

AFFIDAVIT OF OLGA TALAMANTE

10/12/76 '86 (D.F)
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I, Olga Talamante, of 470 Gavelin Court, Gilroy, California do depose and state the following:

RELEASE IN FULL

1. In August 1973, I travelled to Argentina after having graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, where I majored in Latin American studies. My intention in going to Argentina was to stay for about six months and possibly to attend the University of Buenos Aires for continuing my studies in Latin American history. I had met previously in Mexico a family that lived in Azul, in the province of Buenos Aires. I contacted them and found there was a possibility of getting a job teaching English in Azul. Since the University of Buenos Aires at that time was in turmoil, and in fact the rector of the University was being ousted, I decided to go to Azul, and there I got a job teaching English in a private institute.

2. When I came to Azul in August 1973, Juan Domingo Peron was about to return to Argentina. The Argentine Government was then supporting some social welfare programs which had been instituted in Azul as in other parts of the country. While I was teaching English classes in Azul, I came to know a number of young people, including Susana Pioli, now 18 years old, Mirta Varela, 27 years old, Edith Stahelli de Frias, 25 years old, Osvaldo Gasparini, 22 years old, Ruben Piazza, 20 years old, Eduardo Gonzales, 29 years old, Eduardo

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Kathleen Allegrone,

Grutsky, 18 years old, Juan Gonzales, 35 years old, and Julio Varela, 27 years old. I came to know these people through the activities of a municipal cultural commission in Azul, of which Eduardo Gonzales was the director.

3. At that time, several programs were being conducted in Azul to provide community services, community activities and cultural activities for adults and children. Some of those taking English classes were also engaged in the work of the cultural commission. The purpose of the community centers operated by the cultural commission was to provide social services which had not previously been made available by the government. The aim of the government and its officials was that people who had not had access to cultural activity and to basic social services such as tutoring programs and legal aid should now benefit from them. The cultural commission and the community centers in Azul were supported through government funding, were under the auspices of the municipal government, and operated under the direction of the Mayor of Azul, with whom the director of the cultural commission worked. The social programs were directly related to the general activities of the municipal government. I recall many times when we informed the government of an activity that we were about to carry out so that official assistance would be available for the events contemplated. Throughout the summer of 1973 -- which is during the months of November, December, and January in Argentina -- these programs in fact were very much encouraged by the government. The federal

government policy was to support the programs, and it financed them, acting through the provincial governments and then the county and city authorities.

4. In 1973 and 1974, I continued to teach English, and on a volunteer basis I worked at one of the community centers. The nine people that I referred to earlier (see pages 1-2, supra) also worked at the community centers. There were three such centers in Azul. Of the nine people I have mentioned, three were high school students or graduates; several were workers at the ceramic tile factory in Azul; two were store clerks. We all worked at the centers on a volunteer basis. The centers that were operating under the government's auspices were providing services such as voter registration, legal aid, tutoring programs, and health care clinics. The centers also sought to have municipal lighting installed where needed and to have sections of the barrios levelled to avoid seasonal flooding. One of the main programs provided by the city and the cultural commission through the community centers was a series of children's activities, including field trips, puppet shows and other cultural events for those living in the poorest sections of Azul.

5. In June 1974, after President Juan Peron's death, the attitude of city officials with whom we were in contact began to change gradually. Slowly, funds that had been previously allotted for the programs of the community centers were reduced. For example, we began to notice that there was no longer a readiness on the part of city officials to respond to

our requests as they had done previously. When we asked for paint that they had given us before, they said they had run out of it. Medical services that had been given to people free were now being charged for. The whole attitude of the officials in charge of carrying out these programs appeared to be changing. However, we never received word from the city officials or from the provincial or federal governments that the programs were to stop. In fact, we continued to receive enough assistance and materials to conclude that we would be able to continue the programs, albeit on a reduced scale.

