

New evidence emerges in Princess Diana murder plot

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Photographs published, for the first time, in this issue of *EIR*, may shed further light on the Aug. 31, 1997 murders of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and driver Henri Paul. The three were killed in a vehicular homicide in the Place de l'Alma tunnel in Paris shortly after midnight on Aug. 31, when their car was rammed by at least one other vehicle, and crashed into the 13th pillar in the tunnel. Fayed and Paul died instantly; Princess Diana died nearly two hours later, after French authorities, under the personal supervision of Paris Police Chief Philippe Massoni and Interior Minister Jean-Paul Chevènement, failed, incredibly, to transport her to a hospital in a timely manner for life-saving surgery.

After nearly a month of cover-up, following the fatal crash, French officials finally were forced to admit that at least one other car had been involved. They are still looking for a 1984-87 Fiat Uno turbo, which collided with the Mercedes carrying Princess Diana, and then escaped from the crash site. On Dec. 3, the Associated Press published a news wire, describing a sketch, prepared by police investigators on the day of the crash, that clearly identified a "probable collision zone" inside the tunnel, where the Mercedes collided with a second vehicle. The sketch identified parts of a rear-light cover from the second vehicle that were found at the crash site. This sketch, leaked to the Associated Press by French investigators who apparently were angry at the persistent official cover-up, confirmed *EIR*'s Nov. 21 account—that French authorities knew from the outset that the Mercedes had been a target of a professional, vehicular attack. The fatal crash had not, as the French insisted for a month, been the result of reckless, drunk driving by Henri Paul.

The photos that appear in this issue of *EIR* add more pieces to the puzzle of precisely what happened in the early moments of Aug. 31. The photographs that appear on the cover and with this article, were provided to *EIR* by Paris sources close

to the ongoing investigation. They come from closed-circuit television footage, taken by cameras near the Ritz Hotel, where Princess Diana and her friend Dodi Fayed ate their last meal together.

As *EIR* first reported on Nov. 21, Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed were under constant surveillance and harassment from the moment that they arrived in Paris on Aug. 30. A seven-person team is believed to have been surveilling them, from the moment that they returned to the Ritz Hotel at approximately 9 p.m. on Aug. 30. Diana and Dodi had left the Ritz, which is owned by Dodi Fayed's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, and had not planned to return. However, continuing harassment by paparazzi forced the couple to return to the hotel, where they dined in a private suite. They had apparently planned to return, ultimately, to Dodi Fayed's apartment, not far from the Place de l'Alma, just a few miles from the Ritz Hotel.

Having been dogged and threatened by paparazzi throughout the day, Dodi Fayed reportedly decided to attempt to elude the harassment by using a different car and a rear exit of the hotel. Shortly after they returned to the Ritz, arrangements were made to bring a Mercedes 280-S to the rear exit.

Diana and Dodi left via an employees entrance at the rear of the Ritz Hotel, shortly after midnight, while a group of 30-35 paparazzi milled around the front of the hotel, near the Mercedes and Land Rover, the vehicles the couple had used during their brief Paris visit. The attempted diversion proved fatal.

As *EIR* exclusively reported on Nov. 21, one of the seven mysterious individuals surveilling the hotel, posted just up the street from the rear exit, saw the back-up Mercedes speed off, and immediately made a call on a mobile phone, apparently setting in motion the fatal vehicular attack just moments later at the Place de l'Alma tunnel.



Photos from the closed-circuit television footage taken by cameras near the Ritz Hotel in Paris, where Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed ate their last meal together.



The surveillance photographs

The photograph on the cover was taken by a surveillance camera in front of the Ritz Hotel on the Place de Vendôme. The Ritz Hotel is part of a group of adjacent buildings looking out on the plaza. One of the other buildings is the Ministry of Justice. The entire area is ringed with state-of-the-art surveillance cameras. Despite the non-stop bird-dogging of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed throughout the day of Aug. 30, French authorities made no effort to provide any added security. There was no attempt to impede the swarms of paparazzi, even as they gathered in the Place de Vendôme in front of the hotel, waiting to descend on Diana and Dodi.

The two men in the rear of the cover picture (also shown here), wearing sport clothes, were *not* among the paparazzi. They arrived at the Place de Vendôme shortly after Diana and Dodi returned to the hotel, according to closed-circuit TV footage and eyewitnesses. They stayed in the plaza for more than two hours. According to sources close to the French probe, they remain unidentified to this moment. All of the paparazzi, and the handful of well-dressed chauffeurs who were waiting in front of the hotel, have been identified by the authorities and other investigators, according to *EIR*'s sources. However these two men have not been identified.

Of the four individuals, suspected to be part of the surveillance team, who were inside the Ritz Hotel during the period that Diana and Dodi were in the building, two remain unidentified, and are still considered suspect. They were moving about the hotel lobby, attempting to appear as if they were among the paparazzi. However, they were never identified by any of the news photo services that employ the paparazzi.

The two men seated in the lobby bar, identified in the Nov. 21 *EIR* as English-speakers, were subsequently interrogated by French police, according to sources. They came under

suspicion because they were positioned so as to monitor the hotel security personnel and spot any movement by Diana and Dodi. They have been tentatively cleared by French authorities of involvement in the hotel stake-out, but their presence in the lobby still raises suspicions among other investigators. A seventh, critical person, still unidentified, was posted at the rear corner of the Ritz Hotel; he placed what is believed to have been the fateful call, activating the vehicular chase.

The white car

The picture of cars that appears here was taken from a surveillance camera looking down from a nearby building at the rear of the Ritz Hotel, near the exit used by Diana and Dodi. According to sources close to the Paris probe, the large, white sedan was parked at the rear of the hotel, with a driver behind the wheel for a period of time, while Diana and Dodi were dining in the hotel. Seconds after the Mercedes 280-S, with Henri Paul behind the wheel, pulled out from the rear of the Ritz, the white sedan also took off.

Investigators leave open the possibility that the white vehicle may have been the car later described by eyewitness Gary Hunter. He and his wife were staying at a hotel near the Place de l'Alma. Hunter, a London attorney, heard the crash inside the tunnel, at exactly 12:25 a.m. A moment after the crash, according to his account to *EIR* (see Nov. 21, p. 53), Hunter saw a small, dark-colored car and a larger white car turn onto the street in front of his hotel. The two cars, driving bumper-to-bumper, sped off at 60-70 mph, away from the tunnel, past his hotel, before disappearing out of sight. Hunter was convinced that the two cars were fleeing the scene, and that the larger, white car, was protecting the dark car. He assumed the two cars were somehow linked to the crash he had heard just moments earlier.