

Vatican Makes Arrests In Latest Probe

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican said Monday it had arrested a high-ranking priest and another member of a papal reform commission on suspicion of leaking confidential documents — a stunning move that comes just days before the publication of two books promising damaging revelations about the obstacles Pope Francis faces in cleaning up the Holy See's murky finances.

The developments threatened to become a new "Vatileaks" — the 2012 scandal that began with the publication of a blockbuster book by Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi detailing the corruption and mismanagement in the Holy See. The scandal ended with the conviction of Pope Benedict XVI's butler — and Benedict's resignation a year later.

The latest arrests of two advisers hand-picked by Francis to help in his effort to overhaul Vatican finances threatened to further expose infighting and rifts surrounding the pope's efforts at reform and a more open church.

Monsignor Lucio Angel Vallejo Balda, a Spaniard, and Francesca Chauouqui, an Italian public relations executive, had served on a now-defunct financial reform commission set up by Francis in 2013 as part of his drive to clean house at the Vatican, especially in its scandal-tainted economic affairs.

A Vatican statement said the arrests followed a months-long investigation and that the two had been interrogated over the weekend. It said Vallejo Balda was being held in a jail cell in Vatican City, while Chauouqui was released Monday because she was cooperating with the investigation.

Bush Returns To Fla. To Reset Campaign

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Jeb Bush hit the reset button on his faltering presidential campaign, racing across Florida Monday with a new slogan that cast him as the sole Republican candidate who can right what's wrong with Washington: "Jeb Can Fix It."

But the pithy phrasing could apply as much to his effort to steady the campaign as it does to his sense of confidence about handling the nation's problems.

"This is not about big personalities on the stage. It's not about talking. It's about doing," the two-term Florida governor told supporters in Jacksonville, the last of three stops for the day.

His remarks, repeated earlier in Tampa and Orlando, were obvious jabs at rivals Donald Trump and Marco Rubio, and a nod to his flat performance in the debate last week in Colorado.

Bush's reset comes as a populist surge has propelled the outsider campaigns of bombastic developer Trump and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson — and created an opportunity for Rubio, a freshman senator from Florida and former Bush protege, to make his appeal to the party establishment

EPA: VW Cheated Second Time On Tests

WASHINGTON (AP) — Volkswagen cheated a second time on emissions tests, programming about 10,000 cars with larger diesel engines to emit fewer pollutants during tests than in real-world driving, according to the U.S. government.

The German automaker installed software designed to defeat the tests on VW, Porsche and Audi vehicles with six-cylinder diesel engines, the Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board said Monday. While on the road, the cars emit up to nine times more nitrogen oxide pollution than allowed by EPA standards, the agency said.

The latest charges follow VW's admission in September that it rigged emissions tests for four-cylinder diesel engines on 11 million cars worldwide, including almost 500,000 in the U.S. The so-called defeat device in the six-cylinder engines was discovered by EPA and CARB with tests put in place in late September.

In a notice of violation sent to VW, EPA officials said the automaker "knew or should have known" that by employing the software, the cars were not in compliance with Clean Air Act emission standards.

In a statement, Volkswagen said "no software was installed in the 3-Liter V6 diesel motors to change the emissions values in any impermissible way." It pledged to "fully cooperate with the EPA to clarify this situation."

Lax Culture Part Of Misconduct Incidents

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — As darkness falls, the most tattered section of this town's main drag feels more desperate with each passing hour. Under the cover of night, a slow but steady flow of wandering souls emerges — addicts, prostitutes, drifters. Sergio Alvarez knew the pickings were easy.

As a rookie officer on the West Sacramento police force, Alvarez was assigned to the overnight shift on a beat that included West Capitol Avenue — a one-time Las Vegas-style strip now lined with low-rise motels that rent rooms by the week or the hour.

Most officers are more than happy to eventually escape the post, but Alvarez volunteered to stay on late-night duty. Over his nearly six years on the job, he gained seniority and almost always patrolled alone. With the solitude came opportunity.

