

# Rowland scam aimed at Mohammad Al Fayed

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On the eve of significant moves by the chief investigating magistrate in Paris, yet another effort has been launched to subvert the ongoing probe of the Aug. 31, 1997 automobile crash that claimed the lives of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and their driver, Henri Paul. And, once again, the disruption may be the handiwork of the British Establishment's favorite hooligan, Tiny Rowland.

On April 22, 1998, police in Vienna, Austria arrested an American, Oswald LeWinter, as he attempted to extort \$16 million from Mohammed Al Fayed, the father of Dodi Fayed and the owner of Harrods department store in London. Since February, when he gave an interview to the *Mirror*, Al Fayed has been on record, that he believes his son and Princess Diana were the victims of a murder conspiracy.

Among the most disturbing unresolved aspects of the tragedy, is the missing Fiat Uno that collided with the Mercedes 280-S carrying Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, causing the fatal crash. The Fiat sped from the crash scene in the Place de l'Alma tunnel and has disappeared, along with the driver.

On June 5, 1998, magistrate Hervé Stephan is going to convene an extraordinary group interrogation of more than 20 eyewitnesses to the crash, to attempt to resolve some of the contradictions among their accounts. Magistrate Stephan has also ordered a comprehensive review of the emergency medical response at the crash site. Princess Diana survived the crash, but it took nearly two hours for rescue workers to get her to a hospital, just four miles away! Princess Diana bled to death just moments before the ambulance arrived at Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital.

## The extortionists

It was not long after Mohammed Al Fayed gave his controversial interview to the *Mirror*, and then met with magistrate Stephan, that the LeWinter hoax was launched. Through intermediaries, LeWinter contacted Al Fayed in late March 1998, claiming that he had CIA documents proving that the CIA and Britain's MI6 had conspired to assassinate the couple. The initial approach was made by a Beverly Hills, California attorney, Keith Flear, of the law firm Tennenbaum, Emmanuel and Flear. Flear called Doug Marvin, a Washington lawyer who does work for Al Fayed, claiming that he was representing four serving CIA officers. A New Mexico-based journalist, George Williamson, subsequently came into the act, as a go-between and bagman. Two other men, one claim-

ing to be a former "top CIA officer" named Jim Thompson, and another claiming to be an ex-Mossad officer known only as "Gershon," were also involved in the extortion attempt.

In phone discussions between Flear and Harrods security director John Macnamara, a 26-year veteran of Scotland Yard, Flear offered to provide a series of CIA top-secret documents on the murder plot, in return for \$20 million in cash, to be deposited in an Austrian bank account.

Macnamara was hardly about to buy into the Flear deal. He had taped the telephone conversations, and, on April 13, 1998, he traveled to Washington to meet with senior officials of both the FBI and the CIA. It was agreed in those meetings that Macnamara would pursue the negotiations with Flear and his "CIA clients." A week later, Macnamara, having wired \$25,000 for travel expenses to a New Mexico construction company, went to Vienna, Austria for the scheduled document exchange. He was accompanied by two FBI Special Agents and a representative of the CIA.


On April 23, after several more days of negotiating with Flear and George Williamson, a meeting was finally arranged between Macnamara and the "CIA officer." At 2:30 p.m., Oswald LeWinter showed up at the meeting place. He was using the name "George Mearah." In the first meeting, LeWinter/Mearah specifically named Tiny Rowland, the ex-Lonrho boss, and his personal security chief, Kenneth Etheridge, as having been involved in CIA operations.

The initial LeWinter-Macnamara meeting was surveilled by another member of the LeWinter "team," a former Czech intelligence officer named Karol Koecher. The involvement of Koecher added another ironic twist to the scheme. Karol Koecher and his wife, Hana, had defected to the United States from Czechoslovakia in 1965, claiming that they had been secretly working with Radio Free Europe, and had to flee the communist state. In reality, the Koechers were Czech intelligence officers, assigned by the KGB to establish a long-term penetration of the United States.

After a brief career as a college professor, Koecher began taking graduate courses at the Russian Institute at Columbia University in New York, according to authors Joe and Susan Trento, and William Corson. At Columbia, Koecher came in contact with Zbigniew Brzezinski, who apparently helped him get a job as a CIA translator. Eventually, Koecher managed to get a job in the CIA's Directorate of Operations, which gave him access to sensitive field intelligence on U.S. espionage activities inside the East bloc. Ultimately, both Koecher and his wife were unearthed as KGB "sleepers" and were jailed.

While in prison in New York State, Koecher met Oswald LeWinter, who was also jailed, for smuggling methamphetamine from West Germany into the United States. On Feb. 11, 1986, Karl and Hana Koecher were freed in East Berlin in a spy swap for Russian "refusenik" Natan Sharansky, now an Israeli cabinet minister.

