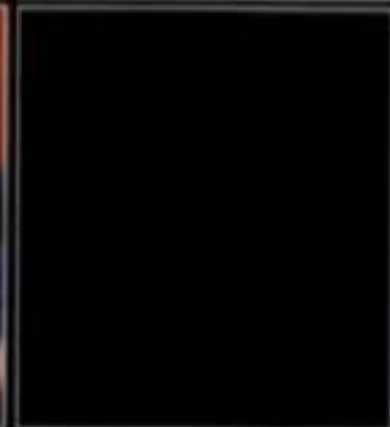




THE GREAT PICTORIAL HISTORY OF
WORLD

C R I M E



Jay Robert Nash

Edgar Award-Winning Author and
Dean of American True-Crime Writers

AUTHOR OF BLOODLETTERS AND BADMEN

THE GREAT PICTORIAL HISTORY OF

WORLD

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VOLUME I
VOLUME II

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CRIME

Jay Robert Nash

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I. Crime—Criminals—World—History—Bibliography

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This book is dedicated to my wife, Judy, to my son, Jay Robert Nash IV, and to the memory of dear, lifelong friends, Juan Amidei, Michaela Tuohy, Jim McCormick, Stanley Ralph Ross and George de Kay.

BOOKS BY JAY ROBERT NASH

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On All Things
A Crime Story
The Dark Fountain
The Mafia Diaries

NON-FICTION

Dillinger: Dead or Alive?
Citizen Hoover
Bloodletters and Badmen
Hustlers and Conmen
Darkest Hours
Among the Missing
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Look for the Woman
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Jay Robert Nash's Crime Chronology
Encyclopedia of Organized Crime
Encyclopedia of 20th Century Murder
Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws
Crime Dictionary
Spies
Terrorism in the 20th Century

POETRY

Lost Natives & Expatriates

THEATER

The Way Back
Outside the Gates
1967 (Last Rites for the Boys)

MULTI-VOLUME REFERENCE WORKS

The Motion Picture Guide (17 Volumes)
Encyclopedia of World Crime (8 Volumes)

INTRODUCTION

The Great Historical History of World Crime was designed to offer the most comprehensive view of crime assembled on the most infamous criminals throughout recorded time. The most extensively illustrated work of its kind, this work provides readers with more than 2,000 crime graphics, forty percent of which are published for the first time. Unbeknownst to the large number of graphics ever assembled and published in a single source on this engaging subject, the illustrations have been carefully selected from the author's own repository, the largest such privately-held collection. Through these eye-catching—often times horrific—graphics, the sinister and startling face of crime in all of its guises and depths is revealingly shown.

It was the ambitious aim of the author to compile and illustrate in one source the most important crimes in history. The expansive coverage offers many entries ranging from more than 10,000 words in a two-million-word narrative depicting criminal acts, *modus operandi*, and backgrounds of the world's most notorious criminals. Within the thousands of profiles to be found in this work, the reader will learn the subtle and diagram motives behind their criminal feats. In many instances, the author expresses a definite opinion about questionable or puzzling cases, pointing to the inconsistencies that bedevil the name. Je. of Abraham Lincoln, the identity of John H. Kennedy's assassin, the true names of robbers Jesse James and Beattie and Clyde, how Sam and Ned can solve the 125-year-old Jack the Ripper case, the illustrated evidence long researched by the author that shows how bench John Dillinger was not killed, as claimed by the FBI, in a Chicago theater in 1931, the culpability of O. J. Simpson (the most probable killer of the doctor William Desmond Taylor), as name only a few of the thousands of cases receiving in-depth definitions.

Every major crime category is presented as a separate, complete narrative case by case history. Volume I: Assassination, Bigamy, Burglary, Cannibalism, Drug Fraud, Gangs, Gangsters and Organized Crime, Volume II: Kidnapping, Murder (including Celebrity Shootings, Mass Murder, Serial Killers and Unsolved Homicides), Piracy, Robbery, Secret Criminal Societies and Terrorism. Many chapters are followed by extensive chronologies depicting further notable cases (there are more than 150 such entries in the chronology following the chapter on kidnapping).

All of the world's most significant and history-defining assassinations, as well as attempted political murders, are presented in scores of entries that extensively profile and illustrate both victims and perpetrators. This chapter alone offers more than 1,500,000 words and more than 400 illustrations. Here, the reader will find substantial text and graphic profiles from the killing of Julius Caesar to the murders of American president Abraham Lincoln (this entry alone offers more than three thousand words and forty-seven illustrations), James A. Garfield, William McKinley, and John F. Kennedy. The kings and heads of state throughout the world, who fell before the assassin's blade or bullet, will be found in these pages, such as Alexander II of Russia, Austria's Francis Ferdinand, and Nicholas II of Russia, as well as Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin.

The world's most notorious bigamists, from England's Elizabeth Cady Bann of the 18th Century to American ex-husband's Sigurd Engel of the 20th Century (two legally married and eloped more than 200 times) will be found in the illustrated pages of this work. The most daring and often failed burglars, Lou Scialoja's William Booth Brown whose dark exploits Robert Louis Stevenson based his novel, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* on; American millionaire banker Bernard Charles White Jr. are given in-depth treatment. So are the world's blood-thirsty cannibals: Sweeney Bean of 15th Century Scotland, the German cannibal Fritz Hartmann, Russia's Andrei Chikatiya and American flesh-eater Alfred Pinner, Albert Fish, Ed Gein, and Jeffrey Dahmer.

From the ancient kingdoms to the present day, the shocking history of drugs is profiled. Here the reader will find the use of being, coca and other exotic drugs among the Aztecs and the American Indians, which ultimately contributed to the discovery of George Armstrong Custer's "Cocaine" at the Little Bighorn in 1871, the introduction of opium (the "Mongolian Curse") into the U.S. through widespread Chinese immigration; the famous writers who used heroin and cocaine to stigmatize their opinions; the celebrated drug-addicted film stars who ruined their careers and lives; and the billion-dollar drug lords who operated the drug cartels of Central and South America.

All manner of **fraud**—impersonations, identities and art, bank and investment swindles, and a litany of confidence games—are to be discovered in this extensive chapter—the milking Mary Moores of 17th Century England; Italy's 18th Century magician Charlatan Capriatara, the American robber barons, Daniel Drew, Big Jim Foss, Jay Gould, the bold con artists William Hunter Mead, Victor "The Count" Lustig, and Joseph "Shadow King" Weil, along with their female counterparts, Sophie Lyons, Cessie Cradwick and the volatile child prodigy, the Dutch painter, Hans van Meegeren; of masterful fakes: the corporate swindlers Ivar Kreuger of Sweden, Frances's Sergei Bransky and America's Billie Sol Estes and Robert Vesco; millionaires like John Lyons Hellstrey; stock manipulators Michael Milken, bar's swindler Charles Karing, and many more.

