

Basic Detail Report

Portrait of Roberto Calvi

Date

1969-1979

Medium

gelatin silver print

Description

Roberto Calvi was an Italian banker dubbed "God's Banker" by the press because of his close association with the Holy See. He was the Chairman of Banco Ambrosiano, which collapsed in one of modern Italy's biggest political scandals. His death in London in June 1982 is a source of enduring controversy and was ruled a murder after two coroner's inquests and an independent investigation. Roberto Calvi was the chairman of Italy's second largest private bank, Banco Ambrosiano, when it went bankrupt in 1982. In 1978, the Bank of Italy produced a report on the Banco Ambrosiano, which found that several billion lire had been exported illegally, leading to criminal investigations. In 1981, Calvi was tried, given a four-year suspended sentence and fined \$19.8 million for transferring \$27 million out of the country in violation of Italian currency laws. He was released on bail pending appeal and kept his position at the bank. During his short spell in jail, he attempted suicide. Calvi's family maintains that he was manipulated by others and was innocent of the crimes attributed to him. On 10 June 1982, Calvi went missing from his Rome apartment, having fled the country on a false passport in the name of Gian Roberto Calvini. He shaved off his moustache and fled initially to Venice. From there, he apparently hired a private plane to London via Zurich. At 7:30 am on Friday, 18 June 1982, a postal clerk was crossing Blackfriars Bridge and noticed his body hanging from scaffolding beneath Blackfriars Bridge on the edge of the financial district of London. Calvi's clothing was stuffed

with bricks, and he was carrying around \$15,000 worth of cash in three different currencies. Calvi was a member of Licio Gelli's illegal masonic lodge, P2, and members of P2 referred to themselves as *frati neri* or "black friars". This led to a suggestion in some quarters that Calvi was murdered as a masonic warning because of the symbolism associated with the word "Blackfriars". The day before his body was found, Calvi was stripped of his post at Banco Ambrosiano by the Bank of Italy, and his 55-year-old private secretary, Graziella Corrocher, jumped to her death from a fifth floor window at Banco Ambrosiano. Corrocher left behind an angry note condemning the damage that Calvi had done to the bank and its employees. Corrocher's death was ruled a suicide. Calvi's death was the subject of two coroner's inquests in the United Kingdom. The first recorded a verdict of suicide in July 1982. The Calvi family then secured the services of George Carman QC. At the second inquest, in July 1983, the jury recorded an open verdict, indicating that the court had been unable to determine the exact cause of death. Calvi's family maintained that his death had been a murder.

Dimensions

Overall: 18 x 24.4 cm (7 1/8 x 9 5/8 in.)