

New holes in cover-up of Diana murder plot

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Shortly after midnight, on Aug. 30-31, 1997, David Laurent, an off-duty senior French police official, was driving alone in his car on the right bank of the Seine River, heading toward the Place de l'Alma tunnel where, moments later, Diana Princess of Wales, her companion Dodi Fayed, and driver Henri Paul would die in a car crash. As he drove, Laurent was passed by a speeding white Fiat Uno, according to accounts he provided nine months ago to French Criminal Brigade police probing the Diana crash. As he approached the tunnel, Laurent noticed that the Fiat Uno that had sped by him, was now crawling along in the right traffic lane, almost at a standstill, just before the tunnel entrance.

Although the behavior of the Fiat driver was a bit bizarre, Laurent drove on. It was, after all, Saturday night on the final weekend of the summer, and there were a lot of strange goings-on on the streets of Paris. Less than a moment later, however, Laurent heard a loud explosion from inside the tunnel, as he was driving a short distance ahead.

It was not until the next morning that Laurent realized that the explosion he had heard from inside the tunnel was the crash that claimed the lives of Diana and her companions. And it was not until several weeks later that police forensic tests confirmed that the crash had been caused by a collision between the Mercedes 280-S carrying Diana, Fayed, Paul, and bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, the sole survivor of the crash, and a Fiat Uno. Within hours of the crash, police at the scene had gathered up evidence—a side mirror and fragments of a tail light—suggesting that a two-car collision had occurred. A police sketch, drawn at the crash site, labeled a section of the tunnel the “collision zone.” Several witnesses, interviewed during the first week after the crash, had described a small hatchback car, cutting in front of the Mercedes at the tunnel entrance, jamming its breaks inside the tunnel, fleeing the crash scene, and so on.

But, until Laurent's critical piece of the story became public in early June, the role of the Fiat had remained ambiguous—despite the fact that the car and its driver have disappeared. Was the missing Fiat tragically in the wrong place at the wrong time, or was it critical to the most spectacular vehicular homicide in history?

Laurent's description of the Fiat, speeding to a spot near the tunnel entrance, less than a minute ahead of Diana's

car, which was under chase from several other cars and motorcycles, strongly suggests the latter possibility.

For reasons yet unexplained, Laurent's crucial eyewitness account was withheld from the chief investigating magistrate, Hervé Stephan, for months.

Tampering with evidence

This is not the first time that the French police in charge of the investigation have tampered with evidence. Within hours of the crash, French police had told reporters that the Mercedes carrying Diana had been travelling at speeds of more than 120 miles per hour. How did they know? They told reporters that the speedometer of the mangled Mercedes had been frozen at more than 120 mph. *EIR* investigators determined that the French “leak” had to be a lie. Daimler Benz safety experts had told *EIR* reporters that, in any crash, the speedometer immediately goes back to zero. Two weeks later, the French police “corrected” the error; but this time, the media scarcely reported the correction. Similarly, French police had lied to reporters that Diana had been pinned in the rear compartment of the Mercedes, and saying that this was why it took so long to get her into an ambulance and to a hospital. Photographic evidence and eyewitness accounts later proved that it, too, was a premeditated lie by the French police.

In the case of the Laurent testimony, sources tell *EIR* that the police have claimed that they have withheld certain vital evidence from Magistrate Stephan, to avoid the information falling into the hands of the attorneys for the paparazzi. The police allegedly claimed that their investigation “would be jeopardized” if the paparazzi were to learn crucial details.

The Laurent revelation, which was leaked to the London *Daily Mirror* on June 4 by a well-placed French police source, was not the only new piece of evidence to emerge in early June. On June 3, the British independent television network ITV aired a one-hour investigative report, “Diana: The Secrets Behind the Crash,” that seriously discredits French police claims that driver Henri Paul was drunk at the time of the crash.

Carbon monoxide found in Paul's blood

The assertion that Paul was drunk and high on two prescription drugs is pivotal to the ongoing effort, by the French government and the British establishment, to cast the crash as nothing more than a case of reckless, drunk driving. The claim that Paul had blood alcohol levels three times the legal limit at the time of the crash, was based solely on tests conducted by French coroners within hours of the crash. Independent forensic experts, including Dr. Peter Vanesis of the University of Glasgow, who reviewed the autopsy report, had harsh criticisms of the *post mortem* on numerous technical grounds.

