

# Money Changer Says Brazil's Ruling PT Had International Money Laundering Scheme

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Brazilian money changer, Antônio Oliveira Claramunt, aka Toninho da Barcelona (Little Tony from Barcelona, a reference to a neighborhood in the São Paulo suburb of São Caetano do Sul), said that money transferred to the Workers' Party (PT) by the Rural Bank came from foreign accounts belonging to the advertising executive, Marcos Valério, and was introduced into Brazil through transactions with money changers.

By means of various international financial operations, the money entered Brazil and went into the party's accounts, "Barcelona" told the Parliamentary Investigating Commission (CPI) on Bingo Parlors. He presumably obtained this information from friends who work in the currency market.

"Two schemes fattened the PT's account. These schemes involved the Rural Bank and the Bonus-Banval brokerage firm," he said. One of the schemes, according to the money changer, consisted of the loans received by Valério from the Rural Bank.

According to "Barcelona," these loans were fake. In fact, it was money drawn from Valério's accounts abroad. The loan façade was, therefore, just a way to legalize the money.

The company responsible for introducing these funds from abroad, according to "Barcelona," was the Trade Link, which is connected to the Rural Bank. The funds received by Trade Link from Valério's accounts were sent to another money changer, Dario Messer, in Uruguay.

From there the money was supposedly received in dollars by the Bonus-Banval brokerage firm. To deliver the money to the PT, Bonus-Banval needed to convert it into reais, which it did with the help of money changers.

"I exchanged US\$ 3.05 million (R\$ 7 million) for Banval and learned that the money was for the PT," "Barcelona" said. According to him, friends informed him of where the money he exchanged for the brokerage firm was going.

"Barcelona" said that Messer managed an account in Panama together with Trade Link. When asked by the legislators about the reasons for transactions involving so many countries, the money changer commented that, in the 1990's, the market was "very open," because the Council for the Control of Financial Activities (Coaf) did not yet exist. "Nowadays, to withdraw a lot of money, one has to do a good job," he affirmed.

The Coaf is an organ subordinated to the Ministry of Finance and was created to accompany financial transactions in order to combat money-laundering.

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