6. The nine people I have mentioned (see pages 1-2, supra) who worked in the community centers were respected members of the Azul community. They had all attended school there. They had their friends, their families in Azul. Their civic interest was exemplified in the community center activities that they undertook, and they were widely admired for these activities. None of these people had had any encounters with the law; none had ever been arrested. The work they carried on in the community centers contributed to the social status and prestige they enjoyed in Azul. An example is Eduardo Gonzales who was the cultural commission director and whose father also had been deeply engaged in civic affairs. When I attended his father's funeral, all the principal city officials were present, and the family received expressions of condolence from several levels of government. The three high school students whom I mentioned lived at home. Susana Pioli lived with her mother; her father

had died some time before; she was a third-year high school student planning to continue in school and possibly go on to college. Another student, Ruben Piazza, had graduated from one of the local high schools and had attended medical school in La Plata during one semester; he was in Azul on a vacation from the medical school. Eduardo Grutsky was a high school student; he lived with his parents, having lived in Azul for most of his life where his father was a businessman. Mirta Varela and Julio Varela were married; they were both from Azul. Julio Varela was well known in the Azul community, his father having been one of the all-time football heroes, as was the son. The son was also active in Catholic Church activities. Juan Gonzales was from one of the barrios where a community service center was located; he had long been involved in community service programs. He had also worked on a housing project. Eduardo Gonzales is married and has two children, a little boy and a little girl. Osvaldo Gasparini had graduated from one of the Azul high schools, and he had continued his studies in La Plata. He was back in Azul working as a store clerk. Osvaldo Gasparini underwent heart surgery in October 1974 and was thereafter in precarious health. Edith Stahelli de Frias was a store clerk; her family had land and cattle in the outskirts of Azul. She also had teaching credentials. She was married and was three-months pregnant in November 1974.

7. Early in November 1974 I was preparing to depart from Argentina and return to the United States. I wanted to see about

entering graduate school in the United States, so I was getting ready to say goodbye to my friends in Azul. The activities in the community centers had continued up to that point with regularity, but, of course, at a reduced level because of the financial cutbacks reported previously. There had been no events to make us think that anything out of the ordinary was going to happen. We decided to have a party which was in a way to say goodbye to each other. We arranged a barbecue at the house of one of the families engaged in community center work. This was the Piazza family. The barbecue began during the day of November 10. Barbecues in Argentina are somewhat of a whole-day affair, with people coming in and out. The meat is laid out and cooked; there are drinks and salads; it is an informal gathering where one comes and goes and has different meals during the day. We were at the house for most of the afternoon listening to music and enjoying ourselves.

8. About 9:30 in the evening people started to leave. It was between 9:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. that I left together with Eduardo Gonzales; we were planning to walk downtown. We stepped out of the house and crossed the street. An unidentified car pulled in front of us, and a man got out and he said that we had to accompany him for questioning. We asked him why, and he did not answer. He took my purse away, and he said we had to go in the car with him. He pulled a gun out and pointed it at us and said we had to do what he told us to do. We went into the car. On approaching us, he had identified himself as a policeman and showed us a badge very fast before putting it away. He pointed

the gun at us, so we climbed into the car. He kept pointing the gun at us and said if we moved or said anything he was going to shoot us. Another friend, , walked out of the house, somewhat behind us, and he also was apprehended at that point and put in the same car.

9. Then the three of us were driven to the police station, which was not very far from where the party had been. We were taken into the police station and stood up against a long wall with our hands against the wall and our feet spread out. We were not allowed to speak to each other at all or even to turn our heads to look at each other. As we were held against the wall, I learned from the sounds that other people at the barbecue had been arrested while they were going home, and a couple of people while they were still in the house. That same night, a couple of other people, Susana Pioli being one of them, were arrested. She had not been at the party but had been arrested later at her home. The following day still other people were brought into the police station for questioning. They were people who had been working at the community service centers. Some were released.

10. In the police station, we spent most of that night and the following day with our hands against the wall and with our feet spread out. We were not allowed to look in any other direction except straight at the wall. In the early morning hours of November 11, I was taken to a room, with my hands tied behind my back, and a cloth bag was put over my head and tied. I was told to sit in a corner and stay there, not move, and not

talk to anyone. I could tell there were other people in the same situation that I was by the shadows cast by their figures.

