



ABRAM, Michael (b. 1966), attempted to kill George Harrison (b. 1943), the former member of the twentieth century's most famous singing group, the Beatles. At approximately 3:00 a.m. on

December 30, 1999, Harrison and his wife Olivia were awakened by the sound of broken glass at their home at Henley-on-Thames, about forty kilometres from London. Harrison went downstairs to investigate while his wife called the local police station located four hundred metres from the estate. When Harrison found the intruder, Michael Abram, Abram stabbed him in the chest with a twenty-centimetre knife. Harrison tried to escape up the stairs to wait there until police arrived, but Abram followed him and attempted to stab him again, cutting and slashing at his victim repeatedly. When Olivia Harrison appeared, Abram began attacking her as well, in a struggle that would continue for several minutes. Eventually, Mrs. Harrison struck Abram squarely on the head with a heavy brass lamp and her husband then held the attacker until police arrived.

Although the wounds to Mrs. Harrison were no more than minor cuts and bruises, the initial attack on the singer had partially collapsed his left lung and had come dangerously close to severing the superior vena cava, a vein that carries blood from the head and upper body to the heart. Yet Harrison was in good spirits, mentioning to his doctor that he was sure that the event had not been a simple burglary and that Abram "certainly wasn't auditioning for the Traveling Wilburys" (a band that Harrison had helped to form some years after the breakup of the Beatles). Harrison's recovery would take several weeks, but he checked out of hospital within a few days and convalesced in Ireland.

Michael Abram, a former heroin addict with a long history of mental problems, apparently believed all recorded music lyrics literally. He also wore a Walkman almost constantly, playing music to drown out the voices in his head. His mother had been trying to get him psychiatric treatment, as he had been diagnosed as suffering from drug psychosis. He was informed that his symptoms of insanity would disappear if he stopped

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using heroin. In fact, Abram had been off heroin for over seven months before the attack on Harrison but his madness had worsened.

Initially Abram had been obsessed with the pop group Oasis. But after being informed that Oasis's music was strongly influenced by the Beatles, he became obsessed with them instead. Known as "Mad Mick," Abram had been telling acquaintances that the Beatles were witches and that they were evil. He became obsessed with killing a Beatle even though he had no previous history of violence.

Harrison's estate was known to local residents as Fort Knox owing to the heavy security measures Harrison had put in as a result of the assassination of his former Beatles colleague John Lennon by a crazed fan and various death threats he himself had received. The home, built by an eccentric millionaire solicitor in the nineteenth century, featured motion detectors, razor wire, guard dogs, powerful lights and video cameras but also elaborate hedges and stone gargoyles, which provided enough cover for Abram to approach a cellar window and thus gain entry. Abram's mother blamed the attack on the British National Health Service. "Nothing gets done," she said. "The system is totally and completely useless. If they had listened to me and Michael [her husband, Abram's father] over the last six months this would have never happened." Michael Abram was found to be insane.

ACCIARITO, Pietro Umberto (1871–1943), attempted to assassinate the Italian king Umberto I (1844–1900) on April 22, 1897, as the monarch attended a horse race in Naples being run in honour of his twenty-ninth wedding anniversary. A crowd of well-wishers was on hand, as well as his fatal ill-wisher, who approached the royal carriage, producing a knife. When Umberto saw the weapon, he stood up and moved far enough away in the carriage that Acciarito could not reach him. Acciarito tried to stab Umberto anyway, but his knife struck harmlessly against the vehicle. Acciarito then proceeded to carve a letter *A* and a cross in the side of the carriage. In the panic and commotion that followed, Acciarito calmly walked from the scene. He was finally apprehended fifty metres away. The king, not wanting to appear shaken by the event, attended the races as scheduled.

Pietro Acciarito was born in poverty. His father, Camilo Acciarito, who worked as a doorman, was proud of the fact that his birthday was the same as Umberto's and that his son's middle name was Umberto. As

an adult, Acciarito became a blacksmith and operated a small shop of his own. Although poorly educated, he was a supporter of radical politics, but he was not a member of any political group. He did, however, have a strong hatred of the upper classes, a fact about which he was quite vocal. He also showed what would today be considered signs of clinical depression.

On April 20, 1897, he shut his blacksmith shop and informed his father that this would be the last time they would see each other. When his father asked if he was planning to emigrate or commit suicide, Acciarito replied that he would find out soon enough as he was off to the racetrack. Acciarito's father then contacted the police and told them to be prepared for an attack on Umberto at the races. When Acciarito was arrested, he was asked why he had attacked the king. His response was that the king seemed willing to give twenty-four thousand lire to a horse (the purse from the race that day) but nothing to the poor. Convinced that he was part of an anarchist conspiracy, police interrogated and tortured Acciarito to force him to betray accomplices. But in the end they arrested only Acciarito's friend Romeo Frezzi because Frezzi had a photograph of Acciarito in his home. Frezzi died under interrogation three days later. The initial verdict on Frezzi's death was that he had committed suicide by banging his head against the cell wall. A second investigation was concluded by stating that Frezzi had died of a stroke. When both explanations were disputed, a third investigation was undertaken; it found that Frezzi had jumped six metres to his death.

The Frezzi affair was the centre of mass protests against police brutality. The officers responsible for Frezzi's interrogation were soon transferred. The police then forged a letter from Acciarito's girlfriend saying that she was pregnant and later informed Acciarito that they would release him to be with his girlfriend if he would name his co-conspirators. Acciarito named five men who were all quickly arrested. At their trial, Acciarito's five supposed accomplices were found not guilty as the only evidence against them was Acciarito's statement made under extreme duress. Acciarito, however, was found guilty of attempted regicide and sentenced to life imprisonment. While in solitary confinement, he went insane. He was then transferred to the same asylum as the assassin Giovanni Passannante, where he lived out the remainder of his life. The same eugenicists who examined Passannante's brain concluded that because Acciarito's head was oval-shaped, he was predisposed to assassination.

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RESOURCE: *Giovanni Passannante. La vita, l'attentato, il processo, la condanna a morte, la grazia 'regale' e gli anni di galera del cuoco lucano che nel 1878 ruppe l'incantesimo monarchico* by Giuseppe Galzerano (Scalo, 1997).

