



Depp's a treat, the movie isn't
RICK GROEN, R1



Sizing up Ben, Owen and Jack
JOHANNA SCHELLER, R1

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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10 bombs kill 192 Spanish commuters in a terrorist strike by Basque militants or even al-Qaeda

'Mass murder' in Madrid



BY ALAN FREEMAN
IN MADRID

Spain was ripped apart by its own version of Sept. 11 yesterday when a series of bombings shattered commuter trains and railway stations across Madrid, killing 192 people and injuring more than 1,400. The attacks were first blamed on Basque separatists but may have been the work of al-Qaeda.

Ten bombs, which some reports said were carried in backpacks, exploded within a span of several minutes during rush hour, turning rail carriages into twisted steel and covering platforms with corpses and human remains. Rescue workers reported hearing the eerie ringing of cellphones on the bodies of the victims as desperate relatives tried to contact their loved ones.

The Spanish government, which faces a general election Sunday, immediately blamed ETA, the notorious Basque terrorist group.

"This is mass murder," a sombre Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said after an emergency cabinet meeting. He vowed to hunt down the attackers and ruled out negotiations with ETA.

Doubt was cast on that assessment of blame when a van was found with an Arabic-language audio tape and seven detonators, and a British-based newspaper received an e-mail that purported to be from al-Qaeda and claimed responsibility for the attack.

Spain was a high-profile ally of the United States and Britain during the war in Iraq, and Osama bin Laden has threatened to punish Madrid for supporting the coalition. In London, the Arabic-language newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi said it had received a claim of responsibility issued in the name of al-Qaeda, signed by a group called the Brigade of Abu Hafs al-Masri.

"This is part of settling old accounts with Spain, the crusader, and America's ally in its war against Islam," the message said.

Mr. Aznar had a different assessment, saying that "March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy." King Juan Carlos added his own condemnation in a televised address, saying that the day



DENIS DOYLE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescue workers line up bodies beside the tracks at Madrid's Atocha railway station yesterday, after one of a series of bombings just days before Spaniards vote in a general election.

had "engulfed Spain with profound pain, repulsion and anger."

Campaigning for Sunday's election was called off and the government declared three days of mourning for the most deadly terrorist attack in Europe since the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people. It was also 2½ years to the day since the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

The bombs began going off at 7:39 a.m., targeting three railway stations, including the historic Atocha station, as well as four trains running along commuter lines.

See BOMBINGS on page A14

Injured woman calls in vain for husband

BY ALAN FREEMAN, MADRID

It was just after 11 yesterday morning when Freddy Varias first got a hint that something was terribly wrong with his friend Neil Torres Mendoza.

"We got a call at the construction site," Mr. Varias, a 50-year-old bricklayer, recalled. "They were trying to find Neil to tell him that his wife was seriously injured in hospital. But Neil wasn't around. He hadn't turned up at work."

Mr. Varias and his fellow workers, a multinational group of Ecuadorians, Spaniards, Peruvians, Moroccans and Romanians, began to worry. By 4 p.m., they had found out the horrible truth. Mr. Mendoza was dead, one of the nearly 200 victims of yesterday morning's terrorist attacks at three Madrid railway stations.

His wife, a maid who was on the train with him, was among the seriously injured.

"She was conscious and the first

thing she said was, 'Where is my husband?'" Mr. Varias said. "We knew he had died but we couldn't tell her what had happened. She doesn't know yet that he's dead."

The young couple were typical of many victims of yesterday's attacks, which hit commuter trains long before Spain's white-collar work force heads to the office. Many of those killed at Atocha railway station were immigrants, Latin Americans and Eastern Europeans who do many of the construction,

cleaning and restaurant jobs shunned by affluent Spaniards.

Last night, seven of Mr. Mendoza's friends travelled together with his brother to the makeshift morgue set up in Pavilion No. 6 at Madrid's giant suburban convention centre to identify the body.

Only one of them was allowed to accompany the brother into the morgue, so the rest stood outside reminiscing about their friend.

See VICTIMS on page A15

INSIDE: Full coverage, analysis and the story in pictures. **A14-15.** Marcus Gee on Aznar's brave strategy. **A17.** Terrorist fears send stock markets down. **B1**

Judging Bertuzzi: Late nights, bad blood and a spoiled snack

BY TIM WHARNSBY
HOCKEY REPORTER, TORONTO

When Todd Bertuzzi attacked Steve Moore, Colin Campbell looked up from his bowl of honey-nut Cheerios and hoped the late-night sugar fix was affecting his sight.

It wasn't. So he put down his spoon and rolled into action.

"I was on the phone to [NHL commissioner] Gary Bettman 10 seconds later," said Mr. Campbell, the National Hockey League's director of hockey operations and chief disciplinarian, who ruled yesterday that Mr. Bertuzzi would miss



Todd Bertuzzi, left, was banned for the rest of the NHL season and the playoffs by Colin Campbell.

the remainder of the regular season and playoffs as the result of injuring the Colorado Avalanche rookie in Monday night's game.

To be reinstated for next season, the Vancouver Canucks forward

has to meet with Mr. Bettman in the summer. The recovery of Mr. Moore, who is in hospital, will play a big role in whether Mr. Bertuzzi is allowed to play either in the World Cup of Hockey in late August or next year's NHL season.

The incident happened just after midnight Eastern time. Mr. Campbell, 51, knew there would not be much time to sleep in the next few days and that his decision on Mr. Bertuzzi's punishment would be heavily scrutinized.

See BERTUZZI on page A8

■ Fine angers Canucks. S1

Auberge arson charge

The owner of the Auberge Grand-Mère, the scandal-plagued hotel in Jean Chrétien's riding, has been charged with arson and fraud. **A4**

Budget focuses on youth

Learning and young people will be central themes in the March 23 federal budget, including improved student loans and new grants for low-income students. **A4**

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Weather: Cloudy with a few flurries. High -1. Map and details, **S7**
Births & Deaths, **S5**



Harper set to triumph as Stronach falls short

Sources say her recruitment drive stalled

BY BRIAN LAGHI, OTTAWA

Stephen Harper appears on the edge of a first-ballot victory in the race for Conservative leader, according to sources familiar with the party's bursting membership rolls and the recruitment drives of the three candidates.

Sources said yesterday that former auto executive Belinda Stronach has come up short in her effort to recruit the 50,000 to 100,000 members that her campaigners said they needed to tilt the race in their candidate's favour. A party document released yesterday

showed that the Stronach campaign sold 20,000 direct memberships, a number officials say is not enough to overtake the lead of Mr. Harper.

Sources also said the Harper campaign has produced an internal poll of party members that shows 57 per cent would choose the former Canadian Alliance leader.

Supporters of Mr. Harper are quietly predicting their candidate will achieve between 45 per cent and 55 per cent of the vote on the first ballot.

See CONSERVATIVE on page A4

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