

'Carlos the Jackal' Trial Begins In Paris After Years of Mayhem

'Professional Revolutionary' Addresses Court

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By Charles Trueheart
Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, Dec. 12—"Carlos the Jackal" finally went on trial today, nearly a quarter of a century after his name became synonymous with world terrorism.

"My name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez," said the ascot-wearing retired Venezuelan guerrilla and arms trafficker as he stood in a Paris courtroom. "My profession is professional revolutionary."

Ramirez, 48, who appeared relaxed and smiling amid the heavy security of the Palace of Justice, has been charged in the killing of at least 16 people and the injuries of hundreds more in bombing attacks and other armed terrorist hits from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. He once claimed to have killed 83 people.

He is being tried, however, on just three charges of murder in a June 1975 shooting in Paris that left two French police officers and a Lebanese informer dead. Carlos claims he had nothing to do with the killings; he has said he believes that Israeli intelligence was responsible and that the attack was designed to sour relations between France and the Palestinians, whose burgeoning cause he adopted in the early 1970s.

But Carlos the Jackal became world-famous—the grainy, grim face of fiendish terror on magazine covers and television screens—six months after the Paris shooting.

Storming a conference hall in Vienna, he and a band of confederates captured 11 oil ministers from the

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then-potent Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The ministers later were released in Algiers, reportedly for a ransom handsome enough to have underwritten his mob's future revolutionary projects and kept Carlos himself in the Cuban cigars and Savile Row tailoring he has preferred since his London youth as a member of a prosperous Venezuelan family.

On the stand in public for the first time today, the reputedly multilingual Carlos, speaking French heavily accented by Spanish, described his address like this: "The world is my domain. My last address was Khartoum, in Sudan."

The reference was to his August 1994 abduction in Khartoum after his Sudanese hosts found him too difficult to maintain and protect. Seized by French agents from a hospital operating table—by some accounts, he was injected with an incapacitating drug and stuffed in a sack—the arrest was a humbling moment for the long-elusive guerrilla. Carlos has been in solitary confinement, preparing his defense, ever since.

France sentenced Carlos in absentia to life imprisonment in 1992, and he is exercising his right to a retrial in person—even as he declares that the French system of justice is part of an American-Zionist conspiracy.

On the stand today, he denounced the "monstrous arbitrariness" of the trial, the first in a series he faces. "I can't be judged because of the conditions of my arrest."

According to his lawyer, Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, Carlos will argue in his own defense that the circumstances of his forced extraction from Sudan violated his rights under the European Charter of Human Rights.

Referring to Carlos's "kidnapping," she said: "Carlos is a convinced revolutionary. He has dedicated his life to the cause. I do not accept the use of the term 'terrorist.'"

One of many anonymous, inside-the-investigation sources quoted in French newspapers summed up the faintly condescending treatment the once-feared Carlos is now getting:

"He knows he's a has-been. His mental universe is the Palestinian guerrilla movement. He's nothing but a dinosaur of the Cold War stranded in the '90s."

Carlos's first move today was to ask

the presiding judge, Yves Corneloup, to disqualify a civil party to the case, an anti-terror organization called SOS-Attentats, which he described as "extremist, revisionist and racist." The judge said he would rule later.

The trial is expected to last about a week before going to a combination judge and jury panel for a verdict.

Carlos's trail of death and mayhem continued long after the incidents of 1975. Bombings on trains and in the streets of Paris, Berlin and Marseille made him the world's most wanted terrorist. He moved audaciously—two bazooka attacks on jetliners at Orly Airport in Paris on successive Sundays, for example, were both failures. As exotic as he was fiendish, he turned up in Iraq and Yugoslavia, Damascus and Budapest.

His father, who is still living, was a prominent communist lawyer in Caracas. He named his sons Vladimir, Illich and Lenin. Illich, later Carlos, studied at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow before being asked to leave the Soviet Union in 1970, apparently for the capitalist habits he brought to his revolutionary fervor.

Carlos's terror business faded with the times, and by the early 1980s he was close to being a full-time arms merchant. He wound up in Khartoum, seemingly under the protection of the radical Sudanese government.

His life there followed a familiar pattern of excess. He was known for pouring expensive whiskey in expatriate clubs of the capital of a country whose laws proscribed alcohol. He had a new name, a new Jordanian wife and an unchecked habit of chasing women.