ADLER, Friedrich (1879–1960), assassinated Karl von Stürgkh (1859–1916), prime minister of Austria, on October 21, 1916, as the victim was dining at the Hotel Meissl & Schadin in Vienna, as was his custom. Adler was himself a political figure as secretary of the Austrian Social Democratic Party (SDP), which had been founded by his father, Viktor Adler. But the younger Adler was not present that evening in order to eat. Walking to von Stürgkh's table, he produced a pistol and shot the prime minister three times in the back of the head while shouting "Down with tyranny! We want peace!" Von Stürgkh died instantly and Adler was apprehended at the scene.

Karl von Stürgkh's administration had moved Austria during the war years from a constitutional monarchy (at least in theory) to a dictatorship. Von Stürgkh's censorship of foreign newspapers was so strict that not only was it illegal to possess newspapers published by enemy nations but also those from allied nations such as Germany. During the war, von Stürgkh was determined not to allow dissent. As a result, he refused to call parliament on the grounds that some parliamentarians were against the war and would speak out against it. He refused to meet with delegates from the SDP even when the party offered to support the war effort. Friedrich Adler, whose father had been jailed repeatedly for his political views in the past, decided to stop von Stürgkh's dictatorship at all costs. Knowing von Stürgkh's routine well, he found it a simple matter to be waiting for him with a pistol in his pocket.

Although Karl von Stürgkh was not a popular figure at the time of his death, his reputation improved considerably thereafter. Emperor Franz-Joseph, speaking from his own death bed, declared that the killing of von Stürgkh was a greater loss than any battle could bring. The Social Democrats denied all responsibility and condemned Adler for his actions. Adler's trial, however, helped the assassin's reputation. The intelligent and articulate Adler gave a masterful defence of himself and his actions. But the court was not in sympathy and he was sentenced to death. The new emperor, Charles I, commuted Adler's sentence to life imprisonment.

With the war in its final days, Austria released a large number of political prisoners. Among the pardoned men was Adler, who had served

less than two years. Adler returned to political activities. Resuming his post with the Social Democrats, he organized several workers' councils, but his political skills were not equal to his father's. Adler eventually became secretary-general to the Second Internationale. When the Nazis threatened to annex Austria, Adler began making plans to leave the country. He eventually made his way to the United States, where he remained for the duration of the war. When peace came, Adler returned to Europe to live out his remaining years in Switzerland.

RESOURCE: *The Passing of the Habsburg Monarchy 1914–1918* by Arthur May (Philadelphia, 1966).

AGCA, Mehmet Ali (b. 1959), attempted to assassinate Pope John Paul II (b. 1920) on May 13, 1981, as the pontiff was being driven around Rome's St. Peter's Square in an open Jeep-like vehicle nicknamed the Popemobile, which he stopped now and then to give personal blessings to some of the crowd of ten thousand. The Holy Father was on his third orbit of the square when Agca stepped from the crowd and, from less than six metres away, opened fire with a 9-mm Browning semi-automatic pistol. The pope was struck twice, one bullet grazing a hand and arm producing little more than superficial wounds, the other bullet lodging in his abdomen. Agca dropped his pistol and turned to escape when he was knocked to the ground and subdued by Suor Letizia, a large and robust nun. Letizia shouted, "Why did you do it?" To which Agca responded, "Not me, not me." Agca was held until police arrived. The pope was rushed to the Gemelli Clinic, which has a special section reserved for papal medical emergencies. His blood pressure was falling rapidly and his pulse was almost undetectable. Just before surgery, last rites were administered to the unconscious patient. Although his situation was grave, John Paul had been lucky. The second bullet had not shattered on impact as it was supposed to. Also, in a pattern that duplicated almost exactly that of the bullet that entered US president Ronald Reagan only weeks earlier, it missed the aorta by millimetres. The pope's surgery lasted over five hours and the doctors removed almost two feet of the victim's intestines. In spite of losing sixty per cent of his blood to internal hemorrhaging, the pope survived.

Mehmet Ali Agca was born in the shantytown of Yesiltepe, just outside Malatya, Turkey. His family's situation worsened with the death of

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his alcoholic father when Agca was only seven. Agca was forced to work from a very young age selling water at the local train station. Intelligent and industrious, he managed to continue his education in spite of his circumstances.

While attending Malatya's Teachers' Training High School in 1975, he became affiliated with the Grey Wolves, a right-wing, anti-Western terrorist group affiliated with the National Action Party. In 1979, while attending Istanbul University, Agca was arrested for his involvement with the assassination of Abdi Ipekci, the editor of the leftist newspaper *Milliyet*. Agca pleaded guilty to the murder and insisted, in spite of eyewitness testimony, that he had acted alone. Within a month of his arrest, Agca had escaped from prison, simply walking out wearing an army uniform that had been smuggled into his cell. He left a letter for *Milliyet* declaring that the pope's impending visit to Turkey was intended to erode Islamic unity and that John Paul II would be killed if he entered the country. Agca did not attempt to kill the pope on his visit to Turkey, but at about the same time the informant who had fingered Agca in the editor's assassination was murdered.

A report prepared by the Vatican following the shooting stated that after his time in prison Agca left Turkey and travelled to more than twenty countries between 1979 and 1981. His time abroad apparently included training by the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Evidence also pointed to the conclusion that Agca had four confederates the day the pope was shot to help him make his escape. When Agca was apprehended at the scene, the others dispersed; only one was ever located.

Agca's motives have been the subject of much speculation, as was the question of who financed his travels and activities. Rumours suggested that the order to assassinate John Paul was probably issued by the Bulgarian secret service, though the exact nature and extent of Bulgarian involvement have never been determined. Some speculate that the Bulgarians were merely carrying out orders for the Soviet Union through the KGB. For his part, Agca, after serving about ten months of his life sentence, began to talk about Bulgarian involvement in the affair. His statements led to the arrest of three Bulgarians and four Turks. The trial of these conspirators, however, broke down when Agca rose in court and declared loudly, "I am Jesus Christ. In the name of the omnipotent God, I announce the end of the world. No one, neither the Americans nor the Soviets, will be saved. There will be destruction." The chief prosecutor, whose case relied completely on Agca's testimony, said,

“When he starts speaking of facts, he is very believable.” Agca changed his testimony from implicating the Bulgarians to placing the blame for the attempt on members of a secret Italian Masonic lodge and Italian intelligence. After nine months of such farce, all the defendants were acquitted for want of evidence. Agca remains the only person incarcerated for the attempt to kill the pope.

