



U.S. Fugitive Found Hiding in Portuguese Hamlet

McNabb Associates, P.C. (U.S. Extradition Attorneys)

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A 1970s militant who carried out one of the most brazen plane hijackings in U.S. history lived for decades in an idyllic Portuguese hamlet near a stunning beach with his Portuguese wife and two children, neighbors said Wednesday.

George Wright, 68, was taken into custody by local police Monday at the request of the U.S. government, which is seeking his extradition for escaping from a New Jersey jail in 1970 after being convicted of murder. Wright was also named as one of the hijackers of a Delta flight in 1972.

The Portuguese news agency Lusa, citing unnamed police sources, reported Wednesday that the former Black Liberation Army member plans to fight the extradition demand.

During a court appearance Tuesday in Lisbon, Wright asked to be released pending the outcome of the U.S. extradition request, and his request is being reviewed by Portuguese judicial authorities, U.S. Justice Department spokeswoman Laura Sweeney said Wednesday.

Until his arrest, life was sweet for Wright in the tiny town of Almocageme, 28 miles west of Lisbon. Fluent in Portuguese, Wright had no apparent profession but worked a series of odd jobs, most recently as a nightclub bouncer, said two neighbors who spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared being ostracized for speaking out.

Wright married a Portuguese woman, identified by neighbors as

55-year-old Maria do Rosario Valente, the daughter of a retired Portuguese army officer. They had two children — Portuguese-born Marco and Sara — now in their early 20s, who used their mother's last name when they registered for swim classes at the local pool.

The couple lived in a small, whitewashed house with terracotta roof tiles, a yellow door and a small front garden in the picturesque village, which lies close to broad Atlantic beaches. A gray Volkswagen station wagon that neighbors said Wright drove was parked on the cobbled dead-end street outside.

Wright was convicted of the 1962 murder of gas station owner Walter Patterson, a decorated World War II veteran shot during a robbery at his business in Wall, New Jersey.

His daughter, Ann Patterson, told the AP she wants Wright sent back quickly to the United States. "I'm so thankful that now there's justice for Daddy," she said Wednesday. "He never got any kind of justice."

Wright possessed a Portuguese identity card that said he was born in Guinea-Bissau, a former Portuguese colony in West Africa. A photocopy of the document, shown to The AP, bore the name Jose Luis Jorge dos Santos, an alias that U.S. officials said Wright used. The identity card puts his age as 68. It was issued in 1993 and expired in 2004.

Neighbors estimated the family had been in the village for at least 20 years but said the couple didn't mix much with neighbors. None of them witnessed Wright's arrest.

Rui Santos, who works at the parish council, said Wright

approached him in the mid-1990s and offered, in Portuguese, to coach local kids at basketball but the project never got off the ground.

A fingerprint on Wright's Portuguese ID card was the break that led a U.S. fugitive task force to him. He was arrested by Portuguese authorities and is being detained in Lisbon but Portuguese police have repeatedly refused to release any details about the case.

Eight years into his 15- to 30-year prison term, Wright and three other men escaped from the Bayside State Prison in Leesburg, New Jersey, on Aug. 19, 1970.

The FBI said Wright became affiliated with an underground militant group, the Black Liberation Army, and lived in a "communal family" with several of its members in Detroit.

In 1972, Wright — dressed as a priest and using an alias — hijacked a Delta flight from Detroit to Miami with four other Black Liberation Army members and three children, including Wright's companion and their 2-year-old daughter. The hijackers with Wright were not the same men who escaped from prison with him.

After releasing the plane's 86 other passengers in exchange for a \$1 million ransom — delivered by an FBI agent wearing only swim trunks — the hijackers forced the plane to fly to Boston. There an international navigator was taken aboard, and the plane was flown to Algeria, where the hijackers sought asylum.

Wright's capture was among the top priorities when the New York-New Jersey Fugitive Task Force

was formed in 2002, according to Michael Schroeder, a spokesman for the U.S. Marshals Service, who worked with New Jersey's FBI and other agencies on the task force.

Investigators started the case anew. They reviewed reports from the 1970s, interviewed Wright's victims and had age-enhanced sketches made.

An address in Portugal was one of several places they wanted to check out.

