



Profiling The Fox

A Counterintelligence Profile on Arms Trafficker Jacques Monsieur

By Drew Davis, Executive Director



Jacques Monsieur

The arrest of Jacques Monsieur on August 28, 2009, once again put this notorious arms smuggler into the spotlight. Operating both independently and on behalf of numerous governments since the early 1980s, a diverse, though fractioned, array of public information exists on his professional activities. The intent of this essay was to collect and connect the snippets of information that are public, create a panoramic chronology of his personal life and professional history, and articulate the motivations that drove his decision-making. The below is an abridged version of that chronicling, without length afforded to Monsieur's networks in Croatia or Congo, and is according to open source information, international investigative journalists, interviews with sources close to him, and interviews with the accused himself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The detailed nature of this essay would not have been possible without the translation of its many primary sources from French into English. The time Mr. Joshua A. Pierce offered the author in this process is deeply appreciated.

The direction and guidance of Mr. Willy Van Damme, a career-long international investigative journalist currently residing in Belgium, ensured the depth and scope of this project would mark it as the most comprehensive piece of literature to-date on Mr. Jacques Monsieur. His time on the phone and in email earn him my sincere gratitude.

Mr. Arthur Madden, III, esquire, of Madden and Soto Attorneys and lead defense counselor for Jacques Monsieur, was very gracious with both his time in a telephone interview and offer to put a series of personal interview questions in front of Mr. Monsieur. Even though the inquiries were pertinent only to Monsieur's childhood and family background, he respectfully declined to submit answers while his trial is pending. Any future information Mr. Monsieur provides will be incorporated into subsequent editions of this text.

Ms. Tiffany Craig, the investigative journalist for WKRG-Mobile/Pensacolo reporting on the Monsieur's proceedings, has been charitable with her time and facts on the case. Her inside access to court clerks and the defense and prosecuting teams contributed greatly to the depth of this profile. Her devotion to acquiring the truth is inspiring.

Finally, the French independent documentary film company LE CHAINON MANQUANT, of Paris, provided insight into arms trafficking in Eastern Europe and will be providing this author with the final product of their new documentary on arms trafficking in Eastern Europe; the film affords Mr. Monsieur's history some time.

Case Background, Status, and Relevance

On August 28, 2009, the U.S. counterintelligence world savored a victory as Belgian arms trafficker Jacques Monsieur was taken into custody after stepping off his plane in a New York airport. Monsieur, who has been smuggling military parts and weaponry for Iran since the early 1980s, was arrested by federal agents in August for conspiring to illegally export F-5 Fighter jet engines and spare parts from the United States to Iran.¹ The six count indictment was the result of a seven month joint-investigation by eight separate agencies. The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Department of Defense's Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), took the lead.² On August 27, 2009, a United States Grand Jury from the Southeast District of Alabama indicted Monsieur and his co-conspirator, Dara Fatouhi,³ with counts of conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling and violations of both the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). If convicted, both men could serve a maximum of 60 years in prison.⁴ The arrest of Jacques Monsieur will not only undermine Iran's ability to maintain its air force and equip its armed forces, it may also provide the United States with invaluable intelligence on the strength and scope of the Iranian military complex at a time when it is most needed.

¹ The Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies. "Monsieur, Jacques." From: Economic/Industrial/ Corporate Espionage Case. Alexandria, VA. Sep. 2009. [All website links available in References]

² United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement. *International arms dealer arrested for conspiracy to supply U.S. fighter jet engines to Iran*. Official Press Release. 09-02-2009.

³ Dara Fatouhi is believed to be an employee of a General Dynamic subsidiary in Geneva, which, in 2008, acquired Jet Aviation, a Switzerland based jet aircraft company.

⁴ U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama. *Grand Jury Indictment: United States v. Jacques Monsieur and Dara Fotouhi*. USAO No.09R00376. 08-27-2009. (Addendum #4)

Personal Profile—Jacques Monsieur—A.K.A. The Fox and The Field Marshal

Born in Halle, Belgium, on March 31, 1953, Monsieur was the son of a successful notary and heir to a wealthy family in Brussels.⁵ Living and schooling in Brussels during his youth, Monsieur attended the French-speaking Université Libre de Bruxelles (*ULB*) where he studied the humanities before attending law school. With a strong Catholic-Protestant social divide in Belgium at the time, attending *ULB*, a non-denominational Protestant university, would have been indicative of a Liberal or Social Democratic political orientation.⁶ Fluent in Flemish, French and English, after law school Monsieur joined the Belgian military in the early 1970s and was assigned to a logistics unit known as The Hunters, an informal intelligence unit which often served as a recruitment pool for Belgium's secret intelligence service—the General Intelligence and Security Service (GISS), known in French as the SGR.⁷ With law school experience, it was not long before Monsieur was made an officer. Specializing in light- to medium-arms and military aviation parts, Monsieur worked a number of missions in Eastern Europe for both the Belgian army and NATO.⁸ His down-to-business attitude and military successes in logistical command earned him the nickname The Field Marshal.

