

City of Secrets



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On the heels of one of the greatest public scandals to rock the Catholic Church comes an explosive exposé of murder and corruption in the highest reaches of the Vatican, the oldest and most secretive autocracy in the world. On the night of Monday, May 4, 1998, in Vatican territory, the bodies of the commander of the Swiss Guard, his wife, and a young lance corporal were found in the barracks of the picturesque force historically entrusted with protecting the pope. It was the worst bloodbath to take place in more than a century in the heart of the supreme authority of the world's one billion Roman Catholics. Four hours later, the Vatican announced that the lance corporal, twenty-three-year-old Cédric Tornay, had shot the couple, then committed suicide in "a fit of madness" brought on by frustration with the unit's discipline -- a conclusion it reaffirmed after a nine-month internal inquiry. But as John Follain's hard-hitting exposé shows, the official report was a travesty, a tissue of suppositions, contradictions, and omissions. Based on an exhaustive three-year investigation -- the first independent attempt to establish the truth -- *City of Secrets* reveals how the Vatican, the oldest and most secretive autocracy in the world, staged an elaborate plot to obstruct justice and hide the scandals it dares not confess. Echoing the pace and plotting of a highstakes thriller, Follain's true-life tale of intrigue moves from the guards barracks and the pope's palace in Vatican City to

Paris, Berlin, and the Swiss Alps, and features a fascinating cast: an old, suffering John Paul II; his chief bodyguard, formerly accused of spying for the Soviet bloc; a mysterious priest punished by the Vatican; and the powerful Opus Dei sect. Timely and explosive, City of Secrets is the story of a still-unsolved crime committed on holy territory, and of a systematic attempt to hide the fatal failings of a security force charged with protecting one of the world's most influential leaders.

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