

Charges on war crimes

■ Two former soldiers deported from the U.S. are to be indicted for alleged involvement in '95 massacre in Bosnia

BY MATTHEW MCALLESTER
STAFF WRITER

Two former Bosnian Serb soldiers who made comfortable lives for themselves in Phoenix before being deported this year are expected to be indicted in Bosnia today for war crimes, including murder, during the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

Mladen Blagojevic, 35, and Zdravko Bozic, 42, are the first former Yugoslavs deported from the United States to then be charged with war crimes in their home country. If convicted, they each face between 10 and 45 years in prison.

"It sends a message to those still out there that if they've committed war crimes and hidden in foreign countries that they will be brought to justice irrespective of where they are," said Toby Cadman, counsel to the chief prosecutor at the War Crimes Chamber of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Paul Charlton prosecuted Bozic and Blagojevic for lying on immigration application forms at the time they sought entry to the U.S. "These men may have thought that fleeing across the world could deprive their victims of justice," he said in an e-mailed statement to Newsday. "They were wrong."

The Bosnian prosecutor's office is likely to allege

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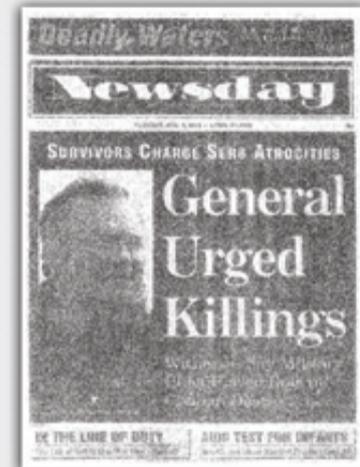


NEWSDAY PHOTOS / MATT MCALLESTER
Zdravko Bozic



Mladen Blagojevic

- **March 1992:** War begins in Bosnia.
- **July 1995:** Bosnian Serb forces massacre more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys after seizing the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica.
- **December 1996:** The war ends with more than 100,000 dead and nearly 2 million displaced from their homes. Many refugees from all sides in the wars of the former Yugoslavia come to the United States, apparent perpetrators blending in among them.
- **Late 1990s-early 2000s:** Dozens of men who were in the Bosnian Serb military units that participated in the Srebrenica massacre obtain refugee status in the United States. Mladen Blagojevic and Zdravko Bozic make their home in the same neighborhood of northern Phoenix, along with about 20 other former Srebrenica comrades and their families.
- **August 2001:** The UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague finds Bosnian Serb Gen. Radislav Krstic guilty of genocide for his role in the Srebrenica massacre.
- **2004:** U.S. federal agents begin to arrest former Srebrenica suspects living in the United States, charging them with immigration violations.
- **2006:** Bozic and Blagojevic are deported to Bosnia and are arrested on arrival in Sarajevo. Today, they are expected to be indicted for war crimes, including murder.



AUG. 8, 1995
How Newsday covered the story



Forensics experts with skull found at mass grave in Bosnia.

AP PHOTO

Blagojevic and Bozic, with two other former soldiers from the same platoon arrested this year in Bosnia, committed numerous war crimes in July 1995 during what remains the worst

war crime Europe has experienced since World War II.

The charges they face will likely focus on a well-chronicled episode in the massacre, when Bosnian Serb soldiers held prisoner

between 2,000 and 3,000 Bosnian Muslim men in and around the Vuk Karadzic elementary school in the town of Bratunac. Most were then taken to other sites to be executed.

Sources say prosecutors will allege:

■ On the night of July 13-14, 1995, Blagojevic and Bozic shot dead

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Cops: Marriage and 'hit' all arranged

BY ANN GIVENS
STAFF WRITER

Santhosh Paul wanted his wife dead before the holidays, and time was getting short, Nassau prosecutors said.

He started by asking a friend to kill her, they said. When that didn't work, Paul, 31, of 2431 Cliff Lane, North Bellmore, arranged to meet a hit man in a McDonald's restaurant parking lot in Uniondale. There, with his 3-year-old son in his car, Paul agreed to pay the man \$200,000 to follow his wife to Manhattan today and stab her through the heart, prosecutors said.

There was just one problem: The hit man was a cop.

Paul said he wanted to mourn his wife before the holidays, so he wanted the murder over with fast, said District Attorney Kathleen Rice. He said his wife, who works for Cablevision, was heading into Manhattan to get a passport today, and that the un-

dercover detective should follow her and stab her there, where crime is more prevalent, the prosecutors said.

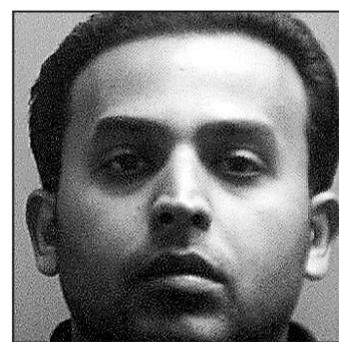
Late Tuesday night, when Paul returned to the parking lot to give the man money for the job, he was arrested and charged with second-degree conspiracy. His unsuspecting wife, Tina, filed a missing person report when her husband didn't come home Tuesday night.

Paul, who owns a local mortgage insurance company, pleaded not guilty yesterday, and was held without bail.

"This defendant was intent on having his wife killed," Rice said at a news conference.

At Paul's arraignment in District Court yesterday in Hempstead, defense attorney Peter Brill of Manhattan said the charges against his client are unfounded. "They're not backed up," he said.

Prosecutors say the undercover officer videotaped three



Suspect Santhosh Paul

meetings between him and Paul. They also said Paul showed the detective a copy of a \$1 million life insurance policy he had on his wife, to prove he could pay the \$200,000.

Tina Paul, 30, left the arraignment with a sweater over her head. Prosecutors said she was shocked and that they were giving her time to absorb what happened.

Paul's mother, Gracey Paul

of East Meadow, said her son is a "good person."

"We're really upset," she said at the arraignment. "We don't know anything about it."

She said her son's arranged marriage to Tina took place in India about six years ago.

According to Rice, Paul's friend contacted the authorities after Paul asked him to kill his wife. The undercover detective then posed as a hit man and quickly moved to make contact with Paul.

The two met three times, twice on Tuesday, Rice said. Paul brought his 3-year-old son to the final meeting, and left him in his own car while he discussed the hit in the other man's car.

Paul paid a \$900 down payment early Tuesday evening, but the detective said he needed more money, prosecutors said. When Paul returned with an additional \$1,600, he was arrested, Rice said.



NEWSDAY PHOTO / DICK YARWOOD
Tina Paul, wife of attempted murder suspect Santhosh Paul, tries to evade reporters.