Having gained a bounty of knowledge on the people and global networks involved with arms procurement, he was recruited by the SGR in the late 1970s to sell arms to embargoed

⁵ Van Damme, Willy. *Jacques Monsieur: The Remarkable Story of a Spy and an Arms Dealer*. Berichten Online Blog. 03-05-2007.

⁶ Van Damme, Willy. Retired Belgian international investigative journalist. Interview with Drew Davis. Conducted on 11-17-2009.

⁷ Servenay, David. *Dear Sirs, breeder or arms dealer? Rue89 [Street 89; an online French source of investigative journalism]*. Posted on 03/31/2008, 13:58 LST. *The date of Monsieur's entrance into the Belgian armed forces is the author's approximation based on open source information and obligatory military service laws that existed at the time.

⁸ Monsieur, Jacques. *Confessions d'un marchand d'armes [Confessions of an Arms Dealer]*. Interview with David Servenay, Radio France Internationale. Conducted December 6, 2004. Retrieved October 31, 2009, from RFI web archives.

countries with which the West could not formally commit himself.⁹ In the 1980s, it was Iran. A decade later, though Monsieur was no longer officially with the SGR, it was Bosnia and Croatia; and, by the late 1990s, it was the Republic of Congo while a civil war unfolded in Brazzaville. When the Iran-Iraq War ended, however, and Western countries—predominantly the U.S.—were no longer willing to underwrite arms shipments to Iran, Monsieur seemingly cultivated an underground relationship with Tehran and used the already-existent network to continue moving weaponry for his own financial gain.¹⁰ It was a decision that would ultimately separate him from the SGR and launch a twenty-year career in international trafficking.¹¹

In 1986, Belgian authorities caught wind of Monsieur's personal endeavor when customs searched a mysterious suitcase owned by David Benelli—A.K.A. David Azoulay—and discovered a plethora of documents concerning the purchase and sale of armaments; Monsieur's name was all over the forms.¹² With those documents were Swiss and South African customs seals—perhaps for future use. Also with them was a certificate of non re-exportation—a document that proved a number of the armaments, most likely weapons, had been successfully delivered to their buyers—though to falsified addresses.¹³ Both Monsieur and Benelli were brought in for questioning. Having been detained in 1979 for his involvement with Elf Aquitaine's illegal arms trafficking to the Congo, Jacques Monsieur was already on paper. David Benelli was found to be a former officer

⁹ Id. Monsieur, Jacques. Interview with David Servenay, Radio France Internationale. 2004.

¹⁰ Promulgating arms to Iran was the Israeli and U.S. attempt to offset the power of Saddam Hussein as well as an American attempt to recover seven U.S. hostages who had been seized by Hezbollah, one of which was CIA station chief William Buckley. The latter motive spiraled into the Iran-Contra affair during an era known as *Irangate*.

¹¹ It should be noted that within the little open source information that exists on Jacques Monsieur, no exact date specifying the end of his work with the SGR, CIA or NATO is available (see footnote 17). Nor can it be ascertained with certainty that Monsieur was or was not acting independently while shipping armaments and defense systems to any of the countries listed in this essay, as numerous intelligence services have histories of employing arms procurement networks to establish legal plausible deniability while trafficking weaponry.

¹² Léger, Laurent. *Mr. Monsieur before Mr. Justice: James Bonders*. 03/28/08. *David Azoulay holds dual citizenship, Israeli and South African.

¹³ Ibid

in the Israeli army and security service, as well as former security chief of El Al Airline in Africa.¹⁴ It was also learned that Benelli's brother was a senior Mossad official.

After the initial questioning in 1986, Belgian authorities continued to investigate and document Monsieur's growing network. In 1991, Monsieur sent a letter to a Polish arms manufacturer on behalf of an Angolan colonel. In the letter, which was discovered by Belgian investigators, Monsieur organized the transportation of tanks, transport helicopters, attack helicopters, and assault rifles to Angola.¹⁵ It was also in 1991 that the Field Marshal began to send tens of millions of dollars of weapons to Croatia, allegedly on behalf of the CIA and with the blessing of France's intelligence service, the DST.¹⁶ By 1993, as Belgian courts prepared to shut him down, Jacques moved to France.¹⁷ His enterprise, which had been based in the small country of Belgium until then and involved moving arms from Russia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Bulgaria to Angola and various other African states, had simply become too sprawling to hide.¹⁸

