

[commercial break]

DOWNS: Last week we told you about the real onion field killer, Gregory Powell, convicted of murdering a Los Angeles policeman back in 1963. Well, the prospect of his release on parole after 20 years in prison created a public outcry. And this morning his parole was once again denied, and he must spend at least one more year behind bars before he can be considered again.

Well, that's 20/20 for tonight. We're in touch, so you be in touch. I'm Hugh Downs. Good night.

ABC NEWS

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20/20

October 21, 1982

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"A Moment of Crisis"

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"Barbara Mandrell"

DENNIS S. OSIK Producer
STEVE FOX Correspondent

Louise Mandrell courtesy of Jim Owens Entertainment
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Special thanks to the Mount Pisgath Methodist Church Choir
Additional video courtesy of Country Music Association Awards 1981

"A Gift of Life"

JOE PFIFFERLING Producer
BOB BROWN Correspondent

Special thanks to KBTU-Denver, WTAE-Pittsburgh

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ABC NEWS

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HUGH DOWNS: Good evening. I'm Hugh Downs. And this is 20/20.**ANNOUNCER:** On the ABC Newsmagazine, 20/20, tonight:

The inside story of the ruthless plot to kill Anwar Sadat.

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": I would do anything to get rid of this oppressive ruler.**"HUSSEIN ABBAS":** I fired some shots from the top of the truck.**"ABDEL HAMID":** I raised my rifle and shot the President.**ANNOUNCER:** A dramatic reconstruction of the assassination of Egypt's president, told in the words of his killers. Tom Jarriel relives the assassination of Anwar Sadat, an historic tragedy a year ago, in "A Moment of Crisis."

Barbara Mandrell — she sings of lust and sin, but she lives a life of faith and family. Her special drive has taken her to the top in the world of country music. Steve Fox with the story of Barbara Mandrell.

MARIE CLARK: To know that we have improved lives of other people, I mean, that—that is a good feeling.**ANNOUNCER:** Liver transplants to save the lives of thousands of people across the country, most of them children. Now, more transplants, advanced surgery and higher survival rates through new drugs. Bob Brown with a medical story of hope: "A Gift of Life."**DOWNS:** Up front tonight, the assassination of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat, and the extraordinary inside story from the killers. The assassination occurred a year ago; five men were executed for their part in the crime, and at the time questions were raised about these men and their motives. Well, now, 20/20 has obtained a remarkable set of documents that help answer some of the questions. They are the record of the interrogations by the Egyptian prosecutors of the conspirators.

To explain the story of the five main conspirators, we're using a different concept on 20/20. The five assassins will be portrayed by actors, but the words they will speak are the actual words of the assassins. You're going to see the five conspirators on the left side of your television screen, and the actors who portray each of them on the right. First, First Lieutenant Khaled Islamboulli; former Air Defense Lieutenant Abdel Hamid; Army Reserve Lieutenant Ata Rayil; volunteer Sergeant Hussein Abbas; and a civilian, Muhammad Farag, an electrical engineer. And here with the inside story of that assassination, "A Moment of Crisis," is Tom Jarriel. Tom?

TOM JARRIEL: Hugh, the five assassins were members of an outlawed Moslem extremist group called Jihad, who with surprisingly little planning put together what became one of the most spontaneous assassination plots ever. Their goal: the overthrow of the Egyptian government.*[voice-over]* October 6, 1981: as he had done for seven years, President Anwar Sadat was in the reviewing stand presiding over the annual military parade commemorating Egypt's attack on Israel in 1973. The parade was orderly and predictable.**Field Marshal GHAZZALA, Defense Minister:** I was sitting on the left of the President, right on his left side, and we were watching the parade, talking; and I was also explaining to him what kind of weaponry — new weaponry, you know, telling him that how many tanks we received — everything like that.**JARRIEL [voice-over]:** Around 1:00 p.m., jets streaked overhead, their roar and colorful exhaust grabbing the attention of those in the stands. That was the moment the assassins chose to strike. The entire attack lasted 45 seconds. When it was over the President of Egypt was dead; dead, too, were six other men — 43 others were wounded.**HOSNI MUBARAK, President of Egypt:** This is a terrible shock. I myself was very shocked — I couldn't realize — 'til now. I couldn't imagine that such things could happen in our country.**JARRIEL [voice-over]:** How could President Sadat have been killed, surrounded by the very army he had built up and led? And why had he been killed? Was it a plot, an attempted coup?

