



César Gaviria Trujillo was the intended target when Pablo Escobar ordered the downing of Avianca Flight 203 on November 27, 1989.

Although the plane crashed, and all 107 people on board died (plus three individuals who also died on the ground from falling debris), Escobar's murderous plan was thwarted when it came to Gaviria. Having changed his plans, he was not on Flight 203 that day.

Born on the 31st of March, in 1947, César Gaviria was Colombia's 28th President (between 1990-1994). He was in office when Pablo Escobar died on the 2nd of December, 1993.

Since his presidency, Dr. Gaviria has also served as Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). His [biography](#), at OAS, tells us more about him. The following is an excerpt:

Former Colombian President César Gaviria—known in Latin America as a conflict mediator, advocate of democracy, staunch supporter of regional integration and defender of human rights—was first elected OAS Secretary General in 1994. He was re-elected, by acclamation, at the 1999 regular session of the General Assembly...

Beginning his political career when he was just 23, Gaviria had a role in Colombia's national government by 1974. Fifteen years later, in 1989, he stepped down from serving as Minister of the Interior to manage the presidential campaign of Senator Luis Carlos Galán.

When Galán was assassinated, as ordered by Pablo Escobar, César Gaviria became his party's nominee. Despite Escobar's efforts to have Gaviria murdered too, he was [elected to high office in 1990](#):

During his four-year term (1990-94) he enacted policies to strengthen democracy, promote peace and reintegrate armed rebels into civilian life. He also carried out a process of constitutional and institutional change, focusing on strengthening the judiciary branch and increasing human rights protection.

In 1991, through a plebiscite and elected constitutional assembly, Colombia drafted a new, more democratic constitution. President Gaviria also undertook economic reforms to modernize and enhance Colombia's competitiveness in the world market.

Once the target of a drug-lord, Dr. Gaviria has some thoughts about the "War on Drugs." [In his opinion](#), it has been less-productive than people think:

No country in the world has paid such a high cost as Colombia in terms of the lives of its political leaders, judges, policemen, soldiers, journalists, and tens of thousands of innocent civilians, nor suffered a graver damage to its democratic institutions.

*The moment has come to evaluate the results of this strategy, which has so few results to show beyond statistics about interdiction efforts, drug seizures, the persecution of drug cartels, deaths, and prisoners in jails. (See Prologue, by César Gaviria Trujillo, in *Anti-Drug Policies in Colombia - Successes, Failures, and Wrong Turns* by Alejandro Gaviria and Daniel Mejía, published, in English, by Vanderbilt University Press.)*

This image depicts how Dr. Gaviria appeared at about the time he avoided Pablor Escobar's assassination plot.

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Image of Dr. Gaviria, online via the Organization of American States. Public Domain.

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