11. During the day of November 11, I was interrogated by police officers. They identified themselves as police officers. They said they knew that I had killed police officers, and that I had been involved in bombings of police stations, and that it was best for me to admit these crimes; otherwise terrible things would happen to me. Then I was beaten with blows from their fists and kicked between the legs. Both the police officer who was speaking and others around him beat me with their fists, kicked me, and hit me on the head and on all parts of my body. The accusations included my having killed the chief of police who had been killed in Buenos Aires. In fact, I had not been in Buenos Aires for three months previous to the arrest. When I was being interrogated, the police said if I gave a no answer I was sure to be hit. So, when they asked me, did you do it, and I said no, I was immediately smashed against the wall by one of the people in the room.

12. After this phase of the interrogation, I was put into the same room with some of the other people with whom I was arrested. We were woken up in the middle of the night (November 11-12) by a group of people whom I could not see, but believed to be the same police officers in the police station. They beat us, kicked us, and dragged me by the hair. The others in the room were Eduardo Gonzales, Ruben Piazza, and Julio Varela. During this time, there was no real interrogation; the process was

mainly accusations, and then we were all beaten and kicked, and I was dragged across the floor by someone who grabbed my hair. I was kicked in the chest and between the legs several times. Then we were left in the same room.

13. On the morning of November 13, I was taken to a room by myself, to what looked like an office. I believe there were at least three men there; at least I was spoken to by three men. There might have been other people present but I was not able to see because at this point they had put adhesive tape over my eyes down to the tip of my nose. I was seated on a chair with my hands tied behind my back and they informed me that the serious interrogation was going to take place at this point and that I was better off to respond adequately. They then again asked me about the activities that I was supposedly involved in -- the killing of the police chief in Buenos Aires -- and they related it to the activities that we carried on in the community centers. Next, they applied to me electric shocks while I was fully clothed; they applied it to my arms and my face, to my lips and my head. At that point I was threatened with very, very horrible things that were going to happen to me if I did not answer adequately. I later found out in prison that the people who were next door heard me screaming during the subsequent torture and began to ask what was happening, so the police officers turned the radio up very loud so that my screams should not be heard.

14. They threatened me with gang rape, and they threatened me with killing and throwing me in a ditch some place. They said they could get rid of me and no one would ever find out what happened to me; they could say that I tried to escape, that in fact I had escaped, and that they didn't know where I was. They gave proof that they were able and willing to do this by beating me and by applying further electric shocks. They said that they could apply the electric shocks for so long that I would be unable to bear children, that I would go crazy, that they would burn my whole body up with the electric shocks. That went on for a couple of hours right there in that office, and then they stopped. They said they would get to me later.

15. Hardly an hour later I was then taken to an upstairs room. This was still in the police station; I had already been upstairs before then to be examined by a doctor. Everyone else was also examined by a doctor. I was asked at that time if I suffered any heart ailments, and I said I did because I thought that they would take that into consideration. I told them that I did have a weak heart.

16. When I was taken upstairs, my eyes were covered so I did not know exactly what room I was in. I was taken into several rooms before I was finally deposited into one room. I was sat down on what seemed to me to be a bed. They took all my clothes off, and then they strapped me to the bed. They

tied me spread-eagle fashion. They tied both of my wrists to the bedpost and both of my ankles to the bedpost. I heard at least five or six different voices, and I could sense that there were several people in the room. The radio was on very loud and they seemed to be plugging and unplugging things constantly. Then they proceeded to apply the electric shocks throughout my body. On my head, on my eyes, on top of the adhesive tape, on my nipples, vulva, vagina, the joints of my legs, and my fingers and my toes, and at one point they stopped and asked me if I would rather be raped; they asked what I preferred, whether I preferred to be given the electric shocks or to be raped. I told them I didn't want either. At one time they went through the motions of preparing to rape me, but in fact they did not. I was given the electric shock treatment first tied up with my head facing up. Then they untied me, put me face down, and proceeded to apply the electric shocks in that position also. I became numb and was very hazy. I believe it went on for a few hours, two or three hours; I lost sense of time. Later, trying to reconstruct the period of time from how long people heard me scream, we concluded that it was two to three hours. My joints were numb completely and I had lost all sense of time and place by the end of the torture. They stopped and told me to put my clothes on, which I could not do by myself, so one of them helped me put my clothes on. I was taken then to another room, where I was left tied up to a chair. I was left there the remainder of that day and that night.