More than 100,000 words and 280 illustrations will be found for gangs, gangsters and organized crime, spanning more than a century and providing extensive profiles on early day crime bosses and their lethal minions, including Paul Kelly, Big Jim Colaninno, "Doc the Boss" Masseria, Al Capone, Dutch Schultz, Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, Lenny Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Vito Genovese, Albert "The Mad Hatter" Anastasia and latter-day syndicate Mafia dons Anthony "Big Tony" Accardo, Joe Colombo, the warlike Gal Shorbehn and John Gotti, the "Yellow Dog" Of equal length and with hundreds of illustrations, **kidnapping**, from ancient times to the present is covered in dozens of the world's most important cases—including the first ransom kidnapping in America, the abduction of Charley Ross in 1874; the faked kidnapping of American evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson in 1906; the seizure of 1932 Lindbergh kidnapping by Hugo Richard Hauptmann (15,000 words, 32 illustrations); the abduction and murder of Robbie Greenhouse in 1855; the kidnappings of Barbara Mackle in Atlanta and Muriel McKay in Chicago; Utah's most notorious kidnapper, Chester Foxe King, executed in 1988; the 1973 raking of Glenn Paul Berry, the grandson of the world's richest man; the serial child-fans-child killers Lawrence Bittaker, Arthur B. Ship, Wayne Williams, Leroy J. Lee, and Charles Ng; Belgium's Marc Dutroux, Charles James and Salvatore Strano.

Murder of all manner and types is represented by more than 400,000 words and 800 illustrations in this all-encompassing work, including celebrity slayings that shocked nations—the beat of Su Dharma Ockrent in 1615; the mysterious 1791 death of composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; France's infamous essayist-killer Pierre-François Lacenaire; Heavens Professor John White Webster; Roland B. Moore; the Pittsburgh millionaire Henry K. Ulmer, who shot to death the celebrated architect, Stanford White in 1906; Princess Maria Fakhry, who killed her husband, Prince Ali Fakhry al-Lezairi's Savoy Hotel; millionaire killer Barbara Leopold and Richard Lusk of Chicago; sun worshiper Percy Crew Crosby; the notorious 1931 Massie murder case in Hawaii; heiress Candy Crowley; the murder of silent screen star Ramon Novarro in Los Angeles in 1958; playboy Clark von Buzow; Ukrainian Brando, son of famed actor Marlon Brando, football star and film personality O. J. Simpson, who murdered his two warring mothers in 1993; Bryan Hartman, who murdered his Canadian husband, Phil Hartman, before committing suicide in 1998, and many others.

Those who committed **mass murder**, will also be found in these pages: Romanian twins Vlad Dracul and Vlad Tepes (Bram Stoker used both, father and son as the role models for his legendary vampire, Dracula); Albert Hicks, hanged in 1860; Jean-Baptiste Truppinian, plane-bombber Albert Guay and John Gilbert Graham, Howard L. Smith, Richard Huss and Perry Smith; Richard Speck, the 1968 murder clan of Charles Manson; religious fanatics who brought about the mass homicides of their naïve followers—James Warren Jones of Guyana in 1978; Javal Konek in Waco, Texas, in 1993; Marshall Applegate in San Diego, in 1997.

All of the world's worst **aerial killers** are included. France's Gilles de Rais, Hungary's Elizabeth Bathory; the infamous Bondi family of Kansas; Chicago's Herman Webster Mudgett (J. H. H. H. H. H.), who may have killed as many as 200 women; Belle Gunness of Indiana; France's Henri Désiré Landry and Marcel Petitot; Germany's Peter Kurten; England's Burke and Hare, John George Haigh, Reginald Holiday, Christie and Peter William Sutcliffe (Yorkshire Ripper); Australia's Ivan Robert Marko Milat; and American modern era slayers Charles Starkweather, Melvin Duval, Rees, Albert De Salvo ("The Boston Strangler"), Walter Kellbach and Myron Lance, Douglas Geyziere and William Stockman, John Wayne Gacy, Angelo Bruno and Kenneth Branch ("The Hillside Strangler"), Theodore "Ted" Bundy, Dean Hall and Elmer Wayne Henley, Herbert Muller, Juan Valdejo Cruzon, Vernon Butler and William Bonin (Freeway Strangler), Patricia Wayne Keasley and David D. Hill, Henry Lee Lucas and Otis Howard Foster, Coral Eugene White, Christoph Bernhard Wilder, Dorothy Poore, Joseph Paul Franklin, Raynor Leroy Rogers, Adolfo de Jesus Coronado, Remy Turpinne, Conde, Andrew Phillip Cannon, who killed fashion tycoon Gianni Versace, and many others.

All of the great **unsolved murders** are also profiled in this gigantic work, including the horrific 1888 murders at Lanchester's Whitechapel by the fiend known to history as Jack the Ripper (the author appearing a role in Scotland Yard at the end of this entry, which details his suggestion on how to solve this baffling 115-year-old case); the sensational New York killings of millionaire lounge expert Joseph Brown, Edward and showgirls Dot King, and Star Faithful (the role model for the novel and film, *Starfield 5*); New Jersey's mystifying Hall-Mills case; the perplexing murder of film director William Desmond Taylor and the strange death of film actress Helma Todd; the murders of multi-millionaire Zachary Smith Reynolds (near to the Reynolds tobacco fortune, in 1934) and Sir Harry Gorkin in 1943; the baffling and savage 1947 Black Dahlia (Elizabeth Short) murder in Los Angeles; the 1996 killing of child beauty contestant Jon-Benét Ramsey in Boulder, Colorado; and many others.

The comprehensive chapter on piracy profiles the wild and savage careers of Barbarossa I and II (both known as "Redbeard"), Sir Francis Drake, Sir Henry Morgan, Thomas Tew, Jean Bart, Captain William Kidd, Edward Teach ("Blackbeard"), Howell Davis, Charles Vane, John Rackam ("Fisher Jack"), Philip Rucbe, Howard England, Edward Low, the lady pirates Anne Henry and Mary Read, and the last of the great corsairs, Jean Lafitte.

The comprehensive history of **robbery** portrays the most notorious thieves and bandits of the old and modern eras: Mel Catpawse, London's master pickpocket; the bold Colonel Thomas Blood, who stole the British crown jewels from the Tower of London in 1671; the early-day highway men of England—Dick Turpin, James MacLaine, and John Ram ("Sixteen String Jack")—and their American counterparts: Michael Martin ("Captain Lightfoot") and John A. Murrel ("The Great Western Land Pirate"), the legendary black bandit Bras Coupa ("Brogue of the Swamp"), Australia's Ned Kelly, England's trouble-maker killer Franz Muller and Percy Lofby and the Great Gold Robbery of 1855, the legendary American bank and bank robbers, Jesse and Frank James, the Younger Brothers and The Wild Bunch (Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid); Robbers of the 20th Century include the celebrated Sney-Sneytrifense, France's Jules Bonner, and American bandits Gerald Chapman, John Dillinger, the Barker-Karpis gang, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, Arthur "Pretty Boy" Floyd, Willie "The Actor" Sutton, the Sicilian bandit Salvatore Giuliano, England's Great Train Robbery, the bloody North Hollywood robbery of 1997 and many others.

