

TRANSCRIPT of the Article which appeared in the **TODAY** Newspaper on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1993

## **THE TARGET IN TERROR**

Divorcee Wendy Welsher looks just like any other housewife but she has been in hiding...with the key to the fate of runaway millionaire Asil Nadir

### **Nadir judge bribery plot**

## **MY TERROR**

### **TODAY EXCLUSIVE**

by **BOB GRAHAM**

This is the woman at the centre of a £3.5 million plot to bribe the judge in the Asil Nadir trial.

Divorcee Wendy Welsher has been in hiding for the past eight months after revealing details of the bizarre plan to police.

She now lives everyday in fear of her life.

**TODAY** tracked her down to her country hideout where she admitted she was an agent used by the disgraced Polly Peck boss. Her job was to sell paintings to raise cash for a secret Swiss bank account.

The money, it was alleged, would have been used by Nadir to bribe the Old Bailey judge into handing back his passport before he fled British justice.

But Nadir did not reckon on Wendy Welsher breaking her vow of silence.

**TODAY NEWS FOCUS ???? MOST AMAZING BRIBERY PLOT EVER INVESTIGATED BY SCOTLAND YARD**

### **Don't you know what that man can do to me..My life is in danger**

SHE looks just like any other busy mother, going shopping, doing the school run and chatting to neighbours.

But in her discreet terraced house, Wendy Welsher lives in fear of her life.

She is the woman who revealed details of a bizarre £3.5 million plot to bribe the judge in the Asil Nadir trial.

She has abandoned her £100,000 home in Edgware north London, to start a new life with her young daughter under police protection in the West Country.

When **TODAY** contacted her she at first denied she was Wendy Welsher and angrily threatened to call police “to find out who you are”.

But instead of ringing the local bobbies she telephoned Scotland Yard's elite International and Organised Crime Branch and cried down the phone: “Hello Mike, this is Wendy. They've found me.”

The 42-year-old divorcee, a key police witness in the probe into allegations of the scheme to bribe Old Bailey judge Mr Justice Tucker, refused to talk publicly of her role.

*She insisted “I can't say a thing. Don't you know what that man will do to me. My life is in grave danger.”*

Mrs Welsher went into hiding eight months ago when it was first disclosed police were investigating a plot to bribe Mr Justice Tucker.

Her job was to help channel money into a Swiss bank account by selling valuable paintings. Nadir's mother Safiye and sister Bilge Navzat were also alleged to be involved in running the account.

The cash was allegedly to be used to persuade the Old Bailey judge into handing over Nadir's passport while he was on bail facing £30 million fraud charges.

Nadir was already planning to flea the country and knew he would need his passport to travel freely round the world running his vast business empire.

## **Discredit**

Police know that no money was sent to Mr Justice Tucker, who had no knowledge of the plot. But they have traced the Swiss accounts to be used and some of the money.

The main evidence the detectives have gathered so far centres on Wendy Welsher.

Her story has also provided a unique insight into the shadowy way in which the former Polly Peck boss used his vast army of agents, who only had the briefest contact with each other.

Many of the couriers had no idea they may have been used in an alleged operation. Most were unaware Nadir was involved.

*This way Nadir hoped to make it impossible for his jigsaw operation to be detected.*

Mrs Welsher has pin-pointed two bank accounts set up in Switzerland which contain at least £1.5 million. Both have been frozen by the Swiss authorities who are conducting their own inquiry into the murky dealing. To raise the cash – when Nadir himself had been declared bankrupt – his family and associates attempted to sell various works of art bought during the lucrative Polly Peck days.

Wendy Welsher helped smuggle the paintings in and out of Nadir's offices without alerting creditors. She told investigators she worked for a firm called Heritage International, where she met a Swiss consultant known to her as Carl.

At the beginning of 1992 he rang to ask if she could deliver a painting to a friend.

*She agreed – and found herself caught up in an astonishing cloak and dagger operation.*

She was told to go to an address in Berkeley Square, London, where she says she saw a sign on the door saying Nadir Investments.

Inside, she was met by Abide Gonultas – an ex-love of Nadir. Miss Gonultas gave her a painting wrapped in brown paper. She signed for it and walked outside.

She was immediately approached by another agent she had never seen before.

He asked: “Are you Miss Wendy? I am collecting something from you.” As arranged she then handed over the painting.

In July, Carl called again. He wanted her to take a painting to auctioneers Bonhams. The same contact would be outside.

## **Stolen**

Mrs Welsher collected the painting from the man who also handed her a false power of attorney certificate giving her authority to sell the painting. Inside Bonhams the painting was unwrapped – and Mrs Welsher recognised it as the highly prized Sisters by Lord Frederick Leighton, worth about £500,000.

Bonhams agreed to sell the painting. But in August Carl phoned Mrs Welsher saying he had a buyer for Sisters and she must immediately get it back.

Lawyers acting for creditors had discovered that Sisters – along with other valuable paintings – was missing from Nadir's collection. It had become too hot to handle in public.

*Two days later creditors put out a warning to dealers that Sisters was stolen property.*

### **Get lost, said Maggie**

**BRIBERY** is a common weapon in Nadir's business armoury.

**TODAY** has discovered that in 1989, when the Inland Revenue was probing his affairs and close to landing him in court, he tried to “twist arms” to get the enquiry stopped.

In a frenzy, Nadir turned to top Tory – **TODAY** knows his identity – to remind him of his “generous contributions” to party funds.

“If you want that sort of donation, then get these bastards of his back” Nadir raged.

When told only Premier Mrs Thatcher could halt the probe he drafted a letter to her. She turned him down flat.