17. It was not until the following morning (November 14) that I was taken downstairs and the adhesive tape was taken off. They then informed us that we were going to be taken to the prison that afternoon. Later that morning, Judge Ippolito, of the federal district court in Azul visited the police station. He asked me if I had been mistreated, and I told him I had been. He said he would ask for a doctor's examination of me, and I was taken into a room by the same doctor who was the police doctor and who had examined us before the torture. This doctor looked at my face and at my stomach, and said "you don't have any signs of torture." He immediately went out of the room and said, "this woman is lying she does not have any signs of torture." He told the Judge this.

18. Later that day, all ten of us were taken to Azul-prison, Unit 7. Before we were transported to the prison, one of the police officers read to me a statement that stated generally my personal data such as name, place of birth, and nationality. This was done also to the other people who had been arrested. I was forced to sign the statement by another police officer who held a gun pointed at my head. Upon arriving at the prison, I was immediately asked by the receiving penal officer whether I was the one that had been tortured with electric shocks. I said yes, and he said well, "we have to have an examination right away." A male nurse came to examine me. He said that he did not want to make a statement, that he wanted the doctor to examine me, the official prison doctor. So then the doctor came,

and it was at that time that I first saw all the marks that I had on my body. The doctor proceeded to describe them and enumerate them in the prison record. The prison officials evidently feared being held responsible for what had been done to me at the police station, thinking I might claim later that they had done it at the prison. So they took note of and recorded all the bruises and burns and in general the condition that I arrived in, so there is a medical record of that at the prison.

19. Because I did not have direct relatives who could visit me, I did not have visiting hours for a period of almost four weeks. I was not able to communicate with the men who were arrested at and after the party on November 10. The women and I were put in the same cell. I learned that they had been subjected to very much the same treatment at the police station -- beating, kicking, dragging by the hair, and constant verbal and physical harassment by the police officers. They related to me that they had been subjected to the same threats of rape and threats of being killed if they did not answer adequately the questions that were being put to them.

20. On arrival at the prison, we were in deplorable condition in view of what had been done to us at the police station, the fact that we had had nothing to eat since November 10, and that we had been bound with nylon ropes. We had bruises from the ropes on our wrists and ankles. Since we had been lying on the floor for four nights and four days, with no blankets, we were very stiff and very weak, especially the woman who was three-

months pregnant. She was suffering additionally from an anemic condition. Although I was not in direct contact with the men because I was denied visiting privileges, relatives of the other women told me the men had been beaten. Eduardo Gonzales, even four weeks after the arrest (which was the first time I was permitted to see him), still showed very large bruises on his face and, in fact, the official picture that was taken of him by the prison authorities clearly shows this condition. I was able to see this photograph when we were taken to see the director of the prison as he had it posted along with pictures of all the other prisoners. I was not able to talk in private with the men until several weeks after the arrest because prison officials were always present. However, the six men were able to convey to me that they had been subjected to the same abusive treatment and torture that I had undergone. Osvaldo Gasparini, who had had heart surgery not long before the arrests, was in particularly poor physical condition. He was subjected to blows directly to the scar of the operation and this action has had very adverse effects on him. All of the six men were beaten, kicked and severely bruised by the police officers, and they were constantly threatened with being killed and were subjected to electric shock.

