

THE HOLY BULLET
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This book is dedicated to
Ioannes Paulus PP. II
Karol Josef Wojtyla
May 18, 1920-March 4, 2005

To all men of faith. JC, February 26, 2007

No bullet can kill unless it is His will. Sister Lucia in a letter to Karol Wojtyla, April, 1981

Hitler couldn't have been as bad as they say. He couldn't have killed six million. It couldn't have been more than four. San José María Escrivá de Balaguer in a letter to the members of Opus Dei

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I am writing a book in which I will tell the whole truth. Until now I've told fifty different stories, all of which are false. Ali Agca, the Turk who shot Pope John Paul II
Anno Domini MMVII

Everything has a beginning.

The start, the departure point, the zero, Sunday, the starting gun, the sprouting seed pushing through the earth for light, the splash into water, the earliest heartbeat, the first word, the first stone of a village, villa, city, wall, house, palace, church, building. Of this building in an unnamed city. A luxury restaurant occupies the ground floor and basement, as indicated by the menu displayed at the side of the door. Its status is not openly announced to the world at large, but suggested by the tinted glass doors, always closed, and by the haughtiness of the doorman, impeccably dressed in a burgundy uniform. The absence of prices on the menu and the many phrases in French are also a sign of its exclusiveness, even if the city is located on French soil, which is neither confirmed nor denied. What is certain is that this restaurant does not need to advertise any of its services, which, in itself, presupposes an exclusive clientele.

Any diner who wishes to enjoy the favors of this establishment must first seek approval; without such authorization he will never pass through the tinted glass doors. Usually this can be obtained through the recommendation of a frequent client, a member of sorts, who has influence with management, or by a formal request that involves a long process of investigation into the private life of the applicant. A large bank account is useful, but not enough, since some pretentious newly rich are frequently rejected, although many members of old families are turned down also. Such rejection, and bear in mind the word "rejection" is never used, is communicated by a letter in a white envelope with no return address. Once this decision is made, it can never be revoked. In the case of acceptance there will be a long list of rules. There is, for example, a provision in the statutes for the expulsion of a member in the case of serious offenses, even if such expulsion has never happened.

Acceptance happens differently: a telephone call at home inviting him to dinner. Upon arrival, the uniformed doorman compliments him and opens the tinted glass doors. Inside, he is treated with a deference that is never excessive. Another employee relieves him of his coat. Immediately he is led to a table that, from that day on, will be his alone, no matter the hour or day of the week. He can bring any guests he desires, as long as he informs the manager of their names five days in advance. The morality of the guests is not important. This is the privilege of the selected clients, who can share whatever with whomever they desire--favors, business negotiations, intrigues,

blackmail, purchases, the destiny of others, their own-- without anyone pointing a recriminating finger, accompanied by food for the refined palate, breast of chicken stuffed with pate of bacon and mushroom sauce, wine, and brandy. No financial transactions take place here, except those discussed at the table, which are many. Members pay a monthly fee by bank transfer of 12,000 Euros that covers the privileges of having the kitchen available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Thus this restaurant functions in every city of major political and economic influence in the world, as it does in this unnamed city.

Today, at noon, the restaurant is half empty. The clients of the empty tables are occupied with their personal or professional lives. The table that matters to us is the thirteenth; the two men seated there aren't superstitious. In their opinion the table is as acceptable as any other. What matters is the here and now. Everything else is useless, unproved theory. Above all, these men adapt to time and circumstances. Each case is unique. In a world driven by money, this philosophy has advantages, and the two of them know how to make use of it.

Reasons of security and privacy prevent mentioning the name of the city with this restaurant, its table thirteen, and two men, seated face to face. The one with his back to the dining room is the member; he could be the father or even grandfather of the man sitting in front of him. No family ties connect them, except Adam and Eve, who unite us all. They aren't even friends. The younger is an aide to the older, if not a servant, a term no longer used these days. Let's not call what he's receiving "orders," but instructions or suggestions. They're dressed conservatively like any executive or business man seated at the other tables. They're eating delicious halibut with spinach, *mascarpone*, and slices of Parma ham, an exception to the rule that one eats little and poorly in exclusive restaurants. They're drinking a Pinot Noir, Kaimira, 1998, chosen by the member without consulting his guest. They're courteous, since they aren't given to excess or speculation. The word "exception" is not part of their vocabulary. Everything is what it is, here and now, always.