Given Israel's intimate role in the transfer of U.S. arms to Iran in 1985 and 1986, Monsieur's relationship with David Benelli is not surprising. In fact, it further illuminates how Jacques may have cultivated his own network in Iran in the first place. In addition, Monsieur's connection to the major air carrier El Al, which serviced Belgium, the Middle East, and Africa, may provide the most insight to date on his modus operandi for trafficking arms to Iran in the late-80s, Angola in 1991 and the Congo six years later.¹⁹ On October 4, 1992, El Al Flight 1862, a Boeing 747 cargo plane traveling from New York to Tel Aviv, crashed into a high-rise Dutch apartment

¹⁴ Id. Léger, Laurent. 2008. *It should be noted that El Al is the national airline of Israel.

¹⁵ Lallemand, Alain. "The Field Marshal." In *Making a Killing*, edited by The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. Washington, DC: The Center for Public Integrity, 2003. *The ICIJ also noted that Monsieur acknowledged that the weapons would be financed in part by Elf Aquitaine (now Total Oil) in France.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Natural Law Publishing Wessex. *CIA Assistance for Croatia—CIA Uses Belgian Arms Dealer To Supply Iranian Weapons To Anti-Serb Forces In Croatia*. September 2009.

¹⁸ Curtis, Glenn E. and Tara Karacan. *The Nexus Among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. December 2002.

¹⁹ El Al Israel Airlines. *Timeline Highlights*. Jewish Virtual Library, The American-Israeli Cooperation Enterprise. 2009.

complex after making a stopover at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam, where new cargo had been loaded onto the plane.²⁰ Soon after the disaster, authorities announced the plane had contained fruit, perfumes, and computer components. In September of 1993, however, the media reported that the El Al Boeing actually contained Israeli national defense materials, that a third of the cargo (the new cargo added at Schiphol, which had been approved by customs authorities) had not been physically inspected, and that the cargo listings had not been verified.²¹

While it has neither been suggested nor proven that the new cargo was in any way related to Monsieur, or that Benelli, as a security chief for the airline, was involved with the customs “oversight,” Flight 1862 is an apt illustration of both El Al’s operational integrity in Western Europe at the time and how these two men were poised to exploit the carrier for their own procurement network.²² Indeed, the three-way relationship between Monsieur’s network, air logistics, and the Netherlands became further suspect when Laurent Léger, investigative journalist and author of *Arms Trafficking, Investigating the Merchants of Death*,²³ revealed that in 1985 Monsieur and Benelli had sold grenade launchers to China that were manufactured in Belgium but were processed through customs with an official destination of the Netherlands.²⁴ With a highly-developed communications infrastructure, two major seaports (Amsterdam and Rotterdam), a high volume of cargo containers, and relatively lax import-export controls, the Netherlands is known to offer favorable conditions for illegal trafficking.²⁵ Compounding these conditions, Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport is a European hub for all kinds of illegal trafficking given lax security controls.

²⁰ El Al Flight 1862. ICD-9 / Health Information.

²¹ Ibid.

²² In 2008, the airline was named by *Global Traveler* magazine as the world's most secure airline. (*El Al Named Most Secure Airline*. Jerusalem Post. 02-06-2008.)

²³ A Flammarion publication, 2006.

²⁴ Id. Leger, Laurent. 2008.

²⁵ Alonso, Stephane. “Fight Against Narcotics is Symbolic,” *NRC Handelsblad* [Rotterdam]. FBIS Document EUP20020902000252. 08-31-2002.

With these many variables, the exact relationship Monsieur had with these two cities specifically, and the Netherlands in general, may never be fully understood.²⁶

Upon leaving Belgium in 1993, Monsieur settled in La Celle Condé—a quiet village near Lignières in Berry in the center of France. He purchased a rundown stud farm, overhauled its facilities, and began to pursue his life’s passion, breeding Portuguese Lusitano dressage horses.²⁷ After renovating his new ranch—*Domaine des Amourettes* or *L’Amourettes* [Domain of Passing Infatuations]—Jacques built an indoor arena on the property that would allow for year-round training and purchased a series of high-end BMW automobiles. As he settled into his new lifestyle in France, Mr. Sir, as Jacques became known in Berry, was respected as a no-nonsense gentleman who radiated class, elegance and aristocracy—all qualities revered in the rural paddocks of the old country. Possessing an insatiable need to continue living the highlife with which he was raised—a lifestyle that required endless inflows of wealth—Monsieur often made trips to Switzerland and Luxembourg for jaunts of high-end partying. Regardless of these extravagant weekends abroad, Jacques nevertheless portrayed a seemingly simple and discreet life on his ranch.

