

Dramatic revelations in Princess Diana case

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Oct. 1, a Vienna, Austria court found American con-man and former CIA asset Oswald LeWinter guilty of fraud, and sentenced him to two and a half years in prison. LeWinter's conviction stemmed from an April 1998 effort to extort \$20 million from Mohamed Al Fayed, the Egyptian-born London businessman whose son, Dodi Fayed, and Princess Diana, were killed in an automobile crash in Paris on Aug. 31, 1997.

Since the moment he learned of the death of his son and the Princess of Wales, Al Fayed has been pressing for a complete investigation of the crash, and has publicly stated that he does not believe it was an accident. Early this year, LeWinter, acting through Los Angeles-based attorney Keith Fler, approached Al Fayed's Washington lawyers, offering to sell "secret CIA documents" that proved that British intelligence and the British royal family had carried out the murders of Diana and Dodi. Skeptical about the approach, Al Fayed dispatched John Macnamara, a former senior Scotland Yard inspector and now the security director of Al Fayed's Harrods department store, to Washington, where he conferred with officials of the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI, and the CIA. As the result of that cooperation, Macnamara arranged a meeting with an unidentified "ex-CIA" man who claimed to possess the secret documents. On April 24, 1998, during a meeting with Macnamara at a Vienna hotel, Austrian police, with FBI officials on the scene, arrested LeWinter. Moments later, they discovered four "CIA" documents in LeWinter's hotel room, all of which were later proven to be forgeries.

The trial of LeWinter had been expected to be a mundane affair. Long before the trial date, LeWinter had confessed to the crime and thrown himself on the mercy of the court. The 67-year-old notorious con-man, who once served a several-year sentence in a U.S. Federal prison for trafficking methamphetamines between Germany and the United States, argued that he was too old and too ill to serve the potential five- to ten-year sentence. His attorneys also argued that LeWinter was merely an accessory to the crime, and that the architects of the \$20 million extortion scheme were still on the loose in the United States. LeWinter, however, refused to identify his co-conspirators, claiming that he feared for his life and for the lives of his family. In fact, the judge

took those factors into account in giving LeWinter a reduced sentence, which prosecutors say they will appeal. Prosecutors intend to argue that LeWinter should have been forced to cooperate with authorities in identifying his co-conspirators, and in detailing the extortion scheme.

But these details were overshadowed by startling revelations about the August 1997 Paris crash, that were spelled out by Dr. Manfred Ainedter, the attorney for Al Fayed, in his closing arguments before the court. Both Al Fayed and Macnamara also testified in court about the details of their cooperation with American and Austrian authorities, in setting the trap for LeWinter.

New information on Henri Paul

Ainedter revealed, for the first time in public, some of the reasons why Al Fayed is convinced that the Paris crash was not an accident. Ainedter told the court that evidence has now come to light that Henri Paul, the deputy security director of the Ritz Hotel in Paris, owned by Al Fayed, and the driver of the Mercedes 280-S that carried Dodi and Diana to their deaths, had been on the payroll of the British secret services for more than a year! After Paul's death in the Paris crash, it was discovered that he had secret bank accounts in a half-dozen Paris banks, with more than \$100,000 on deposit. Paul had confided to several close friends that he was working for several unnamed intelligence services, providing information and special favors.

Ainedter also revealed that Al Fayed had been assured that Diana and Dodi would travel from the Ritz Hotel to Dodi's nearby apartment in an armored limousine, owned by Al Fayed, that was parked in an underground lot next to the Ritz Hotel. The attorney reported that Paul had insisted on driving the car, even though Al Fayed had understood that a professional chauffeur would be behind the wheel. Also, the route taken by Paul was not the originally planned route. In fact, the Mercedes should have exited the riverfront highway before entering the Place de l'Alma tunnel, where the fatal collision with a second car occurred.

Ainedter also highlighted the fact that, more than one year after the crash, Judge Hervé Stephan, the French magistrate in charge of the crash probe, is still hard at work. In late August, on the eve of the first anniversary of the crash, Judge Stephan had issued a terse statement through the Paris prosecutors' office, itemizing areas of the investigation that were still incomplete. Among the unresolved issues highlighted by Ainedter, is the fact that blood tests on Paul revealed the presence of alcohol, prescription drugs, and nearly lethal levels of carbon monoxide. Had Paul been under the influence of all of these deadly chemicals, he would have been unable to walk, and certainly incapable of driving a car. Yet, videotape recordings from the security cameras at the Ritz Hotel showed Paul walking about, talking with other hotel personnel; and, Dodi Fayed's two bodyguards, Trevor Rees-Jones (who was the sole survivor of

the crash) and Kes Wingfield, testified that they spent two hours sitting and talking with Paul, and saw no evidence that he was drunk or in any way incapacitated. Ainedter's conclusion: The blood tests could not possibly have been performed on Henri Paul's blood.