Secret criminal societies are extensively profiled, from India's ancient Khatrauli, Thuggee to the organized crime and heyday of the Sicilian-born Mafia, from the murderous Order of the Assassins in Persia, led by the Old Man of the Mountain (whose mantle Osama bin Laden assumed) to the deified Chinese Triads, from Japan's Yakuza (stemming from the old Black Dragon Society) to Kenya's notorious Mau Mau and Argentina's Ro-Kim-Kim.

A comprehensive chapter on terrorism chronicles from ancient times to the present many of the most infamous individuals and groups that have practiced political, economic or financial terrorism; urban terrorists Harry Orchard; the anarchists of England, who battled police and troops in London in the 1911 "Siege of Sidney Street"; New York's "Mad Bomber," George Peter Metesky; Hungary's team bomber Sylvester Matusek; California's Synagogue-Liberation Army (and the Patty Hearst case); "Carlos the Jackal," (Hylia Ramirez Sanchez); Japan's Aum Shinri Kyoe, the sect that facilitated the poison gas (sarin) attacks in Tokyo's subway system in 1995; American terrorists Theodore Kazynski ("The Unabomber") and Timothy McVeigh, who killed 168 persons in a bombing attack in Oklahoma City in 1995; the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; the devastating terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, by members of Al Qaeda and under the direction of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden; many more.

The Great Pictorial History of World Crime captures all of these cases and more, showing how clever criminals adapted to law-enforcement procedures and measures from one decade to another, from one century to the next. This work is the result of three decades of research and writing on behalf of the author, a kaleidoscopic work intended to inform and enlighten the reader about the most infamous persons in the history of the human race. Some are to be admired, but all should be studied, examined and unlearned. For many of these memorable miscreants have altered the course of human events for their own ends and to the widespread detriment of mankind.

Jay Robert Nash, 2001

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Throughout recorded history, the world has been plagued by assassinations, the wanton murders of prominent political or social leaders. From biblical times and through the long eras of Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome the deadly assassin was present. In the modern era, these killers would claim the lives of countless presidents and premiers, gurus and kings. The word "assassin" derives from the Arabic word "hashshashin," or "hashish," a drug either smoked or chewed that was employed by members of an 11th Century Islamic sect that sought to murder Western leaders of the Crusades and came into prominence during the Third Crusade, led by English King Richard the Lionheart. Members of this sect believed that the murder of one's political enemy was a religious and sacred rite. (This mindset was later embraced by the followers of Islamic terrorist Osama bin Laden.)

Marco Polo related tales of the followers of this Near Eastern cult and their deadly acts after smoking hashish. The drug supposedly elevated them to a higher level of "paradise," enabling them to fearlessly face "martyrdom." In the 11th Century Hasan e-Sabbah (known as the Old Man of the Mountain) commanded a vast network of professional killers who stalked their enemies throughout Persia and what is now Iraq. By the 12th Century, their influence extended into Syria. The reign of the assassins lasted until 1256, when the Mongol armies under the leadership of Hulegu seized their castles in Persia and Aq-mut. After this period, the sect became insignificant.

Its tales of its infamous acts were spread throughout Europe by the Crusaders.

No culture or people has been immune to political assassination. Four U.S. presidents — Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, William McKinley and John F. Kennedy — have been assassinated since 1865. Unsuccessful attempts were made on the lives of Andrew Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. In 1800, James Hadfield was acquitted of trying to murder King George III on the grounds of insanity. During the sixty-four year reign of Queen Victoria of England, at least six attempts were made on her life. Spencer Perceval, the only British prime minister to succumb to an assassin's attack, was finally shot by John Bellingham in 1812 in the House of Commons. In 1845, in a case of mistaken identity, Daniel O'Connell attempted to assassinate the prime minister, but killed his secretary instead.

Following the murder of President John F. Kennedy, the U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence compiled a profile on the individual most likely to become an assassin. The study concluded that this person invariably was a class loner, alienated from family and friends, unemployed, and desperately in need of a social identity. The commission's profile accurately described John Hinckley, the disturbed young man who shot and wounded President Ronald Reagan in 1981 to demonstrate his devotion to screen actress Jodie Foster.

THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS

Ancient Greece, the oldest Western culture, its history spanning 3,000 years that dated from the Minoans, offered to the world great gifts of commerce, law and fine art. It was a land of philosophers and playwrights and created the spectacular sports of the Olympics. It advanced fragile republics and democracies, always to be undone and destroyed by city-state wars. It was a nation built upon conquest and through its sun-filled centuries gave rise to many despotic rulers. The risk of their tyranny was the waiting hand of the assassin. Like its political prey, Greece itself would be, in 146 B.C., conquered by another predatory nation, Rome. That empire, too, would blindly follow the fate of Greece, its domination crumbling through a thousand years (500 B.C. to the 5th Century) from its own vile oppressions, many of its leaders first loyally usurped and destroyed by one assassination after another.

MURDEROUS LOVERS/514 B.C.

Two wealthy aristocrats, Harmodius and



Assassins Harmodius and Aristogiton, who murdered Hipparchus in 514 B.C.

Aristogiton, plotted to assassinate Hippias, the tyrannical ruler of Greece, but their scheme was exposed. In retaliation, the lovers killed Hippias' brother, Hipparchus, during a festival. Hipparchus had rebuffed the generous advances of Harmodius and blamed him for spurning his plans to kill Hippias. Palace guards slew Harmodius as he still held a sword stained with his victim's blood, while Aristogiton escaped into the festival crowd. He was later captured and tortured into falsely implicating many as collaborators, innocent persons who were later put to death.

Even Hippias himself killed Aristogiton. In so doing, he brought more fame to the assassins. Though the assassinated Hipparchus was not responsible for the harsh rule of his despotic brother, his association with Hippias was sufficient to have him branded a tyrant. Thus, Harmodius and Aristogiton were immortalized in Greek history as courageous assassins who vanquished an oppressor.

THE GREAT GREEK REGICIDE/336 B.C.

More than ten centuries would pass before Greece was visited by another significant assassination, that of Philip II (Philip of



The warrior-king, Philip of Macedonia, slain in 336 B.C.

Macedonia, 382-336 B.C.). A brilliant, relentless warrior, Philip had conquered in prolonged wars all of the Greek city states. He then amassed an army poised to enter and defeat the colossus of Persia. His personal life, however, not only upset his scheme of conquest, but ended his 46-year-old life. Philip had divorced his clever-minded wife, Olympias, in marry another woman, Cleopatra, who later bore Philip a son—Olympias' son, the grown Alexander,

was in jeopardy of losing his right to the throne.