John Paul II, as is traditional for popes who have survived assassination attempts, visited Agca in his cell to forgive him for the attack. The two men chatted in Italian for twenty minutes. As the pope was leaving, Agca kissed his hand and declared to the press, “The pope knows everything.” The pope’s own theory was that the attack was the work of Islamic forces, not communists. He also believes that he was saved through a miracle performed by the Virgin of Fatima whose feast day is May 13, the date of the attack. “One hand fired,” the pope declared, “and another hand guided the bullet.” Mehmet Ali Agca remains imprisoned in Italy. When the pope visited the shrine of Fatima in Portugal in 2000, he finally revealed the so-called third secret of Fatima, as given by the Virgin Mary to three children in a 1917 vision. The third secret was that there would be an attempt on the pope’s life in 1981. In June 2000, Italy’s president granted clemency to Agca, who thereupon resumed serving a ten-year sentence for the assassination of the newspaper editor.

RESOURCES: *His Holiness: John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time* by Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi (New York, 1996). *To Kill the Pope* by Tad Szulc (New York, 2000) is a novel inspired by the Agca affair.

AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER (16–59 CE) assassinated Claudius (10 BCE –54 CE), the man who became emperor of Rome by using his physical liabilities, such as lameness and stuttering, to convince previous emperors that he was feeble-minded. While others in line for the throne were being assassinated, Claudius survived because it was felt that he was not a threat to their rule; with the death of the Emperor Caligula (12–41 CE), the Praetorian Guard declared Claudius his successor, whereupon he was revealed to be an intelligent albeit deviant person.

While Claudius was not so insane as his nephew Caligula, he was capable of great cruelty. When he discovered his wife, Messalina, was plotting against him, he had her executed, as well as all the men she had slept with while they were married: the total numbered in the hundreds.

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Afterwards Claudius compelled the senate to change the laws concerning incest so that he could marry his niece, Agrippina. Incest was nothing new to her. She was the sister as well as the former wife of Caligula.

Once married to Claudius, Agrippina was determined to see her son fathered by Caligula, Ahenobarbus (later renamed Nero—37–68 CE), become Claudius's heir. Claudius, however, favoured his own son, Britannicus, by his former wife, Messalina. Agrippina improved Nero's position by having Claudius adopt him. She also had Nero marry Claudius's daughter Octavia, making Nero Octavia's cousin, brother and husband. As Claudius grew old and frail, he began to have second thoughts about his succession and appeared ready to remove Nero from the line of succession in favour of Britannicus. At that point, Agrippina decided that Claudius would have to be eliminated. She consulted with Rome's most infamous poisoner, Locusta, and bought poisoned mushrooms that she later put into Claudius's stew. In one account, the mushrooms did their work and Claudius died the evening after eating them. In others, Claudius began to recover from the poisoning and had to be further treated by Agrippina and her physician. In either case, Claudius was succeeded by Nero, who within a few years decided that his mother must go. Nero had tired of Agrippina and wanted to eliminate her.

Agrippina saw Octavia as an ally as well as a stabilizing influence on her mad son. Nero knew his mother was too wise in the ways of poison for him to try that method. In 59 CE, he tried to sabotage her ship so that she would appear to have drowned. When Agrippina survived the sinking, Nero dispatched troops to execute her. When the soldiers approached Agrippina, she is reputed to have requested they stab her in the womb that had produced Nero. The troops granted her request.

RESOURCE: *Agrippina: Sex, Power, and Politics in the Early Empire* by Anthony Barrett (New Haven, Connecticut, 1996).

AIZAWA Saburō (1889–1936) assassinated General Negata Tetsuzan (1884–1935), chief of Japan's Military Affairs Bureau, an intelligence agency. Aizawa Saburō, an army lieutenant colonel, entered Negata's office in the War Ministry in Tokyo. The general was behind his desk speaking to the head of Tokyo's military police about maintaining discipline. Aizawa drew his sword and attacked. Wounded, Negata tried to flee through a door when Aizawa pounced again, piercing the general in the back and killing

him. Aizawa then proceeded to the office of his friend General Yamaoka Jūkō; Aizawa had been wounded in the struggle, and Yamaoka bandaged the attacker's hand as the military police arrived. As Aizawa was being escorted out of the building, General Yamashita Tomoyuki approached the group, shook Aizawa's good hand and thanked him for killing Negata.

Aizawa was a member of the radical right Kōdōha Faction, also called the Imperial Way Movement or the Young Officers' Movement. The primary motive for the assassination was the fact that Negata belonged to the Toseiha (Control Faction), which favoured democratic government over a militaristic one loyal to the emperor. Negata had replaced a Kōdōha general as head of Military Affairs. The previous November, the Kōdōha Faction had fallen into disgrace when plans for a *coup d'état* were revealed, though Kōdōha members claimed that the Toseiha had fabricated the charges. Nevertheless, many Kōdōha officers were demoted, including the head of Military Affairs. To the Kōdōha, Negata was the main figure behind the demotion and transfer of Kōdōha officers. On July 19, 1935, Aizawa gained an appointment with Negata. He advised Negata to resign. Negata reacted by ordering Aizawa transferred to Taiwan. On the day of the assassination, Aizawa was supposed to be preparing for his new assignment.

Aizawa's public trial quickly became a circus. With a large faction of the army behind it, and considerable public support from rightist civilians, the defence attempted to put the government on trial for the struggle between military factions that eventually led to Negata's death. Even the prosecution agreed that Aizawa was defending the emperor and Japan by his actions. Thousands of letters begged the court for Aizawa's release, many of them written in blood. In one extreme case, the writer also enclosed two of his own fingers as a sign of support. When the events of the February 26 Incident (an attempt by the Young Officers to overthrow the government) halted the proceedings, the trial was cancelled, with no verdict given.

