



MUSEO
SITIO DE MEMORIA
ESMA



HISTORIAS SIN OLVIDO

In the Officers' quarters where the Clandestine Detention Center of Torture and Extermination set up in the Naval Mechanics School operated. There were more than 700 places of illegal detention during the last dictatorship from 1976 to 1983.

Here, in the ESMA approximately 5000 men and women were detained or missing. They were members of political parties or social activists, revolutionary organizations either armed or unarmed, workers, trade union members, students, professionals, artists and members of religious orders. Most of them were dropped alive into the ocean.

Here, in the ESMA the Navy planned abductions and systematically carried out murders. Here, prisoners were kept in hoods and shackled. Here, they were tortured. Here, the Navy made them disappear.

Here, in the ESMA children were born in captivity and were separated from their mothers. Most of them were illegally adopted or robbed. We are still looking for many of them.

Here, in the ESM a crime against humanity was perpetrated.

**memory,
truth &
justice**

ESMA MUSEUM AND SITE OF MEMORY Former Clandestine Centre for Detention, Torture and Extermination

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory will remain closed until further notice as a preemptive measure against the spread of Coronavirus in our country.

Contents not suitable for children under 12.

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Argentina **unida**

Secretaría de
Derechos Humanos



Ministerio de Justicia
y Derechos Humanos
Argentina

Dagmar Hagelin

THE YOUNG SWEDISH WOMAN KIDNAPPED BY THE ESMA TASK FORCE



Dagmar Ingrid Hagelin was born in Buenos Aires on September 29th, 1959. Her parents were Susana Buccicardi and Ragnar Hagelin, a Swedish citizen, economist and business manager. She had an interest in music and developed a social sensibility after the separation of her parents, perhaps due to the influence of her mother's boyfriend Edgardo Waisman, a human rights lawyer who represented political prisoners.

In the summer of 1975, Dagmar went to Villa Gesell on vacation. That is where she met Norma Susana Burgos, wife of Carlos Caride, a former defendant of Waisman back in 1974 when an arrest warrant was issued against him. Susana and Waisman were activists in the Western area of the Buenos Aires province, where Dagmar also started her on-the-ground activism. In May of 1976 her mother's boyfriend was murdered during an operation conducted by the Armed Forces at their home in El Palomar. In December, Norma Burgos lost one of her daughters. So, Dagmar started to visit her regularly at her home. She also lived in El Palomar. Her fellow activists included María Cristina Lennie, who at that time offered her a place to hide.

In January, 1977, Dagmar was starting to organize a new vacation in Villa Gesell. Ragnar bought her summer clothes, including a colored checked shirt. On January 26th she sat with her father and told him she was going to visit Norma the next day to give her the address of the Villa Gesell house so she could go there to rest. Dagmar didn't know that on that same day, January 26th, 1977, an ESMA Task Force had kidnapped her friend in the city of Ramos Mejía. That night, they set up a guard at her friend's home on the street Sargento Cabral 317, in the town of El Palomar in Buenos Aires.

At 10 pm, four cars with their lights off parked at the Burgos home. There were three Ford Falcons and a light blue Chevy that was often used by the head of the Navy School of Mechanics, Rubén Jacinto Chamorro. Norma, already kidnapped, was in one of the cars. Several men entered her home, turned it upside down searching for documents and told her family that their daughter was at the door. Norma was taken back to ESMA but a group of seven people stayed in the house, now turned into a hellhole. They waited for anyone who would come in, convinced they would get María Antonia Berger, a member of the Montoneros organization and survivor of the Trelew massacre, for whom Dagmar worked as an assistant.

"They put us in a bedroom with my wife and a our 3 year-old granddaughter," said Norma's father some time later, "and around 3.30 am they went across the street into a plastic factory, introduced themselves, and the tall blue-eyed man told them there was a military operation and that they should leave if they heard gunshots, because that was a possibility."

At 8.30 am on the morning of January 27th, 1977, Dagmar arrived at Norma's home holding a small piece of paper. She was wearing the colored shirt her father bought for her. When she arrived at the door, two Navy officers assaulted her. One of them was Lieutenant Alfredo Astiz, the other one was Corporal Peralta, a police tracker loaned by the local precinct to guide the marines. Dagmar got to the door of the Burgos home where a heavily armed group was waiting both inside and on the roof. Those who saw her stated that her face transformed out of fear and desperation. She turned around and ran through the street, with Astiz and Corporal Peralta pursuing her. The military who were positioned on the roof fired towards the street all along the block. By the time she reached the street corner, she was already 30 meters ahead of them.

—Stop, girl —shouted Astiz—, or I'll shoot you.

Neighbors came out of their homes. They saw Dagmar run and Astiz go down on one knee, pull out his gun, and fire. One single shot dropped her. There was a taxi cab parked on the street. Corporal Peralta ran to get the owner. Jorge Oscar Eles told them the car didn't run.

—We're Federal Police —they lied. Eles gave them the car keys. They moved the car thirty meters forward, tried to open the trunk, and had to go back to get the owner because they couldn't do it. The man, a key witness in the criminal investigation, helped them open the trunk. Between the three of them they loaded Dagmar, who was bleeding. Dagmar reacted and threw her hands out to prevent the trunk from closing on her.

—Don't worry, girl —said Astiz—. We'll take you to the Churruca.

Dagmar's father, Ragnar Hagelin, repeated endless times the story he was able to reconstruct by going house to house. He always explained that they were lying to her from that point on: the Churruca was a Federal Police Hospital, and the men carrying out the operation were marines.