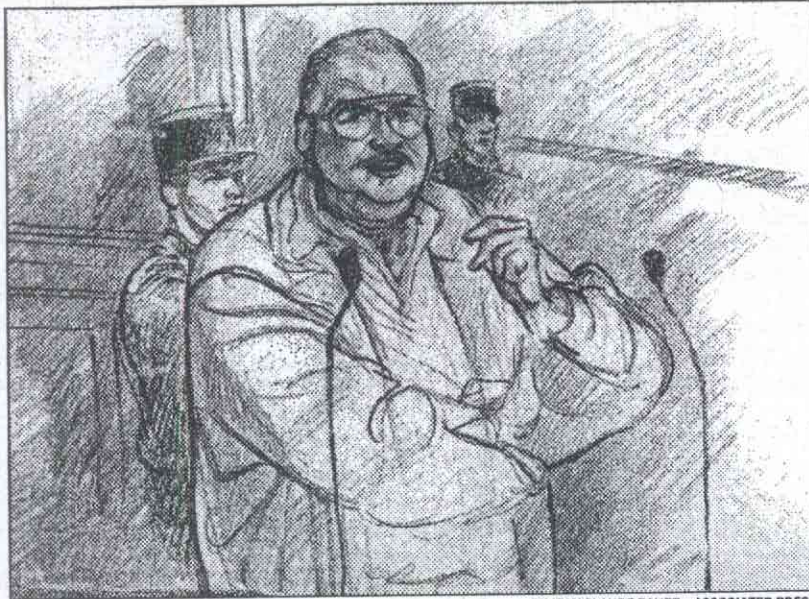
And until his arrest in 1994, according to a French magazine account, few of his acquaintances in Khartoum had any idea who he was.

Carlos's behavior as one of the world's most notorious political prisoners has been an entertaining final act in the Carlos drama.

In his cell, according to his lawyers' testimony, Carlos has consumed dozens of foreign news publications every day and feverishly prepared his elaborate defense.

He has met frequently since 1994 with the investigating magistrate in

He had contacts with then-proliferating guerrilla movements and terror cells across western and eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. His adopted cause was the liberation of Palestine, and his initial associations were with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a radical wing of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization. But Carlos was a freelancer, a contract hire, who came by his radicalism at home.



BY JEAN CLAUDE BAUER—ASSOCIATED PRESS

A sketch shows 'Jackal' Illich Ramirez Sanchez in the Paris courtroom.

his case, Jean-Louis Bruguiere. For the French, the trial represents a showdown between a notorious criminal and the country's best

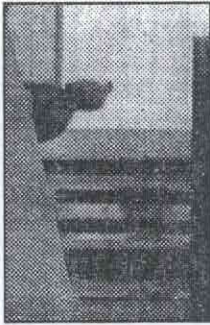
known prosecutor. Bruguiere, often dubbed "the Cowboy," supervises virtually all of France's crusades against terrorists.

A TERRORIST'S CAREER

"Carlos the Jackal" has acknowledged his role in some of the bloodiest terrorist attacks of the 1970s; police and intelligence sources have linked him to other attacks.

Born Illich Ramirez Sanchez in Venezuela to a wealthy communist lawyer who gave his son Lenin's middle name.

Begins study at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, famous training ground for future terrorists and KGB recruits.



Guerrilla guarding Israeli hostages. Intelligence reports link him to the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.

Linked to:

- Takeover of the French Embassy in The Hague, Netherlands.
- Bombing of Paris drugstore in which two people died and 30 were wounded.

Said to have been the brain behind hijacking of an Air France jetliner to Entebbe, Uganda. Israeli commandos storm the plane and end the standoff; 31 people die.

Other terror attacks in 1982 and 1983 to which Carlos has been linked:

- Bombing of Paris-Toulouse express train kills six people and wounds 15.
- Bombing near Champs Elysees in Paris kills a pregnant woman and wounds 63 other people.

French police charge Carlos killed two French intelligence agents and a Lebanese man who were investigating attacks on planes of Israel's El Al airlines at Paris's Orly Airport.

- Bombing of main Marseille railroad terminal on the Paris-Marseille express kills five people and wounds 50.
- Bombing of French cultural center in West Berlin kills one and wounds 23.

Arrested in Sudan and taken to France, where he has been in solitary confinement in maximum security jail.

Joins Communist Students Movement in Venezuela. Receives guerrilla training in Cuba.



Joins Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Begins terrorist career. The media later nicknames him after the fictional terrorist in Frederick Forsyth's 1971 novel, "The Day of the Jackal."

Carlos and band of Palestinian and West German guerrillas attack ministerial meeting in Vienna of the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries, in which three people die. Eleven cartel oil ministers taken to North Africa in a hijacked plane in a \$1 billion ransom drama.



Austrian guards outside OPEC meeting.

Convicted in absentia by French court for 1975 killing of two French counterintelligence agents.

SOURCES: News wires, staff reports