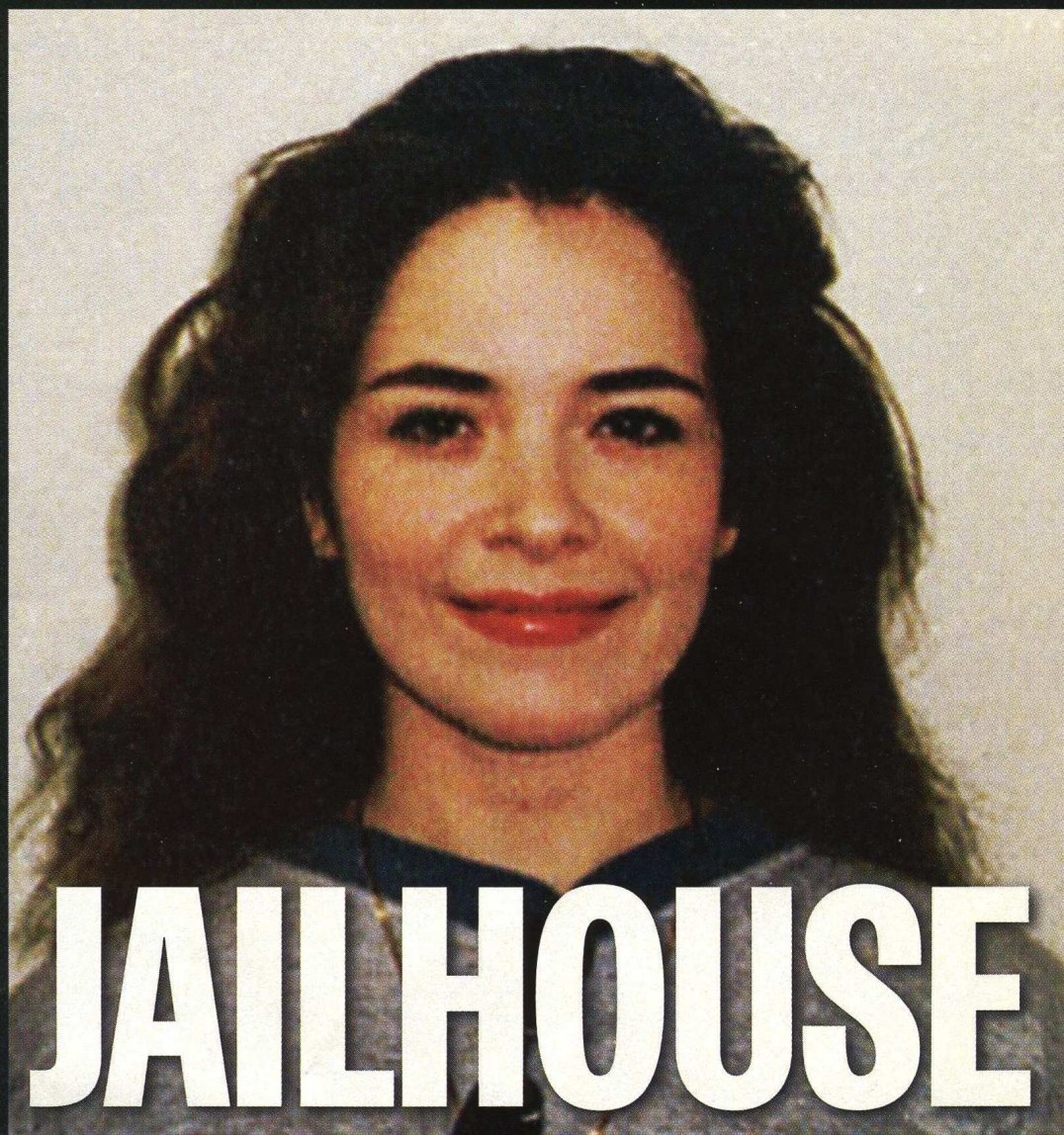


By SANDY FERNANDEZ

DOORMAN SEVERINO Amos didn't think much of the small band of girls he saw trooping in and out of 136 Rua Domingos Ferreira, a high-rise apartment building just off Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach. One of them was pregnant; another had a small child; all of them looked scruffy and down on their luck. Sometimes as many as six young women would spend the night in the fourth-floor studio. In the mornings, a heavy-set, dark-haired man would visit, sometimes carrying a box of diapers, and then leave with one or more of the residents. "I thought they were hippies," said Amos, who worked in the next building. "I never imagined they were wanted by the police."

But at least three of them were, including the overweight man. Hidden behind dark sunglasses and a quiet demeanor was Mexican rock star Gloria Trevi, 29, for seven months the object of one of the most extensive police manhunts Latin America has seen. She and her secretive manager, Sergio Andrade, 43, fled Mexico after a wave of accusations that they had lured numbers of underage female fans into a cultlike world of deprivation, abuse and sexual servitude.

