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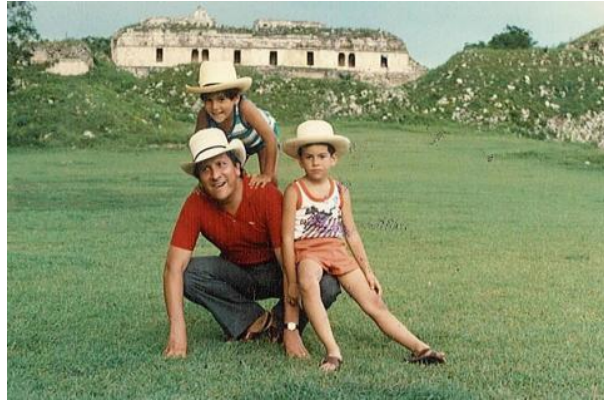
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Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Colombia's Minister of Justice, and his children while on vacation during 1984. His murder, in 1984, helped to turn popular sentiment against Pablo Escobar. Family photo online via Nicolas Entel, producer of the documentary "The Sins of My Father."

Pablo Escobar wanted to be involved with national politics for one major reason: As a member of Congress, he could lobby against—and vote against—an extradition treaty with America.

For a short while, Escobar had a seat in Congress. His importance, in national politics, was very short-lived, however.

When Rodrigo Lara Bonilla—the Minister of Justice and one of Pablo's political enemies—was murdered, in 1984, Escobar's political career was over. Not only that ... Pablo's family, according to his sister Luz Maria, was now on the run:

When Lara Bonilla was murdered, we received a call from Pablo, and he said we had to leave our apartments in five minutes. So I packed my bags, my children's blankets and we began running, and this lasted for how many years. After Mr. Lara Bonilla's death, we had to run for ten years.
(From interview included in "Pablo Escobar's Private Archive".)

Meanwhile, her brother Pablo, fled to Panama where he was protected by General Manuel Noriega. Back in Colombia, Vicky had the couple's second child, a daughter named Manuela.

When he felt it was safe to return to his own country, Escobar came back to Colombia. He never forgot the people whom he thought had betrayed him (when they blamed him for Lara Bonilla's murder).

After his return from Panama, Escobar used his retreat at Hacienda Napoles as his home base. There his family, including his mother, could enjoy Pablo's growing wealth.

Pablo's home movies, from the Escobar family archive, give us a snapshot into the lifestyle they had at the time. His mother recalls:

Pablo said, "Go with your friends, Mama. I know that you are happy and healthy when you are with all those teachers. That [a visit to Hacienda Napoles] was a very nice trip for all the teachers. They had never traveled in a helicopter. Pablo told his employees—and he had many—"My Mom is coming with all the teachers, so you'll treat them like queens." (From interview included in "Pablo Escobar's Private Archive".)

With his love of animals, which he'd also had as a child, Escobar imported all kinds of exotic creatures for his private zoo. His personal archives are filled with hours of video recordings showing those animals as they arrived and lived at Hacienda Napoles.

Jaime Gaviria, Pablo's cousin and confidant, recalls:

He asked for giraffes, he asked for rhinoceroses, zebras. He brought many birds in a Hercules plane. They called the Inderena [Colombia's National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and Environment], and the director said he would not permit it, so we had some trouble, because it was illegal. (From interview included in "Pablo Escobar's Private Archive".)

Not one to worry whether things he wanted to do, or obtain, were legal, Escobar gave some instructions how to resolve the trouble:

"Ask the guard how much they pay him, and give him three years' salary, so he would let us get our animals out." (From interview included in "Pablo Escobar's Private Archive".)

The bribe did the job, and the animals arrived.

Today ... years after Hacienda Napoles fell into ruin, the hippos—which multiplied greatly—are thriving particularly well. In fact, they have expanded into an entire herd.

America, meanwhile, had started a "war on drugs." Its leaders sought to catch Escobar in an ever-expanding dragnet.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PABLO-ESCOBAR-MURDER-and-MAYHEM-Pablo-Escobar-Narcos>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream

Rodrigo Lara Bonilla - Murder Victim

Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was Colombia's Minister of Justice in 1984. He did not approve of Pablo Escobar's drug-trafficking empire.

Because cocaine had become such a huge business in Colombia—amounting to around \$5 billion a year by 1984—Rodrigo Lara was one of just a few people who openly opposed Escobar and publicly campaigned against the drug trade.

While he was in Bogota, during April of 1984, Rodrigo Lara was murdered in his car when two young men, operating a red Yamaha motorcycle, pulled-up alongside his Mercedes and fired seven bullets into him.

One of his young sons—also called Rodrigo and just eight years old at the time—helped his father's bodyguards get his fatally injured Dad to the hospital.

Pablo Escobar was widely blamed for the murder.

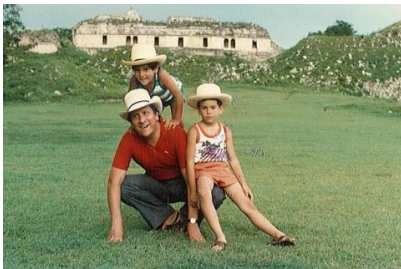
In addition to the disastrous situation for Rodrigo Lara's family, and Colombia in general, Escobar himself began to experience unintended consequences. Popular sentiment began to turn against him.

In this photo, we see the Justice Minister on vacation with his children.

Lara Bonilla family photo; online via Nicolas Entel, producer of the documentary "The Sins of My Father."

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rodrigo-Lara-Bonilla-Murder-Victim>





Pablo Escobar's Ranch and His Hippos

Image online, courtesy Wikipedia.

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