

When Princip learned that the archduke would be visiting Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Princip and Cabrinovic recruited one of Princip's boyhood friends, Trifko Grabez, and sought out Milan Ciganovic, a Balkan War hero known to be a radical terrorist. Ciganovic brought Princip and the others to the attention of Apis, who gave Ciganovic four Browning revolvers and ammunition, six bombs, and some capsules. The capsules, Apis explained, contained cyanide, which was to be swallowed by the assassins if capture seemed imminent.

The fact is that the capsules contained nothing more than a harmless watery substance. Clearly, Apis did not really believe that the youths—whom he hadn't even met—would ever get close enough to the archduke to kill him. But Apis understood that the boys were fanatics, who believed they had nothing to lose.



Voices of Battle

"There is an outside chance that they just might blunder into a success. We might as well give them a try at it as any other."

—Dragutin Dmitrievich ("Apis"), after authorizing Gavrilo Princip and others to assassinate Franz Ferdinand

The Archduke and His Lady

Franz Ferdinand von Sterreich-Este was every inch the typical Hapsburg autocrat: elegant, bigoted, and completely out of touch with most of the empire whose throne he was slated to ascend when his uncle, the aged Emperor Franz Josef, should die.

In 1900, the archduke fell in love with Countess Sophie Chotek von Chotkova, daughter of an obscure Czech noble. Franz Josef objected that his nephew was marrying beneath him, but the archduke held firm. He would marry the woman he loved. The old emperor relented but compelled Franz Ferdinand to renounce the right of his children to inherit the throne. As for Sophie, she was officially snubbed by Franz Josef and the members of his court.

The official mistreatment of his wife embittered the already intolerant and ill-tempered archduke, who vented his spleen against Jews and against Serbians, whom he counted as members of a hostile Magyar race bent on the destruction of the Hapsburgs. His personal hatred of the Serbs energized his will to suppress all signs of Serbian nationalism.

A Blind Alley in Sarajevo

Franz Ferdinand looked forward to appearing in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914—St. Vitus' Day, the great Serbian national day of *Vidovan*—precisely because it would put Serbia in its place. Serbia wanted Bosnia-Herzegovina to be part of a grand Slavic state, but Bosnia-Herzegovina was now a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—a fact the archduke's official visit would underscore. Moreover, the military had scheduled important maneuvers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the archduke would oversee them in

He of Gallipoli

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his official capacity as inspector general of the Austro-Hungarian army. This official visit would give Franz Ferdinand an opportunity to have his much-maligned wife appear as his equal, riding with him in an open car at his side. She would be officially recognized as royalty.

Waiting for the archduke and his wife on the streets of Sarajevo would be a number of assassins. In addition to the three principal conspirators, Princip, Cabrinovic, and Grabez, there was Danilo Ilic, the young man with whom Princip had boarded after he left his father's farm. Ilic brought three more assassins into the plot, so seven in all were prepared for attempts on the archduke's life. If Princip, Cabrinovic, and Grabez failed to score a kill, Ilic would use the others to finish the job.

The limousine route of the royal couple was well publicized and would include a drive to the Sarajevo town hall for a formal reception, a sight-seeing tour, and then lunch at the Governor's Palace. After this, there would be brief visits to a museum, the local mosque, and army headquarters.

Ilic stationed his assassins along a 300-yard stretch of the principal avenue of Sarajevo, the Appel Quay. The first assassin was armed with a bomb at the Cumuria Bridge. The second, with a bomb and a Browning revolver, was stationed farther along the road. Next came Cabrinovic, with a grenade, then Ilic himself and another assassin with revolvers, and then Princip, armed with only a Browning revolver. He was the second-to-last in line, just before Grabez. Princip expected that at least one of the other assassins would score a hit and that he would not even be called on to act.

Despite warnings about the danger of assassination, security was lax. The archduke had ordered his crack military units to stay out of Sarajevo because he didn't want to give the impression that he was trying to intimidate the population. His only protection was a small coterie of elite guards.

