

'Only out for money'

Associated Press

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — Dutch magnate Maurits Caransa, freed Wednesday by kidnapers after five days captivity, said he negotiated his own \$4.16 million ransom with four abductors he described as "just criminals" and not political terrorists.

"As they said themselves, they were only out for money," the 61-year-old millionaire told a news conference.

Caransa said the four men, who overpowered him last Friday outside an Amsterdam hotel, drove him to a dark cell-like enclosure within a larger room and handcuffed him to a bed. They spoke to him in English and French via intercom and wore ski masks in face-to-face dealings.

The self-made magnate said he gained his freedom at one-fourth the 40-million guilder (\$16.64 million) ransom his captors first demanded. "We bargained and came to the sum of 10 million guilders," he said.

He said he wrote the board of directors of his real estate company Sunday and instructed them to draw the money from a bank and arrange for its delivery to the kidnapers.

His advisers at the news conference stopped Caransa from explaining how this was done, but the newspaper Nieuws van de Dag said a Caransa company representative delivered the money at a rendezvous outside an Amsterdam bar. Police confirmed the ransom was paid.

The bearded and disheveled millionaire was put out of a car in downtown Amsterdam at 1:15 a.m.

Wednesday. He yelled "I am Caransa! Please help me!" A woman passer-by put him in a taxi and sent it to police headquarters, where he was reunited with his wife and grown daughter.

Caransa, born of a poor Jewish family of Portuguese descent, was imprisoned briefly by the Nazis during World War II, and his parents and two brothers died in concentration camps. He made his fortune selling army surplus equipment after the war.

Police Chief Inspector Gerard Toorenaar said detectives knew the serial numbers of the 1,000-guilder ransom notes and were "not pessimistic" about finding the kidnapers. A car believed connected with the case was found abandoned on Amsterdam's south side.

Caransa's abduction came 10 days after the slaying of West German industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer by the Red Army Faction, a West German terrorist organization, and was first thought to be the work of that group. Dutch newspapers received calls demanding the release of a Red Army Faction member jailed in Holland in exchange for Caransa's freedom.

Caransa said his four abductors spoke English and French and one appeared to understand Dutch radio broadcasts.

He said they gave him three sleeping pills two hours before releasing him, but he swallowed only one and stayed awake during the 45- to 60-minute drive from the hideout where he was held.