

EIRFeature

Princess Diana: The cover-up of her murder crumbles

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The lid has been blown on the attempted cover-up of Princess Diana's murder, shortly after midnight, on Sunday, Aug. 31, 1997.

If you had been following the coverage of the French government's official line on her death on CNN, Fox-TV, *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *U.S. News & World Report*, you were told, first, that the deaths of Diana, her friend Dodi al-Fayed, and their driver, Henri Paul, were the suspected result of harassment by photographers on motorcycles. Later, the press suddenly switched its line, saying that the deaths were probably the result of Henri Paul's drunk driving.

Until the week of Sept. 15, the French government had been doing everything in its power to rule out any possibility that the death of Diana was the result of foul play. Analysis of the cumulative evidence to date, shows that the French government was engaged in a vicious cover-up of a political murder. Now, that attempted cover-up has begun to disintegrate.

Even now, the full truth may never come out. The actual authors of the death of Diana and the others may never be known, at least to the general public. The events that transpired in the few seconds that the Mercedes 280-S, carrying the Princess and the others, turned into the tunnel of the Seine River underpass, before crashing, may never be fully known to the public.

But this does not preclude a blunt statement of the facts that *are* known.

First of all, the facts now available demonstrate that the story, as it had been presented by the French authorities, and peddled uncritically by much of the Anglophile press in Europe and the Americas, has been a compilation of willful lies, aimed at concealing both the details of the crash, and the broader power struggle now under way among the London-centered European financial oligarchy.

From within a day of the crash, French officials were insisting that driver Henri Paul had alcohol levels in his blood that were three times the legal limit. In the next days, following the first circulation of that now-discredited report, two more blood tests were conducted by French officials, purportedly confirming the alcohol levels.



A mourner signs the condolence book for Princess Diana in Frankfurt, Germany, Sept. 6, 1997. Above: French President Jacques Chirac. The French oligarchy is doing everything in its power to cover up the evidence that Diana's death was a political assassination, and to prevent it from leading to an outbreak of popular insurgency.

Allegedly, the third test turned up evidence that Paul had also taken two powerful prescription drugs shortly before the fatal crash. The official reports charged that traces of the drugs were present in his blood.

While French authorities detained nine “paparazzi” photographers, and are investigating whether they were complicit in the crash and in interfering with the rescue efforts, increasingly, the French probe has been focussed upon the alleged fault of the driver.

A fairy tale

But, according to credible eyewitnesses and other evidence, Henri Paul, a highly skilled French combat pilot and security driver, had been “cold sober,” in the company of others at the Hotel Ritz, for two or more hours before he and his party left in the Mercedes 280-S for their passage into the Seine River tunnel.

The French government’s crucial claim, that Paul was drunk at the time of the crash, has been widely *disproved* by video footage taken throughout the two-hour period before the fateful car ride, eyewitness accounts, and other background evidence.

This evidence throws into question every other facet of the French government’s behavior, prior to, at the time of, and following the crash.

Mohammed al-Fayed, the father of the late Dodi al-Fayed, and the owner of the Ritz Hotel in Paris where the couple dined just before they left in the Mercedes, provided police

with videotape footage, taken by security cameras inside the hotel, showing Paul arriving at the hotel two hours before the drive. He was sober. Some of the footage was released by the al-Fayed family to the media to demonstrate the point. Footage provided to the police provided regular glimpses of Paul throughout the two hours that he was at the hotel. He did not drink there. He was in the constant company of British and French security professionals, who all testified that he was sober.

Paul was a known entity. Everything that is known and corroborated about the man flies in the face of the transparent efforts by the French government, to cast him as a depressive, closet alcoholic. Paul was the assistant security director of the hotel. He was well known to senior French police and intelligence officials, many of whom have confirmed that he was a very serious person, who did not drink in excess—ever. Paul was a veteran French Air Force pilot. Weeks before the crash, he flew a plane under harsh weather conditions, that an alcoholic would not have survived. Paul’s physician complained to the press that she was never contacted by French police investigators. She said that she never prescribed the drugs that the third blood test purportedly turned up in his bloodstream. A second doctor, who administered annual physical exams to Paul, told authorities and the press that he had never prescribed such drugs to Paul. As *EIR* goes to press, French officials have been forced to acknowledge that they have not found *any* prescriptions for the two drugs, issued to Henri Paul.

French officials now also know that, in the several hours before he was called back to the Ritz Hotel on Aug. 30, Paul was not drinking. He was at a neighborhood restaurant, where he was well known to employees and regular patrons. He drank cola.

