



**INTERNATIONAL PEN  
WRITERS IN PRISON COMMITTEE  
DAY OF THE IMPRISONED WRITER**

**15 NOVEMBER 2006**

**Mexico**

**Lydia Cacho**

**Author, poet, novelist, newspaper columnist**

A charge of “defamation” was brought against Lydia Cacho in October 2005 by José Camel Nacif Borge, a textile businessman. Nacif is cited in Cacho’s book *Los Demonios del Edén: el poder detrás de la pornografía* (*The Demons of Eden: the power behind pornography*) as having connections with Jean Succar Kuri, then detained in the United States and accused of heading up a child pornography and prostitution network (he has since been extradited to Mexico to stand trial).

Although she lives in the state of Quintana Roo, the legal action against Cacho (43) was taken in the state of Puebla. On 16 December 2005, Cacho was detained by Puebla state judicial officers in Cancún, Quintana Roo. The officers apparently arrested her in her office, bundled her into a vehicle at gunpoint and drove her to Puebla, a journey of approximately twenty hours. She was released from San Miguel State Prison the following day on bail of 106,000 pesos (US\$9,900), pending trial. Cacho has questioned the legality of officials from Puebla making an arrest in Quintana Roo before steps had been taken to ensure that she was aware of the charges brought against her.

Nacif does not deny knowing Succar Kuri but claims that his reputation has suffered as a result of Cacho’s book making his relationship with him common knowledge. Succar Kuri has since publicly declared that Nacif has paid US\$300,000 towards his legal costs.

Over the few months since the publication of the book, Cacho has received the protection of bodyguards provided by the General Procurator’s Office on account of the repeated death threats she has received. A lawyer she was employing also reportedly received death threats from the governor of Puebla, Mario Marín and dropped the case.

In February 2006, two investigative journalists revealed the contents of a tape recording of an apparent telephone conversation between José Camel Nacif Borge, Mario Marín, and the governor of Chiapas, Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía, in which the businessman thanks the governors for their role in having Lydia Cacho arrested. Nacif is also apparently heard voicing the desire that Cacho might be sexually abused whilst in

detention. On 21 February, the Chamber of Deputies asked the Supreme Court to investigate the matter. The case is apparently only the third in Mexican history in which the Supreme Court has investigated state violence against a member of the general public.

In the meantime, Lydia Cacho is in the invidious position of facing mounting legal costs and a possible four-year sentence if convicted of telling the truth.

### **Defamation laws in Mexico**

Absurdly, under Mexican law, a person can be found guilty of “defamation” even if they can prove that what they have written is true. However, this year, a federal law was passed decriminalising “defamation”. Although this has come into effect in the Federal District of Mexico City, the bill has yet to be approved by congresses in the other 32 states. Indeed, in 2004, the state of Chiapas actually raised penalties for “defamation” and “libel” from between two and five years to between three and nine years.

### **Appeal addresses**

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## Sample of Writing by Lydia Cacho

### Excerpt from:

*Los demonios del edén – El poder que protege a la pornografía infantil*  
(*The Demons of Eden – The power that protects the child pornography [industry]*)  
Published by Grijalbo in 2005

### The Demons of Eden

*Writing or reading a book on the abuse and trade of children is neither easy nor enjoyable. Nevertheless, it is more dangerous for society to remain silent about this phenomenon. Whilst society and the State looks on, thousands of children are victims of dealers who turn them into sexual objects to be traded and enjoyed by millions of men who find in child pornography and the sexual abuse of children a thing of delight which has no ethical repercussions.*

*This is not a story of a dirty old man who discovers he likes to have sex with little girls of five years of age or younger. Although some passages, in which the victims speak, are deeply painful, the courage and the clarity of the witnesses and specialists allow us to see the light at the end of the tunnel and understand better the implications of this complicity of silence with regard to violence and sexual exploitation.*

*The challenge of journalism is to tell human stories in order to understand better the world around us. In this sense *The Demons of Eden* fulfils this purpose: to reveal the twilight world that hundreds of mothers, fathers and children – who never dreamt that they could fall victim to a pederast, a pornographer or a rapist – face every day without even knowing it.*

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