In April 1936, a new trial commenced. Unlike the previous one, it was a court martial conducted in secret. With no distractions, the court soon found Aizawa guilty and sentenced him to death. On July 3, 1936, Aizawa was executed. Although Aizawa had paid for the assassination with his life, the Kōdōha would win out. The defence minister resigned in disgrace immediately after the assassination. His successor, although considered neutral in the dispute between the two factions, in fact tended to side with the Kōdōha. Within a few years, the Young Officers had the government they had wished for.

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RESOURCE: *The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident* by Ben-Ami Shillony (Princeton, 1973).

AKBAR, Said (d. 1951), assassinated Liaquat Ali Khan (1895–1951), prime minister of Pakistan, on October 16, 1951, as the latter was about to give a speech at a public meeting in Rawalpindi. The politician had just mounted the podium and had barely begun to speak when Said Akbar, who was sitting in the audience on the left side of the podium, stood and fired twice. The first bullet severed Ali Khan's aorta. Ali Khan's last words were "*Khuda Pakistan Ki Hifazat Kare*" ("May God Preserve Pakistan"). The prime minister was rushed to hospital, where, despite massive blood transfusions and emergency surgery, he died within a few hours. Akbar was grabbed by another member of the audience after his second shot, and a third shot was fired in the struggle. Akbar was then gunned down by a policeman. Members of the Muslim League National Guard ran the assassin through with their ceremonial spears; Akbar died on the scene.

Said Akbar was the son of Babrak, the leader of the Zandran tribe in Khost, a southern province of Afghanistan. The Zandran had been fighting the Afghan government for some time when Babrak fell in battle, at which point leadership passed to Akbar's brother, Mazarak. When the tide turned against the Zandran, Mazarak and Said fled to India, where they were offered asylum. The two men and their families were given a house and an allowance by the Indian government, but they were forced to agree not to leave their home in Abbottabad without official permission. Shortly after arriving, Said requested a separate home for his family as he was not getting along with his brother. The request was granted.

According to his wife, Akbar began to have dreams which he interpreted as visions. He became deeply religious, spending most of his days praying, fasting and reading the Koran. According to his young son Dilawar, whom Akbar had taken with him to the assassination, the Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi appeared in one of the dreams and instructed Akbar to kill Ali Khan because "Ali Khan was a bad man who must go to hell for his sins" (from the official government inquiry into the assassination). While this theory has been disputed because of inconsistencies in the boy's story, papers on Akbar's person when he was killed indicated that he did favour a Pakistani invasion of Kashmir. Ali Khan, wishing to preserve peace between the two new nations, had refused to challenge

India's authority over Kashmir. Although Akbar, being Afghani, was not particularly interested in Indian-Pakistani politics, being a devout Muslim made the question of control of the predominantly Muslim state a religious rather than a political issue.

On October 14, 1951, Akbar, in violation of his agreement with the Indian government, left Abbottabad for Rawalpindi, taking with him two thousand rupees and a pistol. Authorities later would trace the money to see if Akbar had been paid to carry out the killing, but no evidence was found to support this theory. After the shooting, Akbar's son walked away from the scene without being detected. Having no way to get home, however, Dilawar lived on the streets until the authorities realized who he was. The official government report of the assassination mentioned a wide range of motives for the killing, but could not specify one in particular; it did, however, condemn police and the Muslim League National Guard for not taking the assassin alive.

RESOURCE: *The Assassination of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan: Report of the Commission of Enquiry* (Karachi, 1952).

ALVES, Darli (b. 1934), masterminded the assassination of the Brazilian labour leader Francisco "Chico" Mendes (1944–1988). Like his father before him, Mendes was a rubber tapper, a person who extracts latex sap from rubber trees in the Amazonian rainforest. The source of considerable wealth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Brazil's rubber industry fell on hard times following the invention of synthetic rubber substitutes and the transplanting of rubber trees to Southeast Asia. During the boom times, the so-called rubber barons amassed incredible fortunes while the tappers eked out a bare existence; the tappers were poor, uneducated and usually at the mercy of the landowners. Mendes had one advantage over many of the others in that from an early age he had had a mentor who taught him to read and write and allowed him to listen to short-wave radio.

In 1964, the Brazilian government was overthrown in a military coup. Radio Moscow reported it as a CIA-backed plot to subvert a liberal government; just as predictably, Voice of America called the event a triumph of democracy over communist fellow-travellers. As a Brazilian, Mendes knew what the new government was really like, and, as a result, came to sympathize with the anti-American view. This in turn eventually

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led him to become a socialist. In 1975, Mendes founded the Union Movement in his home region of Acre. In 1979, he helped to establish the Workers' Party and in 1985 formed the National Council of Rubber Tappers to fight for better working conditions.

By then, the question of the future of Brazil's rainforests was receiving international attention: with a surging population and a declining rubber industry, the government had opened up the area for deforestation and the creation of new ranch land. Although much of the world was aghast at the erosion of the rainforest, a new class of Brazilians, the wealthy ranchers, kept domestic opposition in check. Mendes realized that the rubber tappers, who quite naturally depended on the forest for their livelihood, could utilize environmental movements throughout the world to keep the forests from being destroyed. He preached the benefits of "extractive reserves": the idea that keeping the forest intact could provide an economic resource that would boost Brazil's economy and please environmentalists internationally. Mendes travelled throughout the United States speaking of the economic benefit of environmentalism. Because he spoke only Portuguese, a translator was needed; because the audience was American, references to organized labour and socialism were not translated. Chico Mendes received the Global 500 award from the United Nations Environmental Program as well as the entrepreneur Ted Turner's Better World Society Environment Award.

Because of his success as an activist on the world stage, Mendes made many powerful enemies at home, including Alves, a wealthy ranch owner. In 1988, Mendes led the Xapuri Rural Workers' Union in a successful effort to stop Alves from deforesting an area that was later made into a reserve for rubber tappers. In addition, Mendes was pressuring Brazilian justice officials to enforce a court order for the arrest of Alves for the murder of a labourer in 1973. Police corruption and a tradition of wealthy landowners not being prosecuted for murdering workers made the task nearly impossible. Nevertheless, as talk about the possible elimination of Mendes began among members of the Democratic Rural Union (UDR), a political group founded by the landowners, Alves was quick to volunteer to kill the troublemaking rubber tapper.

On December 22, 1988, Mendes was in his kitchen with two untrained bodyguards appointed by the authorities. The bodyguards had only one pistol between them. Mendes walked outside to take a shower in the outdoor bathhouse. Within seconds of his leaving, a shotgun blast was heard and Mendes staggered back into the kitchen with nearly thirty

pellets in his chest; he fell to the floor and died. The two bodyguards jumped through the window and escaped into the forest. Within minutes, reporters began arriving; their timing indicated that they had been tipped off. Later, witnesses claimed that several landowners had begun parties to celebrate the death of Mendes hours before the event. International attention forced the authorities to prosecute the case, and several national officials were brought in to take charge for fear that locals would be in the pay of the assassins. Still, the investigation probably would not have achieved any results but for the fact that Alves, along with his brother Alvarino and his son Darcy (who had actually done the shooting), turned themselves in. The assassins showed no remorse. Darli Alves revelled in the worldwide attention he received and regaled the press with stories of his sexual prowess (he had had five wives, more than a dozen mistresses and claimed to have fathered more than thirty children). Darli and Darcy Alves were sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment each: the first instances in Brazilian history of landowners being jailed for killing a worker. In 1993, when the world media had lost interest in the plight of rubber tappers, the two Alves men escaped; Darli Alves was not recaptured until 1996, Darcy the following year.

Today, the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve protects almost one million hectares of forest. Brazil, haunted by negative attention and concerned about the question of tying environmental protection to international trade policy, hosted the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Darcy and Darli Alves are still in prison. Brazilian officials have announced that they will not be allowed to escape again.

RESOURCE: *Into the Amazon: Chico Mendes and the Struggle for the Rainforest* by Augusta Dwyer (Toronto, 1990).

AMIR, Yigal (b. 1970), assassinated Yitzhak Rabin (1922–1995), the prime minister of Israel, on November 4, 1995. As Rabin was walking to his car after addressing a peace rally in the Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv, he was approached from behind by Amir, who produced a 9-mm Beretta pistol loaded with dum-dum bullets and fired three times from point-blank range. The first two shots struck Rabin in the back; the third missed and wounded a bodyguard. At first many of the officers near Rabin believed that the shots were blanks, as they had been told to expect a security test involving an actor posing as an assailant. But the shoulder

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wound of the injured bodyguard proved that this was a real attack. Rabin was bundled into his car, but crowds blocking the street meant that the trip to hospital took much longer than necessary, and Rabin's situation was grave by the time he arrived. Although rushed to the operating room, he died less than ten minutes later. Back at the crime scene, Amir had been apprehended, even though some security personnel were still certain that what they had heard was a drill. When news from hospital reached them, Amir was arrested for murder.

Amir was born to a poor Orthodox family who had immigrated to Israel from Yemen. As a teen, he became ultra-Orthodox, and was said to be hard-working, diligent and an extremist on religious and political matters. While his classmates were avoiding military service, he volunteered for a five-year Hesder program that combined combat training and religious scholarship. He was an excellent soldier. He became known as someone who could be counted on to volunteer for extra duty.

In 1992, Amir worked for the Liaison Bureau, which sent scholars into Russia to teach Hebrew (and possibly to spy); he spent three months in Riga. Returning to Israel, he enrolled at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv. At about the same time, Yitzhak Rabin was concluding negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization for peace in Israel. The famous handshake between Rabin and the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, on the lawn of the White House in Washington infuriated many Israelis, including Amir, who attended classes taught by Dr. Uri Milstein, the author of a biography harshly critical of Rabin. (In later editions of the book, Milstein mentions that Amir was a student of his, but he places blame for the assassination on Rabin himself, making the point that as the prime minister was also minister of security, the responsibility for lapses in security lay with him.) Amir came to believe that the only way to stop the perceived giveaway of land along the West Bank, a key issue in Israeli-Palestinian talks, was to "take down" (his own words) Rabin and the former prime minister Shimon Peres in order to bring about, he hoped, a government headed by the right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu. Amir made such speculations with his brother, Hagai. Their early discussion centred on a possible bombing; later, Hagai, who wanted most of all to escape after the assassination, tried to obtain a sniper's rifle to shoot Rabin from a great distance. In the end, Yigal decided that the mission could be accomplished only by a lone gunman with a pistol at close range.

On the night of the rally, Amir waited for his chance in the VIP car park. The fact that neither he nor about twenty other unauthorized persons were

removed from what was supposed to be a secured area does indeed indicate that the Shin Bet, the internal security service responsible for the prime minister's safety, was not operating efficiently. Amir's defence at his trial was based on his interpretation of Jewish tradition, citing, among others, Maimonides, who had called for the elimination of collaborators. To Amir, anyone who advocated relinquishing territory in the West Bank was a candidate for retribution. Amir later said that he was merely intending to paralyze Rabin in order to keep him from signing the Oslo Agreement.

Although only the Amir brothers were brought to trial, three other suspects were charged originally, leading to the spread of conspiracy theories in which the Shin Bet or its external equivalent, the Mossad, were involved—theories ruled out by the authorities less than three weeks after the shooting. Many viewers of Yigal Amir's televised trial were distressed by his lack of remorse, his constant smiling and his open-mouthed gum-chewing; some demanded that he be kept behind a screen so they would not have to look at him.

The court found the Amir brothers guilty. Hagai was sentenced to twelve years in prison for conspiracy. As to Yigal, as Israel imposes the death penalty only on Nazi war criminals, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, plus another eleven years for wounding the bodyguard and endangering the lives of others. Yigal Amir began serving his sentence in 1996. In 1998, a young woman friend of the jailed killer was convicted of knowing his intentions but failing to report them to the authorities. At the same time, she was acquitted of aiding Amir in obtaining weapons illegally.

RESOURCES: *Shalom, Friend: The Life and Legacy of Yitzhak Rabin*, ed. David Horovitz (New York, 1996); *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin* by Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman (New York, 1998); *The Rabin File: An Unauthorized Exposé* by Dr. Uri Milstein (Jerusalem, 1999). The conspiracy theory is upheld by Barry Chamish in *Who Killed Yitzhak Rabin?* (Venice, California, 1998).

AN Chung-gun (1879–1910) was the Korean nationalist who, while in what is now northeastern China, in 1909 assassinated Ito Hirobumi (b. 1841), the “resident general” of Korea during its period as a Japanese protectorate following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. By 1908, Ito and his political masters in Japan had imposed a puppet emperor as

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well as a puppet prime minister and had disbanded the Korean army. In reaction to such events, a number of former military men and Korean nationalists had formed militia groups, known as Righteous Armies, with members often recruited through Protestant schools and professing to be Christians (in some cases, in an attempt to garner favour in Europe and America). The Righteous Armies clashed with Japanese troops between 1907 and 1909; the uprisings were suppressed harshly.

On October 26, 1909, Ito was en route to Moscow to discuss plans for full annexation by 1910. He was to change trains in Harbin for the long trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Surrounded by his aides and Russian diplomats as well as by Russian security agents, Ito was approached by An, a former Righteous Armies officer. An wore western clothing, which created the impression among the Russian security officers that he was Japanese. Producing a pistol, An shot Ito three times; one of the bullets pierced the liver and Ito died fifteen minutes later. An was executed on March 25, 1910. Some have suggested that Ito's assassination was the final pretense for Korea's full annexation, which took place later that year, but the annexation had already been decided on in Japan before Ito's death. In spite of his reputation among Korean nationalists, Ito was a moderate who personally opposed full annexation.

RESOURCES: *Korea: Tradition and Transformation—A History of the Korean People* by Andrew C. Nahm (Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1988); *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times, 1800 to the Present* by Robert T. Oliver (Cranbury, New Jersey, 1993).

ANCKARSTROM, Jacob Johan (1762–1792), was the killer in a conspiracy to assassinate Gustavus III of Sweden (1746–1792, reigned from 1771) while the king was attending a masked ball at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm on March 16, 1792. Although Gustavus was wearing a mask, he was instantly recognizable because the mask hid only half his face, revealing the disfiguring effects of a childhood accident. The large number of medals he was wearing also left no doubt as to his identity. Early in the evening, the king had been handed a note telling him that his life was in danger, but having been threatened before, he ignored the warning. As he mingled with the crowd, a masked figure approached him and said, “Good evening, fair mask.” The phrase was an agreed-upon signal amongst the conspirators. At that point, Anckarstrom shot the king in

the hip with a pistol. As he fell, Gustavus cried out, "I am wounded! Arrest him!" But an immediate arrest was impossible. Not only were the conspirators masked, they were also crying out "Fire! Fire!" to spread confusion. Reacting quickly, the king's guards sealed the exits and declared that nobody would be allowed to leave. They soon discovered two pistols and a dagger on the floor but no indication of who had brought them. Gustavus was ushered away and despite the ablest medical treatment died of gangrene less than two weeks later.

Anckarstrom, a former guards officer, opposed Gustavus's military policies, which included making peace with Russia (on terms Anckarstrom found humiliating to Sweden) and preparing to go to war against revolutionary France. His opposition to the king soon became maniacal, and he became involved with a group of nobles who had their own reasons for wishing Gustavus dead. Early in his reign, Gustavus had reduced the power of Sweden's nobility in favour of parliament, though he later devalued parliament and became autocratic. The conspirators believed that Gustavus's assassination would lead to full-scale rebellion by the military and nobility. But although he was not particularly popular during most of his reign, Gustavus gained wide sympathy during the thirteen days he lay dying. Yet many in authority feared that punishing the nobles involved in the plot might indeed lead to the uprising for which conspirators (who were quickly arrested, despite their escape from the scene) were hoping. As a result, Anckarstrom alone was punished. After a brief trial, he was executed by torture.

RESOURCE: *Gustav III og Stockholm* by Godfred Hartmann (Copenhagen, 1974).

ANGIOLILLO, Michel (1871–1897), assassinated Antonio Cànovas del Castillo (1828–1897), the prime minister of Spain, on August 9, 1897, when Cànovas and his wife were on holiday at Santa Agueda in the Basque mountains, an area known for its mineral springs. While on a walk, the Cànovases were approached by Angiolillo, who produced a pistol and shot the prime minister repeatedly until he was dead. Mrs. Cànovas, witnessing her husband's death, cried out "Assassin!," to which Angiolillo replied, "I'm not an assassin, I am an avenger" before running off.

Angiolillo was born in Foggia, Italy, and was introduced to anarchism while in the military. Becoming a convert to radical politics earned

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him rebuke by the army, and he served the remainder of his tour in a disciplinary company. After his discharge, he worked as a typesetter until his views brought him to the attention of the authorities. In April 1895, he was sentenced to eighteen months in prison for “subversive activity” (distributing pamphlets).

After being released, he decided to leave Italy, and he travelled to France and Belgium before arriving in England. While in England, Angiolillo read that Cànovas of Spain had launched a campaign of persecution against anarchists after a bombing incident at a religious procession in Barcelona. Cànovas ordered mass arrests and torture to learn the names of anarchists involved. The result was four anarchists executed by garrotting and seventy-six sent to prison for the bombing. Incensed, Angiolillo returned to Spain with one purpose, to kill Cànovas. Although Angiolillo escaped the scene of the shooting, he was arrested within a few days. At his short trial, he attempted to defend himself on the grounds that he was merely executing a tyrant. He quoted St. Thomas Aquinas to demonstrate that such killing was justifiable. The court disagreed. On August 19, 1897, Angiolillo was garrotted.

RESOURCE: *Cànovas* by José Luis Comellas (Madrid, 1965).

ARAMAKI Taisuke (1895–?), who had been secretary-general of the Taika Kai (Great Reconstruction), a Japanese nationalist group forced to disband by the American occupation forces in 1946, stabbed Kishi Nobusuke (1896–1987) six times in the thigh at a reception at Kishi’s official residence on July 14, 1960, only a few hours after Kishi had resigned as prime minister. The reception was being held to honour Kishi’s successor, Ikeda Hayato. Kishi’s life was not in danger as a result of the attack but he was hospitalized for twelve days after losing a considerable amount of blood. Aramaki, who was seized immediately after the attack, pleaded guilty but showed no remorse for his actions. His defence was that he had attacked Kishi to “make him reflect on his maladministration,” a statement that was probably an indictment of Kishi’s pro-American stance. Aramaki was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment.

RESOURCE: *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan: A Study of Post-War Trends* by Ivan Morris (London, 1960).

ARNOLD, Samuel Bland (1834–1906), one of the persons tried and sentenced to prison in the Abraham Lincoln assassination conspiracy, maintained his innocence and, towards the end of his life, after years of embittered silence, published his memoirs, hoping to exonerate himself in the eyes of history. Born in the District of Columbia, Arnold served briefly as a Confederate soldier early in the Civil War before being discharged on medical grounds; he later worked as a civilian employee of the Confederate government. By the latter part of the war, he was living in the border state of Maryland, a hotbed of intrigue and espionage, the geographical middle ground between the warring capitals of Washington and Richmond.

In September 1864, he was summoned by John Wilkes Booth, an old schoolmate, who introduced him to the other conspirators in what was originally a plan to abduct Lincoln, first from a theatre, later from a carriage, and hold him hostage until the North released Confederate prisoners of war. In order to hasten the collapse of the Southern war effort, the North, which had by far the larger pool of personnel from which to draw, had suspended the practice of exchanging prisoners. Arnold, who engaged in the discussions out of patriotic motives rather than mercenary ones, thought Booth's plans impractical, but agreed to play his assigned role, which consisted largely of keeping arms and horses at the ready.

When the final abduction scheme failed, Arnold quit the conspiracy and took work on April 2, 1865, as a shop clerk in Old Point Comfort, Virginia. "This ended my connection with the conspiracy," he wrote in old age, "and I heard nothing further from it nor from any of the parties connected therewith." He was thus far from Washington when Booth killed Lincoln at Ford's Theater in that city on the evening of April 14, an event he learned of the following morning. Searching Booth's possessions, authorities discovered letters between the two men.

Arnold was arrested on April 17. He and seven others went on trial before a military commission. Four were hanged; Arnold and three others were sentenced to prison and served time at the infamous Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, a place whose brutality his memoir describes in detail. After a general pardon in 1869, he went into seclusion in rural Maryland. His manuscript entitled "Lincoln Conspiracy and the Conspirators," written mostly in the 1890s, was acquired by the Baltimore *American* and serialized in that and other major newspapers in

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1902–1903. Arnold died of “galloping consumption” in Baltimore and was buried in Greenmount Cemetery in that city, where the family plot containing John Wilkes Booth may also be found.

RESOURCE: *Samuel Bland Arnold—Memoirs of a Lincoln Conspirator*, ed. Michael W. Kaufman (Bowie, Maryland, 1995).

ASHU, Mustafa (1930–1951), was a tailor’s apprentice who assassinated King Abdullah Ibn Hussein of Jordan (1882–1951) on July 20, 1951. Abdullah, along with his grandson Hussein, entered the al-Aqsa Mosque in the Jordanian-held Old City of Jerusalem when a *shaykh* (sheik) came forward to pay homage to the king, whose guards parted to let him pass. Just then Ashu pushed his way past the *shaykh* and fired a single shot, striking Abdullah in the head. The king was dead before he hit the floor. Abdullah’s bodyguards returned fire recklessly. Not only was Ashu shot to death but more than twenty other worshippers were killed and another hundred wounded.

Ashu, a native of Jerusalem, was involved with a group of Palestinian activists from his neighbourhood. Along with the Old City, Abdullah had seized the West Bank of the Jordan River during Israel’s war of independence in 1948–1949. Most of the Arab world had earmarked the West Bank for a Palestinian homeland, but Abdullah’s goal was to expand Jordan to take in all of the former British mandate of Palestine. When he realized that he could not conquer Israel by force, Abdullah entered into secret negotiations with it. Details of these talks were leaked to radicals in Egypt and the former Palestine. When word reached members of Ashu’s group, they decided to act.

Jordanian negotiations with Israel died with Abdullah. Police quickly rounded up the other conspirators. Ashu’s neighbourhood *qabaday* (boss), Abid Ukah, along with a cattle breeder, a butcher and a café owner, were quickly tried, without a chance to give testimony, and executed. The group was described as “professional terrorists and assassins,” but no record of any previous terrorist activity was produced. Abdullah al-Tall, formerly Jordan’s military governor in Jerusalem, and the person who revealed the existence of the secret negotiations with Israel, fled to Cairo, where he made known his participation in the plot against Abdullah. Egypt refused to extradite him to Jordan.

Some have speculated that the authority behind Abdullah's assassination came from Egypt, but a lack of evidence, along with Egypt's refusal to co-operate with the investigation, brought the subject to an end. Abdullah was succeeded by his son Talal, but within a year Talal, due to mental instability, was forced to abdicate in favour of his own son, Hussein.

RESOURCE: *Man Qatala al-Malik Abd Allah?* by Nasir al-Din Nashashibib (Kuwait, 1981).

ATZERODT, George Andrew (1842?–1865), a native German who earned an exiguous living painting carriages and repairing their wheels, became a member of the plot to abduct Abraham Lincoln for the simple reason that he owned at least one small boat tied up at Port Tobacco, Maryland, on the Potomac River, which separates Washington, DC, and Maryland from Virginia and the Confederacy. He was recruited for the conspiracy in January 1865 by John Surratt, a far more important member of the group, and a Confederate agent named Thomas Harbin. When in March 1865, the plan, led by John Wilkes Booth, proved a wild failure, Atzerodt's involvement, and that of his co-conspirators, was simply transferred to Booth's self-sanctioned plot to assassinate Lincoln instead of kidnapping him.