What the residents of Berry did not know, however, was that from a small, private office in his personal residence, The Field Marshal was running a rapidly expanding arms procurement network that was not so discreet to a host of governments and intelligence agencies around the world. In fact, if Monsieur’s admission to Radio France Internationale in 2004 was truthful, it was he, himself, who informed French authorities of his operations prior to arriving in France.

In the only interview he’s ever given, he told RFI:

“Before my settlement [in France], I wanted, at any price, to keep on good terms with France. I considered it my duty to inform the proper authorities of who I was and the true nature of my activities. [As a result of my move, certain] Belgian authorities then

²⁶ Steven Derix and Jos Verlaan. “Investigative Services Want More Operational Powers at Schiphol.” *NRC Handelsblad* [Rotterdam], FBIS Document EUP2002073000022629. 07-29-2002.

²⁷ Id. Servaenay, 03-09-2009.

contacted the French DST, since they are responsible for such things...so I had several conversations with the DST [and] we took stock of my situation, what could happen and not happen. Thus we found a *modus vivendi*.”²⁸

Monsieur purported in the interview that during these conversations with the DST it was determined that his procurement activities were allowed but subject to the famous French decree of 1939, which regulated all aspects of military trade and outlined what could and could not be done inside France with or without the authorization of the Minister of Defense.²⁹ “So, it was clearly established and agreed,” Monsieur noted, “that I never anywhere would export equipment into or out of France, I would not transit, and that I would not build on the French territory.”³⁰ When RFI asked Jacques if he had stuck to this agreement, he replied with a smile, “Of course.”

This transparency with the DST may have been what led Belgium federal police, escorted by their French counterparts, to *L'Amourettes* in La Celle Condé in 1996, where they found his small, private office in complete disarray. With strict orders from Monsieur, his maid was not allowed to throw away any accumulating paperwork; the result was a treasure trove of evidence that corroborated a decade of surveillance and investigation. Between artillery catalogs, falsified certificates of final destination and armament fax orders, investigators discovered the full panoply of an arms dealer.³¹ For Belgian authorities it was clear: Monsieur’s new lifestyle in France was, in reality, no departure from the illicit and dirty work he had been conducting in Brussels. With a new stud farm, the only difference was the shit on his hands no longer remained metaphorical.

The 1986 Belgian police probe that eventually led to Monsieur’s move to France in 1993, and the continued existence of a Belgian federal investigation through 1996, creates an

²⁸ Id. Monsieur, Jacques. Interview with David Servenay, Radio France Internationale. 2004.

²⁹ The 1939 decree was used unsuccessfully by Monsieur’s defense team in 2002 during his trial in Belgium. He was sentenced to 40 months of house arrest for having sold "huge quantities" of arms, including grenade launchers and missile parts, to Iran, China, Ecuador, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia in the 1980s and 1990s.

³⁰ Monsieur, Jacques. Interview with David Servenay, Radio France Internationale. 2004.

³¹ Ibid.

irreconcilable conundrum with the facts available from open source reports: Either Belgian federal police were sincerely unaware of Monsieur's official ties to the SGR in the mid-1980s when he was trafficking arms to Iran, which would not have been an uncommon divide between state intelligence and police entities, or, by 1986, Monsieur was, in contrast to what he purported, no longer officially operating on behalf of the SGR and was thus violating civilian law. Regardless if the latter is true, and Jacques was operating on his own, the evidence—examined in the Croatia profile below—does overwhelmingly indicate that Jacques was working with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency at this time.³²

In addition, if Monsieur's career in arms trafficking had been an elaborate cover for his role as an intelligence officer, as he asserted in the 2004 RFI interview, it would be hard to imagine that a highly-trained spy, who knew that "ignorant" Belgian and French authorities were on to him, would have left so many very sensitive documents unsecured and strewn about his residence for anyone to see. It is unbelievably terrible tradecraft. Why he was so careless when he knew federal officials from a series of countries were closing in remains a mystery. It may be an apt reflection of an invincible ego born from wealth, a decade of lucky breaks, the constant exploitation of legal loop holes, and the continued acquisition of vast wealth and capital. Or, more likely, it may be that he was not the ever-active intelligence officer that he claimed to be.³³

When it comes to counterintelligence, even the minutest of details can provide insight into the subject or target at hand and the motivations at play. A good counterintelligence officer would have taken note of the breed of horses to which Monsieur was drawn, for the selection is most

³² The use of the preposition "with" here, as opposed to "for", is key, denoting both the tacit approval from the Agency and peripheral support. It would have been impossible to traffic such large amounts of weaponry into Croatia at a time when the USG had an impenetrable embargo on the country and employed rigorous SIGINT, IMINT, and HUMINT resources to ensure its effectiveness.

