

## ABC NIGHTLINE

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KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline. Our main focus tonight is war. Forty-five nations are currently involved in war of one kind or another, and the number is growing. We'll examine what those figures tell us about the world of 1983 and what they may mean for the future. Also tonight we'll look at the debate in the National Council of Churches on whether to grant membership to a church serving the gay community, and two years after the attempt to kill the pope we'll look at what intelligence agencies know about the shooting and how they've used the event to further their own ends.

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KOPPEL: Gentlemen, thank you. In a moment, a report from Rome on how much has been accomplished and how much is still a mystery in the two-year-old investigation of the shooting of Pope John Paul II.

Two years ago Mehmet Ali Agca tried to kill the pope. How he came to do it, at whose urging, with whose assistance and to what larger end--those questions are still snarled in controversy, but, as Bill Blakemore reports now, those who've been covering the story have been dealt a fascinating and frequently conflicting variety of stories.

BLAKEMORE: On May 13, 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca did something very easy. He shot the pope. He ran but was grabbed by onlookers who'd seen his gun go off. Another man was photographed racing from the scene. Four eyewitnesses said he also had a gun in his hand. John Paul was rushed to the hospital where he almost died, and the world naturally wondered had Agca acted alone as he had said? Was he as unbalanced as he appeared? Had big-power politics pushed him or some small group of fanatics? Three investigations began--by the intelligence services, by the Italian court of law and the by the journalists. The intelligence service from various countries, because it's their job, got deepest first and still know most, but it's not their job to tell each other or the public anything nor necessarily the truth when they do, rather to defend and advance the interests of their different governments. We cannot know for sure what any of them know, though a bit of it made its way into the semi-public Italian court procedure. In the trial the judge said there were signs of some vast conspiracy. The investigating magistrate began to work on Agca, who began to talk, and this Turk was arrested in Switzerland, who admits he brought Agca the gun, and this Turk in West Germany, who admits he gave Agca money. Now in Italian jails, they say they know nothing about shooting the pope. Then 18 months after the crime, Agca said more, and this Bulgarian official was arrested in Rome. The Italian court also wanted to arrest more Bulgarians Agca said had helped him, and this Turkish businessman Agca said had promised him \$1 million to do it, but these three were all back in Bulgaria. Shown the fleeing man, Agca said it was one of the Bulgarians. Shown there was little resemblance, he changed and said it was a close Turkish friend whom he'd never name. The Italian court thinks it's this man, \*Oral Chellink, Agca's missing boyhood friend. They've issued a warrant. The journalists began, as always, by picking up crumbs, matching rumors, bothering judges and stalking spooks. High Vatican sources told reporters off the record they had no doubts the KGB did it, that the Polish pope, champion of Solidarity, had been too great a danger for Moscow. American intelligence nudged several reporters to keep looking eastward. In late '81 a British documentary claimed a Bulgarian connection. Agca had said he got his false passport there. Reader's Digest in '82 expanded this, said the KGB did it, or almost certainly. Other reports in Europe and elsewhere, forgetting that motive is never proof, published partially fanciful tales of Agca in Tehran and Lebanon, Moscow and Libya, which read like bad spy fiction, and when Agca's own story, that Bulgarians had helped him shoot John Paul, was leaked from the courts, speculation soared. The Bulgarians invited the international press to their capital for an extraordinary news conference, where all those Agca accused protested their innocence, but four Italian

cabinet members told their Parliament Bulgaria was involved in several subversions of Italy, Red Brigades terrorism and massive smuggling of heroin and arms, all part of an effort to destabilize the country. Both countries recalled their ambassadors. The story had widened from the trial of one crime to East-West politics and multinational crime. Moscow denied any connection to Ali Agca but added that John Paul, in any

case, had been trying to subvert Eastern Europe. The same Turk Agca claimed offered him riches to kill the pope was now said by Italians to be at the center of Bulgarian-based smuggling of Western arms to the Middle East wars in return for heroin smuggled to Italy. Authorities wondered was Agca a drug runner? Did he work for Bulgarians and Turkish Mafia that way and falsely accuse them in a plot on the pope? American intelligence nudged some reporters and said now they thought perhaps it was not an Eastern plot after all. Much was now known, but Agca still held on to his secret. Why did he do it? Whatever else is found, the investigations spurred by the one crime have already given glimpses of a world's business we normally would not see. This is Bill Blakemore for Nightline in Rome.

KOPPEL: The issue: did intelligence agencies put out disinformation on the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul? Here in our Washington bureau to discuss it with us now Paul Henze, consultant with the Rand Corporation, former member of the National Security Council in the Carter administration and now completing a book on the attempt to kill the pope and Ray Cline, former deputy director at the CIA, now a professor of international relations at Georgetown University. Paul Henze, who, who stands to gain from these stories? I mean there's a variety of them which would seem to gain almost every intelligence agency in the world. HENZE: Well, I'm not aware of very much misinformation that's been put out by any intelligence agencies except those from the East, and obviously they're very interested in deflecting attention from themselves, so the stories that are most distorted seem to me to be coming mostly from Moscow and Sofia, that we also have a pattern of disinformation rising from various strange places, a tendency to tell wild tales in order to diffuse judgement.

