

Villalobos Detective Hasn't Left Costa Rica

BY ROBERT GOODIER

Tico Times Staff



Courtesy La Nación

UNDER the radar: U.S. Detective Waitman claims to have caught Luis Enrique Villalobos (above).

saying, "He didn't pay me anything. He didn't pay anyone that I know of. He owes me \$150,000 and didn't pay me any of it."

WAITMAN showed The Tico Times a copy of his contract with Cervantes that pledged four payments totaling \$150,000, the first on the first day of operation, the last when all the Villalobos money is doled out. However, since he never began payments, he doesn't owe Cervantes, he said. He paid Cervantes several thousand dollars in about a dozen small advances the lawyer requested over the three months they did

business together, Waitman said.

To one investor who spoke to The Tico Times on condition of anonymity, Waitman's plan looked like another in a series of cons that have vexed investors since their money was tied up when the Brothers operation closed. Opportunists have targeted Villalobos investors in the past as a group of people who have already proven their willingness to take risks, or their credulity.

One group of about 650 investors, the United Concerned Citizens and Residents, warned against giving Waitman money and considered taking legal action against him, according a member of the group's board of directors.

SUSPICIONS abound. Some of the prominent ones include that Waitman is working for the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) collecting bank information on people who might not have paid their taxes, or that he is working for the Villalobos brothers themselves, trying to coerce investors into withdrawing their charges against the brothers in order to give him their account documents.

When asked why it looked so shady, he said, "I think it's because of our predecessors. We tried to be as outward as possible, but (there is) skepticism from these people who entered into something that they knew was too good to be true (the loan operation) and when it faltered (they could not recover their money)."

Of those who did pay and spoke to The Tico Times afterward, all were hopeful, but skeptical. One investor, a U.S. retiree living in Costa Rica who did not want his name made public, said, "I think he's try-

ing to do something for the cause. That's what I call it, for the cause, for the people, and I admire him for doing it. At least someone is trying to do something for the people who lost their money. I feel that if he is honest and working, which he seems to be, I wish him the best."

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