³³ "His claim of working for intelligence services is not false, but it is exaggerated," Alain Lallemand said in a telephone interview with The Los Angeles Times in 2009. "He...has many contacts...a real intelligence value that a lot of governments want." Rotella, Sebastian. *Belgian Arms Trader Jailed in Alabama*. Los Angeles Times. 09-04-09.

assuredly another manifestation of his ego. It is not ironic that he chose the Portuguese Lusitano, a horse known historically for its proven military value. Remarkably strong and agile, the Lusitano was used for centuries to transport military equipment and forces across the vast expanse of the Roman Empire—a history reflective of Monsieur’s career. Temperamentally, the Lusitano has a reputation for courage, with a tendency to move forward toward that which threatens, combining calmness with great fire while under saddle. Lusitanos are reputed to be very intelligent and possess both a sensible, levelheaded disposition and tendency to bond strongly with humans.³⁴ When juxtaposing these traits with a modern international arms trafficker, specifically Jacques Monsieur, the similarities are striking. To believe Mr. Sir was ignorant to this history is to make a gross error in assessment.

Monsieur and Iran: The 80s, 90s and Incarceration.

Following the U.S. embassy hostage crisis in 1979, the United States placed an economic and arms embargo on Iran, making it very difficult for Iran to maintain and upgrade its military hardware. The embargo put the Iranians at a disadvantage during the Iran-Iraq War, and in mid-May of 1985 Hezbollah seized seven Americans and held them hostage. At the same time, President Reagan asserted that a cohort of politically-moderate and influential Iranians opposed to Khomeini had approached Israel and were seeking to establish a quiet relationship with the United States before establishing formal ties upon the death of the Ayatollah.³⁵ By Reagan's account, National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane told him that these Iranians, to demonstrate their seriousness, had offered to persuade Hezbollah to release the seven U.S. hostages in exchange for arms.³⁶ The Administration seized the opportunity to free the hostages and agreed to sell them weapons. Israel and South Korea would act as intermediaries for the transfer of arms to Iran and

³⁴ Equine Exerciser Online Forum.

³⁵ Reagan, Ronald. *Ronald Reagan: An American Life*. Simon & Schuster: New York, NY. 1990. p. 504.

³⁶ Id. Reagan, Ronald. 1990. p. 505

Manuchar Gorbanifar, an international arms dealer, was brought in to help facilitate the transfers. Though Gorbanifar coordinated the first shipment of arms, intelligence historian Christopher Andrew pointed out that Reagan and the NSC never really knew who they were dealing with.³⁷ All available information indicates that Jacques Monsieur—a friend of multiple Mossad officers (notably David Benelli and his brother)—was also brought in to help facilitate additional shipments.

Investigative journalist David Servenay noted that during the Iran-Iraq War, within the Agency's backdoor channels, Monsieur appeared to become a favorite intermediary of the CIA to Iran.³⁸ It was the beginning of an on-and-off relationship with CIA that would last, as best it's known, through the mid-90s with the Balkan conflicts. While allegedly working on behalf of the CIA in the 1980s, the Agency's contacts in Iran offered him the opportunity to supply an array of military assets (aircraft, artillery, vehicles) of U.S. origin and to become familiar with U.S. companies, networks and laws.³⁹ It was on the job experience that would lay the foundation for a personal relationship with Iran for the next two decades and provide him with the necessary working knowledge of the U.S. system to buy Iran F-5 Fighter jet engines in 2009.

In 2002, Belgian journalist Alain Lallemand wrote a brief report on The Field Marshal for the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), a branch of the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C. In this report, which focused on Monsieur's history with Iran and his connections to the French oil conglomerate Elf Aquitaine, Lallemand noted that according to Jacques' own documents, in 1992 he transmitted to the Iranian Air Force plans devised by the French company Matra for adapting the *Magic-2* air-to-air missile to the *Phantom F-4* aircraft.⁴⁰ He also attempted to deliver Electron radar material to Iran in 1992—the radar system that tracks

³⁷ Andrew, Christopher. *For The President's Eyes Only. Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*. HaperPerennial: New York, NY. 1996. p.481-82.

³⁸ Servenay, David. *How to convert when it was trading in arms?* Rue89. Posted on 03/09/2009, 2:55pm LST.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Id.* Lallemand, 2003.

