

Ex-U.S. Informer Loses Bid to Stay His Extradition

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A U.S. judge in Alexandria yesterday approved the extradition of former government informer Franklin Peroff despite warnings from Peroff's attorneys that ordering Peroff out of the country "... is really sentencing him to death."

Peroff, 39, whose testimony in the early 1970s helped break open among other things the so-called "French Connection" narcotics smuggling ring, was arrested last week based on a Swedish warrant charging him with fraud involving a stock transfer in 1972.

The arrest came seven days after Peroff tried unsuccessfully to get a court to order federal protection for him after an unknown assailant allegedly fired a shotgun blast at his automobile. Yesterday, attorneys argued in U.S. District Court in Alexandria that Peroff has now been abandoned by the federal government, which provided him the protection of U.S. marshalls while he was an active witness and later gave him a new identity and relocated his family in exchange for his cooperation.

One of Peroff's attorney's, Harvey Katz, described his client as a man "who has done a lot for law enforcement in this country and has been forsaken."

Later, cocounsel Phillip J. Hirschkop pleaded with Judge J. Calvitt Clarke to stop the extradition because "it would be inhumane to send this man under the circumstances to Sweden to have someone blow his brains out."

Peroff himself tried to tell the court about his involvement as a government witnesses and his fears for his safety but was overcome by emotion and unable to continue.

After a brief recess, Hirschkop then told Judge Clarke that Peroff didn't "feel up to recounting" his role in "many, many heavy matters," which he claims now put his life in danger.

Judge Clarke, ruled that there was "no persuasive" evidence to show that Peroff would be subjected to the harm alluded to by Hirschkop and Katz.

"There is no evidence that the defendant would be any less safe in Sweden than in the United States," Judge Clarke said.

was extradictable, Clarke In certifying that Peroff said he concluded there was probable cause to believe that Peroff was the man wanted in Sweden on the fraud charges, although Peroff's attorney's argued that evidence presented by the government was insufficient.

Judge Clarke also denied bond for Peroff and ordered him held in a Northern Virginia jail pending final action by the State Department on his extradition.

In reference to public discussion of Peroff's role as an informer, Judge Clarke said, "now that his Peroff's cover is blown . . ." he was apprehensive Peroff might try to "go underground."

"Where do you run with a wife and five children?" Hirschkop asked Clarke.

Clarke said he wanted Peroff held in custody not onl to guarantee the extradition will go ahead but "for his own protection."

Following the Judge's ruling, Hirschkop told the court Peroff's case "is the persuasive reason why nobody should ever cooperate with the U.S. government in a prosecution . . . that's the lesson to be learned by every informer."

Peroff's attorney's said they will either ask the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to review Clarke's decision or appeal to the Secretary of State to hold off on the extradition because of the potential threat to Peroff's life.