

Polish court delays decision in Polanski extradition case

Dorota Niemitz
7 March 2015

On February 25, a judge in the district court in Krakow, Poland, adjourned the extradition case instigated by the US government against director Roman Polanski (*Knife in the Water*, *Chinatown*, *The Pianist*) for several weeks in order to study documents. Polanski's attorneys used the same documents in 2010 when Swiss authorities detained the director at the request of American authorities. That case was eventually dismissed.

Polanski pled guilty in 1977 to unlawful sexual intercourse with an underage girl and fled the US when the judge in the case threatened to renege on the plea bargain and sentence the director to years in prison.

The new Obama administration attempt to lay hands on the filmmaker is part of an ongoing effort. A government that is laying waste to much of the Middle East, has launched illegal drone strikes that have killed thousands, and systematically undermined constitutional rights at home is pursuing the 81-year-old filmmaker for entirely reactionary and hypocritical reasons. The location of the hearing, Krakow, where Polanski and his family were trapped and persecuted by the Nazis at the start of World War II, is an especially foul aspect of the case.

The Krakow prosecutor's office refused to arrest Polanski last October, despite a US request, during his visit to Poland for the opening ceremonies of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. In January, US authorities officially applied to the Polish government for Polanski's extradition, and justice ministry spokesman Mateusz Martyniuk asserted that Poland's statute of limitations "does not apply to US requests," suggesting that Polanski could possibly be returned to the US.

According to Polish law, the fact that Polanski committed his crime more than 40 years ago would

have shielded him from further prosecution.

Polanski's lawyers, Jan Olszewski and Jerzy Stachowicz, argued that the case should be dismissed based on the fact that Samantha Geimer, the victim herself, appealed to the California court to close the criminal case against the director. Other undisclosed arguments were presented during the February 25 hearing.

The Krakow court judge, Dariusz Mazur, explained that his decision to delay the final ruling was motivated by the need for a careful examination of all the preliminary documents provided by the defense, which need to be translated from English and German.

"Verification of Polanski's testimony is necessary, and that rules out a quick resolution in the matter." court spokesperson Barbara Górszczyk told the press. Calling more witnesses, she said, "is not out of the question either."

Polanski's testimony lasted close to nine hours. At the request of his lawyers, the public and press were barred from the courtroom. Visibly nervous and exhausted after the hearing, the filmmaker told reporters: "This is all very tiring and, in a sense, painful, as I am forced to return to the issues I would rather forget."

Even if the Krakow court agrees to extradite Polanski, the final decision remains in the hands of the Polish minister of justice. The next hearing in the case is scheduled for April.

In Poland, with the exception of certain feminists, the respected artist has the support of the media and the general public, who are tired of and disgusted by his harassment. The general hope is that the extradition case will be dismissed.

Polanski plans to start filming his new movie, based on Robert Harris's *An Officer and a Spy*, about the

notorious Dreyfus case in France in the late nineteenth century, in Warsaw this July.

The WSWs has written extensively on the vindictive character of the case against Polanski:

Film director Roman Polanski questioned, released in Poland

[3 November 2014]

The sordid coalition pursuing filmmaker Roman Polanski

[8 October 2009]



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact