You Decide

5.2 Francisco Martin Duran was a twenty-six-year-old upholsterer from Colorado. On September 13, 1994, Duran bought an assault rifle and roughly one hundred rounds of ammunition. Two days later, he purchased a thirty-round clip and equipped the rifle with a folding stock. Thirteen days later, Duran bought a shotgun and, the following day, additional ammunition. On September 30, 1993, Duran left work and, without contacting his family or employer, began a journey to Washington, D.C. He purchased another thirty-round clip and a large coat in Virginia. On October 10, Duran arrived in Washington, D.C., and he stayed in various hotels over the next nineteen days.

On October 29, 1994, Duran positioned himself outside the White House fence and observed a group of men in dark suits, one of whom was Dennis Basso, who strongly resembled then-president Bill Clinton. Two eighth-grade students remarked that Basso looked like Bill Clinton. Duran almost immediately began firing twenty rounds at Basso, who managed to take cover. Duran was tackled by a pedestrian when attempting to reload a second clip. The Secret Service searched Duran's automobile and found incriminating evidence, including a map with the phrase "kill the Pres!" and an "X" drawn across a photo of President Clinton. A subsequent search of Duran's home led to the seizure of other incriminating evidence, including a business card on the back of which Duran called for the killing of all government officers and department heads.

Was Duran guilty of an attempt to kill the president of the United States, despite the fact that this was impossible given that President Clinton was not on the lawn of the White House? See *United States v. Duran,* 96 F.3d 1495 (D.C. Cir. 1996).

You can find the answer at study.sagepub.com/lippmaness2e