That changed last week, when details started falling into place with the help of Portuguese authorities.

By the weekend, U.S. authorities were on a plane to Portugal. And Monday, Portuguese police staking out Wright's home found him there.

This article was written by Barry Hatton and published by htrnews.com on September 28, 2011.

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN List Removal.

The author of this blog is Douglas McNabb. Please feel free to contact him directly at mcnabb@mcnabbassociates.com or at one of the offices listed above.

Suspect Extradited from Mexico in Ohio Rape Case

McNabb Associates, P.C. (U.S. Extradition Attorneys)

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A Mexican man has been returned to southwest Ohio to face charges that he kidnapped and raped a 9-year-old girl in 2005, in a case that sparked unrest in a Hamilton neighborhood.

Alfredo Lopez Cruz was being held Wednesday without bond in Butler County. No attorney was listed for him.

Lopez Cruz disappeared soon after the girl told family members she had been assaulted. The home where he was believed to have been staying was vandalized and set on fire.

Federal officials said in March he had been taken into custody in Mexico after a joint effort by Mexican and U.S. authorities to find him, and that extradition proceedings would begin.

The 31-year-old man is charged in Ohio with four counts of rape and one count of kidnapping.

This article was published by the Houston Chronicle on September 28, 2011.

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Roman Polanski Acknowledges Sex Crime in

New Documentary

McNabb Associates, P.C. (U.S. Extradition Attorneys)

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Roman Polanski makes his first public acknowledgement about Samantha Geimer, the 13-year-old model he sexually assaulted in Los Angeles, in a documentary on his life that premiered Tuesday at the Zurich Film Festival.

"She is a double victim: my victim, and a victim of the press," Polanski says of Geimer in Laurent Bouzereau's "Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir." Polanski took to the stage at the Zurich Film Festival Tuesday to accept a lifetime achievement award two years after he was originally intended to receive it, as he was arrested and incarcerated in a Zurich prison at the request of U.S. authorities when he arrived to receive the honor in 2009.

"Better late than never," the 78-year-old filmmaker said after a booming applause from the audience.

The director was held for two months in 2009 following his arrest at Zurich's airport, then placed under house arrest at his home in Gstaad while the fight over his extradition to the U.S. was waged in courts. It was in this time that Bouzereau shot the interviews with Polanski for his documentary memoir.

The film reportedly shows Polanski's side of the story regarding the 1978 legal case against him, which alleged that the then 43-year-old filmmaker sexually assaulted 13-year-old Geimer during a photo shoot for French Vogue.

In 1978 Polanski and his lawyers accepted a plea deal that would have the director put on probation, but Judge Laurence J. Rittenband reportedly suggested to Polanski's attorney that the sentence may be

heavier. Polanski fled to France, where he was protected from extradition, mere hours before sentencing.

In July 2010 Switzerland rejected the U.S. extradition request. Six charges against Polanski remain pending in the U.S.

Speaking with “Good Morning America” in March, Geimer told of a letter of apology she received from Polanski in 2009, and not only condemned the press in the same manner that Polanski does in Bouzereau’s film, but went on to condemn the courts.

“[Polanski] sent me a small note that was like an apology for all the trouble that he put me through. So that was nice,” she told “GMA.”

“But I was at peace with all that before that, because I know that he didn’t really mean to hurt me, and I know we were both going through a really hard time with the publicity and the courts, and nobody was getting treated fairly, and we were being used,” Geimer added.

Now a mother in her forties, Geimer said that the judge had insulted her mother, abused his power for his own gain and accused him of judicial misconduct. She also said that when the story of what happened to her resurfaced in 2009 following Polanski’s arrest her house was mobbed by the media and her children harassed by paparazzi.

“[The sexual assault] was bad, but it wasn’t as bad as the grand jury testimony, not as bad as having my sons traumatized by paparazzi, not as bad as the DA’s office saying ‘we look forward to seeing Mr. Polanski in court.’ What is that — sarcasm? We’re talking about a 13-year-old rape victim, and that’s how they treat me,” she said.

As for Polanski’s letter of apology, she told “GMA” that she was happy to hear it.

“I appreciated the apology — and it meant a lot to my mom,” Geimer said.

This article was written by Kevin Dolak and published by abcnews.com on September 28, 2011.

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