Al Fayed's lawyer also told the court that some of the "proof" put forward by French police that the crash was an accident, had been proven false. As one example, he cited early media reports, attributed to French police sources, that the Mercedes was traveling at 192 kilometers per hour at the moment of impact. Forensic tests later showed these statements totally false.

Ainedter also clarified another bit of media disinformation. Several months ago, the *Daily Telegraph*, one of the British dailies most deeply involved in the effort to slander Al Fayed and cover up the evidence of murder, claimed that the Harrods owner had announced a \$20 million reward for any information proving that the British government had murdered Dodi and Diana. No such offer was ever made. In fact, the "agreement" to pay \$20 million to LeWinter for the so-called CIA documents was part of the sting, worked out at the behest of the FBI and U.S. Department of Justice, to lure the extortionists to a location where they could be arrested.

A cover-up in Washington?

While the Vienna court considers prosecutors' appeals for a stiffer sentence for LeWinter, in Washington, there are disturbing indications that U.S. authorities are anxious to drop any efforts to track down the identities of the higher-ups in the extortion scheme. While LeWinter's attorneys argued that he was a low-level player in the plot, Justice Department prosecutors, according to sources close to the case, so far have failed to aggressively pursue the other known co-plotters, including Los Angeles lawyer Fler, who made the initial approach to Al Fayed's Washington attorney Doug Marvin. Fler told Marvin that he represented four ex-CIA officers, who were in possession of "proof" of the assassination plot. Former San Francisco journalist George Williamson was another known player in the scheme. Williamson, who has told *EIR* that he was working with Fox TV on a possible docudrama based on LeWinter's account, had served as the go-between for cash payments from Al Fayed to LeWinter, to set up the Vienna meeting (Al Fayed had put up the money at the request of the FBI and the DOJ).

Despite these promising leads, the Justice Department and FBI have apparently done little to pursue the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Lisa Praeger, from the Washington office, refused to speak with *EIR*. A spokesman for her, Channing Phillips, told *EIR* that the case was still ongoing, and that the U.S. government was "satisfied" with the sentence handed down against LeWinter.

Sources have told *EIR* that the Justice Department is not anxious to pursue the case, because a trial of LeWinter, or the others, in the United States, would draw attention to LeWin-

ter's ties to the CIA, which date back to the late 1960s, and could prove embarrassing to the Agency. CIA sources tell *EIR* that LeWinter was formally dropped as a CIA informant in the 1970s, but his unofficial ties to some Agency officers may have continued beyond that date. When LeWinter was released from Federal prison in the mid-1980s, he surfaced as one of the sources of disinformation about the so-called 1980 "October Surprise," in which the Reagan-Bush campaign sought to prevent an election-eve release of American hostages in Iran, to prevent a come-from-behind Carter re-election victory. LeWinter told investigative journalist Bob Parry that he had received \$100,000 from "ex-CIA" officers linked to George Bush to put out disinformation about the "October Surprise" during Bush's 1988 Presidential election campaign to counter Democratic Party efforts to exploit the scandal.

What do the CIA files show?

EIR has learned that, while the CIA had absolutely no involvement in the plot to assassinate Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, CIA sources in the Middle East and in Europe had learned of intensive British intelligence, and possibly Israeli Mossad, surveillance of the couple, during the months leading up to the Paris crash. While *EIR* has not been able to learn any details about what is contained in the CIA files, the material could contribute to the ongoing probe in Paris by Judge Stephan, and could possibly implicate the British and Israeli services in the murders.

Such CIA data, if the source reports are accurate, would bolster claims that the British and Israelis were stalking Diana and Dodi during their final months. Recently, Judge Stephan received closed-door testimony from Richard Tomlinson, a former MI6 officer, who said that he had seen MI6 files showing that the couple was under intense surveillance by that agency. In an interview with an American tabloid in early October, Tomlinson stated, "Diana was rubbed out. The agent who masterminded her assassination was absolutely fanatical about the job. I know. He trained me. Diana died at the hands of MI6, the British equivalent of the CIA. Her every waking moment was documented; she was tracked relentlessly. She endured over half a lifetime of torture which ended in cold-blooded murder."

In a soon-to-be-released book, British investigative author Gordon Thomas charges that the Mossad cooperated with MI6 in tracking and killing Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed.

While the reliability of both Tomlinson and Thomas is uncertain, the seriousness of Judge Stephan's probe is not. Were the LeWinter case to be prosecuted in the United States, it is certain that CIA evidence about the circumstances leading up to the Paris crash of last August would surface. Already, attorneys for Al Fayed have formally asked the House Select Committee on Intelligence to conduct an inquiry into what the CIA knows about the crash, based on the unanswered questions in the LeWinter affair.