



*"I am the man of the century. No one will ever forget me."
- López*

Pedro Alonso López, a.k.a. "The Monster of the Andes", is a prolific Colombian pedophilic and ephebophilic and serial killer, serial rapist, stalker, and abductor believed to have murdered over 300 young girls in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. He is considered by many to be one of the world's most prolific serial killers and rapists. To this day, he is presumed to be at large.

Background

López's mother, Benilda López de Castañeda, was a sex worker. His father, Midardo Reyes, who was married to another woman at the time, was having an affair with Castañeda. López was the seventh of thirteen children. Reyes was shot and killed six months before López was born when a rebellious mob attacked the grocery store he was in. This attack occurred at the beginning of the civil war in Colombia known as La Violencia. López's mother claimed to be loving and caring, but López said that she was cruel and physically abusive as she raised him.

When he was eight years old, Castañeda caught López molesting his younger sister, resulting in him being kicked out of the

house. Days later, he was found by a pedophile, who lured him with the promise of a hot meal and a bed. Instead, the man took him to an abandoned house and repeatedly sodomized him. After the incident, he joined a gang of street children for protection. The gang would often fight others with knives and belts, for food and places to sleep in. They would also smoke bazuco, a type of drug derived from cocaine. After spending four years surviving on the streets, López was taken in by an American family and became a student in a school for orphans, but he ran away after he was molested by a teacher.

Murders, Arrest, and Release

"I like the girls in Ecuador. They are more gentle and trusting, more innocent. Not like the Colombian girls, who don't trust strangers."

As a young adult, López began to steal cars and sell them to local chop-shops in exchange for sums of money. López was arrested in 1969 for the auto thefts and sentenced to seven years in prison in Bogota. Two days into his sentence, he was brutally gang-raped by three other inmates, an event that deeply traumatized him. Following this, López made a shiv for himself and hunted down his rapists, killing all of them (some versions claim that he was also raped by a fourth inmate, who escaped his wrath; and also that he strangled the ringleader of the rapist with his bare hands). The killings gained him the grudging respect of the other inmates, who never dared to disturb him again, and were considered acts of self defense by the local Colombian justice department. Because of this, only two years were added to his previous sentence.

Following his release in 1978, López became a drifter and began abducting, raping, and murdering an average of three young girls per week. On one occasion, in Peru, López attempted to abduct a nine-year-old child from an Indian tribe, but he was caught in the act. As a result, López was beaten, tortured, and buried up to his neck by the natives, who planned to pour syrup on his head and let him be eaten alive by ants. However, he was saved when an American missionary intervened and convinced them to let her deliver him to police. The tribe reluctantly agreed, but the unaware missionary instead drove López to the Colombian border, where she set him free. Afterwards, he began traveling through the countries of Colombia and Ecuador, abducting and murdering more girls along the way. Police initially believed that slavery and prostitution rings were abducting the missing children.

Following a flash flood near Ambato, Ecuador, in 1979, the bodies of four of the missing children were uncovered and found. Days later, López attempted to abduct twelve-year-old María Poveda from a marketplace, also in Ambato, but failed when her mother caught him in the act with the help of other women; he was almost lynched on the spot. López was rescued by

police officers and arrested while proclaiming that he was a "good person" and that he had "a clean heart". While in detention, López was subjected to a standard interrogation until he told the policemen that he was not Ecuadorian, but a Colombian drifter. A police lieutenant then beat him and accused him of being part of a gang abducting girls from Ambato. The officer threatened to kill him if he didn't confess, but López remained silent.

In that moment, the officer's superior, Captain Pastor Córdova, entered the room and told all of the policemen to leave, deciding to interrogate the suspect himself with a more friendly approach. He offered López food and cigarettes and asked him about his health and feelings before requesting information about the gang of abductors. López shrugged and said that he knew nothing about that. When the Captain told him that he was under great pressure from the families of the missing girls to find whoever abducted them, López told him that he could find one victim in a cabin outside the town. The police went to the cabin and found a nude, dead body lying on an old mattress, who was identified as Ivanova Jácome, a missing girl. After Córdova asked López how many girls he had killed, López looked upwards and said, "Over two hundred in Ecuador, some tens in Peru, and many more in Colombia." The President was informed, and he ordered that López should be taken to the places where he had left the bodies, until all of the victims in Ecuador were recovered.

López led police to more than 30 shallow graves, but after learning that he was going to be charged for murder, he stopped cooperating and declared his innocence. A total of 53 bodies were recovered in Ambato alone, even though many graves had been emptied by flash floods or scavenging animals before the investigators could find them. López's minimum body count is estimated to be at 110, but some believe that the total number is in the vicinity of 300 or more. Many police officers and reporters have disagreed with the latter estimate, saying that it was still very low, because he had stopped cooperating with the investigation. López was convicted of three murders in 1980 and sentenced to sixteen years in prison, the maximum penalty for murder under Ecuadorian law. He was incarcerated in the Pavillion B section of Quito's García Moreno prison, where he was a model prisoner and met a later Colombian pedophilic serial killer, Daniel Camargo.