For the French government's official blood test results to be accurate, Paul would have had to have consumed more than two full bottles of wine, or a dozen glasses of hard liquor, just before he went back to work at the hotel, where he had been summoned due to security problems that had already come up during the course of Princess Diana and Dodi al-Fayed's one-day visit to Paris. Had he been drinking earlier in the day before he drove Princess Diana, Dodi al-Fayed, and their bodyguard, Trevor Rees-Jones, approximately half of the alcohol in Paul's bloodstream would have dissipated. Even a longtime alcoholic (which Paul was not) would have had a difficult time concealing his drunkenness during the two hours that he was back at the Ritz, surrounded by security professionals.

The crash site

The events that transpired inside the tunnel underpass along the Seine River are also shrouded in mystery and contradictions. From day one, French authorities ruled out any kind of interference with the Mercedes. Within 24 hours of the crash, officials at Mercedes-Benz had contacted French police and offered to send an expert team of mechanics and analysts to assist in the official probe. A spokesman for Mercedes-Benz confirmed to an *EIR* reporter on Sept. 15 that the French authorities rejected the offer, without explanation.

Yet, according to one source at the Ritz Hotel, the Mercedes 280-S had recently undergone major repairs, costing approximately \$22,000. On the night of Aug. 30, while Diana and Dodi were dining in a private suite in the hotel, the Mercedes was left unguarded for over one hour. This, despite the fact that there had been at least one reported incident of a vehicular attack on the couple, as they were driving from the airport into Paris early in the day.

Why would the French authorities categorically rule out the possibility that the car had been tampered with? Why would they reject the offers of the car's manufacturer to send expert analysts to assist in the probe?

Within a week of the tragedy, several eyewitnesses to the incident had come forward with accounts of the final seconds before the crash—accounts that raise serious questions about possible vehicular homicide, of a highly professional character.

On Sept. 7, *Journal du Dimanche* reported that two eyewitnesses had told the authorities that they had seen a second car interfering with the Mercedes as it entered the tunnel, causing a sudden braking, seconds before the crash. Two days later, al-Fayed attorney Bernard Darteville told Associated Press reporter Jocelyn Noveck that he had received two photographs from the police, taken seconds be-

fore the crash, from inside a car just in front of the Mercedes. Those pictures showed that a bright flash of light was blinding the driver; that bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones had lowered the sun visor; and that Princess Diana was turned around in the back seat, looking at the headlight of a motorcycle just behind their car.

Still, the French authorities peddled the story that the "accident" was predominantly the result of Paul's drunken condition.

The lid finally blew on Sept. 15, when France 2 television reported that police had found a dent on the right side of the Mercedes, with paint from another car, and had found the casing of a light from another car at the scene of the crash. Other eyewitnesses had, by this time, come forward with detailed accounts of a second car forcing the Mercedes into the left lane, as the cars entered the underpass to the tunnel. On Sept. 17, Paris police investigators admitted that they were seeking a blue Fiat Uno, which had sped from the scene of the crash. It was the light casing from this Fiat that was found at the crash site.

The French behavior

With the French government cover-up of the tragic death of Princess Diana, for the time being, in a shambles, the question now emerges: Why have French authorities gone to such extremes to prevent an honest probe of the death of a prominent member of the British aristocracy? Lyndon LaRouche addressed that question in his weekly "EIR Talks" radio interview on Sept. 16, a transcript of which appears in this *Feature*.

As you will read, leading French institutions, especially the French Socialist Party, have been long contaminated by British Club of the Isles influence. In recent months, leading voices for the House of Windsor have made it clear that Princess Diana had become a "wild card," in the context of a several-years-long power struggle over the shape and future of the monarchy.

Furthermore, the French institutions are notorious for their brutal frame-ups and cover-ups, when there are powerful "reasons of state" to justify such actions. You will read below about the case of Lyndon LaRouche's associate Jacques Cheminade, whose 1995 campaign for the French Presidency was targeted by some of the very same institutions that have enforced the cover-up of the murder of Princess Diana.

One area where the British and French oligarchies—of all factional stripes—agree, is on the need to prevent an outbreak of popular insurgency around the death of Princess Diana, or any other crises that waken the population from the slumber of media-induced "virtual reality." A leading British psychological warfare specialist, in an interview with *EIR*'s Mark Burdman, which also appears below, frankly acknowledged that the establishment was driven to hysteria over the level of public emotional outpouring over the death of Princess Diana. With the cover-up of her murder unravelling, they have every reason to be concerned.