Koecher escaped back to Prague just hours before police

 <b>DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION</b> <b>Foreign Intelligence Information Report</b>	
<small>DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE</small> <b>WARNING NOTICE - INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED</b> <b>FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO</b> <b>CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT</b>	
REPORT CLASS: TOP SECRET	REPORT NO: OO.D 831/173466-97
COUNTRY: France	DATE DISTR: 17 JUNE 1997
SUBJECT: File overview: Diana Princess of Wales-Dodi REFERENCES DCI Case 64376	
SOURCE CASParis/CASLondon/COSGeneva/CASIKingston/UK citizen Ken Etheridge.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relationship initiated between Diana POW and Dodi al Fayed according to reliable intel sources in November 1996. Intimacy begins shortly after they meet (Report filed)</li> <li>2. Reliable source reports Palace seriously disturbed by liaison. PM considers any al Fayed relationship politically disastrous. Edinburgh sees serious threat to dynasty should relationship endure. Quote reported "such an affair is racially and morally repugnant and no son of a bedouin camel trader is fit for the mother of a future king." Edinburgh (Report filed)</li> <li>3. Request from highest circles to DEA attaché UK for 6 on Dodi re: Cocaine see File forwarded to UK embassy DC (Copy filed)</li> <li>4. US liaison to MI6 requested by David Spedding for assistance in providing permanent solution to Dodi problem. Blessing of Palace secured. (Twiz filed)</li> <li>5. WHuse (White House) denies Spedding request. Harrison authorized only to arrange meeting for MI6 representative with K-Team Geneva. (Twiz on file)</li> <li>6. Meeting in Geneva reportedly successful (Report filed)</li> <li>7. al Fayed Mercedes Limo stolen and returned with electronics missing. Reliable intel source confirms K-team involved. Source reports car rebuilt to respond to external radio controls. (Report filed)</li> <li>8. COB Geneva reports that on May 28, 1997 heavily weighted Fiat Turb... ..</li> </ol>	
TOP SECRET	

*This forged CIA document, supplied by Oswald LeWinter, was part of an effort to extort \$16 million from Mohammed Al Fayed, the father of Dodi Fayed. It purports to show that the CIA was involved in the assassination of Dodi and Princess Diana.*

moved in to arrest him, too.

When Macnamara met with LeWinter a second time on April 23, 1998, the Austrian police moved in and arrested LeWinter, who, while he was being dragged off, threatened to kill both Mohammed Al Fayed and John Macnamara.

The law-enforcement team next searched LeWinter's hotel room, and found the documents that had been promised in the earlier telephone discussions with Flier.

*EIR* has obtained copies of the documents, one of which was published in the *Mirror* on May 14. The documents were fairly sophisticated forgeries. A memo bearing the logo of the CIA's "Directorate of Intelligence, Domestic Collection Division" claimed that MI6 had solicited CIA support for an assassination of Dodi Fayed and Diana POW ("Princess of Wales"), but that the White House had refused to give its okay. However, the memo went on, the White House had authorized the CIA to connect MI6 official David Spedding to a Mossad hit-squad in Geneva, Switzerland, referred to as "K-Team."

There were several flaws in the forged CIA document. For one thing, as of the late 1970s, the Domestic Collection Division, a unit that debriefs American businessmen and academics who travel abroad, was transferred to the Directorate of Operations. The LeWinter document was dated "17 June 1997."

## LeWinter's pedigree

Back in the 1960s and early 1970s, LeWinter had been a source for the Domestic Collection Division, according to several people interviewed by *EIR*. The CIA found him less than reliable, and reportedly severed all ties to him before the end of the 1970s. But that did not deter LeWinter.

In the 1980s, he began appearing in a series of high-visibility disinformation schemes. During the 1988 Presidential campaign, he claimed that he had been in Paris with George Bush in 1980, when the Republican Vice Presidential candidate had worked out a secret deal with Ayatollah Khomeini, to delay the release of American hostages in Tehran until after the November elections, to prevent Democrat Jimmy Carter from winning reelection. There was, in fact, compelling evidence that the Republicans had interfered in the hostage negotiations to obtain a delay; but LeWinter's claims of secret supersonic jet flights by George Bush to Paris were absurd, and helped to obscure the legitimate leads and cover up the real October Surprise scandal.

Following the Dec. 20, 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, LeWinter surfaced once again—this time, in league with Tiny Rowland. LeWinter appeared in a documentary film, financed by Rowland, and produced by Alan Francovich, the late London-based American filmmaker, who had been in the orbit of CIA defector Philip Agee. On camera, LeWinter presented himself as a high-level career CIA officer, who had been involved with a special unit in Frankfurt, West Germany, that was implicated in the Lockerbie bombing. At the time of the film, Rowland was courting the Libyans, and saw the film, which exonerated the Qaddafi government of sole responsibility for the Pan Am 103 bombing, as a way to deepen his Tripoli connections.

Apart from LeWinter's own claims of continuing links to Rowland, during his conversations in Vienna, the phony CIA document seized in LeWinter's hotel room referenced "Ken Etheridge," Rowland's security chief, and a former, corrupt British police detective, who was demoted after his links to London's leading pornographer were publicly exposed. Rather than return to the uniformed division, walking a beat, Etheridge went to work for Rowland.

*Postscript:* On May 15, 1998, CIA Public Affairs Officer Anya Guilsher issued a public statement about the LeWinter "CIA memo": "The document is a clear fabrication," she said, adding, "Any allegation that the CIA was in any way connected to any such plot is completely absurd."

While the document was phony, and the CIA was not part of any plot to murder Diana or Dodi, sources close to the Agency have told *EIR* that it had picked up some indications of moves to eliminate Diana and Dodi in the late spring of 1997—several months before their deaths. The warnings, although vague, were reportedly passed on to a Middle Eastern government. The CIA files are undoubtedly a well-spring of information that would be of benefit to anyone honestly attempting to solve the murder case of the decade.