21. At the prison, I and the other three women who were arrested with me, together with others, were housed in a single cell. There were 17 of us at one time in the cell. Part of our cell

was a bathroom with one cold-water shower. The cell had one window for ventilation. One of the worst things about our cell was that it was directly under the men's bathroom which was located on the second floor. A sewer pipe from that bathroom was constantly leaking urine and feces. We had continually to clean the walls of our cell; when we asked the prison authorities to fix the sewer pipe they refused, saying it would take too much money and time. They said we could just keep cleaning up the sewage. We were housed in that single cell with very little ventilation. The prison was not heated, and there were strict quotas on the amounts of clothing and blankets that we were permitted to have. During the winter, the temperature would go below freezing, and still we were not provided with adequate heating or adequate clothing. As a result, several of us suffered frostbite of our hands and feet. Susana Pioli, Mirta Varela and I complained about the situation, but our requests for additional blankets and clothing and better methods of heating the cell were in vain.

22. Edith Stahelli de Frias, the woman who was three-months pregnant when arrested, was due to give birth to her child in May. The prison officials ignored our requests on behalf of Edith for medical care. They waited until the last minute -- when she was already in labor -- to take her to the hospital. They brought both her and her baby back to the prison within three hours of the birth. She received no post-natal care and, in fact, Edith arrived back at the prison still

unconscious from the anesthesia. We took the baby and waited for the mother to recover. Edith and her baby were allowed to stay in a separate cell for a few weeks. This was at our request, to protect the baby from infections through living in the same cell with 16 adults. For six months, the mother experienced bleeding and became progressively weaker. She fainted several times before she was finally taken to the hospital, where it was discovered that she still carried part of the placenta in her uterus -- a dangerous condition that could have caused a fatal infection. Later the mother and baby were forced to lodge in the common cell with the rest of us because of a regulation requiring political prisoners be kept apart from non-political prisoners.

23. The food provided for the political prisoners was basically bread, some vegetables, and some meat. The baby was not given any special treatment or food. Edith had to get everything she needed from her relatives. This included vitamins, certain vegetables, cheese and fruit the baby needed. We asked about examinations and shots for the baby; the prison officials delayed and often ignored the requests totally.

24. The six men (see pages 1-2, supra) were housed in a solitary confinement row in individual cells. Osvaldo Gasparini, who had had the heart operation, was left alone in a cell. He had a number of heart seizures in which he lost consciousness; the prison guards would often go by, ignoring him. Later they would

sometimes -- but not always -- bring doctors to see him. The doctors would give him a couple of pills to make him sleep and that would be the end of the doctors' efforts.

25. The women, including myself, were allowed to go out onto a small patio in the morning and in the afternoon for up to a period of two hours in the morning and in the afternoon. We were also permitted to go outside to hang up our clothes after washing them -- something the men could not do. The men had to hang their clothes inside their cells. The men, at first, were also allowed to exercise outside daily for two hours. Until December 31, 1975, we were allowed to receive books, magazines, newspapers and to write letters without restrictions, except that we knew our letters were read by prison officials. But there was no restriction on the number of letters sent and received.

26. Some time after we were arrested, a lawyer who had been contacted by one of the relatives came to see us. We saw him but once, and we later learned that owing to pressure from government officials he withdrew from our case.

27. I was summoned with Mirta Varela in December 1974 to the chambers of Judge Ippolito where we gave statements separately. My statement was given to the Judge's secretary; the Judge was not present. He only came into the room once to ask me on which day I had been tortured. He made no further inquiries. After giving the statement in which I told about my torture, a different statement was read to me. After the formal complaint of torture was filed, I was returned to the prison.

28. On December 31, 1974, the Judge's secretary came to the prison and read us the Judge's decision which stated we were to remain in preventive custody. The secretary also read the charges against us. The charges under which we were held involved violations of Articles 1 and 2 of the Argentine Security Law, Law No. 20.840. The charges made by the police were that they found subversive written material and weapons in the house where we held the barbecue. The weapons and material that the police claimed to find in the house were not produced until three days after our arrest. All the people at the party, including the people who owned the house, said that these things were not in the house. The secretary of the Judge then proceeded to inform us that we were being detained so that investigation could be conducted of the aforementioned charges. At the time we were read the statement, identical charges were dismissed as to four other people arrested along with me in November. However, because the state of siege had been imposed, they continued to be held under the Executive Power Law. The four people were Susana Pioli, Pedro Frias , Teresa Frias , and Argentino Gonzalez Gonzales. Three of these people have now been released; one remains in Argentina and two were allowed to leave the country under a constitutional law that allows political prisoners without any charges the option to leave Argentina. Susana Pioli is still detained without any charges, because at the time of her arrest she was a minor, and therefore was not allowed to make the choice

of leaving Argentina. She continues to be in prison without any charges to this day.