The royal couple arrived by train and boarded a waiting limousine. It was an open car, designed to display the archduke in his full general's uniform, including a hat with green plumes, and plump Sophie in her finery, a white silk dress with a red sash, an immense picture hat, and a cape adorned with ermine tails. As the motorcade reached the Cumuria Bridge, the first assassin fumbled with his bomb, panicked, and failed to hurl the device. The second assassin, Cabrinovic, threw his grenade, which bounced off the back of the archduke's car and rolled in front of the car following it. The resulting explosion damaged that vehicle and sent shrapnel in all directions, injuring several spectators as well members of the entourage. Sophie's own cheek was bruised by a small flying splinter. Cabrinovic tried unsuccessfully to drown himself in the River Miljacka but was apprehended.

"Who are you?" a plainclothes detective demanded.

"A Serbian hero!" Cabrinovic responded.

When they saw the archduke's car speed past them, Ilic and the assassin that he had stationed with himself were too stunned to act. They did nothing. Neither did Princip nor Grabez. Having failed in his duty, Princip walked off dejectedly to a table at

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an outdoor cafe and ordered a cup of coffee, the revolver still weighing down his coat pocket.

The archduke and his wife went to the reception at the town hall as scheduled, after which Franz Ferdinand called for a change of plan. He wanted to visit the local military hospital to look in on those who had been injured by the bomb blast. He tried to dissuade Sophie from accompanying him, but she insisted.

The chauffeur was unfamiliar with the route to the military hospital. At the corner of the Appel Quay and Franz Josef Street, the chauffeur suddenly turned. A military aide shouted to him: "What's this? We've taken the wrong way!" At this, the driver braked and tried to turn around. But crowds behind the car caused him to slow to a crawl.

The car came to a halt in front of Moritz Schiller's cafe and delicatessen, 5 feet from where Gavrilo Princip was sipping his coffee.

June 28, 1914, 11:15 A.M

"I recognized the heir apparent," Princip told police. "But as I saw that a lady was sitting next to him, I reflected for a moment whether I should shoot or not. At the same moment I was filled with a peculiar feeling and I aimed at the heir apparent from the pavement—which was made easier because the car was proceeding slower at the moment. Where I aimed I do not know. But I know that I aimed at the heir apparent. I believe I fired twice, perhaps more, because I was so excited. Whether I hit the victims or not, I cannot tell, because instantly people started to hit me."

Princip aimed at pointblank range. A policeman spotted him, but as he rushed Princip, an unemployed actor named Pusara leaped forward to shove the policeman out of the way. This allowed Princip to get off his shots. He fired three times.

When the policeman regained his balance and lurched after Princip, who had turned to flee, one Ferdinand Behr punched the cop in the stomach. Instead of running, however, Princip stood frozen; another man, named Velic, knocked the revolver from his hands. At this, spectators descended on Princip, punching and kicking him.

Princip's first shot had penetrated the car door to hit Sophie in the stomach. The second shot hit the archduke in the neck, severing his carotid artery and lodging in his spine. Blood was everywhere. A third shot rang out, but found no target.

"For God's sake," Sophie turned to her husband, "what has happened to you?" Then she collapsed against the archduke's chest and into his lap. The stricken man cradled her head.



Voices of Battle

"Mr. Mayor, what is the good of your speeches? One comes here for a visit and is received with bombs. Mr. Mayor, what do you say? It is outrageous!"

—Archduke Franz Ferdinand to Fehim Effendi Curcic, mayor of Sarajevo, after surviving a first assassination attempt

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"Soferl, Soferl, don't die! Stay alive for our children!"

But she was already dead.

A Count Harrach, who had climbed from the front seat into the back, took hold of the archduke. "Are you suffering, your highness?"

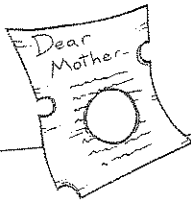
"It is nothing, it is nothing, it is nothing." With this, Archduke Franz Ferdinand died.

Crime and Punishment

Informed that he had killed the archduke and his wife, Princip admitted the crime, allowing only that he was "sorry that I have killed the Duchess of Hohenberg, for I had no intention of killing her." Then he declared that he had "aimed specifically at the archduke because he ... is an enemy of the Slavs in general but especially of the Serbs."

Austro-Hungarian officials would seize on this statement as a cause for war against Serbia. Princip amplified it at his trial:

I do not feel like a criminal because I put away the one who was doing evil. Austria as it is represents evil for our people and therefore should not exist The political union of the Yugoslavs was always before my eyes, and that was my basic idea. Therefore it was necessary in the first place to free the Yugoslavs ... from Austria. This ... moved me to carry out the assassination of the heir apparent, for I considered him as very dangerous for Yugoslavia.



