.". A short time later, they met with Brenner in Hodgins' residence, located in the city of Cariari. There, Mazur told Brenner he was servicing a group of Colombians from Cali, who had an important quantity of currency in major cities of the United States and Europe. Mazur also explained that his Colombian clients wanted their funds transferred to accounts under his control.

Brenner took the bait and slid into the trap. First, Mazur gave Brenner \$100,000 in cash, which was swiftly returned to Mazur via the Lombard Bank Ltd. in Miami. Brenner charged a commission of 5 percent. Afterwards, he repeated



the process with the same results. Then, Mazur was ready to deliver the final blow to the group, but he needed them to step on to American soil, where he could easily place them behind bars.

It was not difficult to bring them to the United States. He offered them an all expenses paid trip to attend a financial seminar in Sarasota, Florida. He took the group in a Lear Jet to sunny Florida. Once there, DEA agents arrested the group for laundering \$10 million in drug proceeds. Later, the super drug enforcement agent dropped out of sight for a much-deserved vacation. His latest operation had taken a little more than a year with incredible results.

With the arrests, Mazur repeated the plot that he wrote in 1988, when he brought to justice the principal officers of BCCI. After arranging their passage into the country for a long period of time, he invited them to his supposed wedding in Tampa. Bankers and drug traffickers accepted his invitation. DEA agents picked them up at the airport in luxury cars. When they arrived at the wedding, the agents put them in handcuffs and sent them to prison. Even Mazur's fiancé was a DEA agent.

Just before the DEA agents arrested this group of money launderers, members of the Costa Rican Justice Department received an urgent call in their San Jose office. They were asked to arrest Randolph Brenner in his business establishment. "PROMO" had run its course.

When Costa Rican authorities entered the CEDELSA offices, they found 8 boxes full of sensitive documents and a nice surprise, under a faucet lay \$45,000 in a bowl. Afterwards, Brenner told the police that he hid the currency under the sink because, when officers entered his building, he thought they were thieves.