29. After the statement by the Judge's secretary was read to us, we proceeded to get another lawyer. With the assistance of relatives of one of the prisoners, we retained Dr. Perez Abraham, of Azul.

30. In May 1975, I was visited by a lawyer from the United States, Leonard Weinglass, and Edward McCaughan, a friend from the committee which had worked to free me. They discovered that the federal prosecutor had yet to file formal charges against us, but the two were informed that the Judge would sentence us in July. July was the date set because it was eight months after our arrest; if we were to be sentenced at all, we would receive the minimum sentence. In this event, we would legally be eligible for parole. The Judge had also given us this explanation on previous occasions. However, we were not sentenced in July, for several reasons which were later conveyed to us by relatives of other prisoners. First, there were several strikes by government workers. In addition, the Judge received serious threats. He received a picture of his daughter with a letter encouraging him to make the "right" decision in this case. As a consequence, the Judge took a month's vacation in July and August. Thus, sentencing was delayed until September 1975 -- ten months after we had been arrested. The procedure consisted of the filing of charges by the prosecutor, the defense lawyer presenting our case in writing, and the Judge reviewing the evidence before passing

sentence. There was no trial and no direct or cross-examination; there was no appearance by the defendants before the Judge. The Judge gave each of us a three-year sentence. After passing sentence, the Judge resigned immediately.

31. After being informed of the sentence, all nine of us (excluding Susana Pioli who had no charges pending against her) decided to appeal our sentence to the appellate court in La Plata, which is also in the province of Buenos Aires. Throughout the proceedings of the case even before sentencing, our lawyer, Perez Abraham, was the victim of threatening letters, and before the sentence was passed, his house was bombed. We came to realize that because of these threats and attacks, his representation of us had become perfunctory and pro forma, so after the decision to appeal, we relieved him from further responsibility in our case. We did not retain another lawyer. We were informed that a public defender in La Plata had been assigned to our appeal, but we never saw nor heard from him. After filing the appeal, we did not receive any reply during the six months that followed.

32. During that period of six months, conditions at the prison changed for the worse. In December 1975 we were informed that the military were assuming complete control of the prison with special attention to political prisoners. We were also informed of new regulations which restricted visiting hours to only a half hour on Saturdays and a half hour on Sundays, whereas previously we had two hours on each of those days. They also restricted the amount of recreation time to one hour per day.

They limited the amount of reading material to one book per person per week, plus one newspaper and one magazine a week. Finally, visiting privileges were restricted to parents, spouses, and children only, whereas before other relatives could visit the prisoners.

33. On March 27, 1976, three days after the military coup in Argentina, I was in my cell with the rest of the women political prisoners when a female guard and a military officer came in and told me to get dressed. I asked them where they were taking me, but they did not reply. They merely said I had to go with them. I got dressed and went with them to that part of the women's section of the prison where the solitary confinement cells are located. I was put in one of the cells with nothing but a cot to sit on and ordered to wait. I waited about four or five hours until four or five military officers came to get me. By that time they had told the women in the cell to pack my things as I was leaving. Again, they did not inform them where I was to go. I took my personal effects and was led outside the prison. Here, I was given my documents (my passport and other identification papers that had been kept in the prison office), and I signed some papers. I was then taken, handcuffed and heavily guarded, in a paddy-wagon to a small airfield on the outskirts of Azul near the prison. There we waited until a small plane landed. Five men came out of the plane, one of them came to the paddy-wagon, took my handcuffs off, put new ones on, took all of my things to the plane, took me to the plane, seated

me, and proceeded to lock my handcuffs to a chain attached to the floor.