KOPPEL: And why is that sort of thing done? HENZE: Well, I think the motivation from the East is quite, quite obvious. It's to deflect attention from what appears to be the only motivation for an attempt to kill the pope. The problem in any kind of murder is always to establish a credible motive. In spite of all of the other theories that have been advanced, no really credible motive for killing the pope has been advanced, except an Eastern one.

KOPPEL: And yet, as we, as we just hear Bill Blakemore say, the, the Western intelligence agencies, CIA included, seem now to be nudging reporters away from that direction. What could be the possible motive for that? HENZE: Well, that isn't my impression. Ah, I, ah, I really don't see any evidence that the Western intelligence agencies are nudging reporters away. The Western intelligence agencies, of course, are not making public note, ah, public announcements of their view. I'm not aware of any public statements that have been made by any intelligence agencies.

KOPPEL: Well, you're quite right. They're not publicly made, but if you read tomorrow morning's Washington Post, you'll find that there is the suggestion there that the U.S. government was most disinclined to lay this crime at Yuri Andropov's doorstep just after he took over. Ah,.... HENZE: Well....

KOPPEL: So, you know, there is the suggestion that perhaps they were nudging people in the direction of, of, ah, Turkish drug runners rather than Bulgarian representatives of the KGB. HENZE: Well, that really.... There've been a lot of stories to this effect, but I must say I've been working on this whole thing for nearly two years now, and I, I have never had any discouragement from anybody in the U.S. government or from any other government for that matter. I've been called nasty names by the Bulgarians and nasty names by the Russians, but no one else has discouraged me, nor has anybody made any effort to pedal what I would regard as any tendentious tales to me.

KOPPEL: Ray Cline, why would any intelligence agency, which by definition is involved in the covert, the secretive, not passing out information, A) why would it give anything to reporters, and B) why would we be dumb enough to believe it if you do since it goes contrary to your motives to do that? CLINE: Well....

KOPPEL: Or would seem to. CLINE: Well, Ted, I think you're, you're really putting your finger on the difference between news and intelligence. Your colleagues are very interested in a new angle and a new headline. The intelligence agencies are trying to sort out the evidence and figure out the consequences of the facts that develop. I think the intelligence agencies, particularly the CIA, has been, have been very sensible in keeping a distance from this story and letting the Italian judicial system handle it, so I don't, I don't see much substance to the news stories I read, Ted. I think the circumstantial evidence is clear that the Bulgarians seem to be involved, and if so, the KGB and the Russians certainly would know what happened, but that's all there is so far, and until we get the final judicial report on Agca, anything public is speculation.

KOPPEL: From your own experience in this sort of thing, Ray Cline, what happens ultimately? Is the truth ever discovered in a matter such as this, or, I mean let's assume for the moment that it was the KGB acting through the Bulgarians, acting through even others. Would they not be smart enough to so cover their tracks that no one's ever going to get to the bottom of it? CLINE: They certainly would try to cover the tracks, and there always probably will be a margin of doubt, probably a slight one at the end of the investigation because a professional assassination operation is not designed to leave calling cards or smoking guns around. On the other hand, there does seem to have been some botch in this case. It's.... The evidence announced in Rome suggests that somebody was there, probably Bulgarians, who were supposed to finish off the job. I have a feeling they expected Agca to be killed by the Vatican police, and when they didn't do it, the other gunman, if there was one, and I think there was, probably should have stayed and killed Agca rather than run, so I think something came unraveled, and it yet was over a year before the story began to leak out which brought out the Bulgarian connection and hence the KGB connection. I think Judge \*Martello, who is a very fine investigative officer, judging by his record in Italy, will unravel this case, present a convincing set of what is bound to be only circumstantial evidence but what will hold up in a court of public inquiry when all the facts are revealed.

KOPPEL: Ray Cline, Paul Henze, thank you both very much. In a moment we'll look at some of the stories that will be making headlines in tomorrow morning's newspapers.

KOPPEL: (Portion of tape missing)...stories making headlines in some of Friday morning's newspapers. On the front page of Friday's Miami Herald is tonight's hijacking to Cuba of a Capital Airlines flight that was bound from San Juan to Miami with 248 persons on board. It's the second time in two weeks that the same Capital Airlines flight has been hijacked to Cuba. A female hijacker has reportedly been arrested in Havana. The Miami Herald also reports that two Eastern Airlines mechanics have been suspected for 30 days without pay. They were found responsible for the maintenance error that caused Eastern's flight 855 to lose power in all three engines last week before narrowly making a safe return to Miami International Airport. When they return, the two men will be placed in other jobs. They must then undergo retraining if they wish to resume work as mechanics. And Friday's Atlanta Constitution reports on an important defeat today in Congress for President Reagan's economic plans. In separate votes the Republican Senate rejected two Republican budget proposals before sending the whole budget issue back to committee for further

consideration. Tomorrow on World News Tonight, a special report from correspondent Al Dale on an attempt to channel the lava flowing from the erupting volcano, Mt. Etna in Sicily, and tonight on One on One, Greg Jackson's guest is actor-singer Kris Kristofferson. That's our report for tonight. I'm Ted Koppel in Washington. For all of us here at ABC News, good night.

**EXCERPTED**