The ITV report revealed that the forensic tests also

showed a near-lethal level of carbon monoxide as well. *EIR* has independently learned that it was a separate toxicological test on Paul's blood sample, that revealed a carbon monoxide level of more than 30% at the time of the crash.

Yet, Dodi Fayed had no carbon monoxide in his blood. Is it possible that Paul could have had high levels of alcohol, traces of two prescription drugs, and toxic levels of carbon monoxide in his blood at the moment of the crash, and yet Fayed had no carbon monoxide present? Not if the carbon monoxide was inside the passenger cabin of the Mercedes.

Furthermore, if Paul had been somehow poisoned with carbon monoxide sometime prior to getting behind the wheel of the Mercedes, experts interviewed by ITV say he would have shown obvious signs, such as dizziness, loss of balance, loss of depth perception, and an unbearable, throbbing pain in his temple. Security camera video footage of Paul, taken in the lobby of the Ritz Hotel between 9 p.m. and midnight, and aired in the ITV documentary, clearly showed that Paul had none of the tell-tale signs of being drunk or suffering from the effects of carbon monoxide.

In a live television interview, aired one hour after the ITV broadcast, the documentary's host, Nicholas Owen, stated that he believed that the blood sample used in the *post mortem* was probably not taken from Paul. There were a dozen other corpses in the Paris city morgue at the time that Paul was brought in. This startling conclusion by Owen, adds further weight to *EIR*'s charge that the French police—as distinct from chief investigating Magistrate Stephan—have been running a vicious cover-up of the events surrounding the crash.

The ITV documentary also cited several eyewitness accounts that a powerful burst of light inside the tunnel, seconds before the crash, may have blinded Paul. Owen showed a commercially produced anti-personnel laser, that he purchased in a Paris shop for \$300, to buttress the possibility that such a device was used in the vehicular attack.

EIR Counterintelligence Director Jeffrey Steinberg appeared along with Owen and a half-dozen other investigators and expert analysts on the nationally televised interview show. Details of that broadcast and the vortex of media controversy, sparked by the ITV show and a second documentary, aired on June 4 on Channel Four TV in Britain, will appear in a forthcoming *EIR* (see also, the *Editorial* in this issue).

In a move that promises to raise even more questions about what happened in the Paris tunnel on Aug. 31, 1997, Magistrate Stephan convened an extraordinary group interrogation, or "confrontation," on June 5, at the Justice Ministry in Paris. Mohamed Al Fayed, Dodi's father and a civil party to the case, was invited to participate, as were a dozen eyewitnesses to the crash. The nine paparazzi who stand to be prosecuted for manslaughter and interference in the rescue effort, were also interrogated by Stephan. Details of what took place are not yet available.

Scaife money supports Israeli think-tank

by Dean Andromidas

According to recent reports in the Israeli press, Richard Mellon Scaife, the paymaster for the British assault on President Bill Clinton and the office of the U.S. Presidency, is the chief financier of a right-wing think-tank known as the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS). The Jerusalem- and Washington-based institute is part of a network of organizations linking Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with the jacobin grouping of U.S. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and the so-called Christian right.

The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* on June 3 revealed that the Sarah Scaife Foundation is the major financial backer of the IASPS; this was discovered as a result of an investigation prompted by Gingrich's recent trip to Israel. Not widely reported in the international press was the cancellation of a seminar on ballistic-missile defense which was supposed to have been held in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), and at which Gingrich was to have been a guest speaker. The event was cancelled after it was learned that the organizer of the event, Robert Loewenberg, the president of IASPS, had authored an article last year comparing former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, an architect of the Oslo peace accords, to the Hungarian Rudolph Kastner, "who helped the Nazis murder Jews."

Loewenberg also charged that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated by right-wing fanatics in 1995, was using "police-state methods" in order to implement the peace agreements.

The Scaife connection is not at all surprising, because a look at IASPS reveals an overlap between the forces that are leading the assault on President Clinton, and those responsible for the assassination of Rabin, who are using their willing tool, Netanyahu, to put Israel on the path toward a new Middle East war.

Overturning the peace

In our issue of Aug. 2, 1996, *EIR* reported on a policy paper sponsored by the institute, entitled "Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." Presented to Netanyahu on the eve of his first trip to Washington after becoming Prime Minister, the paper called for overturning the land-for-peace and regional economic premises of the Oslo Accords,