

SYNOPSIS



Days of Catastrophe - Terror at the Airport

Katastrophenstage - Der Anschlag

Abu Nidal's bloody footprints stain Vienna and Rome. It is a day that shocks Europe. On December 27, 1985, three days after Christmas, the airports of Vienna and Rome become the sudden target of Middle East terror. The then-notorious Abu Nidal Organization makes coordinated attacks on the check-in counters of the Israeli airline El-Al in both cities. The merciless result: three dead in Vienna, sixteen in Rome, and a total of more than one hundred injured. Several of the terrorists are shot by the responding security forces, and the survivors are arrested. The terrorists - Palestinians, but opponents of the PLO - are stopped for the moment. But the shock goes deep, and lingers. It is the first time an Austrian airport has been the victim of a terrorist attack. Twenty-five years later, the film «Terror at the Airport» follows the bloody trail of Abu Nidal and reconstructs the attacks - presenting new facts, previously unknown documents, and surprising statements from eyewitnesses and others involved. One of the sensational new sources is documentation from the former East Germany's state security service, the «Stasi». Research for «Terror at the Airport» delved deep into the former German Democratic Republic's archives, the first time this source has been examined for information about that horrible crime. Abu Nidal and his «Fatah - The Revolutionary Council» had close ties to the Stasi. The newly accessible reports show that the terror group's leader visited East Berlin several times in 1985, the year of the attacks - for education, arms, and ideological training. Also for the first time, the traumatizing events in Vienna are presented from an Israeli point of view, since the terrorists' actual targets were El-Al passengers to Tel Aviv. One of them, severely wounded in the attack, died in a Viennese hospital. And Israeli security officials played an essential role, too: El-Al's security took an active part in hitting back at the terrorists. Twentyfive years later, the unanswered questions of the time are examined with the knowledge of today. How did the attacks actually unfold? Were there precautions for terror of that scope or any secret service warnings? What did the East German Stasi know about Abu Nidal's plans? Were there credible threats against Austria, known for its strong pro-PLO position? The answers expose new facts and surprising results. A quarter of a century after the bloody events, a fuller picture of the Abu Nidal Organization emerges - a Palestinian group that chose to make Austria a target because of its Palestinian-friendly politics.

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Directed by Tom Matzek

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Available for Europe

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HD

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