Were outside forces involved? What pressures in Egypt sparked this radical, suicidal assassination plot? For those of us in the West, Sadat was perceived as a popular leader in his own country. Having achieved peace with Israel, Sadat hoped to finally turn away from war and bring prosperity to Egypt.

But in fact, that quest for prosperity — the flood of Western money and an increasing taste for Western ways — only alienated many of his countrymen from Sadat. He was seen as moving too fast, much like the former Shah of Iran, steering Egypt further and further from the foundations of Islam, thereby betraying the ideal of an Islamic state. It was this feeling of religious betrayal that brought together the group that would plan the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Twenty-four men were eventually tried for their role in the plot; of these, five were executed for having been directly responsible for the death of Sadat.

20/20 has obtained the actual testimony from the pretrial interrogation of those five men. Using their very words from the translated testimony, we will reconstruct the events preceding the assassination and their actions in the crime itself. Actors will portray the assassins, but the words they speak are real. Also, eyewitnesses present that day will recall the events. The five conspirators: Lieutenant Khaled Islamboulli, age 25, a first lieutenant in the Army; Abdel Hamid, 28 years old, former first lieutenant in the Air Defense; Ata Rayil, age 26, an electrical engineer and a lieutenant in the Army Reserve; Hussein Abbas, age 28, volunteer sergeant, the 1980 sharpshooting champion of the Egyptian Army; Muhammad Farag, age 27, electrical engineer and self-styled religious leader. In Farag's view, it was permissible to wage a holy war not only against nonbelievers of Islam, but also against those Moslems who no longer lived according to the precepts of the Koran. And to Muhammad Farag, Anwar Sadat was one of these and deserved to die.

"MUHAMMAD FARAG": I confess. I am the principal conspirator in the operation to assassinate the President of the Republic. By this means I wanted to implement the law of almighty God, to eradicate the rule of the unbeliever. The aim was to establish the Islamic state.**"ATA RAYIL":** The President did not want to apply the rule of God. He pretended that these rules did not have any power anymore. He wanted us to separate politics from religion, but this is not the way of Islam. He says this is democracy, but that word does not exist in Islam. Democracy is the rule of the people, and we will not have any guidance except the book of God and the rule of God.**JARRIEL [voice-over]:** The man who by his own admission conceived the actual plan of attack was First Lieutenant Khaled Islamboulli. Khaled was a devout Moslem. He had been warned earlier by military authorities to stay away from Moslem extremists. He seemed to comply for over a year, but he was still deeply troubled by what he believed to be Sadat's compromising of the strict rules of Islam. Khaled was especially disturbed by the events of September 1981, when in an effort to crack down on political dissidents, Sadat arrested over 1,500 people, including Khaled's younger brother, charging them with inciting the "law of shame," a law that forbids the spreading of false rumors against the state. Many Egyptians felt Sadat was using the law as a pretext to throw his enemies in jail. Khaled was angry and disgusted with Sadat, but not contemplating murder. But, on September 22 fate lent a hand. Two weeks before the annual military parade, Khaled was ordered to take part.**"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI":** I didn't want to take part. Someone else was supposed to go, but his wife took sick, so that battalion leader appointed me. I wanted to go on vacation. I got the idea during the first rehearsal. After that, it was a matter of carrying it out.**JARRIEL:** Khaled then came here to see Farag at his mosque. He regarded Farag as his leader in both spiritual and political matters. If Farag approved the assassination, then Khaled would carry out the plan. Farag said, "Yes," at once.**"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI":** We started to talk about conditions for Moslems. My mood was bad; my morale was low because of what was going on in the country. I told him I was going to be in the parade, that I would do anything to get rid of this oppressive ruler.**"MUHAMMAD FARAG":** We were going to cut communications, and start demonstrations in the street — assassinating the President was 50% of the plan. We thought it would save us a lot of failed attempts.**JARRIEL [voice-over]:** Security at army camps was lax. Khaled's scheme centered on three soldiers who would be on leave from his unit. His plan was to slip in three other men, disguised as soldiers, to take their place for the parade. Knowing few questions would be asked, Khaled

found one of the assassins himself: his childhood friend Abdel Hamid.

"ABDEL HAMID": Khaled and I agreed that killing the President would serve as a lesson to the one who came after him.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Farag found Rayil and Hussein, and made the arrangements for arms and ammunition. He did this by contacting other revolutionary Islamic groups.

"MUHAMMAD FARAG": I said, "You will see how God will make all things possible."

JARRIEL [voice-over]: The desert was the only safe place where the extremists could train in guerrilla warfare. It was where they kept their weapons. *[on camera]* Out here on the shoulder of the desert highway south of Cairo, various explosives were hidden, including 13 hand grenades. They were dug up from beneath kilometer marker no. 80, and delivered to the four assassins.

