

French Courts Reopen Probe Into Princess Diana's Murder

by Jeffrey Steinberg

“It is as if we are back at square one—but four years later.” Those were the words of John Macnamara, former security director of Harrods department store in London, and the personal representative of store owner Mohamed Al Fayed. Macnamara told *EIR*, in an Aug. 30 interview in Washington, that a French appeals court has ordered a magistrate to reopen part of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the Aug. 31, 1997 car crash in Paris, that claimed the lives of Princess Diana, Al Fayed's son Dodi Fayed, and driver Henri Paul.

Macnamara was in Washington for a press conference with Al Fayed's local attorney, Mark Zaid, at which new, startling details of the four-year-old probe into the deadly Paris crash were presented, before a packed audience of reporters and television crews at the National Press Club.

Nothing, however, was more startling, than the news that the case has been reopened, and that the judge who conducted the two-year probe, from Sept. 1, 1997 to Sept. 20, 1999, is facing charges of judicial misconduct, for suppressing a crucial part of the investigation. *EIR*'s long-standing charges, that the real causes of the deaths in Paris were covered up by French officials, are now fully corroborated!

In a videotaped statement released at the outset of the press conference, Mohamed Al Fayed assailed the cover-up of the deaths of Princess Diana and Dodi, by the governments of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. He reported that “the examining magistrate in Paris, Judge [Hervé] Stephan, misled my lawyers and the court by instructing the police not to carry out a proper investigation into the role of the paparazzi and others who were keeping surveillance on my son and Princess Diana. I am pleased to say that a new French magistrate has recently reopened this prosecution.” (See below for the full text of the Al Fayed statement.)

The Details

Within days of the fatal Paris crash, attorneys for Al Fayed petitioned Judge Stephan, the magistrate assigned to probe the causes of the crash, to investigate “infringement of the right of privacy in private life,” in addition to the core issue of whether the crash was the result of vehicular homicide or manslaughter by paparazzi and others.

The probe into infringement of privacy was vital to the entire investigation. From the moment that Diana and Dodi's plane landed in Paris, on the afternoon of Aug. 30, 1997,

they were stalked and assaulted by scores of paparazzi—who knew, in advance, their every move.

Yet, months after the request for the invasion of privacy probe, Al Fayed's attorneys discovered that Judge Stephan had never ordered the police to open the second track. Finally, Stephan, under pressure from the Al Fayed camp, issued a written order to Police Lt. Catherine Anselm to open the investigation, on Feb. 15, 1999—with the evidence now 18 months cold!

According to official French documents released at the Aug. 30, 2001 Washington press conference, on March 30, 1999, Judge Stephan had a phone conversation with Lieutenant Anselm, and ordered her to “put the file on hold”—i.e., he ordered her *not* to conduct the probe of the invasion of privacy that he had personally instructed her to open, in the written document of Feb. 15.

On July 16, 1999, Judge Stephan met with Lieutenant Anselm and other police officials, and again told them to put the privacy probe on hold.

On Sept. 20, 1999, Judge Stephan officially closed the investigation into the Paris crash, finding no basis for prosecution of any of the paparazzi, and ruling that the crash was an accident, caused solely by high-speed drunk driving by Henri Paul. No mention was made of the invasion of privacy probe—because Stephan had verbally instructed the police to ignore his written order.

The same day, according to her affidavit, Lieutenant Anselm returned the entire investigative file—including Stephan's original Feb. 15, 1999 written order—to Judge Stephan.

After two years of investigation into the most significant political death in Europe in decades, Judge Stephan released a three-paragraph finding, supplementing a six-page report issued by the French police. Stephan's 10,000-page report, detailing the 24-month probe, has never been released to the public.

Now the Appeals Court has ruled that Stephan violated his mandate by suppressing the police probe into the invasion of privacy—a probe that would have broadened the scope of the investigation to cover the entire ten-hour period when Diana and Dodi were in Paris—not just the ten minutes, from the time they left the Ritz Hotel, shortly after midnight on Aug. 31, to when the crash occurred in the Place de l'Alma tunnel.

Meanwhile, Judge Stephan is in hot water. On Oct. 3, he will appear before the French Appellate Court, which will consider how to punish him for his judicial misconduct.

A new magistrate, Judge Josi, is now actively investigating the invasion of privacy charges, and a number of the paparazzi are once again facing criminal prosecution.

