

German prosecutors issue arrest warrants for purported CIA agents involved in rendition of European nationals

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — German prosecutors have joined their Italian counterparts in issuing arrest warrants for a number of purported CIA agents involved in the rendition of European nationals in violation of European Union and national laws. A Munich court has issued arrest warrants for 13 purported CIA agents for the 2003 rendition to Afghanistan of Khaled al-Masri, a German citizen, from the Macedonian-Serbian border. After the CIA realized they had the wrong man, they deposited him in Albania. Because the staging of the al-Masri kidnapping took place on the island of Mallorca, Spanish prosecutors are also looking at indicting the CIA agents involved.

Italian prosecutors have issued arrest warrants for 26 purported CIA, as well as U.S. military personnel and Italian security personnel, for the 2003 rendition of an Egyptian cleric, Imam Abu Omar, a legal resident of Italy, from Milan to Egypt where he was imprisoned and tortured and likely murdered. The Italian indictments include Robert Seldon Lady, the CIA's Station Chief in Milan and Lt. Col. Joseph L. Romano III, US Air Force, who, at the time, was a security officer at the U.S. airbase in Aviano, Italy.

However, WMR's sources doubted whether all the wanted Americans are actually CIA agents due to the trail of expensive bills they racked up while deployed on their rendition missions in Italy and Spain. CIA sources have told this editor that the flashy activities and expensive bills accumulated by the Americans are more indicative of the rival Special Mission Units established by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to compete with the CIA. These units not only relied on active duty U.S. Special Operations forces but also reserve military personnel, retirees from the Special Forces, and select foreign nationals, including ex-British and Israeli special forces personnel. It would have been a violation of CIA regulations and tradecraft to run up expensive and traceable personal credit card expenses on such missions and to be so obvious, according to CIA sources.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the team that abducted Masri, including individuals using the aliases of Kirk James Bird and James Fairing, stayed at one of Mallorca's most expensive hotels where they had one food bill of \$1,625 and a charge for an \$81 massage. U.S. contract flight crews ran up expenses on Mallorca for golf course and yacht club accommodations, expensive Spanish wines, spa treatments, crystal wine glasses, and shrimp cocktails, all the U.S. taxpayers' expense. The team that abducted Abu Omar from Milan stayed at Milan's most luxurious hotels — the Hilton, Sheraton, Principe di Savoia, and the Meridien Gallia at a cost for the U.S. taxpayers of \$180,000 — and used their personal credit cards to run up expenses for high-priced rental cars and expensive meals.

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