From the Front

Twenty-five Serbians were tried for conspiracy in the assassination. Ilic and two others were executed. Cabrinovic and Grabez received 25-year sentences, and two other conspirators were sentenced to lesser terms. The others were found not guilty. By 1916, Cabrinovic and Grabez were dead of malnutrition and tuberculosis. Princip succumbed to tuberculosis in 1918.

Princip, thought to be under the legal age for execution, was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The young man's tuberculosis rapidly worsened, spreading to one of his arms, which had to be amputated. He wasted away in solitary confinement. On April 28, 1918, as the world war was consuming a fourth year, his jailers found Princip curled in a tight ball on his bunk. On the wall beside the bunk, he had scratched these lines:

Our ghosts will walk through Vienna
And roam through the palace
Frightening the lords.

Austro-Hungarian "Diplomacy"

Decades before that Sarajevo June morning in 1914, Otto von Bismarck, whose diplomacy had erected the complex of alliances that now bound Europe, had remarked that war would erupt some day because of "some damn foolish thing in the Balkans."



Section 1

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

by Borijove Jevtic

On June 28, 1914, Austria-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. This excerpt from an eyewitness account by a fellow conspirator in the assassination plot explains why the attack took place, what happened during the attack, and how Princip, the 19-year-old Serbian assassin, was captured. Why did the Archduke's plan to visit Sarajevo on June 28 prompt such a violent response?

The little clipping . . . declared that the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand would visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, June 28, to direct army maneuvers in the neighbouring mountains. . . .

How dared Franz Ferdinand, not only the representative of the oppressor but in his own person an arrogant tyrant, enter Sarajevo on that day? Such an entry was a studied insult.

June 28 is a date engraved deeply in the heart of every Serb. . . . It is the day on which the old Serbian kingdom was conquered by the Turks at the Battle of Amsfeldel in 1389. It is also the day on which in the second Balkan War the Serbian arms took glorious revenge on the Turk for his old victory and for the years of enslavement.

That was no day for Franz Ferdinand, the new oppressor, to venture to the very doors of Serbia for a display of the force of arms which kept us beneath his heel.

Our decision was taken almost immediately. Death to the tyrant!

Then came the matter of arranging it. . . . But here Gavrilo Princip intervened. Princip is destined to go down in Serbian history as one of her greatest heroes. . . .

The fateful morning dawned. . . .

When Franz Ferdinand and his retinue . . . passed Gabrinovic . . . he threw his grenade. It hit the side of the car, but Franz Ferdinand with presence of mind threw himself back and was uninjured. Several officers riding in his attendance were injured.

The cars sped to the town hall. . . . After the reception in the town hall General Potiorek, the Austrian commander, pleaded with Franz Ferdinand to leave the city, as it was seething with rebellion. The archduke was persuaded to drive the shortest way out of the city and to go quickly.

The road to the maneuvers was shaped like the letter V, making a sharp turn at the bridge over the River Nilgacka. Franz Ferdinand's car . . . was forced to slow down for the turn. Here Princip had taken his stand.

As the car came abreast he stepped forward from the curb, drew his automatic pistol from his coat and fired two shots. The first struck the wife of the archduke, the Archduchess Sofia, in the abdomen. She was an expectant mother. She died instantly.

The second bullet struck the archduke close to the heart.

He uttered only one word; 'Sofia'—a call to his stricken wife. Then his head fell back and he collapsed. He died almost instantly.

The officers seized Princip. They beat him over the head with the flat of their swords. They knocked him down, they kicked him, scraped the skin from his neck with the edges of their swords, tortured him, all but killed him.

from Borijove Jevtic, "The Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, 28 June 1914" in the New York World, 29 June 1924. Reprinted in John Carey, ed., Eyewitness to History (New York: Avon, 1987), 441-443.

Activity Options

1. **Recognizing Point of View** Draw an editorial cartoon about the Archduke's assassination from the point of view of a Serbian nationalist or a citizen of Austria-Hungary. Display your cartoon in the classroom.
2. **Writing for a Specific Purpose** Write a newspaper headline about the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and share it with your classmates.