On August 31, 1994, López was released from prison on good behavior, but an hour later, he was arrested as an illegal immigrant and deported to Colombia. López attempted to stop his deportation, claiming that he had gained Ecuadorian citizenship in 1974, but he could not produce any evidence of this. In Bogota, López protested as he was subjected to a medical evaluation, demanding to be set free even though an angry mob had gathered outside with the intention of lynching him. However, nobody had ever charged López for murder in Colombia.

Still reluctant to set him free, the authorities moved López to El Espinal, where he had resided decades earlier with his mother, in hopes that one of his older victims would come forward. A local woman named Alba Sánchez claimed then that in 1979, she had seen López walk away with her daughter Floralba from her home before Floralba's body was found raped and strangled outside town. This M.O. was identical to López's known murders in Ecuador. López was found guilty after a short trial, but his defense attorney demanded that he should be subjected to a psychiatric evaluation first. He was ruled insane in 1995, and as a result, he was committed to a mental hospital instead of being sent to prison. In 1998, a new evaluation deemed him sane, and he was released on \$50 bail and the condition that he should continue receiving psychiatric treatment and reporting himself to police every month. However, he did neither.

The news of López's release caused hysteria in Ecuador. It was rumored that he had been seen in the northern part of the country around this time, but this was never confirmed. López was seen next again in El Espinal, when he knocked on the door of his own mother, Benilda. The impoverished woman admitted that she thought he was going to kill her because he had blamed her "for every pain in [his] heart" in a televised interview years earlier, and she had pleaded in turn for López to never be released. However, López calmly told her to get on her knees because he wanted to give her his blessing. Afterwards, he demanded his "inheritance in life", arguing that he had no means to sustain himself. His mother gave him a few bills that she kept in a drawer and an old bed that López took apart to sell for pieces. She never saw him again and his current whereabouts are unknown. In 2002, the Colombian police launched an Interpol order of arrest against López for a new murder in El Espinal that fit the M.O. of his early crimes. Different rumors claim that he is living in Tolima Department, Colombia; as a homeless man in Bogota; or even that he was murdered after some relatives of his victims put a bounty on his head.

He is presumably still at large, although whether or not he has or will start killing again, or his current whereabouts, are unknown.

Modus Operandi

López targeted young girls aged between eight and twelve, mostly from poor, rural Amerindian communities. He had no racial preference and he admitted to having been tempted at times to abduct Caucasian girls, including foreign tourists, but he refrained from doing so because they were more closely watched by their parents. He would stalk the girls for an unknown amount of time and then abduct them. He would bring them to a secluded place, where he would rape them and then strangle them to death. Afterwards, he would bury their bodies in shallow graves, in groups of three or four. Before they

decomposed too much, he would return and play "tea parties" with a group of corpses. López only killed in daytime because he wanted to have a clear view of his victims' faces as they died. When he killed the inmates who raped him, he did so by shanking them.

Profile

"I lost my innocence at age of eight. So I decided to do the same to as many girls as I could."

López was diagnosed as a sociopath with avoidant personality disorder, but not as a true psychopath. Growing up while watching his mother have sex made him assimilate sex with affection, and being thrown out as a result of displaying that affection with his sister made him conclude that affection was something to be punished. His subsequent childhood abuse and deprivations made him assume that destroying childhood innocence was both natural and desirable, and that by killing his victims (chosen because of their perceived innocence more than their looks), he was sparing them from a life of poverty and further abuse.

Pedro Lopez Known victims

Unspecified dates: Numerous unspecified fights
Unspecified dates: Numerous victimless auto thefts
1956, Colombia: His unnamed sister (molested only)
Unspecified dates from 1969-2002: Killed at least 110 victims during a 33-year span. Known ones are:
Bogota, Colombia: Three unnamed inmates (his rapists; all shanked to death)
Bogota, Colombia: Unnamed fourth inmate (unconfirmed; possibly attempted)
1978, Bogota, Colombia: Unnamed girl (abducted, raped, and strangled)
El Espinal, Colombia: Floralba Sánchez (abducted, raped, and strangled)
Ayacucho, Peru: Unnamed nine-year-old girl (attempted to abduct)
Isabel Cristina Recalde (abducted, raped, strangled, and buried in a shallow grave)
Ivanova Jácome (abducted, raped, and strangled)
María Poveda, 12 (attempted to abduct)
2002, El Espinal, Colombia: Unnamed victim (possibly; strangled)
Note: while López was officially convicted for 110 murders, he claimed to have killed over 300.

Notes

Per Spanish naming customs, Colombian people have two last names. The first surname is the first of the father, and the second surname the first of the mother. In most cases, the

paternal surname (López in this case) is the only one used in daily life.

With an estimated minimum of 110 victims, López is the fourth-most prolific single serial killer in recent history, after British doctor Harold Shipman (who had 218 confirmed victims), Chinese quack Hu wanlin (146), and fellow Colombian pedophile Luis Garavito (138).

Captain Pastor Córdova is very commonly misreported as a priest, presumably out of confusion that "Pastor" was not his first name but his occupation.