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The Paris Serial Killer Guy Georges Was My Photo Assistant

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November 3, 2014



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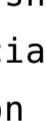


In October 1994, the French weekly magazine *Paris Match* put me in touch with a fixer from what they called the rough suburbs. Mehdi\* pitched stories to the magazine and also sold hash to the editorial staff. Together, our mission was to give an accurate portrayal of a France in turmoil, reading between the lines of the right-vs.-left political face-off presented in the upcoming elections of 1995. It was during my investigations with Mehdi that I met Guy Georges, the "East Paris serial killer" or the "Beast of the Bastille," who was convicted of raping and murdering seven women between 1991 and 1997--exactly the period of our time together. Later on, I would learn that Mehdi himself was also a murderer.

For one of our stories, Mehdi and I were in a squat in Rue Didot in the 15th arrondissement. This was close to a troubled estate, or cité, a hotspot for hard and soft drugs. At the time, gangs were going steady; knives and crowbars abounded. Guy Georges, who went by the name "Jo," lived in the squat. He sometimes came to see us, Mehdi and me, during our shoots, but he always refused to be photographed. Everybody in the squat liked him. I took pictures of his girlfriend, Nadia, with a gun against her temple. I knew he dealt cannabis to the other residents.



In front of the entrance to the squat on Rue Saint-Sauveur, June 1995



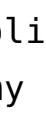
My fixer, Mehdi, bonded with him; they got along on the topic of drugs. Guy Georges presented himself as an activist for the DAL (Droit au Logement), an organization for the right to housing in France. Later on, I learned that he was informing the police of the activities of DAL in exchange for their relative protection. As for me, I realized that my squatters were of no interest to *Match*, but Mehdi and I continued our investigation. Mehdi used a young man of Cameroonian origin, Moïse, as a bodyguard. He was a dove at heart and seemed to be mesmerized by Mehdi's aura. He also served as an assistant to me, and as a way in to all the rough neighborhoods.

One day, Mehdi sent Moïse as a bodyguard to a business deal that went wrong. The result was catastrophic: A mother was killed, according to police, by one of the shitfaced dealers, and Moïse was arrested. He was sentenced to four years without parole. This meant that Guy came to replace him. He would serve as a go-between for Mehdi and, incidentally, as a hired gun. Between May and early July 1995, Guy, through Mehdi, would become my photo assistant and, as illustrated here, also the subject of some of my photos from that time.

"You are going to work for us," he said. "You are going to do what we will tell you; otherwise we are going to rape your wife and spray your kids with acid." It was the beginning of my open-air kidnapping that lasted two months.

Things also became heated in terms of our investigation. The presidential elections resulted in Jacques Chirac's victory, the candidate for the RPR. *Match* had published ten pages of my photographs showing what the newly elected president called the social fracture. Mehdi and I were assigned to a new mission for the magazine: showing the presence of firearms in the suburbs. "And if they don't exist, we'll have to make sure we find some," Mehdi clarified.

To me, making up stuff is out of the question, and so I refused the offer. We were in my car when I informed him about the end of our collaboration. Mehdi asked me to step out. I then realized that Guy was comfortably settled in the back seat. "You are going to work for us," he said. "You are going to do what we will tell you; otherwise we are going to rape your wife and spray your kids with acid."



Guy Georges in front of the squat in Rue Saint-Sauveur, Paris, May 1995



I was scared. It was the beginning of my open-air kidnapping that lasted two months. Our "collaboration" continued until July. Mehdi, Guy, and I met regularly in my car to discuss the procedure. We rented fake firearms from a TV and film prop company called Société Française de Production. Mehdi made his friends pose with the guns, and I took the fake pics. Every day, Mehdi hit me in different parts of my body, sparing the head and hands to avoid attention. I was allowed to go home at night at around 1AM. Then, every morning, I was collected at 9AM to go pick up Jo at the squat on Rue Saint-Sauveur, in the 2nd arrondissement, where he lived.

I must confess that Guy "Jo" Georges was quite nice to me. Sometimes we went out for a drink, and I told him stories about my investigations. He liked them; he played the role of the good prison guard, comforting me after Mehdi's beatings. In the meantime, inwardly, I was preparing my escape. The school year was nearly done, and I knew I could soon leave with my four children. I was scared shitless. I knew Mehdi was capable of anything. That April he had killed a man, and the police had someone else take the rap for him. He could kill my whole family without batting an eyelid. Guy followed him everywhere. They both used my debit card to pay for their expenses, and the lack of funds frustrated them more and more. I could feel something different, an indescribable threat--the sense of death I

had learned to recognize during my assignments in war zones.

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Guy, partly involved with the left-wing DAL, in front of a poster of the right-wing candidate and future president Jacques Chirac, Paris, May 1995

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The "Marseillais," a close friend of Guy, in the staircase of the squat in Rue Didot, Paris, November 1994

One afternoon, I pretended to need to get some money from home. I took advantage of the excuse to tell my partner everything and to show her the bruises that covered my body. We packed our suitcases and gathered the children. We headed to my mother-in-law's in Nice, by the Mediterranean. For two months, *Paris Match*'s Volkswagen Golf sat outside my apartment, according to the building's caretaker.

Mehdi then showed up at my apartment at the beginning of the school year. "He left with another woman. I don't know where he might be," my partner told him. According to her, he seemed unsettled. In reality, I was hiding with a journalist friend whom I completely trust. He persuaded me to disclose everything to the police. At first I refused. "It's too risky. The cops are in cahoots with them," I replied.

However, I knew that in reality I didn't have a choice--this was do or die. My friend came with me, and I explained my case in detail to the captain of a police station in my neighborhood. I had several pieces of evidence, among which a written report from a doctor certifying that my body was "covered in blows," as well as a tape in which Mehdi threatens me and my family with death. It was enough to persuade the captain to act.

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In the Rue Saint-Sauveur squat, a close acquaintance of Guy poses in his room with a portrait of notorious criminal Jacques Mesrine shot down, May 1995

Two days later, I was summoned early in the morning to the police station with Mehdi. They picked him up at his house. As soon as I got there, Mehdi started insulting me and asked his captain to call his "umbrella," a superintendent from home intelligence at Île de la Cité. Mehdi talked down to the captain. "You are going to be in trouble if you don't release me immediately," he told him.

But half an hour later, Mehdi was transferred to the prosecutor's office. What kind of miracle might have happened? The captain told me he knew about this way of doing things. He used to be a councillor to a minister and was aware of certain practices taking place in the system. Mehdi got six months without bail for assault and battery and for death threats. Guy Georges was first arrested in the Marais for attempted rape before being released. It was thanks to his DNA found on a victim that the police were able to identify him three years after our encounter, in 1998. In March 1998, I received a letter from Moïse, who was still held at the Santé prison. He began by saying: "You know, Yan--Guy Georges, that was Jo."

\*Names have been changed upon the author's request.

Continued below.

## RECOMMENDED

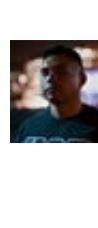
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<b>Under the Clouds of Süleymaniye</b> (/read/under-the-clouds-of-sleymaniye-0000471-v21n10)	<b>The Time John Waters's Girls Escaped a Kidnapping</b> (/read/john-waters-kidnapping-0000468-v21n10)



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[Add a comment...](#)**Richard Moorhouse** · Combat medic at U.S. Army Reserve

Mildly interesting fact: the revolver featured in these pictures is a CO2-powered, .177 cal pellet pistol made by Crossman.

I hope that wasn't the only gun they had. Cause that would be pretty damn funny.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 11 hrs**Ford Sorita** · University of Washington

Did you read the part about the fake guns?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 10 hrs**Richard Moorhouse** · Combat medic at U.S. Army Reserve

Yeah. My comment still makes sense. It reeks of busch league, super small time wannabes. I know a lot of european countries restrict private ownership of firearms-- I just would expect that criminals like these dudes would actually bother to procure them. I'd also like to point out that the author either got ripped off or spent the lowest amount of money possible to rent that bb gun (and yes, I did read the part of the article that said they used his debit card for everything before you ask me that as well). You can get airsoft guns that look far more realistic for less money. FX companies also make far more impressive looking, blank-firing prop guns (like in "Snatch"-- love that movie). I noticed the revolver was fake as soon as I saw the tell-tale metal nob used to secure CO2 cartridges in the headline picture of this article.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · 9 hrs**Moses Sam** · Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Richard Moorhouse this took place in the late 20th century. Airsoft wasn't a big thing back then.

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Damn it vice! I was reading that

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