34. Throughout the trip, the men refused to answer any of my inquiries. We landed in Buenos Aires at an airfield which I believe belongs to the air force. It was not the international commercial airport in Buenos Aires. From this field, I was driven to a large prison in Buenos Aires, to Villa de Voto. There, I was registered after an argument among the guards whether they should register me or not. At this point, I became very scared because I didn't know whether they were trying to get rid of me. They finally registered me and then took me to the second floor of the prison. There were women prisoners on the first floor, but I was taken to a completely empty second floor. I spent that evening there in a large empty cell with only a cot and a couple of blankets. I was still not told where I was being taken or what was happening to me, so I believed that I was being transferred to that prison. The following morning there was a change of guards, but the new guards also did not know what was happening, or they would not tell me.

35. I spent the entire day in that cell until the evening, at which time I was taken out by a different route from that by which I had come into the prison, through the back. They put my things in a station-wagon and I was handcuffed to a prison authority. I was taken in that station-wagon which was led by another car with a couple of men pointing machine guns at people so that they would give way to our caravan. We were taken to the airport, and there I was met by United States Embassy officials.

36. They told me I was going home and asked me if I would object to a medical examination, which I did not object to. I was examined by an Argentine doctor and asked to sign an affidavit in front of the Embassy official in which I stated that immediately prior to my release I had not been harassed or in any way physically abused by any authority. I signed the paper. One of the Embassy officials then told me that I was being released under a special law providing for the expulsion of foreigners who were in government custody.

37. I was put on a plane and flown directly to New York, and from there I proceeded to California. I was taken from Azul on the afternoon of March 26, 1976, spent that night in Buenos Aires, and then on the 27th in the early evening I was flown from Buenos Aires to New York and arrived in New York on the morning of the 28th.

38. Since my release, I have learned in letters from relatives that the sentence has been confirmed for the people who were arrested with me and who had filed the appeal. Susana Pioli, the woman who was in prison without any charges, remains in prison. I have also learned from relatives of those people in prison and from letters directly from the men that prison conditions have gotten much worse since I left. It has evidently become a consistent practice to treat political prisoners worse than common prisoners. I observed this before leaving Azul, and news that I have received from the prisoners' relatives confirms that the practice has worsened. Non-political prisoners, for

example, get more visiting hours with relatives; they are allowed to write more often; and they are allowed to receive food and other articles from relatives. This is specifically the case in the Azul prison. Through letters from relatives and from the men themselves, I have learned that protein and vitamin deficiencies are such that Ruben Piazza has suffered loss of hair and loss of teeth. The man who had the heart operation, Osvaldo Gaspirini, is in especially bad shape. His family has been trying to get a court order to have him transferred back to Azul prison since his doctor is in Azul and it would be easier for him to get medical attention there. (the men prisoners were transferred from Azul prison to Sierra Chica in June , 1975. To the best of my knowledge, they remain there today.) When relatives have complained about the situation, they have been harassed and threatened. The relatives sometimes have taken vitamins to the prisoners but the latter have never received them. The nine are not allowed any sort of food supplement to their diets. In the case of Susana Pioli, her mother has made many trips to Buenos Aires to try to secure her release, but to no avail. The government officials have also denied Susana the option to leave the country.

39. All the nine people who remain in prison have been losing weight as a result of a deficient diet, and the situation of the baby and her mother continues to be serious as now the diet from the prison which is totally inadequate cannot be supplemented by the food that relatives were previously allowed to bring in. My information concerning the prison and health conditions of the six men comes from letters I have received from their relatives.

40. After having filed for parole, the nine people still in prison have concluded that they have no other recourse to alleviate their situation, given the internal situation in Argentina. No one has been able to suggest to them any further steps that they could take in Argentina to secure their release.

Olga Talamante
OLGA TALAMANTE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF) ss.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of
Oct, 1976.

[Signature]
Notary Public

My Commission expires:

