

The Berlin Chair. Gerrit Rietveldt. The Elder. One of his first prototypes. 1923. He introduces two new elements to his work here: asymmetry and construction with flat panels. Love the way the back is the legs. He didn't completely abandon symmetry because it had a mirror image twin.

And the Wiggle Stool by Frank Gehry. As a boy he was grandmother encouraged his construction projects and he spent time in his grandfather's hardware store. Where there would have been a lot of cardboard boxes. Must have made an impression. What does he do? Makes a chair out of cardboard, 60 layers or so. Hidden screws. Fiberboard edging. From 1972. Reminiscent of traditional African stools. Reminiscent of old hardware stores.

Marlene Dietrich's shoes. Supposedly worn during her last concert in Paris in the mid-70's. And fittingly for a holy relic, if you look hard there, that spot. Allegedly blood. She gave her all for her public and hurt herself somehow. That's the sacred blood of the artist.

This chair? Chair with a Shadow by....? Who else. Robert Wilson. For Wagner's Parsifal in 1987.

And this chair? This great chair is Karol Wojtyla's chair. Wojtyla sat here as the Archbishop of Krakow in the Sacred College of Cardinals during the Papal conclave in Rome. And when he rose from this chair he was no longer Wojtyla. He was Pope John Paul II. He was 58 and one of the youngest Popes ever. He was the first non-Italian Pope in almost 500 years.

Now out here. Is a field from the village of Fatima in Portugal. Can you believe it? Mr. Wilson had it brought over piece by piece. Don't tell the Fatimans because they have no idea. The entire thing was removed, the ground was resodded and they're none the wiser. Did it all very late at night. But out there is the actual field where three Portuguese children, Lucia, Jacintha, and Francisco were tending their sheep when they were visited by the Virgin Mary on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1917.

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Why is that date important? Because on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1981, in St Peter's Square in Rome, on the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day that Our Lady of Fatima first visited the shepherd children in that field, John Paul II was visited by Mehmet Ali Agca who attempted to assassinate him.

When Our Lady of Fatima appeared to the children, World War I was raging. Lucia dos Santos was ten. Her cousin, Francisco was eight and her cousin, Jacinta was seven. At about noon, there was a flash of lightning and they were enveloped in blinding light. They looked up and saw a woman "brighter than the sun", dressed in dazzling white, her bare feet resting on a cloud. Lovelier than anyone they had ever seen, her face was pure and smiling with a touch of sadness. Her hands were joined in prayer and a rosary hung from her arm.

"Don't be afraid. I will do you no harm."

“Where do you come from, my lady?” Lucia asked.

“I come from heaven.”

The lady asked if the children would offer themselves to God and accept the sufferings he would send them to redeem the countless sins which offended his divine majesty.

“Will you suffer to obtain the conversion of sinners?”

“Yes, we will,” Lucia answered enthusiastically for all three.

The Virgin told them to return to the field for the next six months. Each time on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

When Lucia told her mother the story, her mother called her a liar and took a broomstick to her. Nobody believed the children. But because of their promise to suffer, they bound their bodies with rope beneath their clothes and began a strict regime of fasting and praying.

One month later, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, at noon as promised, the Lady of Fatima reappeared. This time she revealed that Francisco and Jacintha would die soon and be taken to heaven. She urged devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and emphasized that saying the Rosary was the key to world peace.

Remember that World War I would continue for another year.

The visitations continued and each month more and more people followed the children to the field. Eventually, Lucia mother even stopped beating her. Four months later, more than 75,000 people came to witness the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima.

It rained heavily all the night before. On the morning of October 13<sup>th</sup>, the village was blanketed by rain beneath a cloud bound sky. Everything and everyone was soaked. The dirt roads were mud. Three inches of water stood on the field where the children waited surrounded by thousands watching.

Around midday, Lucia cried, “Look up at the sun!”

And the rain stopped. And the sun appeared. Waves of surprise, awe, fear, and joy swept the crowd.

But this sun was different. It wasn't the usual unbearably bright midday sun of Portugal. It was a fast spinning plate of silver, a giant pinwheel turning on its axis. A madly spinning prism that shattered the light into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. All the colors of the rainbow spilled over the upturned faces and the surprised umbrellas of the crowd. Everyone stared fixedly at the whirling disk. But without pain and without being blinded.

Then after several minutes, the sun began roaming around the clouds. It came unfixed and began moving restlessly back and forth, pulsating and trembling within itself. Still spinning and hurling color, but unsettled and unsettling.

And then it stopped.

Without warning, it suddenly plunged toward the earth, hurtling downward in a zig zag fashion. Faster and faster, drawing closer and closer, getting bigger and bigger. Its heat growing more intense. People wept and prayed. Cries rose up, "We're all going to die!"

But now the children called out:

"Pray and pray hard.

Everything is going to be all right.

Pray and pray, pray and pray."

At the last second, when it looked like the sun would surely crash into the crowd, the whirling disk halted, reversed its path and ascended again to its place in the sky. And the people could not longer look directly at it. It resumed its unbearable midday glare. It became itself again.

In the local vernacular this event became known as the "Dance of the Sun".

And mystery on mystery, it happened again. It happened again 64 years later. In August 1981. When John Paul II lay in bed recovering from an assassin's bullet, he opened his eyes...and the sun that had danced at Fatima, danced for him. The dancing sun that 75,000 people saw in 1917 was the same sun that greeted John Paul in August 1981.

For the 75,000 in Fatima, that dancing sun was further proof for their faith. But for Pope John Paul II, it was more. It was a sure sign that Mary had a mission for him. Saved and protected by Mary, it was in this mood of prayer and total trust that John Paul had his only supernatural vision of things to come.

When the Pope visited his would-be assassin, Ali Agca, a few years later in prison, the first words of the right-wing, non-believer were:

"Who was that Queen that saved your life?"

Mehmet Ali Agca was a convicted murderer and hit man for the Grey Wolves, a far right terrorist organization that had been destabilizing Turkey for decades. He had murdered a left wing newspaper editor in Istanbul and been sentenced to life in prison. But after serving six months, he escaped to Bulgaria which was the base of operations for the Turkish mafia. He involved himself with weapons and drug smuggling and then began criss-crossing the Mediterranean region, changing passports and identities, perhaps to hide his point of origin in Sofia. Finally, he entered Rome.

What happened there in Rome, on May 13<sup>th</sup>, changed the course of history. It also changed the Pope in a way that no one expected.

There are three theories as to who was behind the plot to kill Pope John Paul II.

One is the *Vatican theory*, supported at one point by Agca himself. He testified that he had accomplices in the Catholic Church:

"The devil is inside Vatican's wall", were his words.

The *Jihad theory* claimed that it was Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini who ordered the killing as a first act of holy war against Christianity and the West. Ali Agca was trained in Iran; letters that he sent to the press used phrases like 'High commander of the crusaders' that sounded more like Khomeini than the barely literate Agca.

And finally there is the Bulgarian Connection theory. At one point Agca claimed to have three accomplices in Rome, a fellow Turk and two Bulgarians. He said that the assassination was commanded by the Bulgarian military attaché in Italy. Agca testified, that the plan was for himself and a Turkish back-up gunman to open fire in St. Peter's Square and escape to the Bulgarian embassy under the cover of the panic generated by a small bomb explosion.

It's true that the Communist regime perceived the Polish Pope as a major threat. But this was a colossal misunderstanding.

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev no longer wanted to tolerate a Christian World Leader. KGB chief, Yuri Andropov suspected a German-American conspiracy was behind the election of Pope John Paul, two years before. A conspiracy led by President Jimmy Carter's security advisor, the Warsaw born Zbigniew Brzezinski: 'How could they choose a Pope from a socialist country? A slav, a poet, a playwright and an actor?'

The Pope's first journey to his catholic homeland in 1979 so threatened the Communist Party in Warsaw that they sent a secret memo to teachers in every school: "The Pope is our enemy... Due to his uncommon skills and great sense of humor he is dangerous. He charms everyone, especially journalists. He also seeks the support of the people by cheap gestures like donning a Tyrolean hat, shaking everybody's hand and kissing children!"

Still, a quarter of Poland's entire population showed up to welcome their Holy Father. He gave them hope and strength and courage. Six months later, an increase in prices — especially for meat— caused a huge wave of strikes. On the last day of August, 448 days after the Pope left Poland, the electrician Lech Walesa signed an agreement with the government in Gdansk creating *Solidarnocz*, Solidarity, the first free and legal trade union of the East. Walesa's signed using a souvenir pen with a portrait of the Pope.

Pope John Paul believed the Virgin Mary to be the Queen of the world. As a Polish cleric, before he became Pope, he, like most of his countrymen, expected Mary's power to aid more than their souls and minds. He deeply believed that Mary's influence would lead to Poland's political liberation. Devotion to Mary was not just personal and religious. It was social and political. And Poland's liberation through Mary would cause a major shift in world power.

As Pope, John Paul still believed that the Soviet system would eventually decay. But slowly.

Under the fading Leonid Brezhnev, KGB chief Yuri Andropov was the new strong man in the Soviet Empire. He had crushed the Prague Spring. He was the main proponent of

the "extreme measures". The Western World became more and more afraid of a Soviet invasion in Poland.

In January 1981 John Paul welcomed a delegation led by Lech Walesa in the Vatican. Shortly afterwards, the hit man Ali Agca was contacted in Bulgaria. This is the *Bulgarian Connection Theory*.

What Yuri Andropov didn't know is that in 1978, shortly after becoming the head of the Catholic Church, John Paul II opened an envelope, which contained the so-called *Third Secret of Fatima* – and then decided to do nothing! Against all expectations, the young Pope was very passive. Cautious. And wary of complex political situations.

And this all goes back to Fatima. And the famous *Third Secret*.

In 1917 the Virgin Mary had entrusted the three shepherd children with three messages and given them precise instructions how they should be disclosed. After the early death of Francisco and Jacintha, Lucia, was the sole living source of information. She soon became a Carmelite nun.

The first two messages were disclosed quite soon. The first warned about the world following a path of sin. Many were at risk of eternal damnation. The second message was a prediction about the outbreak of World War II. The Virgin Mary asked the Pope and all his bishops to specially consecrate Russia to her. If this was not done, Russia would spread evil throughout the world. Many would suffer and die.

The third message remained a secret. Finally, in 1944, Lucia wrote the secret on a sheet of paper and sealed it in an envelope with instructions that it was to be opened in 1960.

„By then, things will be clearer“.

But rumors spread about its contents, rumors that it concerned the USSR and other nations. That its scenario was dark and horrible. Vatican authorities grew uneasy about the *Third Secret* and brought the envelope to Rome and placed it in a small humidor box on a mantelpiece in the Pope's private apartments.

To await the man who would be Pope in 1960.

That Pope was John XXIII. He opened the letter, read it and put it back in the box. His successor, Paul VI, opened the letter, read it and put it back in the box. Now the rumors were getting more colorful and louder. Why wouldn't they reveal the *Third Secret*? It must be something evil. Is it about the devil himself? The end of the world?

John Paul I, 1978, opened the letter, read it, put it back in the box. Only lasted 33 days. Still found the time. One of the first things John Paul II did was open the letter, read it, back in the box. He, too, decided that he shouldn't reveal the message. That was in late 1978. His subsequent actions were influenced by his understanding of the content. He decided that as a Pole, he shouldn't challenge the Soviets. He needed to be cautious about Russia, about the Soviet Empire and the Eastern Block. The situation was too volatile. Too dangerous.

In 1980, speaking to a group of German Catholics about the *Third Secret*, John Paul had been quite explicit:

Why had the Popes refused to reveal the Secret. John Paul's reasoning was pregnant with his own pre-1981 reading of the text. „Given the seriousness of its contents“, he explained, „my predecessors diplomatically preferred to postpone publication so as not to encourage the world power of Communism to make certain moves.“

1980, remember. A year before the assassination attempt. A year before John Paul II read Lucia's letter once more. A year before he came to a very different conclusion. He was a different man then.

There was fear on both sides in 1980 and 1981. On the Church side as well as on the Communist side.

*Solidarity* altered its carefully planned course at that time. The influential Cardinal Wyszynski had once warned: „Do not let yourselves be drawn into alliances with those who would use you for aims that are alien to our Polish dignity and heritage“. In March 1981, the Polish Prime Minister, General Jaruzelski thanked both John Paul and Cardinal Wyszynski for their help in bringing about a peaceful solution between the Communist government and the *Solidarity* workers who were on another strike. As long as the Pope and Cardinal Wyszynski were actively in control, *Solidarity* seemed willing to find a way to function within the Communist system. They restricted their ambitions and activity to the fields of culture and labor relations.

But by 1980 already Wyszynski was mortally ill with stomach cancer. By March 1981, the illness has terminal. He had barely two months to live. The removal of John Paul and the Cardinal from active, day-to-day participation greatly facilitated the radicalization of *Solidarity*.

On May 13, 1981, when Ali Agca tried to kill the Pope a new Pope emerged. It was only now that he openly started channeling CIA money via Archbishop Paul Marcinkus and 'God's Banker' Roberto Calvi straight to the *Solidarity* movement. The assassination attempt changed everything. He knew that he was the chosen one to bring down Russia. Not slowly, not cautious. No, it had to be fast. He himself had to do it.

On July 25, the Saturn-Jupiter-conjunction takes place, the same as the one that revealed the birth of Jesus. This is what Astrologers consider to be the most important astrological constellation. It was called: „An old king leaving, a new king arriving.“

It is May 13, 1981.

There are 50,000 people on St. Peter's Square waiting for the weekly Papal audience of the Pope.

Some 11 million viewers follow the event from their home televisions. It is a bright, sunny day with blue skies. It is warm.

The light is blinding.

Mehmet Ali Agca is writing postcards. He watches the crowd. Everything is calm.

His accomplice Oral Celik walks by. They don't look at each other. They are professionals. Celik has a small bomb in his pocket. Everything is calm.

The faithful wait for the Holy Father. The weather is fine.

There is a small path defined where the papa mobil will drive through the crowd. It has the long wide form of an S.

There is a small girl in a light blue dress.

There is another little girl with a small picture of Our Lady of Fatima.

There is Ann Odre of Buffalo, New York.

There is Rose Hill of Jamaica.

There is Camillo Cibin, chief of the Vatican Police.

There is a nun.

There are two bystanders.

There is the Pope.

The pilgrims cheer.

Agca moves into the crowd.

Oral Celik stands on the other side of the square behind a column.

It is a little after five in the afternoon when the Pope enters the square, riding in his open Jeep, the slow moving "popemobile".

Six security men in blue suits stay behind him on the white truck.

John Paul waves.

He smiles.

He shakes hands.

He touches the heads of children.

He lifts a small girl from the crowd, the girl in the light blue dress, and holds her up, for all to see.

It is now that the live footage of Italian TV goes into slow motion.  
The cameras stop. The technicians wonder.

John Paul II is about 15 feet away from Ali Agca.

Agca grips his 9mm Browning.

John Paul II leans toward the girl with the picture of *Our Lady of Fatima*.

Ali Agca squeezes off two bullets precisely where the Pope's head was. As two pilgrims fall wounded to the ground, —the shots were hardly heard, only a few realize the man with the gun—Ali Agca fires again. He goes for the Pope's head, so he aims down, but the Pope bends up again. Agca fires four bullets; misses the head again but John Paul's

white cassock is stained with blood. The Pope slumps down and falls into the arms of an aid. On the open truck. People don't understand. It is too noisy, too fast. Then somebody shouts. The Pope is hit! He touches his side. Blood runs down his fingers.

Two bullets strike him in the stomach, one in his right arm and the fourth hits his little finger.

Ann Odre is struck in the chest.

Rose Hill is slightly wounded in the arm.

Celik panics and forgets to set off his explosion.

He flees.

The nun holds Ali Agca.

Two bystanders help.

Camillo Cibin apprehends Ali Agca.

The Pope is rushed away, to the Gemelli Policlinico.

He will be in surgery for five hours.

He will survive.

It's May 13.

The first two bullets only missed because the pope bent down to the girl with the image of the Virgin Mary.

The pope will put one of the bullets in the Virgin Mary's crown in the statue in Fatima.

He dedicates his life to the Virgin Mary and will say:

"One finger pulled the trigger, the other finger directed the bullet."