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3100 MASSACHUSETTS AVE N.W.
WASHINGTON D.C. 20008



FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION LEADER
FAX NUMBER: (202) 898 4273

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| Date <i>10 July 1990</i> Time | Input Number Sent By <i>J. Nadr</i> |
| This transmission consists of page(s) plus leader | |
| FROM (NAME) TO (NAME) (DEPT/SECTION) (POST/COMPANY) FAX NUMBER | <i>Jocelyne Nadr</i> <i>Bill Gentile</i> |
| MESSAGE: <i>Thought you might like to keep the attached for your records. I hope all is well. Jocelyne</i> | |

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Reporter shot by government troops inquest is told

THE journalist David Blundy was wearing a dark blue shirt similar to those worn by rebel troops when he was shot, probably by government soldiers, while covering fighting in El Salvador, an inquest in London was told yesterday.

Bill Gentile, a US photographer for *Newsweek*, described the moments before the death of Mr Blundy, of *The Sunday Correspondent*, on a video played at St Pancras coroner's court. "I believe David was killed by government forces," he said.

Although based in Washington Mr Blundy, aged 44, frequently travelled to Central America. Mr Gentile said that on last November 17 he encountered Mr Blundy in Mejicanos, a working-class district in San Salvador. Government troops were trying to maintain control after a big guerrilla offensive.

"The government-controlled zone was very tense," he said. The two of them, with four other foreign journalists, began walking towards the government commander for information but then "a single shot rang out and was followed by a short burst of automatic weapon fire". Mr Blundy was caught in an unprotected position in the middle of a crossroads. His 6ft 4in frame and dark blue shirt made him an easy target.

Mr Gentile said the others tried to get Mr Blundy to safety. "I shouted 'journalists, journalists, don't shoot' in Spanish and we waved white flags in the air. I heard David say 'get me out of here', and

this was the first and last thing I heard him say." A Spanish television crew van took Mr Blundy to a nearby hospital. He was operated on but died later that day.

Dr Peter Vanezis, a pathologist, said Mr Blundy died from two gun shot wounds, to the chest and abdomen.

Mr Gentile said although they were "in a very tense and rapidly moving situation", they were clearly identifiable as journalists from their equipment and white flags.

He did not see Mr Blundy being shot but he believed the sound of fire came from an area held by the government troops. He said the government troops "had accused foreign journalists on a regular basis of being sympathetic to anti-government rebels".

An investigation was carried out by Det Insp Robert Webster, attached to the International and Organised Crime Branch, New Scotland Yard. He said he was hampered because a number of government troops he would have liked to have spoken to were being held in jail in connection with the murder of six Jesuit priests. It was impossible to find out the identity of the gunman, he said.

The coroner, Dr Douglas Chambers, recorded a verdict of misadventure on Mr Blundy, who was divorced with two daughters and came from Slinfold, West Sussex. "This is the most clear example of someone in the course of duty entering a course of conduct which is dangerous," he said.

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