"I haven't had the opportunity to ask you how the investigation in the United States is going," the older one asked.

"It's been filed in the archives, of course. Natural causes."

"Perfect. May I deduce that no trace of evidence was left at the location?" The older man revealed his calculating mind. He's not given to imponderables or last minute surprises.

"Complete security. I collected everything before the authorities arrived. His age also helped to close the case rapidly," the younger man explained in a cold, professional tone.

"Perfect."

They continued eating in silence. Anyone noticing the tone of the conversation wouldn't characterize it as an interrogation, at least at this stage, although this wasn't a friendly dinner, either, but a meeting with an agenda planned by the older one. Both ate slowly, taking small forkfuls and pausing to chew without hurry.

"The second part of the plan begins immediately," the older man began. "It's going to be more and more demanding. There can be no mistakes."

"There won't be," the younger man, quite confident, assured him.

"How's the team?"

"Already in place for several weeks, as you directed. All the subjects are under constant surveillance, except one."

"Good, very good." He would've rubbed his hands with pleasure, if he were a man given to expressing himself with gestures. He guarded his emotions and never shared them. "And in London?"

"Our man has privileged access to the subject," the younger one explained. "As soon as I give the okay, the way is open."

"These are the hardest parts of the plan to implement. London and JC," the man with his back to the dining room said firmly.

"Hasn't he shown his face yet?" the younger man wanted to know.

"No, he's an old fox, like me. But we have to make him appear; otherwise the plan is compromised."

"We'll make him appear. London will bring him out."

"Yes. As soon as he emerges, don't think, act. If you give yourself the luxury of thinking, even for only a second, by the time you're ready to move, he'll have already won."

The young man couldn't imagine such a situation. He was prepared for everything. The idea that they were up against such fast-thinking people seemed unlikely to him. Besides, we're talking about an old man more than seventy years old. What danger could he represent? He didn't reveal such thoughts to the old man seated at the table, or rather, his table.

"I know what you're thinking," the old man warned. "All humans have weaknesses. Mine is the Church, yours is self-confidence. It's a flaw. Take your ego out of the equation. That's the only way to guarantee you won't fail."

"I will."

"You must. If things don't work out, you won't be the one looking at *their* corpses. In London, honestly, it won't be easy."

"I have a very efficient man there who'll clear the way for me to do my work."

“Let me clarify something before we continue. At the moment I have no reason to criticize or censure your work. One hundred percent efficient, but you haven’t yet dealt with what you’ll have to contend with this time.”

“The plan is practically infallible,” the young man dared to answer back.

“There’s no such thing,” the other argued. “You have a plan where everything has to come together precisely and you can’t make a mistake. Infallible? Not even the pope.”

“Of course, but...”

“To finish my point,” he interrupted, “Just a little warning.” He waited for the young man to look him in the eye, holding his complete attention, “JC is the man who murdered John Paul I in 1978, and, even so, he was unable to kill the pope in London. He too had never failed.”

The young man took in his words and thought about them for a few moments. The old man was right. Over-confidence was the enemy of avoiding mistakes. That was the message the other man wanted him to get.

“I understand. I won’t give anyone a chance to try something.” He also realized that if he failed, he wouldn’t survive. Whether through the intervention of JC or through this frequent client of the restaurant located in the unnamed city, he wouldn’t live to see the next day. It was time to change the subject.

“What about Mitrokin?”

“I’m on that, the old man replied. “My contacts in Moscow are taking care of it at this very moment.”

“What about the Turk?”

“Let him stay a prisoner. He won’t be hurting anyone. Don’t forget we won’t communicate again until the plan is concluded.”

“Yes, I understand. I won’t forget. Only one thing is missing...”

“The Vatican,” the older man interrupted, “I’ll take care of them personally.” For the first time the old man smiled faintly.

Everything has a beginning.