[voice-over] By Saturday, October 3, all four conspirators gathered here at the apartment of Abdel Hamid. It was the first time the four had been together.

"ATA RAYIL": We talked about the legitimacy of the act. During the night everyone had his Koran. Each of us was reading the Koran.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: The plot even included obtaining knockout drugs for uncooperative soldiers.

"ABDEL HAMID": It was part of the plan we had agreed on with Khaled. He was going to give it to the driver of the truck, to make him groggy before the parade, so Khaled could replace him, drive the truck himself. We tried this out on Hussein that night.

"HUSSEIN ABBAS": Our brother Khaled gave me the medicine in an orange soda, but it didn't work.

JARRIEL: Sunday, October 4, two days before the assassination: the four met at this open-air cafe, the Club Merryland. Khaled arrived carrying ammunition in his briefcase. The other three came in military uniform. From this location Khaled drove them to within 600 yards of where the troops for the parade were assembling. *[voice-over]* They easily infiltrated the ranks of the Egyptian Army. No questions were asked as they presented themselves to the officer in charge.

Monday, October 5: Khaled ordered that his unit's rifles be turned over to him. Regulations required all weapons to be disarmed during the parade by removing the firing pins.

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": I ordered Abdel Hamid to disarm the weapons except for the three that we were going to be using the next day. I figured that would make it easier for them to recognize when they were handed out.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: This is Isam al-Hamid, a private in the Egyptian Army. On Tuesday, October 6, he was assigned to drive the truck carrying the four assassins.

ISAM al-HAMID, driver [translated]: We woke up as usual in the morning, like every day. I checked the truck for maintenance. I noticed that the crew in the truck were not the same crew that usually rode on with us — they had changed, and there were three or four strangers.

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": I put four grenades in my helmet. I covered them with a yellow towel and stowed the helmet underneath my seat. I sent my driver away to get some sandwiches, then I took two grenades out of the helmet, wrapped them in newspaper, and passed them to Hamid. I said, "Hey, soldier, want to read the paper?" And I put the other two grenades in the glove compartment.

"ABDEL HAMID": I took the two grenades. I kept one for myself, I gave the other to Rayil.

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": Just before we moved out, I'd say minutes before we moved out, I took the other two grenades out of the glove compartment and put them inside my uniform. Then I loaded the clip into the submachine gun. I put the submachine gun on the floor of the cabin leaning against my leg.

al-HAMID: I went to take the machine gun from the truck to remove the firing mechanism, but Lt. Khaled told me not to remove it. "If you remove it and lose it, I will have you court-martialed," he said.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: At the same time the four assassins were making their final preparations, the man whom they had set out to kill arrived at the reviewing stand for the parade. As was his custom, Sadat was not wearing a bullet-proof vest. He was somewhat of a fatalist when

it came to protecting himself. *[on camera]* Watching from a glass-enclosed booth above and behind Sadat was his wife, Jihan. She could easily see her husband down below in this position on the reviewing stand. She had begged him to wear his bullet-proof vest.

JIHAN SADAT, widow of Anwar Sadat: And he refused. And he told me, "Jihan, if I think in this way, it's — what about my head? The bullet will come in my head. Don't think in this way, Jihan. And don't you believe in fate?" I always say, "Yes, sure I believe." He said, "Well, don't."

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Sadat even removed one of his bodyguards from his post directly below because he obscured Sadat's view of the parade. Meanwhile, the trucks of the 333rd Brigade, the brigade that included the four assassins, were slowly moving up the line.

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": Everyone was in his place. There were 12 trucks in our brigade. We were in the second set of four trucks, in the truck to the right — the truck that would pass nearest the reviewing stands.

al-HAMID: Suddenly Lt. Khaled ordered me to stop. The order did not register in my mind. He ordered me again, "Stop, or I will shoot you." He pulled the hand brakes and opened the door. At that moment I stopped. I stopped out of fear. He opened the door and jumped out.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: One of the invited guests in the stands that day was U.S. Ambassador Alfred Atherton.

ALFRED ATHERTON, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt: My first impression was that this was just another truck that had broken down, until I saw people beginning to get out of the truck. My second thought was that they were going to put on some kind of a demonstration in front of the President's box.

SELIM RISGALLAH, interpreter: The one that was closest to the main reviewing stands pulled up right in front of me.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: This is Sadat's private interpreter, Selim Risgallah, who was seated in the front row to the President's left.

