

## **The Madrid Connection**

***The Madrid Connection*** tells the stories of the two men who became the leaders of the terrorist cell that committed the Madrid bombings of March 11, 2004, Europe's worst-ever terrorist atrocity, in which 191 people died and nearly 2000 were injured.

The story begins in the early '90s. One of the future terrorists was a Tunisian would-be intellectual who drifted into increasingly extremist circles; the other was a violent Moroccan drug dealer. They lived in separate worlds - the criminal underworld and religious extremism - until their paths crossed six months before the bombing.

The film is a journey into those worlds, drawing on completely exclusive access and the testimony of first-hand witnesses. Interweaving documentary footage, unprecedented interviews, archive and carefully-stylised reconstruction, the film also uses the video-record of the trial as a fascinating secondary narrative, including behind-the-scenes footage of the chief public prosecutor in the case, Olga Sanchez.

The locations range from Spain to Istanbul, Tunisia, Amsterdam and Morocco, as the story tracks how Al Qaeda operates and traces the many connections back to Madrid on March 11, 2004.

This is an untold, deeply revealing and dramatic story – and it can only be told now, in the wake of the verdict of the trial in Madrid of 29 alleged members or collaborators in the terrorist plot.

This 90 minute feature documentary is the fruit of more than two years of investigation by an award-winning team including Spanish judicial experts. The story has only been uncovered after the examination of over 100,000 of judicial documents, and some 400 hours of court footage. But the film goes much further: JWP's own investigation and access to exclusive primary sources provide a far deeper insight into how the plot slowly developed. Much of the information will be completely new to viewers in Spain and abroad.

Some of the major discoveries of the film are:

- How the subworld of paperless immigrants - the drugs trade, prison, addiction and violence - can produce highly-motivated, ruthless and dangerous people.
- What the debate among Muslims in mosques all over Europe is really about.

- How free speech and freedom pose a challenge to some alienated Muslims.
- How the command structure of Al Qaeda worked internationally to help bring about the bombings.
- The effect of international events on individuals who became terrorists.
- The role of internet and 'takfir' ideology.
- How extremist thought can connect with the criminal capacity for violent action to produce an atrocity.
- The difficulty of detecting terrorist groups and the links between them.
- The challenge for the Spanish justice system in mounting the first mass trial of Al Qaeda-inspired terrorists to have committed an atrocity in Europe.

In the background, but always present, is the impact of the bombing on thousands of people, above all, those who died and those left behind to mourn them. From the horror stem the twin questions asked immediately after the bombing: who? why? It those questions which the film ultimately addresses, and to which it gives a necessarily incomplete, but still deeply-revealing, answer.

Broadcast is due after the verdict and sentences are announced in late- October, 2007.

**Director's Filmography:** "FC Barcelona Confidential", Prix Europa (2005), Premio Adolph Grimme (2006). "Photographing the Exodus", 2nd prize Santiago Alvarez International Documentary Festival, Cuba (2007), Best Editing, FIGRA, France, (2007), Television Award Manos Unidas, España (2007), selected for Prix Europa (2006). Other awards/nominations: Foreign Press Association, London, 2003, Royal Television Society 2003, Workworld Media 2002.

"The Madrid Connection" a British-Spanish-Danish co-production, in association with Australia, Holland, Finland and Sweden, will be broadcast this autumn.