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THE *Esquire* INVESTIGATION

IN HIS PARIS EXILE, MI5 WHISTLEBLOWER DAVID SHAYLER SAYS HIS EVERY MOVE IS WATCHED. ESQUIRE TRACKED HIM DOWN TO FIND OUT IF THE SPY WHO COULDN'T KEEP A SECRET IS A PUBLIC HERO OR A GREEDY TRAITOR

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

Carlos the Jackal calls him "David the Englishman". The terrorist once infamous as "The World's Most Wanted Man", is captive inside the forbidding Prison de la Santé in Paris. But that hasn't stopped him plotting, and the arrival of inmate 269151F filled his mind with schemes. He shouted hopefully through his iron bars every time the prisoner walked from his cell to the exercise yard.

"David, David... Tell me about Libya. Tell me about the plot to kill Gaddafi."

The Jackal's voice echoed around the yard as former MI5 agent David Shayler loitered in the shadows. "Who's that?" Shayler asked other prisoners in fluent French. It was Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, alias "Carlos the Jackal", in solitary isolation for life following the brutal murder of two French policemen. The terrorist's disembodied voice unnerved the British inmate. "For God's sake tell him I'm not here," he said, shaking his head.

To the other prisoners, Shayler wasn't David the Englishman. They called him "Mr Gazza": Shayler is a Middlesbrough fanatic; he had a team shirt in his cell. On one of the few occasions when he'd cried, it wasn't because the pressure had got to him, that The Jackal's daily taunts had become too much to bear. It was when he'd heard his team's terrace anthem, "We Shall Overcome", on French TV. It made him think about standing beside his brothers and father watching Boro play in last year's Coca-Cola Cup Final.

David Shayler's journey to his cramped cell began on the night of 1 August 1998. He walked out of his Parisian Left Bank hotel, and strolled around the corner to a bar to watch satellite TV coverage of Boro playing a pre-season friendly. When he returned, dripping wet from the heavy rain, he was greeted at reception by five French undercover police officers. They spoke to him in French, and he replied in French.

"Are you Mr David Shayler?" "Yes." "You must accompany us..." "Am I under arrest?" "That's not important."

It was an odd reply. He was neither read his rights nor informed where the men were from. Shayler asked for ID. Cards were produced. They looked fake, he thought — "like something you'd buy from a dodgy magazine" — and began to suspect he was being hijacked by terrorists. He was, after all, a rogue ex-MI5 officer with valuable knowledge, and Paris has always been an international crossroads in the world of espionage.