Hawk surface-to-air missiles—though it is unclear whether that radar material was ever delivered.⁴¹ According to an intelligence document obtained by Lallemand, Monsieur did sell Tehran a key technology that is currently used by Iranian airports for civil aviation. The trafficking relationship with Iran continued throughout the decade, and, on August 22, 1996, Monsieur suggested to the Iranians that they export weapons to the small central African state of Burundi, a neighbor of Rwanda, in violation of a U.N. weapons embargo.⁴² In a document obtained by Belgian police, Monsieur asked the Iranians for their prices on mortars, assault rifles, ammunitions and light artillery to be sold to Burundi, informed the Iranians he would deliver the bulk by air with an Ilyushin-76, and reassured his Iranian counterparts that if they were concerned about the destination of the weapons, he could find "other end-users," suggesting that, as he had done with the grenade launchers for China, he would falsify the customs documentation.⁴³

As aforementioned, the Belgian investigation into Monsieur's network was culminating in 1996 when authorities stormed *L'Amourettes* and seized his cache of business papers. Monsieur, however, was away on business. By 1999, the French government itself was certain Monsieur had violated his agreement with the DST regarding the 1939 military trade decree and, on May 20, 1999, subsequently placed him and his associates under judicial control—meaning they could not leave the country and had to report regularly to the police.⁴⁴ At this time, two of Monsieur's associates claimed they were working with the approval of the DST—a claim that made little difference to French authorities. The entire ordeal circulated throughout the national media.

Known everywhere by this time as The Fox, for his cunning ability to negotiate and slide out of sticky situations, when French authorities opened a new investigation in November of 2000

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Monsieur fled Berry with his car to Annecy, France.⁴⁵ There he took a taxi to Zurich and, providing an Ivorian passport, flew to Tehran.⁴⁶ Out of the pot and into the fire, however, Monsieur was arrested on November 19, 2000, in Iran after Branch Three of the Tehran Revolutionary Court had become convinced that he was spying for the U.S. and Belgium.⁴⁷ It was not a fantastical assertion. Later testimony in Monsieur's trials in Belgium and France in 2002 and 2008, respectively, revealed that The Fox had, in fact, debriefed French, Belgian and Israeli spies on the Iranian military complex.⁴⁸ As Van Damme noted in an interview with this author, Monsieur made a terrible error in judgment—in tradecraft—when he elected to flee to Tehran. At that time, his name, the trial and the charges were all being trumpeted by the European press, and the details and rumors of his work were duly noted by Iranian intelligence services.

As Lallemand posited in his 2003 report for the ICIJ, the circumstances of Monsieur's captivity in Iran led French intelligence to believe, at least at first, that Monsieur had eluded justice by having the Iranians stage a mock arrest and detention: For example, Monsieur was both unable to receive visitors in his Iranian jail, uncommon even in Iran, and had given orders related to the maintenance of his property in France before traveling to Iran, suggesting he knew he might be gone for some time.⁴⁹ It became clear in early 2001 that Monsieur was indeed being held against his will, and after his sentencing in December of 2001 he spent four months under house arrest. Having missed his trial on October 25, 2001, in Brussels, Mr. Sir was sentenced in absentia. After paying a nominal fine, when he left Iran at the age of 49 on May 11, 2002, via Istanbul, Belgium and France were able to leverage the Turks into action and Monsieur was arrested upon arrival.

⁴⁵ Van Damme. *Jacques Monsieur: The Remarkable Story of a Spy and an Arms Dealer*. Berichten Online Blog. 03-05-2007

⁴⁶ Ibid. *Given the open borders policy of the EU, no documentation or ID was needed to pass from France to Germany. Thus, officials made no probing inquiry at the border.

⁴⁷ Van Damme, 2007.

⁴⁸ Rotella, Sebastian. *Belgian Arms Trader Jailed in Alabama*. Los Angeles Times. 09-04-2009.

⁴⁹ Van Damme believes, however, that Monsieur had sold *L'Amourettes* in 1999 to the local government.

Following a short legal dispute between France and Belgium over which country would win extradition, Monsieur was flown to Brussels, as he was a Belgian national. On December 20, 2002, after his trial in Brussels for having sold "huge quantities" of arms, including grenade launchers and missile parts, to Iran, China, Ecuador, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia in the 1980s and 1990s,⁵⁰ The Fox was fined and sentenced to 40 months of house arrest in Belgium—of those 40, he only served 19 months.⁵¹ After his release, and with the passing of a new European Union Treaty regarding legal partnerships, Belgium extradited Jacques to France where he was wanted on similar charges. There, he was convicted and given a four year suspended sentence.

