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## Apologizes to France

# U.S. Admits Sheltering Barbie

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The United States has formally apologized to France for its close relationship to Gestapo leader Klaus Barbie, and officially admitted that the U.S. Army had hired and protected the Nazi accused of deporting and massacring thousands of French Jews and resistance fighters during the German occupation of France.

In a 218-page report released yesterday, the Justice Department laid out in detail with names and dates, the U.S. role in allowing Barbie to live and travel as a free man for the last 33 years. It concluded that the U.S. Army was guilty of an "obstruction of justice and an unlawful act."

The U.S. Army's Counterintelligence Corps hired Barbie as a paid informer in 1947, kept him hidden in a safe house for four years and smuggled him out of the country to Bolivia rather than extradite him to France, according to the report. It said that the Army lied to the French, the State Department and the High Commissioner's Office of Germany when it denied that Barbie worked for and was being concealed by the Army.

"Whether Barbie is guilty or innocent of the crimes with which he is charged will be decided by a French court," said Allan A. Ryan Jr., the former director of the Office of Special Investigations for the Justice Department, who has been investigating the U.S. role in the Barbie matter.

"Justice delayed is justice denied," Ryan said. "If we are faithful to that principle, we cannot pretend that it applies only within our borders and nowhere else. We have delayed justice in Lyons for the last 33 years."

Ryan said the Barbie cover-up involved half a dozen high-ranking Army CIC officers, including the late Brig. Gen. Robert Taylor, director of intelligence for the U.S. Army in Europe after the war. Ryan said that at least a dozen other CIC officers were involved in smuggling Barbie and his family out of Europe in 1951.

Half of the officers involved are dead, he said. The other half cannot be prosecuted because the statute of limitations has expired. Ryan described the officers' actions as an "obstruction of justice" that involved paying $1,400 apiece for Barbie, his wife and two children to be smuggled out of the country.

"For whatever reasons the CIC arranged Barbie's escape, it was an unlawful act," Ryan said. "From what we know today, we believe the CIC refused to turn Barbie over to the French because they were embarrassed by the affair and felt they would have been compromised by his extradition, at least in part because Barbie was working against the French for the U.S. Army."

Ryan said the Army concealed Barbie's identity, paid him about $100 a month and gave him coffee, cigarettes, food rations and safe housing in Augsburg in Bavaria for almost four years.

In return, Ryan said, the Army received information about postwar cooperation between French and Soviet intelligence, Soviet attempts to penetrate German political movements and the whereabouts and activities of hundreds of former Gestapo officers who could be used as informers.

The Justice Department said that Barbie's network of informers had penetrated both Soviet and French intelligence networks that in turn were attempting to penetrate U.S. intelligence in the U.S. zone.

Barbie was regarded as the "most reliable" informer that the CIC had in Germany after the war, the Justice Department report said.

One reason that the CIC did not want to lose him to either France or Great Britain, "both of which wanted him," was that Barbie "knew more about how the CIC operated" than many members of the CIC. Thus, the Army could not afford to lose him to another country, even an ally such as France and Britain, the report said.

"CIC was convinced that the French Surete [Secret Police] had been thoroughly penetrated by Communist elements who wanted to kidnap Barbie, reveal his CIC connections and thus embarrass the U.S." As time went on and the French pressed their efforts to secure Barbie's extradition, the CIC became "even more desirous of protecting Barbie," the report said.

Curiously, the Surete in 1948 had interrogated Barbie in the same room with CIC agents about his knowledge of French collaborators who masked themselves as resistance fighters. But Surete did not inquire about Barbie's own role as head of the Gestapo in Lyons in 1944. It was only in 1949, after the French prosecuted a resistance leader named Rene Hardy for treason that they asked for Barbie's release so he could testify against Hardy.

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