There was no love between Philip and Alexander. Philip had once tried to run his sword through his offspring during an argument, but fell drunk in a stupor, causing Alexander to sneer: "See there the man who is making great preparations to invade Asia at the head of a powerful army, and who falls to the ground like a helpless child in going from one seat to another."



Philip's son, Alexander the Great.

A short time later, at a wedding feast in 336 B.C., when Philip was again in his cups, Pausanias, a young member of the court and a friend of Alexander's, rushed up to Philip and drove a sword through the king, killing him. He ran off, but the king's guard followed and stabbed him to death. Alexander and Olympias were present, kneeling together at Philip's

prone body. It was Alexander who had ordered the guards to track down and slay Pausanias, but many rumored that he was merely covering the act of his mother, that Olympias had directed the assassin's hand to assure Alexander's inheritance to the throne.

Pausanias was prompted to murder Philip, it was said by Olympias and others, because the king had recently insulted him, but this was merely a weak reason to excuse the first great assassination in Western culture. That murder gave power to the ambitious Alexander, who, before prematurely dying at the age of thirty-three, conquered most of the known world and became known as Alexander the Great. He was a wise, young man who had learned early from the great Aristotle the wily ways of the human mind. It was not known if Alexander was part of a plot to kill his own father, but it is known that as a youth he loved

Philip and admired his military triumphs, despite the hatred of his enemies who called him "Philip the Barbarian."



A scene from the 1956 film *Alexander the Great*: Queen Olympias (Danielle Darrieux) kneels at left and Alexander (Richard Burton) at right, holding an assassin's dagger, next to the slain Philip (Fredric March, prone).

DEATH TO ROME'S REFORMERS/133-121 B.C.

Following Rome's conquest of Greece, this new, most powerful of nations enjoyed a long, enduring republic, but one that eventually crumbled through the arrogance and corruption of its leaders. A few attempted to alter that course and paid with their lives. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (163-133 B.C.) and his brother Gaius Gracchus (153-121 B.C.) were wealthy, liberal-minded young statesmen from an illustrious Roman family. They tried to institute land reforms that would restrict cheap purchases of rich lands from elitist and corrupt Roman senators.

A cadre of venal Roman senators opted for murder instead of reform. In 133 B.C., Tiberius Gracchus was waylaid in a staged riot by a crowd of thugs led by Nasica and other senators (who drew up their togas about their heads to hide their identities), beating Gracchus to death with clubs. His brother, Gaius Gracchus, attempted to continue the reforms, but in 121 B.C. he was falsely branded an outlaw for inciting riots actually staged by his enemies in the Senate. He was chased through the streets of Rome and was slain just as he crossed the Tiber.



Roman leader Tiberius Gracchus, slain in 133 B.C.

Roman scribe Plutarch estimated that more than 3,000 of the Gracchus followers were murdered in ruthless blood purges.

The assassinations of the Gracchus brothers were the first such political murders in the history of the young Roman Republic. More than a century later, Rome saw an assassination that would be immortalized in song and literature, the murder of its greatest leader.

THE END OF CAESAR/March 15, 44 B.C.

The most famous military leader of his day and Rome's foremost politician, Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.) had conquered

most of Europe, the Middle East and Egypt through long and brilliant campaigns. He had outwitted and outthought his enemies, even the elder Pompey. When offered as an appeasement his enemy's decapitated head in Alexandria by Queen Cleopatra (Cleopatra VII, 69-30 B.C.), Caesar returned the death of his noble adversary. He dined with the young Egyptian queen, later bringing her to Rome with their small son, Caesarion, which caused criticism even from his closest supporters, including Marc Antony (Marcus Antonius,



The great Julius Caesar, murdered in the Roman senate in 44 B.C.

87-30 B.C.). Deeper criticism, whispered in secret, came from Decimus Brutus, Marcus Brutus and Cassius, politicians who feared that Caesar would become king.

To prevent that occurrence, Caesar was enticed on March 15, 44 B.C. to the portico of the Senate building where the conspirators, led by hired killer Casca, stabbed the great man to death. During the vicious and bloody attack, Caesar drew his toga about his head, but not before seeing his one-time friend Marcus Brutus approach with yet another dagger thrust, uttering: "You, too, Brutus?" Caesar's ripped and torn body was found ironically sprawled at the foot of Pompey's statue by his friend Marc Antony.

Much was later said in the many plays, books and movies about this remarkable man and his unforgettable assassination, as well as the strange warnings he received of his impending death. His wife Calpurnia had dreamed of his murder the night before the killing and begged Caesar not to attend

the Senate. He dismissed her apprehensions. While on the way to the Senate, as in days before, a soothsayer, Spurinna, was called out to Caesar: "Beware the Ides of March," this being March 15, the day of his murder. Caesar saw Spurinna in the crowd before the Senate that day and mocked the augur, saying: "The Ides of March have come." Replied the ancient Spurinna: "Aye, they have come, but not yet gone."



Caesar (Louis Calhern) is about to be stabbed to death by the first of the assassins, Casca (Edmond O'Brien), in MGM's 1953 film, *Julius Caesar*.

Revenge for the killing was swift. The conspirators fled Rome, their homes and estates seized, their servants and friends killed. Marc Antony, Lepidus and Octavius (63 B.C.-14 A.D.), who was Caesar's nephew and heir, formed a triumvirate that led an army to Philippi and there, in 42 B.C., defeated the forces of the conspirators. Rather than be taken prisoner and dragged through the streets of Rome in degradation, Marcus Brutus and Cassius committed suicide. Decimus Brutus fled to Gaul, where he was later killed. Instead of rescuing the republic, the conspirators brought about its death, for through the foul dust of their murderous wake came Octavian, who eliminated Lepidus, then Marc Antony and his lover, Queen Cleopatra, becoming Augustus, the first Roman emperor.



The body of the slain Caesar lies (left, bottom) at the foot of Pompey's statue as his assassins flee.

LITTLE BOOTS, THE "DIVINITY?"**January 24, 41 A.D.****Emperor Caligula, a human monster, killed in 41 A.D.**

The history of the Roman emperors relates to a litany of inhuman oppression, cruelty and insanity. Few among the lot were wise and compassionate leaders. Most were strutting despots, some, like the notorious Caligula, certifiable tyrants. Upon the death of Emperor Tiberius, his great-nephew and military commander Gaius Caesar Germanicus (Caligula, 12-41 A.D.) was named to the Roman throne, sharing his powers with his cousin, Tiberius Gemellus. Gaius Caesar had been born and raised in a Roman army barracks on the frontier and was nicknamed "Little Boots," after the half-boots he habitually wore and were known as *caliga*. Caligula initially instituted a few reforms, but his personality radically changed for no certain reason. He tired of his cousin's authority and had him assassinated.

Then came Caligula's reign of terror. Bloodthirsty and cruel, he committed countless, senseless crimes. He ordered wholesale murders, bloodbath shows of wild beasts and mass executions of criminals and Christians. He turned against his own caste, selecting the young, handsome sons of noble households and had them branded, flogged and thrown into the Tiber to drown. Others he sent to the arena where they were devoured by wild animals, while he forced parents to witness their horrible executions. Those who particularly irked Caligula had their tongues cut out by Naevius Sutorius Macro, the brutal Prefect of his Praetorian Guards, before they were thrown to the lions.