Mr. RISGALLAH: The door of the truck opened; a tall, dark young officer shot out of that place carrying a hand grenade, and I could see him take two steps, then turn and hurl that hand grenade. And I could see it fly up in the air, and I could see that this grenade landed actually right in front of the wall in front of the reviewing stand. Sadat actually looked to the left, because the explosion was to the left, actually, to his left, and I looked to the right. And almost instantly a gun — there were two machine guns on the side of the truck, and I found somebody shoot him in the neck, and he dropped.

"HUSSEIN ABBAS": I fired some shots from the top of the truck. By instinct I aimed my weapon toward the oppressor.

Mrs. SADAT: He didn't bow, he didn't bend. He didn't go under the chair. He stood up — his reflex was to stand up and just put his hand, and he said, "No."

Field Marshal GHAZZALA: I heard someone shouting, "The President, the President!" So I moved in front of him to cover him against the assassination. And then I pushed him, and I lied over him, and that's exactly what happened in the very moment.

FABRICE MOUSSUS, ABC News cameraman: As the gunmen were starting to come off the truck and throwing grenades, which were all landing short of the reviewing stand, I took the camera off the tripod and Aly and I ran towards the reviewing stand. And we're sort of running parallel at the same time, about the same speed as the gunmen.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: The four assassins advanced quickly toward the stands, Abdel Hamid was first off the truck, closely followed by Khaled.

"ABDEL HAMID": I was the first one to get to the stands. When I got there I turned and climbed the steps which were to my right. I raised my rifle and shot the President. I saw him underneath the chairs; it was obvious that he was already hit. I finished my clip into him until my ammunition ran out.

Mr. MOUSSUS: And as they're running, one of them hides behind the Egypt-TV camera which has been left unmanned. The others are already in front of the reviewing stand.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: The man behind that camera was the sharpshooter Hussein. It was his

first blast of bullets from the truck that likely killed Sadat. Khaled by this time had reached the podium and was shooting point-blank over the wall.

Field Marshal GHAZZALA: When I was lying over the President, I saw one of the assassins, just about two yards far away from me, pointing his submachine gun towards us. And then he pulled the trigger and at that moment, I felt that it's the end of everything.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Khaled then ran out of ammunition and retreated. His place at the wall was taken by Hamid and Rayil.

"ATA RAYIL": I didn't— I didn't see the President. I found the first row was nothing but chairs. No one was there. I reached up, I fired not more than 10 bullets, and I hit someone in the fifth row on the platform.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: As cameraman Fabrice Moussus and soundman Aly Ashmawy ran toward the stands, they were unknowingly on a collision course with Hussein, who was nearing the steps.

Mr. MOUSSUS: As we came over here, we had to come all the way out here, because this area was roped off. Sadat's photographer was protecting himself behind this wall. One of the gunmen at this point turned around 180 degrees and pointed his gun at us. And this— again, split-second eye contact, a moment of hesitation, and I really thought he was going to shoot us. So we ducked behind this wall right here, okay, and so we were stopped, you know, right in front of the podium. I put the camera in front of my face because I really thought he was going to come around and shoot us, and I thought this camera was thick enough it could ricochet a few of the bullets. And it's only six seconds, but I think it goes on forever, and I'm dying to keep going. And we get up again and we go towards the reviewing stand up those steps, and I can see that Sadat's personal photographer, Muhammad Rashwan, has been killed.

Amb. ATHERTON: There's a lot of shooting, and obviously the bullets were being sprayed all over the place. And I could hear them whizzing by in the air. It's very strange, but as I was lying on the ground, I expected to be hit, and the thought going through my mind was, "I wonder what it's going to feel like."

JARRIEL [voice-over]: The attack was over in less than a minute. In the chaos and panic on the reviewing stand, the main concern was for Sadat.

Mr. MOUSSUS: As we get to the area where Sadat was sitting, I can see Mubarak and Abou Ghazzala, the defense minister, were just getting up. And Sadat is not there. And I remember that I kept shooting and I kept asking Aly, "Where is Sadat? Where is Sadat?" And we just couldn't find his body.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Sadat's bodyguards, caught off guard during the shooting, had dragged his body from underneath the tangle of chairs just as the shooting stopped. Very probably, Sadat was already dead, but he was nevertheless rushed to this military hospital.

Mrs. SADAT: I felt— I felt immediately, because I stayed there in the hospital with our President and other ministers, and my children were there, and half an hour passed, nobody came and tell me anything. If there was any hope, I believe any one of the doctors would come and say when there is hope or there is something. Nobody said anything. Then I said to our President Mubarak, "Just go and look after Egypt." And I went inside and I took my children, and it was over.