Other Evidence Of Cover-Up

At the same Washington press conference, Macnamara and Zaid revealed that French coroners had further tampered with the evidence: They embalmed Princess Diana's corpse before it was shipped back to England! The embalming foreclosed a number of potentially fruitful avenues of medical forensic investigation. No such embalming was done on Dodi Fayed, whose body was flown back to England at about the same time.

French officials were well aware that the nearly two-hour delay in bringing Princess Diana from the crash site to the hospital, was the single biggest cause of her death. The kind of internal injuries that she suffered in the crash were not necessarily fatal—had she been brought into surgery in the shortest possible time. High-ranking French police officials, including Paris Police Chief Philippe Massoni, and Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, were personally in charge of the rescue effort, with Massoni at the crash site and Chevènement at the hospital, a short time after the crash.

French officials also sabotaged any opportunity to obtain forensic evidence from the body of Henri Paul. They failed to store the body at the appropriate temperature, and rejected repeated requests from Paul's family to store body and blood samples for future investigation. The French have also systematically refused to allow any DNA tests, which could prove, conclusively, that the blood samples with alcohol, drugs, and carbon monoxide, allegedly taken from Paul immediately after the crash, were not actually his! Those blood samples are the only basis for the "drunk driving" cover-story. Discredit that claim, and the entire house of cards cover-up comes crashing down. A hearing is scheduled for Oct. 11, 2001, at which Paul's family will once again attempt to get court authorization for DNA tests.

Documentation

The following statement by Mohamed Al Fayed was released in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 30:

A year ago on the third anniversary of the tragic deaths of my dear son Dodi and Diana, Princess of Wales, I filed a lawsuit to gain access to information in the possession of the United States government. I was forced to do this because my appeals to the American government to reveal what it knew, were ignored. I said then and say again now that I will never rest until the truth is known about the events of Aug. 31, 1997.

A year has now passed and the United States government, particularly the CIA, FBI, and NSA have done nothing to assist my efforts. Instead, they have done everything possible to delay the case and obstruct the release of documents which would show the collaboration between the United States intelligence services and the British secret services.

My Washington lawyer, Mark Zaid, and my Harrods Director, John Macnamara, will soon explain to you in detail the progress made in the United States and Europe, particularly France, which will demonstrate the corruption and cover-up by those responsible for investigating the cause of the deaths. They will give you details of:

1. The discovery that Princess Diana's body was embalmed in Paris within hours of her death. What reason can there be other than it was part of a cover-up to prevent proper forensic tests in the U.K.?

2. Evidence from leading pathologists that tests revealed Princess Diana may have been pregnant at the time of her death. The extortion attempt against me in 1998 by former CIA agents was covered up by the ex-U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and those working within her office. Part of the extortion was to sell me a pregnancy report on Princess Diana. Despite all my efforts to bring these people to justice, the U.S. government failed to protect me and I now have a lawsuit pending in California against those responsible.

3. The fact that the examining magistrate in Paris, Judge Stephan, misled my lawyers and the court by instructing the police not to carry out a proper investigation into the role of the paparazzi and others who were keeping surveillance on my son and Princess Diana. I am pleased to say that a new French magistrate has recently reopened this prosecution.

4. The withholding of blood and body samples of the driver, Henri Paul, by the French government, and their obstruction to our challenge for independent examination which would show that the blood was not that of Henri Paul.

5. How a former MI6 officer, Richard Tomlinson, was to be here with you today but was prevented by the U.S. government from doing so. He wanted to describe to you how Henri Paul was a paid agent of MI6 and that a plan similar to that which caused the deaths in Paris was planned by MI6 to kill [Yugoslav] President [Slobodan] Milosevic. Although the American government has denied Tomlinson entry to the United States, his message will be conveyed to you today by way of video extracts.

6. James Andanson, one of the paparazzi working for the British secret service in Paris, was murdered and his death covered up as suicide. I trust you will listen carefully to what my representatives have to say and I once again seek the support of the American people to bring pressure through their members of Congress to release the documents that will reveal the truth about the tragedy. I am in no doubt that the deaths were the result of murder with racism at the core.

Finally, I should tell you that the Princess of Wales loved America and its people. She planned to stay with Dodi in Malibu and there make her home in California.