As Caligula's lunacy deepened, his atrocities increased. The aristocracy and the senate stood helpless before his transgressions, since "Little Boots" was firmly backed by a powerful army and his large Praetorian Guard. All this changed when

Macro, his Prefect of the Guard, suggested that he was earning a bloodthirsty reputation. Caligula had Macro executed and then demanded that he be addressed as "Divinity," insisting that he was a god. He berated anyone too slow in recognizing his "Divinity," including Cassius Chaerea, the most popular tribune of the Guard. On the night of January 24, 41 A.D., Chaerea suddenly appeared behind Caligula with some of his men. "Take this!" shouted the tribune and thrust the blade of his sword deep into the emperor's neck.

Caligula fell to the floor, but screamed defiantly: "I am still alive!" Chaerea and his men hacked him to pieces as he writhed in agony, cutting away his genitals, head and limbs until the corpse was unrecognizable. The Greeks then murdered Caligula's wife, Caesonia, and his small daughter, Julie Drusilla. The bloody remains of the emperor were dragged to a courtyard and burned. Chaerea then appeared before the Senate, announcing that he had struck down the tyrant and that "the return of liberty" had come to Rome, demanding that the senators only see the emblems of the old republic. Instead, Libinius Claudius Drusus was named emperor. Claudius would rule for thirteen years and prove in many ways to be a worse tyrant than his demented nephew, Caligula.

"AM I STILL EMPEROR?" (October 13, 54 A.D.)

Initially a timid and fearful emperor, Claudius (Giberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus, 10 B.C. - 54 A.D.) was brought to power through the Praetorian Guard, some of its members having assassinated Caligula. His reign (41-54 A.D.) was marked by an efficient administration, but Claudius continued the barbaric practices of his lunatic predecessor. Obsessed with gladiatorial "sports," Claudius forced citizens

**Emperor Claudius, poisoned to death in 54 A.D.**

and members of his court to fight to the death in the arena. His bloodlust was demonstrated each dawn when he arrived early at the arena to witness until noon all of the savage slaughter his managers could invent. He would then dismiss the audience and watch hundreds of gladiators kill each other for his private pleasure.

In constant fear that he would be deposed or assassinated, Claudius had all visitors to his court thoroughly searched and in the early years of his reign he never moved about without a large body of spear-carrying guards surrounding him. His nagging question to court advisers was: "Am I still emperor?" He believed that assassins lurked everywhere, waiting to strike him down with swords or knives. His assassination was not to be so demonstrative, but came about slyly through the connivance of a woman.

Claudius had little luck with women, having married four times. In 39 A.D., the 60-year-old emperor married nineteen-year-old Valeria Messalina, a vicious profligate who revelled in catering for enemies. She held orgies and Bacchanalian feasts in which she openly participated with scores of men, defying and insulting her husband with her elegant indecencies.

The empress' debaucheries culminated with her bigamous and open marriage to Calpurnius Silus, her favorite lover, a ceremony that shocked even Claudius. His chief adviser, Narcissus, cautioned that Messalina had plotted to have him murdered and seize the throne. Claudius sent a centurion to Messalina's quarters in 48 A.D., where, after failing to seduce her resolute assassin, she was promptly run through with a sword. The emperor married a fourth time in 49 A.D.

Claudius' fourth wife had his niece, Agrippina, was no improvement. In marrying Agrippina, Claudius adopted her son Nero, and the scheming woman immediately plotted her husband's demise in order to install her son as emperor. She reportedly convinced the eunuch Habetus, who was Claudius' official easter, to poison the emperor. The most reliable information held that the empress paid the druggist Locusta to prepare a powerful poison, probably edible *bolus*, mixed in a sauce from the same substance, given to Claudius in a dish of mushrooms, his favorite delicacy. This food was reportedly served by Agrippina herself during a family banquet.

Within a few minutes, Claudius vomited the meal and lost his ability to speak, suffering agonizing stomach pains throughout the night. He died at dawn, October 13, 54 A.D. Another variation of this subtle assassination reported that Claudius survived the original poisoned meal, but was taken ill, and that the empress herself doctored him with a second poisoned dish, the lethal agent being colocynth, from a mild Palestinian gourd. Upon the emperor's death, Nero appeared at the palace, announcing himself as the new emperor. He instituted a barbaric reign that would equal and surpass the bloodletting of Caligula and Claudius, until he ended his own life, refuse being torn to pieces by the Roman citizens he had so long tortured and oppressed.

BLOOD ON THE MOON/September 18, 96 A.D.

Three years before Claudius was murdered, Domitian came into the world. He would inherit the Roman throne and duplicate the atrocities of his predecessors and he would meet the

same end. His brother, Caligula, Domitian (Emperor Trajanus Domitianus Augustus, 51-91 A.D.) succeeded his brother Titus to the throne in 81 A.D. He spent his early years with involved military campaigns and toward the end of his reign became drunk with power, persecuting Jews and freedmen. Like Caligula, he insisted that he was a god and those who did not so address him were summarily executed at his orders.

Domitian then began whimsically selecting noble victims

to be executed. This prompted Marcus Nerva, an esteemed jurist, to form a conspiracy that plotted Domitian's assassination, a plot enthusiastically embraced by Empress Domitilla, the tyrant's long-absent wife. Domitilla, who claimed to be a fortune teller and could see the future, had fearful visions the day before he was killed. He seemed to go into a trance, his eyes rolling in his head as he communicated to nearby court-



Emperor Domitian, his image commemorated on a Roman coin, was slain in 96 A.D.

niers: "There will be blood on the moon as she enters Aquarius and a deed will be done for everyone to talk about."

At dawn, September 18, 96 A.D., the emperor scratched a pimple and a trickle of blood ran down his cheek. "I hope this is all the blood required," he said cryptically. While soaking in his bath, he was told that a courier had arrived with important news. Dripping from his bath, Domitian raced to see Stephanus, a freedman who stood in the emperor's bedroom. He offered Domitian a list of names that represented a conspiracy to kill the emperor. Domitian eagerly read the list, mumbling that he would have every person on the list executed immediately. Stephanus stood silently, a wooden bandage on his arm, having feigned an injury some days earlier to excuse the presence of the bandage. Hidden inside the bandage was a dagger.

With his eyes ravenously scrolling the list and thus diverted, Domitian did not see Stephanus withdraw the hidden dagger from beneath the bandage. With a sudden thrust, Stephanus stabbed Domitian in the groin. He called out for help as he clutched at his assailant's eyes. Help arrived, but it was given to Stephanus, not Domitian. Claudius, a salaried man, raced into the bedroom to stab the emperor. So, too, did Maximus, a freed man and Saturn, a chamberlain. Even one of the imperial gladiators joined the assassins to thrust his sword into the dying Domitian. Stabbed seven times, Domitian collapsed, rolled over and died.

