

# Phoenix Still Looking For Clues In Priest Attack

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF AND EMAUN KASHFI  
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Police say the investigation into a deadly priest shooting at a Roman Catholic church in Phoenix has been stymied by a lack of usable surveillance video and a vague account of the attack by a second severely injured clergyman.

Still, investigators have been able to recover forensic evidence from the dead priest's car and the crime scene that they are hopeful will lead them to a suspect. And they are going door to door in the neighborhood looking for witnesses who might have seen something.

The investigation is playing out as parishioners are mourning the loss of the Rev. Kenneth Walker, 28, and praying for the recovery of the Rev. Joseph Terra, 56, who was so badly beaten in the Wednesday night attack in the rectory of their church that police were worried he wouldn't survive the night. He remained in critical but stable condition.

Police said Terra told them the next day the suspect was a white male in his 40s, but they acknowledged it was a "limited description."

"Unfortunately because of the severity of his injuries, he was only able to provide

limited information about one particular suspect," Phoenix police Sgt. Steve Martos said.

In a recording of the 911 call released by police Friday, Terra can be heard breathing heavily and pausing as the dispatcher asked him what happened.

"We have been broke into ... an assault," Terra said.

"Did he hit you on the head?" the dispatcher asked.

"Yeah, I think he did," Terra replied. "My assistant priest here is ... uh ... has been beaten."

"Is he breathing?" the dispatcher asked.

"No, no he's not," Terra said as he is then instructed how to perform CPR.

He was unable at the time to provide a description of who attacked him and fatally shot Walker.

"You have no description at all?" the dispatcher asked.

"No," Terra replied.

Police and paramedics soon arrived on the scene, and Terra "pretty much just shut down then, went into survival mode," Martos said Friday.

He said detectives weren't suspicious that Terra couldn't describe his attacker at the time, but later was able to provide a limited description.

"That's not uncommon. You're talking about an individual who was just severely attacked," Martos said, adding that authorities didn't think he would survive. "Especially with the vicious assault that he had just endured."

Martos said Terra was trying to save Walker's life until authorities arrived, even as he himself lay critically wounded.

"He's doing everything he can because he's the only one there," Martos said.

Detectives have collected surveillance video from buildings in the area, including government facilities near the state Capitol, but they found nothing usable at this point because the cameras weren't pointed at the church.

Police are still unsure if there was only one suspect or whether robbery was the motive in the attack at the Mother of Mercy Mission, Martos said. He declined to say whether there was forced entry.

Investigators have been able to rule out several theories, including speculation of a dispute between the priests.

"There's nothing to indicate that this is priest on priest or Father Terra getting into some argument or discussion with Father Walker," Martos said. "We don't believe that. The evidence that we have come across does

not point in that direction at all."

Walker was born in upstate New York, had 10 siblings and was drawn to the priesthood after attending traditional Latin Mass with his family in high school. He later joined the seminary, made good grades and enjoyed playing soccer, said the Rev. Joseph Lee, academic dean at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Nebraska.

Walker eventually joined a Catholic order that specializes in Latin Mass and became a priest in downtown Phoenix. He recently officiated a younger sibling's wedding in Kansas — the last time he saw many relatives.

Family members said they were overcome with emotion by the loss, but they took solace in the fact that the surviving priest was able to administer last rites.

"For Catholics, receiving your last rites basically guarantees you're going to heaven," said Walker's stepsister, Sasha Keys. "That's one of the biggest reasons we have to smile."

In his application to the seminary, Walker spoke of his devotion to God and desire to be a priest.

"The only vocation that I could be satisfied with, as a work," he wrote, "would be one that would be ... dedicated to bringing people to salvation in whatever way God wills for me to do so. This work is best carried out by the priesthood."

## Iraq

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building a modern-day "caliphate," a word whose derivation comes from the idea of a successor to Islam's founder, the Prophet Muhammad, and has been used to describe every Muslim empire since Muhammad's time.

Under al-Baghdadi's leadership, Johnston and other close monitors of the group say, ISIS has built an organization spanning western Iraq and eastern Syria that includes statelike institutions, reached a high degree of self-sufficiency through aggressive fundraising, become adept at media manipulation and refused to kowtow before al-Qaida's elders.

Al-Baghdadi's insubordination made him anathema to sympathizers of a more traditional brand of jihad, who accuse ISIS of brutalizing civilians instead of focusing on the removal of autocrats such as Syrian President Bashar Assad. Monitors of militant groups shake their heads at the irony of the al-Qaida camp

labeling ISIS extremist. And U.S. counterterrorism specialists choose their words carefully in the public sphere, aware that comparisons between al-Qaida and ISIS risk making al-Zawahiri look good.

Yet, despite the chilling videos of ISIS beheadings and hand choppings, there's also appeal for al-Baghdadi as a leader who, as Johnston put it, has "done the impossible when al-Qaida has been degraded in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere."