Atzerodt met with Booth and others at the Herndon House, a hotel near Ford's Theater in Washington, at 8:00 p.m. on April 14, 1865, the date of Lincoln's shooting. Atzerodt was given the important chore of assassinating the vice-president, Andrew Johnson, while Lewis Powell, a.k.a. Lewis Payne, was to kill William H. Seward, the secretary of state. In a confession read by his counsel at the trial (as well as a later confession written in his cell and also in an interrogation transcript that came to light again only in the 1980s), Atzerodt truthfully denied even making an attempt on Johnson (whereas Powell did indeed wound Seward). In fact, Atzerodt, the only one of the conspirators who insisted on being paid for his services, is reliably reported to have drunk away his fee and then pawned the revolver he had been issued.

The war department's reward circular dated April 20, putting a \$25,000 bounty on his head, indicated that Atzerodt was "sometimes called Port Tobacco." He was captured at the house of a female acquaintance about thirty-five kilometres north of the Kirkwood Hotel in Washington,

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where a search of his room revealed weapons and other incriminating evidence. Atzerodt thus became one of eight civilian prisoners, following Booth's death on the run, to be tried by a military commission in May 1865. Like Powell, he was represented by William E. Doster, a former provost marshal of the District of Columbia. On June 30, all were found guilty; four, including Atzerodt, were sentenced to hang. The execution took place on July 7 in Washington, and Atzerodt, like the others, was buried under the stone floor of a warehouse on the grounds of Old Arsenal Prison. On March 4, 1869, as his term was expiring, President Johnson ordered the bodies exhumed and returned to their families. Of all the inner circle of Lincoln conspirators, Atzerodt consistently has been held in the lowest esteem by historians of the assassination, with Booth's granddaughter, Izola Forrester, calling him a "clumsy, slow-thinking ferryman" and Lloyd Lewis describing him as a "squat, un bathed gnome" and "a cartoon of an assassin, humped, simian, fawning, with hair that hung and whiskers that straggled."

RESOURCES: *Myths after Lincoln* by Lloyd Lewis (New York, 1929; reprinted as *The Assassination of Lincoln: History and Myth*, [Lincoln, Nebraska, 1994]); *Beware the People Weeping: Public Opinion and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* by Thomas Reed Turner (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1982); *The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies* by William Hanchett (Urbana, Illinois, 1983); *April '65: Confederate Covert Action in the American Civil War* by William A. Tidwell (Kent, Ohio, 1995).

AUDISIO, Walter (a.k.a. Colonel Valerio) (1909–1973), assassinated Benito Mussolini (1883–1945), the ruler of Italy. On April 28, 1945, Colonel Valerio, an Italian Communist Party operative, along with three other men, approached a farmhouse near Como. Inside, the former fascist dictator Benito Mussolini was being held by Italian partisans who had apprehended him four days earlier as he attempted to flee the country. When Valerio and his men arrived they argued with the partisans, who were not communists and resented their prize being taken from them. Nevertheless, Valerio won out and entered the house, informing Mussolini that he was about to be rescued. Mussolini was sceptical, but his mistress, Clara Petacci, begged him to go with Valerio as it was their only chance to escape. Mussolini finally agreed, and Valerio took Mussolini and Petacci to a villa near the town of Azzano. Once there,

Valerio declared: "By order of the general headquarters of the Corpo Volontari della Liberta [Volunteers for Freedom Corps] I am required to render justice to the Italian people." Valerio then tried to fire his machine pistol, but the weapon jammed. He then produced a revolver, but it too failed to fire. Finally, Valerio grabbed a machine pistol from one of his men and shot Mussolini five times in the chest. Valerio then shot Petacci. Mussolini and Petacci both died instantly.

Although the identity of Colonel Valerio remained a mystery for a few years, the Italian Communist Party later revealed that Colonel Valerio was in fact Walter Audisio, one of its members. Audisio was from a middle-class family and was trained as a bookkeeper. In 1929, he joined the army, where he was exposed to communist ideas. In 1931, he became a member of the party and three years later was arrested for distributing communist literature. He was sentenced to exile on the island of Ponza, where many political dissidents were sent during Mussolini's rule. In 1935, he was removed from Ponza after participating in a riot on the island and transferred to the notorious Poggioreale prison in Naples. Four years later, due to illness, Audisio was released after renouncing communism. He worked as a bookkeeper until resuming political activity in 1942, then went underground.

In 1943, he organized a clandestine partisan group, the Brigade Garibaldi, which was part of the umbrella group the Corpo Volontari della Liberta, and was given the code name Colonel Valerio. He worked closely with Allied intelligence during the liberation of Italy. When news of Mussolini's escape became known, the communists feared that if he was captured by the Allies, he would become the centrepiece of the war-crimes trials that must surely follow the end of hostilities. Such an outcome, they feared, could lead in turn to widespread prosecution of Italians and possibly Allied occupation for many years. Killing Mussolini before the Allies could get him, they reasoned, would eliminate such dangers.

After the shooting, the bodies of Mussolini, Petacci and fifteen other fascists were thrown into a van and taken to Milan, where they were dumped in the Piazzale Loreto, the same spot where fifteen hostages had been killed by the Nazis a year earlier. The next day the bodies were arranged in a row. Passersby began kicking and spitting on the corpses. Eventually, Mussolini and Petacci were hung upside down from a girder. Petacci's dress fell past her ears until one woman climbed up on a box and secured the dress to the dead woman's ankles.

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Mussolini and Petacci were buried in paupers' graves in Milan's Musocco Cemetery on May 1. In 1946, Mussolini's corpse was taken to the Capuchin monastery cemetery in Cerro Maggiore. Mussolini was moved again, in 1957, to his family's vault at the Cassiano Cemetery in Predappio. After the war, Audisio used his fame as the man who killed Mussolini as a stepping-stone to political office. He sat as a Communist member of the legislature from 1948 to 1963, when he was elected to the senate, where he remained until his retirement in 1968.

RESOURCE: *Duce! The Rise and Fall of Benito Mussolini* by Richard Collier (London, 1971).