

UK's 10 most wanted: Suspected murderer and fraudster top list

The 10 suspects - thought to be hiding in Spain - will have their photos printed on plane boarding passes and buses.


By Martin Brunt, Crime Correspondent

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Photos of the most wanted will be printed on airline boarding passes



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A billion-pound money launderer, a lifelong fraudster and an alleged murderer head the latest list of Most Wanted suspects thought to be on the run in Spain.

Their photographs will be printed on airline boarding passes and plastered on buses along the Costa Del Sol as half-term holidaymakers are asked to join expats and locals in the hunt for the fugitives from British justice.

It will mark the tenth anniversary of Most Wanted appeals in Spain, where

76 out of 86 identified suspects have been captured and extradited to face UK courts.

Sarah Panitski, 42, from York, laundered £1 billion in a VAT fraud and should be doing eight years in a British jail, but fled during her trial and was convicted and sentenced in her absence.

Mark Acklom, 43, is a serial conman who was in a Spanish jail when police in Bath were told that three years earlier he had allegedly romanced and fleeced divorcee Carolyn Woods, 55, of her £850,000 life savings.



Sarah Panitski laundered one billion pounds

By the time detectives had obtained a European arrest warrant for him, Acklom had been freed from jail in Murcia and disappeared.

The other main suspect is Shane O'Brien, 28, wanted in connection with the savage and unprovoked murder of a young man in a North London wine bar. There is a £20,000 reward on offer for information.

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All ten suspects are subject to a European arrest warrant (EAW), which effectively guarantees that any fugitive who is captured will be extradited.



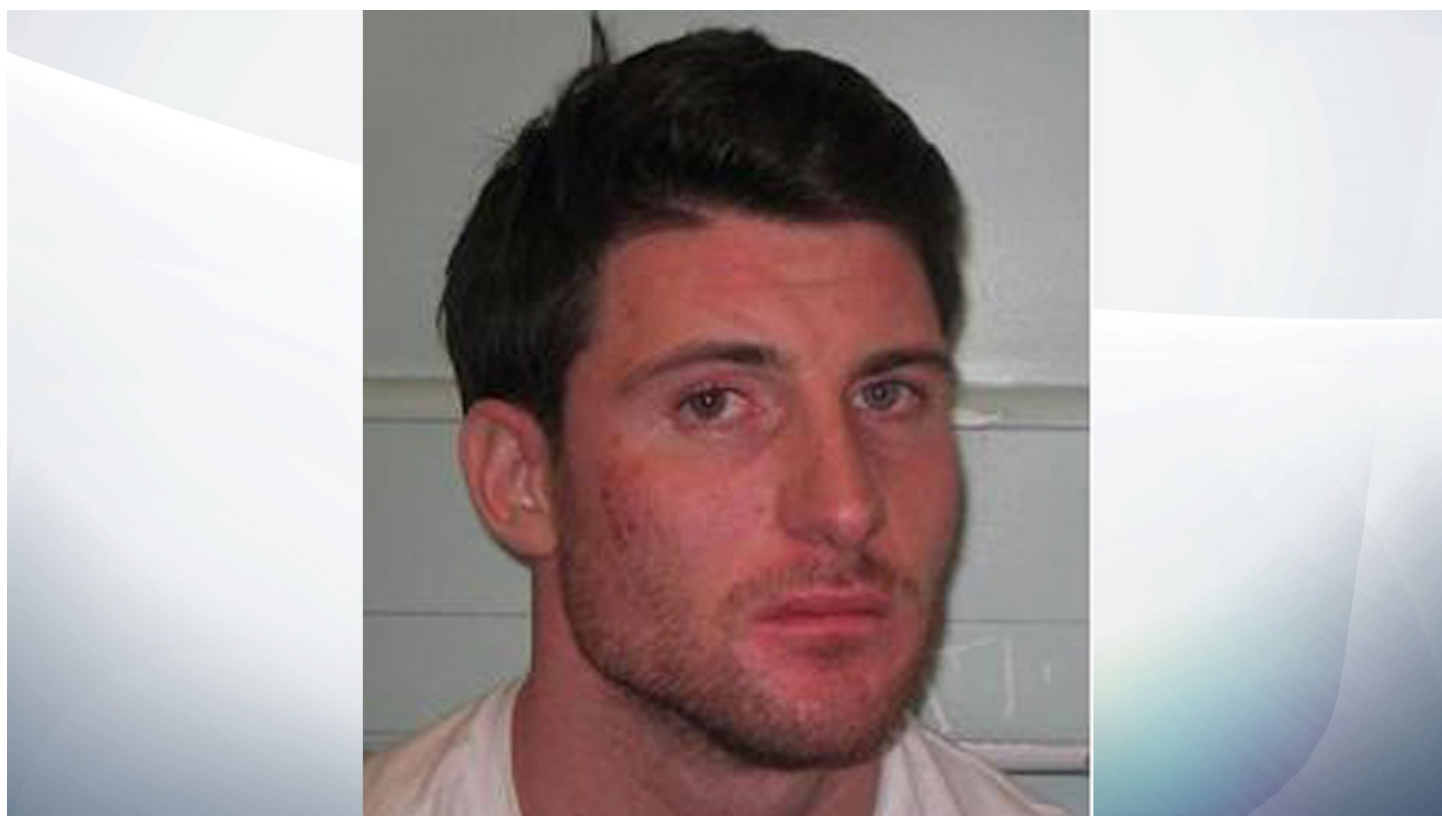
Mark Acklom allegedly fleeced a divorcee of her life savings

But Brexit will mean an end to the system, so the UK government will have to negotiate bi-lateral extradition treaties with each European country.

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If it can't do that, Brexit could herald a return to the Costa del Crime days of the 1980s and 90s, when fugitives lived in Spain away from the clutches of British detectives and returned to face the music only if and when they chose to.

Steve Reynolds, from the National Crime Agency, said: "We don't want to take a step backwards and if we didn't have EAWs we would encourage the government to negotiate with our European partners to create a system that has the same characteristics."



Shane O'Brien is wanted in connection with the murder of a man in north London

The Most Wanted appeal is being launched in Torremolinos in Southern Spain as a joint venture between the NAC and the Crimestoppers charity.

Anyone with information about the fugitives can call two freephone numbers and speak anonymously to operators.

People in Spain, where a translation service is available, can ring 900 555 111.

The number in the UK is 0800 555 111.



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