In some quarters, al-Baghdadi is seen as standing up for disenfranchised Sunnis in the face of Western and Iranian oppression. Fans post photos of their children holding thank-you placards dedicated to him; one posted a photo of a cake decorated as a black ISIS flag. Al-Baghdadi's latest actions in Iraq have drawn a new round of condemnation — and a new crop of supporters.

One popular tweet making the rounds on jihadist social media hailed him as today's Salahuddin, the early Muslim ruler who fought the Crusaders.

"ISIS is like the latest iPhone version," said Lukman Faily, the Iraqi

ambassador to the United States, using an alternative acronym for ISIS. "They're the latest generation of al-Qaida: They're very savvy, very ruthless, and they have financial capability and media presence. They're on Twitter."

But can al-Baghdadi carve an Islamic emirate from Iraq's Sunni heartland? "We don't want to wait and see," Faily said wryly.

The Iraqi government has sought U.S. military assistance — including airstrikes — to arrest the ISIS march. So far, however, the Obama administration hasn't committed to such measures, saying only that U.S. officials are considering additional help and are preparing for previously scheduled counterterrorism training of Iraqi forces this summer.

Johnston, the RAND analyst, said al-Baghdadi's interest in keeping the fight regional meant that despite its brutalities, ISIS might pose less of a direct threat to U.S. national security interests than core al-Qaida, with its targeting of Western nations and interests.

"The worst thing the U.S. could do in the near term is to become more aggressive in any kind of intervention,

because given the inward-focused, Islamic state-building strategy of ISIS, they seem more intent in pursuing local and regional aims that are not consequential to the United States but are not the same kinds of grave national security threats as attacks on the homeland," Johnston said.

Unlike the foreign-born leaders of previous incarnations of the Islamic State, al-Baghdadi is a native Iraqi, undoubtedly a plus as he enters risky partnerships with more nationalist Sunni militant factions in Iraq and takes steps to reassure wary Iraqi communities that the group won't — at least not immediately — start beheading those it deems insufficiently pious.

For example, in the ISIS takeover of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, residents said they were stunned to hear jihadists offering safe passage for soldiers who surrendered; such forces had been slaughtered en masse under previous insurgent leaders. In the capture of nearby Tikrit, according to a witness reached by phone, fighters took over a television station but allowed its staff to leave unharmed.

ISIS fighters circulated a 16-point pamphlet Thursday to residents of their newly captured territories, predictably ordering women to cover up and for shrines to be destroyed, but also offering amnesty to security forces who "repent," forbidding looting of public property and assuring locals that "people under our rule are safe and secure."

Such temperance is largely absent in the more competitive battle next door in Syria. And it's definitely missing in ISIS' plans for Shiite Muslims, an ISIS spokesman said Thursday in a statement that was posted on ISIS-linked media outlets.

"Don't stop until you reach Baghdad and Karbala. Be prepared!" the spokesman said, a pointed reference to the Battle of Karbala in A.D. 680, where Sunni warriors beheaded one of the most revered Shiite figures, Hussein ibn Ali. To bring home the point, the spokesman added: "Iraq will turn into a living hell for Shites and other heretics."

It's unclear whether ISIS is serious about its march to Baghdad, where it will face not only the so-far unimpressive Iraqi forces but also the Iranian-trained Shiite militias

that bloodied U.S. troops for years. Demographics are against the Sunni fighters; Baghdad has become a Shiite-majority city and on Friday thousands of Shiite volunteers were arriving from the southern provinces, summoned by a call to arms from Shiite Islam's most prominent cleric, the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

Other analysts of ISIS say al-Baghdadi risks overplaying his hand if his ambition outstrips his men's ability to hold territory and fend off competing Sunni actors, the no-nonsense Kurdish peshmerga forces and whatever force the Iraqi government can muster. Then there are regional players who might join in to rout ISIS; reports already have emerged of Syria and Iran wading into the battle.

"Both Mosul and Tikrit are a big gamble in the shorter term, given the interests of other Iraqi actors, and in the longer term it's unlikely that Iraq's neighbors will stand for a jihadi stronghold stretching across a swath of northern Iraq," said Jacqueline Hazelton, a counterterrorism expert now teaching at the Naval War College. "Both long and short term, the forecast is, unfortunately, for a lot more violence no matter what."

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God took the **STRENGTH** of a mountain, the **MAJESTY** of a tree, the **WARMTH** of a summer sun, the **CALM** of a quiet sea, the **GENEROUS** soul of nature, the **COMFORTING** arm of night, the **WISDOM** of the ages, the **POWER** of the eagle's flight, the **JOY** of a morning in spring, the **FAITH** of a mustard seed, the **PATIENCE** of eternity, the **DEPTH** of a family need. Then God combined these qualities. When there was nothing more to add, He knew His masterpiece was complete. And so, He called it ... **DAD**

- Brie Carter

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