"That's where Alvarez falls through the cracks," said Sacramento attorney Justin Gingery, whose firm represented four of eight women who said they were sexually assaulted by the officer, many in the same dumpster-lined alley near "West Cap." Convicted last year of kidnapping five of those women and either raping them or forcing them to perform oral sex, Alvarez is now serving 205 years to life in prison.

Alvarez is a poster child of a predator cop — and also of the flaws in policies, technological glitches, and culture of policing that can allow such behavior to go unnoticed or unpunished until it's too late. His case prompted multiple civil claims against his department and the city of West Sacramento over police procedures, with a total of \$4.1 million in public funds to be paid to six victims who sued. It also has left a new chief taking a hard look at the way the department does business.

Court Divided In Dispute Over Website

WASHINGTON (AP) — No one at the Supreme Court on Monday disputed the fact that an online profile of Thomas Robins was riddled with false and misleading information.

The profile of the Virginia resident compiled by Internet search site Spokeo.com said Robins had a graduate degree, a good job and was married with children. In fact, Robins had no advanced degree and was unemployed, with no wife or children.

But the justices appeared sharply divided along ideological lines over whether Robins can sue the company for a technical violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, even if the mistakes didn't cause him any specific harm such as a lost job opportunity or denial of credit.

The case pits business groups concerned about exposure to costly litigation against consumer protection advocates who say such lawsuits are the only way to hold companies accountable for mistakes.

One Year Out

A Year From Election Day, Republicans Face Chaos They Hoped To Avoid

BY STEVE PEOPLES
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a devastating loss in the 2012 presidential election, the Republican Party entered a period of intense self-reflection and emerged with a firm promise to learn from its mistakes.

The GOP vowed to avoid a prolonged and vicious 2016 primary. It concluded it must embrace an overhaul of the nation's immigration laws and adopt a more welcoming tone to win over women and minorities.

Yet a year from Election Day 2016, the GOP primary is a rough and bumpy competition. More than a dozen candidates are fighting for the support of voters — and skirmishing among themselves over the process of picking the nominee. And there are few signs the candidates are committed to expanding the party's appeal beyond its conservative base.

"For Republicans, a free-for-all is good — I guess," says Steve Duprey, a Republican National Committeeman from New Hampshire. "We always anticipated a vigorous contest, but I never anticipated 16 candidates."

Meanwhile, there's no such drama among Democrats. The party appears to be coalescing behind front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is building a campaign operation aimed at turning out the general election voters who catapulted Barack Obama to the White House.

The GOP's challenges were on display Monday, as bickering continued among campaigns about upcoming debates. That's an issue the GOP thought it had resolved, having spent years retooling its primary process after officials said it left 2012 nominee Mitt Romney bloodied heading into the general election.

Members of both parties say the GOP's White House hopefuls have also ignored the recommendation from the RNC's self-study that insisted Republicans must improve the party's appeal among women and minorities.

"Devastatingly, we have lost the ability to be persuasive with, or welcoming to, those who do not agree with



JOE BURBANK/ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS
Republican presidential contender Jeb Bush meets 6-year-old Jace Pitre, a student at the Conductive Education Center of Orlando, during a campaign stop at the special-needs school Monday in Winter Park, Fla. Bush met with the students, families and faculty at CEO. The school specializes in working with K-12 students with cerebral palsy and other motor disabilities.

us on every issue," the report found. In addition to an improved tone, the RNC outlined a single policy imperative: "We must embrace and champion comprehensive immigration reform. If we do not, our party's appeal will continue to shrink to its core constituencies only."

After a bipartisan group of senators failed to turn immigration legislation into law, Republicans on the campaign trail — including those involved with that effort — have moved sharply in the other direction. Almost the entire GOP field now calls first and foremost for increased security along the Mexican border.

Some, including front-runner Donald Trump, want to deport the estimated 11 million immigrants in the country illegally — a policy prescription experts suggest would be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

Incoming House Speaker

Paul Ryan said over the weekend there would be no immigration bill until 2017, at the earliest. But Trump, who has infuriated Latinos by describing Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals, keeps the topic front-and-center in the race.

