

Jailed American accused of lawyer attack

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LA PAZ, Bolivia --

A U.S. man jailed since last year on charges of bombing two Bolivian hotels attempted to stab his lawyer and was plotting attacks against other officials, prison authorities said Tuesday.

Triston Jay Amero, 25, who goes by the name Lestat Claudius de Orleans y Montevideo, tried to attack his visiting attorney with a kitchen knife last Thursday at the Chonchocoro prison outside La Paz, prison security director Col. Edgar Andrade told reporters.

Authorities later searched Amero's cell and discovered a bottle of gasoline. Amero confessed he planned to "throw gasoline in their faces and set fire to the prison superintendent and the United States diplomat who visits him every now and then," Andrade said.

Amero had been on a hunger strike after he was caught distilling fruit and rice in his cell and selling the alcohol to other inmates, Andrade said.

Bolivian police have charged Amero and his 45-year-old Uruguayan girlfriend Alda Ribeiro with the March 2006 bombings of two low-budget hotels that killed two people and injured seven in the capital. Neither has gone on trial yet or entered a plea.

In and out of psychiatric hospitals and California juvenile prisons since he was 7 years old, Amero has frequently threatened suicide and violence against authorities, according to court documents.

In his travels through South America, Amero has described himself as a Saudi Arabian lawyer, a pagan high priest, a notary public and even a vampire, deriving his chosen name from a character in U.S. author Anne Rice's popular series of vampire novels.

Amero was convicted of bombing an automatic cash machine in northern Argentina before he arrived in Bolivia.