Her father went to the Burgos home that same day, worried because she hadn't come back home. "My daughter was very punctual, we waited for her to have lunch, an hour went by, we were calmed and kept waiting, thinking that there might have been a problem with the transports. We waited another hour, two hours later we sat and had lunch without my daughter. By the third hour I was restless and, knowing what was going on in Argentina with shootouts and innocent people suffering the consequences, I got in my car".

When he got to the house on Sargento Cabral street, he knocked on the door and a man he didn't know came out, it was Norma's father. He asked him his name. Ragnar introduced himself. The man said: I have some bad news.



Dagmar was taken to ESMA. That night she was held in the infirmary down in the basement. She had a head wound, her hair still tainted with blood, and a reddish bruise below her eyes. Norma Burgos was able to see her that night. The marines took her down to the prison sector on the third floor, hooded, with her hands cuffed behind her back and shackles on her feet. At the infirmary she saw Francis William Whamond and Alfredo Astiz. Lying on the gurney, Dagmar was conscious. Norma never thought she would see Dagmar imprisoned. Astiz said his shot had grazed her head. Norma asked Dagmar how she felt. Dagmar said that in spite of everything she was fine.

That night, Norma overheard the officers say they had mistaken Dagmar for María Antonia Berger. She saw the colored shirt and sandals with dark stripes next to the gurney. She saw Dagmar again, two or three days later, at the Basement, wearing a larger bandage on her head and handcuffed to the bed. Her bruise was turning purple. Clearly she had been cleaned and given some sort of first aid, but she looked very gaunt.

—See? The lady is alive and you will live too —said Whamond.

Norma hinted there had been some type of discussion, and Dagmar had complained. She was able to stay very little. A week later she managed to see her for an instant in a room on the third floor while going to the bathroom. Dagmar was standing, with a flowered nightgown or robe, and she was not hooded. That was the last time she saw her. Two or three days later, thanks to an oversight of her jailer, she peeked below her hood and saw Dagmar's sandals, but the room was empty. After asking several guards about it, one of them told her Dagmar had been individually *transferred* a few nights before, an euphemism they used for murder. Norma recovered Dagmar's shirt from the ESMA Storeroom. She managed to give it back to her father Ragnar Hagelin in 1981 when she was able to testify for the first time, at the Swedish embassy, about what she had seen at ESMA.

Her father looked for her in police precincts in El Palomar and Morón, and just a few hours after her kidnapping he had already found out that the operation that led to her abduction had been carried out by an ESMA Task Force. He turned to the Swedish embassy in Buenos Aires, who immediately contacted the Foreign Office. Yet despite the huge diplomatic pressure and a series of efforts that even reached US president James Carter and Pope John Paul II, the Argentine government systematically denied the young woman was ever arrested.

In 1985, the Buenos Aires Federal Court sentenced Emilio Masera in the Trial of the Juntas for Dagmar's case. Despite early reports about Astiz's involvement in the operation and the tenacious effort of attorney Luis Zamora, Astiz wasn't convicted until November 2017, in the so-called Unified ESMA Case.

Testimonies

"She had a gunshot wound above the left eyebrow, and I saw her on two occasions. Once, in the infirmary at the ESMA basement, she was on a gurney, and Lieutenant Astiz was also there. Whamond had taken me there to talk to her because she also was an activist in the Western area of the Buenos Aires province. Then, two or three days later, I saw her in Capucha, in what would later become the pregnant women's room, to the right of the bathroom. I didn't talk to her, just passed by and saw her, she was standing and walking with some difficulty, wearing a nightgown. I also remember over-hearing comments by Acosta expressing concern due to the pressure of the Swedish embassy, because she had a double citizenship, like saying they needed to solve that issue."

Lisandro Cubas

Kidnapped from October 20th, 1976 to January 19th, 1979.
Testimony at the ESMA Trial, Unified Case, 4/15/2013

"I saw Dagmar Hagelin at ESMA and recognized her because she was an activist in the Western area together with my sister in law María Cristina Lennie (...). When they took her wounded to ESMA, they had us working in little rooms in the Basement and from there you could see the infirmary. I saw her sitting on the bed when they opened the little doors, she had a bandage on her head".

Silvia Labayru

Kidnapped from December 29, 1976 to June 16, 1978.
Testimony at the ESMA Trial, Unified Case, 11/18/2013

"I saw the little Swedish girl in the room that would later become the pregnant women's room. She was on her feet, walking, with bandages on her head and her arm. (...) I remember they went to Norma's home, I don't know if that is when they kidnapped her, then they went back to the house and stayed because they thought Maria Antonia Berger was going to come. But it was Dagmar who came, and that's where they kidnapped her."

Marta Alvarez

Kidnapped from June 26, 1976 to late 1978.
Testimony at the ESMA Trial, Unified Case, 4/25/2013

"They killed her because she was severely injured, she limped on one leg, and since there was a lot of international repercussion because she was a Swedish citizen they had decided to shoot her, and Astiz shot her."

Miriam Lewin

Kidnapped from March 25, 1978 to January 10, 1979.
Testimony at the ESMA Trial, Unified Case, 4/6/2014

"My attention is drawn to a young girl with some sort of bandage on her head, at some point in the Basement area, in the infirmary. Later, I stopped seeing her. They bring me a copy of the Buenos Aires Herald newspaper, they ask me to translate an English-written article about an investigation conducted by the Swedish embassy about the disappearance of Swedish citizen Dagmar Hagelin".

"The person who shoots Hagelin with an 8.8 caliber shotgun, apparently brazes Hagelin's skull with one of the pellets, causing her wound."

Martín Gras

Kidnapped from January 14, 1977 to mid 1978.
Testimony at the ESMA Trial, Unified Case, 8/8/2013