Field Marshal GHAZZALI: I didn't recognize that I was safe 'til I stood up, and at that moment I felt as if, you know, maybe I am badly injured. And I shook my head, I felt that I am okay, so I started asking the generals to take over and control the whole damn situation. Because I was thinking at that time, "Maybe there is a coup."

JARRIEL [voice-over]: There was no coup; other minor attempts to disrupt the government by revolutionary groups were quickly stopped. So were the assassins. As they retreated from the stands, three of the four assassins were wounded and captured. Khaled was shot in the stomach and shoulder; Hamid was hit in the thigh; Rayil took four rounds in the stomach and two in the arm. Only Hussein escaped, by merging into the crowd.

"HUSSEIN ABBAS": I kept on walking past the subway. Then I stopped a cab. I got out of the cab near the last stop of bus no. 48. I walked the rest of the way, about 10 minutes, until I reached the house.

JARRIEL: Hussein remained at large for four days. Authorities arrested him before dawn on Friday morning. They found him staying at his sister's house.

[voice-over] So, in the end who were the men who killed Anwar Sadat? The documents we obtained from their interrogation showed they had been deeply influenced by events in Iran, having seen the Shah and his Western-oriented government toppled by men whose prime motive was to return Iran to a religious Islamic state. For the assassins of Anwar Sadat, that ideal gave them the inspiration to push on, to rid themselves and Egypt of the man they thought to be the infidel, Anwar Sadat. Their goal cost them their lives, too; on April 15, 1982, the five were taken from jail and executed, still believing their cause was just. Muhammad Farag, electrical engineer and self-styled religious leader, age 27:

"MUHAMMAD FARAG": Being young does not mean we cannot wage the holy war. After all, the prophet Mohammed to whom God spoke related that he achieved his final triumph because of the aid of the young. It was the old ones who were his enemies.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Hussein Abbas, volunteer sergeant, age 28:

"HUSSEIN ABBAS": The oppressor did not rule us with the book of God. His soldiers, his police invaded the mosques. We take our religion from those learned men, we don't take our religion from him.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Ata Rayil, electrical engineer, Army Reserves, age 26:

"ATA RAYIL": Of course we knew that some of the others would get killed. But the rule of the Koran says that if a nonbeliever hides behind a Moslem, it is permitted to kill the Moslem in order to kill the nonbeliever behind him. And the Moslems who were killed will be resurrected as martyrs.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Abdel Hamid, former lieutenant in the Air Defense, age 28:

"ABDEL HAMID": I knew in the end that it would be death, but I did what was required of me — to kill the leader of those who do not believe.

JARRIEL [voice-over]: Khaled Islamboulli, first lieutenant in the Army, age 25:

"KHALED ISLAMBOULLI": I did what I did in order that Egypt would be ruled by the book of God and the instructions of his prophet. Because the recent laws do not agree with Islam, what God wanted, happened.

HUGH DOWNS: Thank you, Tom — a remarkable report. Incidentally, comments by Mrs. Sadat and President Mubarak came from interviews conducted by Barbara Walters.

Well, later in the broadcast, a medical report on liver transplants in children. Too many children waiting; too few transplant organs available. But next, country music singer Barbara Mandrell — she is proper and pious but she sings of lust and sin, right after this.

[commercial break]

DOWNS: Tonight we have the story of an explosive talent, Barbara Mandrell. If you know country music, you know her. She's the only one who's ever won the prestigious Entertainer of the Year Award of the Country Music Association two years in a row. And you may also know Barbara Mandrell through her successful television series in which she starred with her younger sisters Louise and Irlene. This is a family success story, and here to tell it is Steve Fox. Steve?

STEVE FOX: Hugh, at age 33, Barbara Mandrell is at the top of her career. Her audience is growing constantly, because Barbara is one of a handful of stars who have been able to cross over from country music and appeal to a wider audience. But make no mistake — her roots and her heart are in country.

[Barbara Mandrell singing "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool"]

FOX [voice-over]: "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool" is one of Barbara Mandrell's biggest hit singles, and the lyrics reveal her unlikely musical heritage.

BARBARA MANDRELL [singing]: I was listening to the Opry/When all of my friends were digging rock and roll and rhythm and blues/Cause I was country when country wasn't cool.

FOX [voice-over]: This is a story about a country singer who credits her family for her stardom. Barbara sings country, but grew up in southern California, surrounded by the sounds of the Beach Boys, the Beatles and rock and roll. But the influence of her parents proved more important.