All that ended last week when a combined force of Brazilian police and Interpol officers banged on the apartment door. Found with Trevi and Andrade were Karina, Karola and Katia de la Cuesta Soria, three Mexican sisters, and singer María Raquel Portillo, an ex-lover of Andrade's whose singing career under the name Mary Boquitas he had managed. Portillo had also played with Trevi in an all-girl band in the late 1980s. The sisters were released because there was no warrant for their arrest. The other three were charged with corruption of a minor. Mexican authorities immediately applied for their extradition, a process that could take three weeks, or longer if the trio chose to fight it. Kidnapping and statutory rape charges are expected to follow. In the meantime, they were held without bail in Rio's Nelson Hungria prison. As she was hauled off by police, Trevi appeared eerily serene, smiling and waving to onlookers.



THE ACCUSERS



L.A. REFORMA

ALINE HERNANDEZ
Wed to Andrade when she was just 15, she wrote an exposé of his penchant for young girls and accused Trevi of complicity in it. No one believed her until others disclosed similar stories



SERGIO DORANTES

GUADALUPE CARRASCO A former beauty queen, she joined the "clan" after a woman approached her at a pageant and offered her a role in a Trevi soap opera. At 19 she was older than most of the girls

She asked for time to put on makeup before facing press photographers and TV cameras. Through a lawyer, she also denied knowledge of the charges against her, saying she was in Brazil to vacation, not flee.

The arrests marked the first time Andrade had been seen in public since 1997, and Trevi since mid-1998. Police say that during their time out of Mexico, the two lived in Spain and may have visited Argentina and Uruguay, but they had been in

Brazil since arriving in São Paulo in December 1998. When the state's attorney's office in Chihuahua issued warrants for their arrest in March 1999, looking to question them about the disappearance of a teenage girl entrusted to their care, the group was living in Rio on tourist visas issued under their real names. In fact, Brazilian police say they first pinpointed Trevi four months ago when she went to get her visa renewed. Although aware of her fugitive status, they



ROCK

Fugitive pop star Gloria Trevi and her manager, Sergio Andrade, are finally busted in Brazil



KARINA YAPOR Her disappearance kicked the case into high gear. Only 13 when she left home, by 16 she'd had a baby, Spanish officials say, and by 17 she had vanished. Her parents' charges set off a manhunt



TAMARA ZUÑIGA From 13 to 15, she claims, she was kept a virtual slave by Andrade—locked in a room, beaten, raped and often deprived of food—while Trevi stood by. She hopes Andrade “gets what he deserves”

were unable to take action against her without a formal request from Mexico. The papers arrived only on Jan. 12. The inexplicable delay is another mystery in a long, weird and tragic tale of a brash, trash-talking rocker who was once, ironically, Mexico's leading icon of girl empowerment.

The woman now charged with enslaving young girls to please her Svengali manager was, in the early 1990s, “a superstar, the Mexican Madonna,” in the words of

Cristina Saralegui, the best-known talk-show host in Latin America. A brash young singer with an aggressively sexual persona and proto-riot grrrl politics, “La Trevi” performed in ripped tights and torn-up shoes, flashed her pantied crotch and said she wanted to be Mexico's President. “This society wants to suffocate me, but I won't let it,” she sang, and made pronouncements on such topics as abortion and government corruption. A young audience

AP

THE SCANDAL

APRIL 1998
Sergio Andrade's ex-wife Aline Hernández publishes a book alleging that—with Trevi's help—he routinely seduced underage fans. Trevi denies it.

MARCH 1999
Karina Yapor's family is told by Spanish authorities that the teen, supposedly studying music with Andrade, gave birth to, and abandoned, a son.

JULY 1999
With Karina still missing, the Yapors file charges against Andrade and Trevi.

DECEMBER 1999
Karina reappears. She disputes her parents' accusations, but her story doesn't check out.

JANUARY 2000
Andrade, Trevi and fellow musician Mary Boquitas are arrested in Brazil. Their lawyer insists they were not hiding.

tired of cookie-cutter pop embraced her aggressively sexy style, buying millions of her records and making her 1991 movie, the supposedly autobiographical *Pelo Suelto* (Hair Hanging Loose), Mexico's biggest moneymaker.

But by 1998, Trevi's star had dimmed. She had retired from touring two years earlier, tearfully telling her last concert audience that Andrade, the man who had discovered her as a teenage singer in the Mexico City subway, had cancer. “He helped me,” she said. “Now I must stand by him.” Her remaining career dwindled. A 1997 attempt at a variety show failed, and the demand for her appearances on TV talk and panel shows slowed to a trickle. She seemed on a track to obscurity.

Then in April 1998 came the first hints of big trouble, when Andrade's ex-wife Aline Hernández, another singer-actress, published a tell-all book titled *La Gloria por el Infierno* (To Heaven Through Hell), which promised to reveal “the story of Aline and how it reflects the hell suffered by Gloria Trevi.” Hernández charged that in 1989, Trevi, whose first record had just hit big, plucked her off a Mexico City street at age 13, promising that Sergio Andrade could make Hernández a star like herself.

RISE AND FALL

After an “audition” in which she was asked to pose nude (Hernández says she refused), the duo offered her a chance to live with them and be groomed for pop success. It was intoxicating stuff: Trevi was fast becoming the country’s biggest attraction, and Andrade was an award-winning songwriter who had managed the careers of other top Mexican singers. Hernández’s parents acquiesced, and she moved in.

