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Rich gold trader 'told cellmate he masterminded wife's murder and plotted to kill man he paid to carry out hit'

By [David Gardner](#)

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- **It was a 'boy meets gold' love story, prosecutors say**



Dead: Pamela Fayed was allegedly killed in 2008 in an attack arranged by her husband James because of issues surrounding their costly divorce battle

A wealthy gold dealer confessed he masterminded the murder of his estranged wife to a prison cellmate, a court heard.

Businessman James Fayed also allegedly plotted from behind bars to kill one of the men he is accused of paying to carry out the hit.

Prosecutors claim Fayed arranged the 2008 killing of his wife, Pamela, because he was embroiled in a costly divorce battle and feared she would give evidence against him in a federal probe into their international gold trading business.

Deputy Los Angeles District Attorney Eric Harmon said the case amounted to a love story, but one that involved 'boy meets gold' rather than 'boy meets girl.'

'It's that greed, that love of gold, that caused this man to have his wife murdered for financial gain,' he added.

Jurors at Los Angeles Superior Court heard excerpts of a tape secretly recorded by the inmate in which Fayed, 48, talked about his 'money-grabbing' wife.

'If she'd just kept her mouth shut,' he said.

Mr Harmon said the jailed businessman complained to the inmate that the hitmen passed up several better opportunities to kill his wife before choosing a crowded parking garage.

Mrs Fayed, 44, was attacked on July 28, 2008, on the third floor of a Los Angeles garage as she walked to her car after a meeting earlier that afternoon with her husband and their lawyers.

She was seeking \$66,000 per month in support and attorney fees and was battling with her husband for control of their precious-metals business.



In court: Businessman Mr Fayed also allegedly plotted from behind bars to kill one of the men he is accused of paying to carry out the hit on his wife

She also demanded nearly \$1million from Fayed, alleging that he had failed to give her access to the company's books.

The couple were supposed to be back in court the day after the murder. Mrs Fayed was getting into her car when she was stabbed 13 times by a hooded attacker.

The man fled in a red Suzuki truck that had been rented by the Fayed's business, Goldfinger Inc., said prosecutors.

Police later found the victim's blood inside the SUV, even though it had been cleaned after the killing.

According to Mr Harmon, Fayed also discussed paying the cellmate to arrange the killings of the men he had used to carry out the attack on his wife.

Fayed could face the death penalty if he is convicted of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Defence lawyer Mark Werksman claimed his client's cellmate, Shawn Smith, was a habitual liar who tried to trick Fayed into plotting the murder of at least one of the men who allegedly carried out his wife's killing.

'He's an innocent man wrongly accused of a crime he didn't commit,' said Mr Werksman.

Prosecutors allege that Fayed paid Jose Moya, an employee at his Moorpark ranch, \$25,000 to carry out the murder-for-hire.

Mr Harmon said Moya, a gang member, hired another gang member, Gabriel Marquez, to help - then Marquez, in turn, hired Steven Simmons, a member of the same gang, to stab Pamela Fayed.

The three are expected to be tried separately and have pleaded not guilty.

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