"There have been moments that have been a little painful," says Henry Barbour, an author of the RNC's postelection report and a Republican National Committeeman from Mississippi. "We have to nominate a candidate who can win — someone who can grow our party instead of making it smaller."

Absent a clear front-runner of their own, Republicans are trying to rally around their opposition to Clinton — amid signs that she's getting stronger.

Commanding performances in the first primary debate and during 11 hours of testimony before a Republican-led

congressional committee reassured many Democrats who'd feared the controversy over her use of a private email server as secretary of state could harm her campaign.

Her poll numbers have rebounded from a summer slump, and she now holds a wide lead nationally over Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders.

The relatively clear Democratic field has allowed her team to focus a full year before Election Day on building the kind of operation that can carry her beyond the primary contests. She currently employs 511 staffers across the country — close to the number of staff on all the Republican campaigns combined.

And fundraising reports show an energized Democratic Party, with Clinton and Sanders together raising only slightly less than 15 candidates on the Republican side combined. The two top Democrats had roughly the same amount in the bank at the beginning of October as all the Republicans.

Clinton aides say that they budgeted for a high level of spending early in the campaign, and that the team is making important investments in data analytics, digital infrastructure and organizing that will help in both the primaries and the general election.

Few, if any, Republican campaigns have made such investments, although the Republican National Committee has expanded its digital operation.

Still, with two Senate committees and the FBI investigating Clinton's email arrangement, that issue could re-emerge. And an unpredictable Democratic primary electorate, which has moved to the left during President Obama's administration, leaves Clinton and her team cautious about their prospects.

"I once made the mistake of thinking we could talk about these kinds of things before a single vote was cast," said former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, a Clinton supporter. "Anything could happen still. This is a presidential campaign. You have no idea what may be waiting in the wings."

Confusion Surrounds Russian Plane Crash

BY DMITRY LOVETSKY
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — Mystery and confusion surrounded the final moments of a Russian jetliner that plummeted suddenly from high altitude to the Egyptian desert, killing all 224 people aboard. The airline Monday ruled out pilot error or a technical fault, but Russian aviation officials dismissed those comments as premature.

Some aviation experts raised the possibility that a bomb on board the Metrojet Airbus A321-200 brought it down, while others cited an incident in 2001 when the aircraft grazed the runway with its tail while landing.

James Clapper, the U.S. director of national intelligence, said that while there is no direct evidence of any terrorist involvement yet, it

couldn't be excluded that the plane was brought down by Islamic State extremists in the Sinai Peninsula.

"It's unlikely, but I wouldn't rule it out," he told reporters in Washington.

Asked if a terrorist attack could be ruled out, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said: "No versions could be excluded."

The Metrojet was flying at 31,000 feet over the Sinai when it crashed Saturday only 23 minutes after taking off from the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh for St. Petersburg with mostly Russian passengers.

Metrojet firmly denied that the crash could have been caused by either equipment failure or crew error.

"The only possible explanation could be an external impact on the airplane," Metrojet's deputy director

Alexander Smirnov told a news conference in Moscow. When pressed for more details, Smirnov said he was not at liberty to discuss them because the investigation was ongoing.

Asked if the plane could have been brought down by a terrorist attack, he said only that "anything was possible."

But Russia's top aviation official, Alexander Nerdadko, dismissed the company's statement as premature and unfounded.

In televised comments from Egypt, Nerdadko said it would be possible to draw conclusions about the crash only after experts examined

the plane's flight data and cockpit voice recorders and studied the wreckage.

He said the large area where debris was scattered indicated the jet had broken up at high altitude, but he refrained from citing a reason for the crash pending the investigation.

Viktor Yung, another deputy director general of Metrojet, said the crew did not send a distress call and did not contact traffic controllers before the crash.

Egyptian officials have offered conflicting accounts on whether or not the plane issued any distress calls.

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