The political slayings of Caesar, Caligula, Claudius and Domitian were the dark hallmarks that heralded the long decline and fall of Rome. This most powerful of empires would see many more such killings, the lives of its emperors, good and bad, claimed at the hands of assassins. Its doom was unfolded through these assassinations, for at the heart of the empire's corrosive core were the always lurking politics of murder.

ASSASSINATION IN THE NAME OF GOD

The murder of the innocent Christ, the messiah for millions, persecuted by his peers and crucified under a henchman of Emperor Tiberius, largely contributed to the fall of tyrannical Rome. In its place, close to the Tiber, rose the miracle of Jesus, the Vatican and its popes. As Christianity spread across Europe, its ethics and credos slowly embraced by new emperors and kings, its beliefs deeply embedded in the roots of nations, offshooting religions branched from its towering tree. The Catholic authority of the Vatican, the corporal and spiritual head of Western nations, was absolute, until a stubborn and profligate king, Henry VIII of England (1491-1547), challenged it at supreme authority.

Desperately seeking a male heir to his throne, Henry alienated the Vatican by demanding that it grant a divorce from his first wife, the barren Catherine of Aragon. When the Vatican refused, Henry established a national religion, a form of Protestantism he entitled the Anglican Church, with himself as its spiritual leader. He secretly married Anne Boleyn, who produced his child, Elizabeth, later Elizabeth, Queen of England. Elizabeth would staunchly maintain this Protestant religion as strongly as her rival, Mary Queen of Scots, would impose the Catholic religion upon her Scottish subjects. These royal edicts led to assassinations by religious fanatics in Scotland, England and throughout Europe.

A POET'S DEATH IN SCOTLAND/

March 9, 1566

One of the first of these brought about the death of a gifted poet. Born in Italy, David Rizzio (or Rizzio, 1533-1566) was the son of a minor musician who received a broad education, becoming a musician and writer of verse. As secretary to the Marquis of Muretto, he traveled to Edinburgh as part of a mission to the court of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587). So impressed with Rizzio's musical and poetic talents was Mary that she made him her *valet de chambre* and later her secretary

and chief minister. Mary came to completely depend upon the perceptive Rizzio, following his advice in almost all instances. He aggressively supported her dedication to establish Catholicism as the predominant religion in Scotland.

It was Rizzio who strongly urged Mary to wed her cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, a handsome but not overly bright young Scot from the House of Lennox, a match not favored by Mary's ambitious rival, Queen Elizabeth I (1533-



David Rizzio, secretary to Mary Queen of Scots, murdered in 1566.

1603) of England. Elizabeth wanted Mary to wed a British

subject to discredit her with her many Catholic adherents in England. She nevertheless married Darnley on July 29, 1565. Mary soon lost interest in her dullard husband and spent most



The youthful Lord Darnley, who married Queen Mary and conspired to have her secretary murdered.

of her time with her confidante, Rizzio, which infuriated Darnley. He developed a raging jealousy against the mild-mannered secretary and was easily enlisted into a conspiracy of religious fanatics who wanted to overthrow Catholicism and to that end plotted Rizzio's assassination.

On March 9, 1566, Patrick, Lord Rattoun, the leader of the plot, along with other Scottish knights, all dressed in armor and fortified with hours of heavy drinking, barged into the queen's

chamber in Holyrood Palace, drawing swords. The outraged Mary ordered the interlopers to leave while the timid Rizzio cowered behind her. One of the conspirators rushed forward and stabbed Rizzio in the chest. The others then grabbed the secretary and dragged him about the chamber, stabbing and beating him until his body went limp.

Rizzio was quickly buried outside the palace chapel and Mary herself was held prisoner for two days until she agreed to ratify the actions of the assassins. Mary later had Rizzio's mutilated body exhumed and reburied in the royal sepulcher. She later bore a son—the future James I of England—on June 19, 1566. Hers was a hapless lot. The Scottish nobles who advocated the Protestant cause intrigued against her, and after several battles, she abdicated in favor of her son. She sought asylum in England where Elizabeth held her in comfortable captivity for eighteen years.



Mary, Queen of Scots, who was present when her secretary Rizzio was murdered; she would become a tragic victim of regicide.

Elizabeth grew to believe that Mary posed a threat to her own crown and might lead an uprising by her Catholic followers. She was easily convinced by her conniving advisers that documents they forged proved Mary guilty of treason, that she was planning to usurp Elizabeth in what later came to be known as the



Queen Elizabeth I of England, who sent Mary to the headsman to preserve her crown.

a chiefly Protestant country, but in neighboring Netherlands and in France it was the Protestants who saw widespread persecution and their leaders murdered by fanatical assassins.

25,000 DUCATS FOR THE LIFE OF A MONARCH/July 10, 1584

William I of the Netherlands (Count of Nassau, William of Orange, William the Silent, 1533-1584) was among a rare breed of public men who subordinated self-interest to the rights of his people, a humanitarian occupation that cost him his life in his fifty-first year. Born in a German Catholic household, William, at age eleven, was ordered to be raised a Catholic by Hapsburg Emperor Charles V. The Protestant Reformation was sweeping Europe and though the emperor did not particularly endorse the aims of that movement, he guaranteed the right of religious freedom. His son and successor, Philip II, who became king of Spain, had different convictions. Upon his succession, Philip demanded unswerving loyalty to the Catholic Church.

When Philip gave William the title of Statesher of Holland, Friesland and Zeeland, the new government argued with Philip for the religious rights of the Dutch. Philip told him to discard such foolish notions, stating, "I would rather die a thousand deaths and lose every square foot of my empire than permit the least change in our religion!" Philip put his heavy foot down in 1565, ordering William to enforce to the letter all existing ordinances against heretics. William reluctantly made a half-hearted attempt to comply, but this caused hatred of Calvinists to invade Catholic churches and destroy ecclesiastical symbols of the Roman Church.

In retaliation, Philip appointed the Duke of Alba as captain-general in charge of the Netherlands. Alba entered Brussels in May 1567, instituting a reign of terror. With the Huguenots and Calvinists at his side, William waged a long war with Philip's forces, one that dragged on until 1576, when William was recognized as the "Civil and Supreme Authority" of Holland and Zeeland. The Pacification of Ghent and the Council of Brussels, signed in 1577, brought to a satisfactory close the first phase of this prolonged war.

Babington Plot of 1586. On shabby evidence, Elizabeth condemned Mary to death, sending her to her execution at Wetheringbury, where she was beheaded on February 8, 1587.