Within weeks, she found herself a virtual slave. According to her account, Hernández was only one of several underage girls who with Trevi’s encouragement had sex with Andrade and accepted his bizarre rules, including no contact with her family or other men, and flogging as a punishment for infractions of house regulations. Hernández married the manager in 1991, when she was just 15 and he was 34. But within a month, the bride returned home to her parents. Confused and hurt, she says, she hid her secret for years.

The Hernández allegations brought Trevi out of seclusion. She fervently denied the charges on several TV talk shows, including Univision’s *El Show de Cristina*, and swore she had never had a “love relationship” with Andrade. She also repeated the story about his cancer.

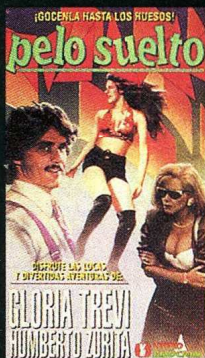
For the most part, the public believed Trevi. The case of missing teenager Karina Alejandra Yapor Gómez, however, proved harder to squelch. Yapor’s parents, a lower-middle-class family from Chihuahua City, reported in April 1999 that they had received a shocking call from authorities in Spain, where their 16-year-old daughter had been living with at least nine other girls under the tutelage of Andrade and Trevi. Karina had left home to study music with Andrade at age 13. The Spanish officials told her parents that the previous December their daughter had given birth to a baby boy she subsequently abandoned. The infant was taken to a hospital, and Karina’s parents were contacted. The Yapor family had not heard from their daughter in months and did not know if she was alive. Taking custody of the baby, they filed charges of kidnapping and corruption of a minor against Trevi and Andrade, whom they presumed to be the boy’s father.

The case exploded in the Latin American press. Neither Trevi nor Andrade responded to the accusations, and both stayed out of sight. They were said to be holed up in Europe, Chihuahua, El Salvador and McAllen, Texas. A formal arrest warrant was prepared against the duo last July. In December 1999, after they had filed charges, the Yapors finally heard from Karina. She called from Brazil to beg them to drop the charges in exchange for her re-



LA REFORMA

1982 Born Gloria de los Angeles Treviño, Trevi met Andrade three years after this photo was taken



1991 Trevi’s second album and its tie-in hit movie, *Pelo Suelto* (Hair Hanging Loose), turn her from star to superstar at age 21. The film is still on the list of Mexico’s biggest hits



LA REFORMA

1996 Trevi says she is retiring and tells fans at her farewell concert that she will take care of Andrade, who has cancer



LA REFORMA

1997 She fails to make a mark on TV; then Trevi begins to fade away



O GLOBO

2000 After more than a year of wandering, Trevi is arrested in Rio

turning home. They refused, but she came home anyway, accompanied by another girl from the group, Marlene Calderón. In a series of interviews, Karina insisted that she had not been maltreated and that her child—“the product of love” between her and a man she identified only as Francisco—was not abandoned but left with a caretaker. She said she hadn’t seen Trevi or Andrade in more than two years and speculated that they were in Rome. No one believed her. Police arrested Calderón as an accessory to kidnapping.

The floodgates had been opened. A number of other women, from well-known Mexican singer Lorena Herrera to former Guerrero state beauty queen Guadalupe Carrasco, 26, emerged to tell their stories. Tamara Zúñiga, a student from Santiago, Chile, offered especially vivid testimony. Zúñiga, now 24, says she was approached by a woman at a Gloria Trevi look-alike contest in Santiago and offered a place in Andrade’s “school.” Instead she found herself subjugated, often deprived of food and isolated from other girls in the communal household, including her elder sister.

One night, Zúñiga relates, Trevi pleaded with her to offer herself to Andrade for sex. “She was crying, begging,” claims the Chilean. “[She said] he needed my affection to heal from past traumatic relationships.” When Zúñiga refused, she says, Andrade raped her anyway. After months of bad treatment, Andrade let Tamara and her sister visit Chile accompanied by Mary Boquitas, who, several girls reported, served as Andrade’s spy and enforcer on the road. When Boquitas was suddenly called to Argentina, the girls bolted. “[Our family] wouldn’t believe us at first. The police didn’t buy our story either,” she told *TIME* in a soft accent. The Yapor case dissolved the skepticism. Zúñiga has filed charges of kidnapping, sexual abuse and corruption of a minor against her alleged captors, and says she hopes Andrade “gets what he deserves.”

Few of the alleged victims have any animosity toward Trevi. In their eyes, she was as exploited as they were. “Like all the girls, Gloria is the very reverse of her stage image, extremely timid and shy,” says Aline Hernández, who wrote that the singer was so devoted to Andrade that she sometimes slept on the floor next to his bed. “She’s as much a victim as an accomplice.” Unhappily, for the woman who was once Mexico’s symbol of women’s liberation, proving that may turn out to be her best defense.

—With reporting by

Vietnika Batres and Ronald Buchanan/Mexico City, Andrew Downie/Rio de Janeiro, Cristobal Edwards/Santiago and Greg Fulton/Miami