

[REDACTED]

10 December 1980

Four U.S. Catholic Women Missionaries Murdered in El Salvador

The bodies of three nuns and a Catholic lay social worker, all U.S. citizens, were exhumed from a roadside grave on 4 December some 36 hours after they were reported missing. They were last seen alive on the evening of 2 December at the San Salvador international airport, where two of them had gone around 1800 hours to pick up two Maryknoll nuns who were returning to El Salvador to resume refugee work in Chalatenango Province. The airport is located about 40 miles south of the capital. The women are believed to have been killed sometime that night or early the following morning. [REDACTED]

Their burned Toyota minibus was found without license plates on the highway leading from the airport. Their initially unidentified bodies had been found by a passing truck driver near the highway at a point about 30 miles from San Salvador, and they had been hastily buried at the direction of officials from the neighborhood, who had had villagers dig a mass grave in a cow pasture. Three of the four had been shot twice in the head by high-velocity rifles that destroyed their features; the fourth was shot once in the chest with a pistol. Pieces of cloth which appeared to have been used as makeshift blindfolds were tied around their necks. [REDACTED]

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