Many came to believe that Elizabeth I, Queen of England, had herself committed regicide in accepting evidence against Mary she knew to be false and that she had wrongfully ordered an "official" assassination. Through her, England would suppress the Catholics and remain

Philip II was a vengeful loser. He stubbornly refused to surrender his claims to the Lowlands and, on March 15, 1580, the king of Spain officially outlawed William. He wanted his adversary dead and offered 25,000 ducats to anyone willing to assassinate the upstart. The way to come forth in claim that bloody prize was a religious fanatic named Juan Jureguy. In 1582 Jureguy fired a bullet at William, which passed under the king's right ear and exited near his jaw-bone. William's life hung in the balance, but he slowly recovered. Jureguy and several accomplices who had helped him gain access to the king were executed, their bodies nailed to the gates of Antwerp as a grim warning to other would-be assassins.



William I of the Netherlands, slain in 1584, because he opposed the religious restrictions of Philip II of Spain.

It did not deter the murderous ambitions of a Frenchman named Bailasac Gérard. He was a Catholic fanatic encouraged by the Jesuits of the College of Tournes to kill the king. On July 10, 1584, Gérard gained entrance to William's residence at Delft, Netherlands. At the noon hour, he waited in the dining hall and when William entered, he fired three shots at the king. William died instantly. Gérard was seized by guards and was forced to undergo a series of horrible tortures. His right hand, the hand that fired the weapon that killed the king, was cut off. His back was slowly broken on the wheel. His head was cut off and impaled on the gate of William's residence.

William's assassination cut short his dedicated task to establish complete religious freedom for his subjects, but he had begun the slow, deliberate path toward independence and for these reasons he came to be recognized as the rightful founder of the Dutch republic. His assassination had been ordered and paid for by another king, who thought to do God a service through murder. The killing of William I was not lost on the

applicable to monarch of France, Henry III, who had seen his country torn apart by the same numerous sects and rightfully feared that, he, too, would meet William's bloody destiny.

"MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS!"

August 1, 1589

The last half of the 16th Century in France was soaked with religious bloodbaths between the Catholics and the Huguenots (Protestants). Huguenot leader Jean de Poltrot assassinated Catholic leader Francois de Lorraine, the second Duc de Guise, in February 1567. The powerful de Guise family persuaded Catherine de Medici to prompt her young son, Charles IX, King of France, to assassinate Huguenot leader Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, a close adviser to Charles.

An unsuccessful attempt against Coligny resulted in a disastrous decision by Charles, who then consented to a wholesale massacre of the Huguenot population known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Hundreds of Protestant leaders and sympathizers were purged in an attempt to consolidate the regency of young Charles, but matters only got worse. Now Charles was marked for assassination by the Huguenots and he knew it.

Never physically strong or psychologically stable, Charles suffered nervous breakdowns, grew ill, then died at age twenty-four in 1574. Henry III (1551-1589) succeeded to the throne and sought to bring about reconciliation between the two bitterly divided religious groups. The Catholic leaders suspected his motives from the beginning, knowing he was a close friend of Henry of Navarre, a staunch Protestant leader. The king's

arch-enemy was Henry de Guise, leader of the Catholic League and the instigator of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

The king knew that he was the only person who stood in the way of the powerful Henry de Guise and that if he (Henry, de Guise) would bring about a national bloodletting that would exterminate every Protestant in France. To protect himself and ensure that moderation prevailed, the king, in the event of his death, named Henry of Navarre as his successor. His own murder, though the king, would only bring a strong Protestant



A scene depicting the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Huguenots in France; thousands were put to the sword by members of the Catholic League.

leader to the throne and that repentant prospect would discourage any notions by Henry de Guise of assassinating him.

De Guise, however, continued to pressure Henry to action against the military forces marshaled by the Protestants. Henry reluctantly led his troops into battle and was promptly defeated at the battle of Coutras. He signed an armistice, then returned to Paris to pacify de Guise. At a private meeting, the Catholic leader adamantly rejected the king's plea for peace. Henry, in frustration and anger at the failure of his negotiations, ordered his guards to attack de Guise, who was killed immediately. While standing over the fallen de Guise, Henry uttered aloud: "May God have mercy on our souls - and France!"

The Catholic League raised its own army and besieged Paris. Henry of Navarre came to the aid of the king, providing him troops and supplies. On August 1, 1589, a Franciscan monk, Friar Jacques Clement, sought an audience with Henry. The king agreed to see him. The monk begged Henry to side with the Catholics, saying: "I beseech you to renounce the heretics and swear your allegiance to the League." Henry, rejected the plea, warning Clement away.

The monk suddenly brandished a long knife from beneath his robe and stabbed the king. In an instant, Henry's guards cut down the friar, but Henry was dead on the floor next to the body of his assassin. In less than three years from the execution of Catholic Queen Mary, a death that strengthened the position of Protestantism in England, the life of the king of France had



Henry III (right), dying from an assassin's knife thrust while his slayer (left, bottom) is killed by guards.

been sacrificed to preserve the Roman Catholic Church. Henry's successor, Henry of Navarre, would meet the same fate.

TWENTY ATTEMPTS TO KILL A KING/ May 14, 1610



Henry IV of France—he was a man marked many times for death because of his tolerance for the Protestant religion.

Henry IV of France (Henry of Navarre, 1553-1610) was an outspoken leader of the Protestant cause. He had supported Henry III in his predecessor's attempt to protect the rights of the Huguenots and was present in the Chamber where Henry was murdered by an assassin, witnessing his friend's painful death. He knew he was marked for murder and yet he fearlessly defended the oppressed Protestant minority. He worked for years to reconcile the vitriolic conflict between Catholics and Huguenot factions, but, without success, constantly being embroiled in military campaigns. In 1594, the war of the Holy League came to an end when Henry agreed to the League's demand that he renounce Protestantism for its pledge to recognize the legitimacy of his rule.

Henry, however, made little effort to convert Protestants to the Catholic faith and usually favored the Huguenots in all major political disputes. No king in history experienced as many

attempts on his life by would-be assassins. During his twenty-year reign, nineteen assassins tried to kill him; almost one for each year he remained in power. He miraculously survived until May 4, 1610, when Francis Ravaillac, a 37-year-old barister from Angoulême, ended Henry's life.

Believing that Henry was planning a war against the pope, Ravaillac leaped through a line of guards walking alongside Henry's carriage as it slowly made its way through the Croix-du-Firou. He leaped forward to drive a sword into Henry, who was sitting unprotected in the open carriage. The king died instantly. Hundreds of onlookers on the crowded promenade witnessed the assassination. Ravaillac made no move to escape and was quickly seized and taken to the Hotel de Reitz for questioning.

Unlike captured assassins of that era, authorities did not immediately put the killer to death, but carefully interviewed the learned lawyer, who seemed dumfounded by his own act. He was thought to be part of a conspiracy led by the Jesuits or the warring Hapsburgs. In truth, Ravaillac had acted out of religious fanaticism. After two weeks of almost round-the-clock interrogation, the assassin was judged guilty of regicide and sentenced to a ghastly death. Placed on a rack, the screws were turned until his joints broke. He was then taken to a scaffold erected near the Notre Dame Cathedral, where the king's executioners tore away pieces of skin with red-hot pincers. The arm used to commit the murder was plunged into a vat of burning sulfur. His torture went on for nearly an hour until a team of horses was brought forth and he was tied to them. They were driven in opposite directions until Ravaillac's body was torn apart.