U.S. ARREST IN AUGUST 2009

Shortly after the French verdict, and undeterred, The Field Marshal went back to work. Contacting a presumed supplier in February 2009, Monsieur sought to purchase and export to Iran jet engines and spare parts for the F-5 (EIF) fighter jet and C-130 Hercules.⁵² Both variants of aircraft were sold to Iran by the U.S. prior to sanctions in 1995 and comprise a significant portion of the Iranian Air Force fleet. Since then, however, Iran has struggled to upgrade and maintain its fleets due to numerous international embargoes and sanctions. Given the Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter jet engines were designed, built and patented by General Electric in the U.S. in the 1960s, Monsieur had no choice but to smuggle the parts from the United States.⁵³ The supplier Jacques had contacted was, in reality, an undercover Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agent, and DHS soon began coordinating with a host of national and international intelligence agencies to build a case for prosecution.

⁵⁰ American Free Press. *Belgian man denies US charges he smuggled arms to Iran*. 09-11-2009.

⁵¹ Id. Van Damme, 2007.

⁵² United States Department of Justice. *International Arms Dealer Arrested for Conspiracy to Supply U.S. Fighter Jet Engines to Iran*. Official Press Release #09-908. 09-02-2009. (Addendum #1)

⁵³ U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama. *Grand Jury Indictment (Id.)*, 6. (Addendum #4)

According to the August 27 indictment: Monsieur began having regular e-mail contact with the undercover agent and met with the special agent in Paris in March, where he again requested the J85-21 model engines and parts for the F-5 Fighter jet. On May 6, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama acquired a search warrant to obtain from Google one CD related to the jacques.monsi@gmail.com email account.⁵⁴ The CD contained, among other things, a list of subscriber information for the account, all email contacts, all emails related to this account that were stored, all electronic communications, images, and data files associated with the e-mail address, and “all timestamp of originating IP address for logins.”⁵⁵ Later that month, the undercover agent met with Monsieur in London and was introduced to Dara Fotouhi; all three discussed the illegal exportation of F-5 Fighter jet engines from the United States to Iran.⁵⁶ In June, Monsieur provided a purchase order for F-5 Fighter jet parts from a front company known as Trast Aero Space in Kyrgyzstan—whose headquarters is located in the U.A.E. The order outlined that the parts were to be located by the agent and exported from the U.S. to the U.A.E. for trans-shipment to Iran. By July Monsieur informed the agent that \$110,000 had been wired from Dubai to a bank account in Mobile, Alabama, as payment for the parts. He indicated that a deposit of \$300,000 would be made as a down payment for two F-5 jet engines and asked about the agent’s contact in Colombia, where the parts would now be routed before heading to the United Arab Emirates. On Friday, August 28, 2009, in Panama, Monsieur was arrested and escorted back to New York.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Addendum #2

⁵⁵ U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama. *Search Warrant for Case 1:09-cr-00186-WS*. Issued on 05-06-2009; Executed on 05-11-2009. (Addendum #2)

⁵⁶ U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama. *Grand Jury Indictment*. (Addendum #4)

⁵⁷ This information, though unconfirmed by U.S. authorities, was provided off the record in an interview with the author by a source close to the prosecution who wished to remain anonymous while proceedings are ongoing.

It takes a Village: An Intelligence Community

It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes an intelligence community to bring down an arms trafficker, and the case of Jacques Monsieur is a benchmark example of the unity within United States' intelligence since 9/11. While the primary investigation was conducted by ICE and DCIS, it is clear, based on the facts of the case, that numerous other agencies would have assisted in the acquisition of evidence and intelligence from February until August.⁵⁸ Those agencies most likely included the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, France's Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (DST) and Great Britain's Secret Intelligence Service.

Given the Agency's global human informant network and past involvement with Mr. Sir, it is probable that ICE liaised with CIA from the beginning. Acquiring the details on Trast Aero (Monsieur's front company in Kyrgyzstan), known traffickers in the U.A.E., and additional intermediaries through which Monsieur may have been illegally exporting from the U.S. are key areas in which the CIA most likely assisted.

Monitoring Monsieur's email, phone, and fax traffic from France to the U.S. and other international destinations would have been conducted by NSA, and back-tracking the \$110,000 that had been wired from Dubai to a bank account in Mobile may well have drawn in the expertise of Treasury's FinCEN. Recognizing that TSA is a component of the Department of Homeland Security, both the flight from Panama following Jacques' arrest and the airport in New York were surely laden with casually dressed U.S Air Marshalls to provide assistance should it be necessary. There can also be little doubt, given the intimate and long-standing relationship the U.S. shares with Britain's intelligence services, that when the undercover ICE agent met with Monsieur and Fotouhi

⁵⁸ *Laird v. Tatum* ('72), *U.S v. Casper* ('76), and *U.S. v. Yunis* ('91) all affirmed intelligence assistance for prosecution.

in London, MI5 and MI6 were providing logistical support to ICE's team in some regard. The DST, likewise, would have provided the same when the ICE team met with Monsieur in Paris in March.

