

## **CEDI**

## Povos Indígenas no Brasil

Fonte New york Times Class: Chies Mendes

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# Brazilian Stuns Courtroom: IKilled Chico Mendes

XAPURI, Brazil, Dec. 12 - A Brazilian rancher's son stunned a court today by confessing that he shot and killed an

by contessing that he snot and kined an Amazon environmental . campaigner and union leader nearly two years ago.

The confession in the death of Francisco (Chico) Mendes, on the opening day of the trial in this remote Amazon village in the western Brazilian state of Acre, took even his lawyers by sur-

cisco (Linco) Mendes, on the opening day of the trial in this remote Amazon village in the western Brazilian state of Acre, took even his lawyers by surprise.

The Mendes case caused an international furor and did much to focus world attention on the destruction of maintain his innocence.

Chico Mendes."

Croachment of cattlemen and farmers, whose slash-and-burn conversion of defense lawyers, João-Lucena Leal, lungle into pasture and cropland has said of the confession by the son, whose sentencing is expected on Thursday. The World Resources Institute says world attention on the destruction of maintain his innocence.

By Reuter C 13 1990 Wast Amazon rain forest.

Arith Dec. 12 — A Brazillon the defendant, 22-year-old Darci on stunned a court today hat he shot and killed an ronmental campaigner or nearly two years ago.

The defendant, 22-year-old Darci died, was a rubber tapper, one of about 2,000 people who make a living collecting latex, nuts, resins and other natural products of the Amazon forest. He organized other rubber tappers in a campaigner when he took the witness stand today the he took the witness stand today of the rubber tappers in a campaigner of the rubber tappers in a campaigner of the standard of the rubber tappers in a campaigner of the rubber tappers in a campaigner of the rubber tappers of the standard of the rubber tappers of the r

### Brazilian Stuns Courtroom: 'I Killed Chico Mendes'

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that as much as 20 million acres of for-est were destroyed in Brazil in 1987 alone. Some scientists say the depletion of the rain forest is contributing to global warming, the so-called greenhouse effect.

Mr. Mendes's activities won him the enmity of the ranchers and other prodevelopment interests, whose views have until recently had the full support of the Brazilian Government. He was gunned down Dec. 22, 1988, in the backyard of his modest wooden home in Xapuri, 2,650 miles northwest of Rio de

Janeiro.

Within days of the crime, the younger Mr. da Silva confessed to the killing, but he later retracted his confession. Many people close to Mr. Mendes assert that both da Silvas were cardes assert that both da Silvas were car-rying out the orders of far more power-ful farmers who wanted Mr. Mendes dead. Human rights advocates have asked that the inquiry into Mr. Men-des's death be reopened

### 'Trial of the Century

"Trial of the Century"

In his lifetime, Mr. Mendes was relatively little known in Brazil. But in death, he became a martyr for the ecological cause, known to milions worldwide. Some 240 people, including many foreign reporters and environmentalists, crammed into the tiny courtroom to follow the proceedings, which the national press has described as Brazil's "trial of the century."

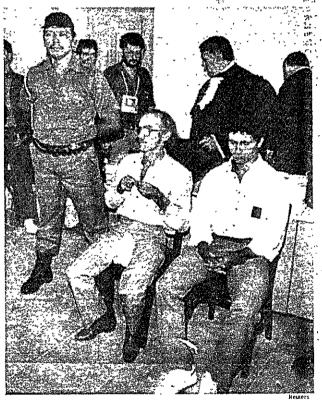
[The Associated Press quoted Marcio Thomaz Bastos, the chief prosecutor, as saying: "This is a historic trial not only for Brazil, but the world, in Brazil, it is a test case against reckless lawlessness, and for the world, a marker of whether or not man will allow the Amazon to be destroyed."]

But the defense lawyers have said they will seek to tarnish Mr. Mendes's image, "We will show the world who Mendes was." Mr. Leal said "He was not a saint"

In court today, Darci da Silva described bow he waited in Mr. Mendes's cribed bow he waited in Mr. Mendes's

not a saint "
In court today, Darci da Silva de-iscribed how he waited in Mr. Mendes's backyard for his victim to appear. "I fired one shot," he said But some confusion arose over the murder weapon. Judge Adair Longhin showed him a 20-gauge shotgun, the purported-murder weapon. But Mr. da i Silva said he killed Mr. Mendes with a | 16-gauge shotgun.

### Father on the Stand



Darci Alves da Silva, right, after confessing yesterday in a Brazilian' court that he killed Chico Mendes, an Amazon environmental campaigner. Seated with him was his father and co-defendant, Darli.



Silva's farm. The teen-ager, who is expected to take the stand later in the trial, has said that the elder Mr. da Silva plotted the murder at the farm.

Silva plotted the murder at the farm.
Thousands of pointcians, ordinary
Brazilians and international observers
have come to this village. Telephone
trucks, television vans and food delivery trucks competed with carts
pulled by horses and oxen as workers
removed weeds in front of the oneroom wooden courthouse.

### Hammocks on Front Porches

Peasants from around the region have come to Xapuri in canoes, in mule- and steer-drawn carts, on horseback, by bus or on foot. Tents went'up in the main souare. Hammocks hung on front porches and matresses were laid wherever there was a free spotsin people's homes. Father on the Stand

The federal Police Chief. Romein Tuma, who was in court, told reporters that the young man's confession could be a factic to try to win acquittal for his father; who is accused of ordering the mirror Because he was under 21 at the time of the crime, Darci de Silva could get a reduced sentence. Mr. Leal said

After the son's confession, his father took the witness stand When asked by the judge if he was involved in the muricler, the gaunt Mr. da Silva, dressed in sic da Silva, who was raised on Mr. da Silva, dressed in the son's confession, his father took the witness stand When asked by the judge if he was involved in the muricler, the gaunt Mr. da Silva, dressed in sic da Silva, who was raised on Mr. da Silva, dressed in the son's confession, his father took the witness stand When asked by the judge if he was involved in the muricler. The prosecution's main witness against the father is 15-year-old General and steer-drawn carts, on horse back, by bus or on foot. Tents went'un the main square. Hammocks hun in the main square. Hammocks hun on iront porches and matresses wen all wherever there was a free spine in the son's confession, his father to the confession, his father to the confession has a free spine in the son's confession, his father to the confession has a free spine in the son's confession, his father to the main square. Hammocks hun in the main square. Hammocks hu

The elder Mr. Da Silva's lawyers said that after this trial he is due to stand trial on charges of murdering three people in the southern state-of Parana.