The struggle between the Catholics and Protestants would continue throughout Europe, countless victims claimed by either side by assassins consumed by ideology, until these religious sects settled into pacified positions. To the East, in Russia, assassination had nothing to do with religion. It was simply a matter of raw, autocratic power.



In the above 17th Century cut, assassin Francis Ravaillac (at left, climbing on the wheel of a carriage) is shown stabbing Henry IV in 1610.

MURDER AT THE THRONE OF THE CZARS

The vast, mysterious empire of Peter the Great sprawled over two thirds of Europe and stretched to the Pacific. It was a nation of tribes, city-states and provinces ruled unsteadily by Peter's tempestuous successors. One of these was the strong, tough-minded Elizabeth Petrovna (1709-1762), empress of Russia, daughter of Peter the Great. She had overthrown the regency of Ivan VI, abolished the cabinet council government and reinstated the senate, a titular body that allowed her to govern with an autocratic hand. To protect her power and extend her family line, Elizabeth, shortly after taking power in December 1741, declared her nephew, Peter (Karl Peter Ulrich, 1728-1762) to be her successor. In a lifetime of wise deliberations, this proved to be a disastrous decision.

THE SLAYING OF PETER THE MAD/ July 18, 1762



The indecisive, perhaps demented, Peter III of Russia, murdered in 1762 with the complicity of his wife, Catherine, in assassination of the czar's own making.

The future czar of Russia was wholly unfit for the lofty position his aunt envisioned. The short-lived Peter III was a weak, vacillating monarch who lost his kingdom and ultimately his life in defense of a foreign culture he tried to impose upon his subjects. The son of Charles Frederick, duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Anna, the eldest of Peter the Great's daughters, Peter had been educated in Germany. He was being groomed to succeed to the throne of Denmark and Sweden when Elizabeth named him her successor. Peter was taken to St. Peters-

burg and was promptly baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church, but he stubbornly clung to his Prussian heritage and upbringing to the great displeasure of his aunt and tutors who attempted to prepare him for his future post as czar. Eventually frustrating Elizabeth was Peter's marriage (on August 21, 1745) to the strong-minded Sophie Frederike, a German princess of Saxe-Zeitz, who took the Russian name of Catherine Yekaterina Alekseyevna (Catherine II, Catherine the Great, 1729-1796).

They were not particularly fond of each other and it was apparent from the beginning that theirs was a uneasy, newly arranged marriage of state. Elizabeth had sought to pacify her nephew's penchant for all things German by providing him with a Prussian-born spouse, but the empress had taken on more than she bargained for in selecting Catherine, the daughter of a Prussian field marshal. Throughout their long marriage, Peter took pains to insult and degrade his wife, treating her as an unwanted partner. He flaunted his many mistresses in her presence and even compelled her to dine with these courtisans while he taunted and humiliated her. Catherine bided her time, plotting with Russian noblemen, especially the Russian general, Count Gregory Orlov (1734-1763), who, among many, was her most constant lover.

Upon Elizabeth's death, Peter became czar of the Russian people on January 5, 1762. In one of his first official acts, Peter withdrew from the Seven Years' War and forged a peace treaty with Prussia, his beloved homeland. Henceforth, the czar conducted all domestic and foreign policy on a pro-German basis, "enlightened despotism" as he called it, patterned after the reign of his hero, Frederick the Great of Prussia. He went so far as to force the Russian Orthodox Church to adopt Lutheran practices into the liturgy. He next seized government lands and forced the nobles in the provinces to accept lower salaries. Peter's desire to drag Russia into a war against Denmark in order to help Holstein regain political control of Schleswig further alienated Russian ministers—a situation Catherine was quick to exploit to her own favor.

By the summer of 1762, tensions between the czar and his resentful wife had reached a breaking point, particularly when Peter disavowed any connections to his son, Paul. Through Catherine, whom he labeled a bastard. Suspecting that her husband was planning to overthrow her in order to marry his



Catherine the Great of Russia, who conspired to assassinate her husband.



Catherine (Elisabeth Bergner) with Peter III (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.) in the 1934 United Artists film, *Catherine the Great*.

mistress, Countess Elizabeth Woronzow. Catherine conspired with Gregory Orlov and members of the Imperial Guard to stage a coup d'état on the night of June 28, 1762. Princess Charlina Dashkova aided and abetted the royal plotter by informing the soldiers that Peter, who was by then labeled a lunatic by the royal household, had died from a fit and that Empress Catherine was assuming the reins of the government. The royal regiment accepted this news and rejoiced, for to a man they shared Catherine's hatred for Peter, who had increased his Russian bodyguards and had replaced them with German troops.

Peter was forcibly taken to the royal residence at Oranienbaum, where he was kept in close custody, along with his mistress, Catherine, after accepting the oaths of alle-

giance from the Imperial Guards, moved quickly to shore up support for her new rule among the nobility, the clergy and the senate. The Archbishop of Novgorod, angered at Peter for imposing Lutheran doctrine upon the Russian Orthodox Church, happily crowned Catherine as the new Russian ruler on July 9, 1762. The few ministers still loyal to Peter advised the deposed czar to take strong, decisive military action to regain the throne. But at this critical moment, Peter hesitated. He was essentially an insecure if not demented monarch, who was wholly incapable of mastering the game of political brinkmanship. His incursion cost him dearly: he abdicated on July 10, 1762 and was taken prisoner by Gregory Orlov and four others a week later.

Peter's captors were the Orlov brothers—Gregory, Aleksey and Izydor. With their heavily armed guards, the Orlovs spirited the confused Peter to a royal retreat, outside the village of Ropsha, where, on July 13, 1762, he was given a dinner and a bottle of Burgundy wine, which was heavily laced with poison. While dining with Peter, Aleksey Orlov convinced the deposed czar that Catherine was going to permit him to return unmolested to Holstein, the place of his birth. (Catherine had no such intentions, believing that if Peter went to Germany he might raise an army against her and invade Russia.)

Peter took one swallow of the befouled wine and revealed: "I am poisoned! I am poisoned! Give me milk, give me oil!" The poison was not strong enough to finish off the powerfully built Peter. He cursed at Orlov, while several other assassins, including Gregory and Izydor Orlov, entered the chamber. Several officers struggled with Peter, who fought like a crazed animal, overturning the furniture and shattering the crystal. Aleksey Orlov then tossed a mask around Peter's throat and strangled him to death. The other Orlov brothers and their officers stood passively by on a veranda as they witnessed this assassination. They then returned to St. Petersburg to report



Assassin Gregory Orlov (John Lodge) meeting the future empress and his lover, Catherine (Marlene Dietrich), with aide IC Aubrey Smith in the 1934 Paramount film, *The Scarlet Empress*.

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