As soon as Monsieur contacted the special agent in February, it is likely that ICE's Office of International Operations, which has 54 offices in 42 countries around the world,⁵⁹ began coordinating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Legal Attaché Offices in Brussels, Paris, and Abu Dhabi—all of which are well poised to deploy surveillance and collect evidence for an international case. To draw upon such a breadth of national and international partners reflects the effectiveness of reforms made within the intelligence community following 9-11 and the continued strength of global intelligence-sharing relationships.

The Impact of Monsieur's Arrest: Timely, Accurate, and Actionable Intelligence

During his trials in Belgium and France, Monsieur testified that he had briefed Belgian, French, U.S. and Israeli spies on the state of the Iranian armed forces and military complex. Though CIA has assets on the ground in Iran today,⁶⁰ it is likely that none are: as knowledgeable about the panoramic inventory and condition of Iran's military equipment; as familiar with the illicit networks Iran has been using to smuggle in armaments and munitions; or as interactive with Iranian military and political leadership as The Field Marshal has been. If such assets do exist, certainly none have been operating as intimately or for as long as Jacques Monsieur.

Though Mr. Sir pleaded not guilty on September 10, 2009, to the charges with which he was indicted, U.S. prosecutors have until the time the jury trial starts to convince Monsieur to broker a deal and exchange intelligence on Iran for a lesser sentence. This will be the key to gaining that

⁵⁹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. *The ICE International Presence*. Accessible online.

⁶⁰ When asked by journalist Josh Rushing in an interview for Al Jazeera's *Fault Lines* if the U.S. has "intelligence operatives on the ground in Iran," former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft replied, "Of course we do." 06-24-2009.

valuable intelligence on Iran's capabilities and intentions. Jury selection begins on November 30, with the trial to begin immediately. To reach a deal it will be important for prosecutors to articulate to Jacques that while he may have only sat a total of 25 months for his previous jail-time experiences, in the face of serious U.S. political tension with Iran over its nuclear program, American jurors will be very inclined to deliver maximum sentences on all counts, especially with his proven recidivism. Informing the jury that Monsieur has negotiated with Congo on behalf of Iran to acquire copper, cobalt, uranium 294, 298, 380, thorium, and titanium for the Iranian nuclear program may well seal his fate.⁶¹

The international community has been skeptical of Iran's claim that its nuclear enrichment program is for peaceful, energy purposes only, and the November 16, 2009, IAEA report on the status of the Fordow Enrichment Facility is not reassuring. The high-profile arrest of Monsieur may provide the international community a window into the true capacity of Iran's missile and nuclear programs. At a minimum, Iran has lost its longest, most experienced, most connected arms trafficker, and the condition of its air force and strength of its military will be deeply undermined as a result.

An arms trafficking career that began with an insatiable need for wealth, a passion for the taboo, and an inflated aristocratic ego will end within the cold confined walls of a federal U.S. prison. By early 2011, The Field Marshall will be forced into his third and permanent retirement with the swift downward motion of a gavel.



Courtroom Rendering, 2002
"Displeasing Verdict"

⁶¹ Id. Lallemand, 2003.

MONSIEUR, JACQUES (W / MALE)					
Status:	In Jail				
Booking No:	BCSO09JBN006727				
Booking Date:	08/29/2009 12:22:11				
Age On Booking Date:	56				
Bond Amount:	\$0.00				
	CELL Assigned:				
Enlarge Photo	Facility: BCSO , Dorm: F , Pod: F , Cell No: 008 Visitation S				
	Address Given: 87A COAUSSEE-DE-NAMUR INCOURT WG				
CHARGES					
STATUTE	CASENO	CHARGE	DEGREE	LEVEL	BOND
FEDERAL INMATE	CASE0001	FEDERAL INMATE		F	\$0.00

CAD Entry upon booking at jail. Mobile, Alabama. Courtesy of a confidential source.



Photo: *Domaine des Amourettes*. Monsieur's Horse Ranch in Berry.
Courtesy of Willy Van Damme. willy.vandamme@scarlet.be

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Addendums [Electronic Access – For Online Edition]

- Ad. #1** [Department of Justice, Press Release of Arrest.](#)
- Ad. #2** [G-mail Search Warrant; Electronic File Seizure](#)
- Ad. #3** [Google Gag Order for Search Warrant](#)
- Ad. #4** [U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama, Grand Jury Indictment](#)
- Ad. #5** [Satellite Image of *Domain des Amourettes*; Horse Ranch in Berry, France](#)
(Ranch, upper left [left of Hwy D570n]. Notice the horses out back.
It's on the road linking Arles to Avignon just outside of the town of Tarascon.)