

French coverup of Princess Diana's death is already unravelling

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Within hours of French magistrates Hervé Stephan and Marie Devidal signing off on the Paris prosecutors' coverup of the wrongful deaths of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and Henri Paul, millions of Britons were already being provided with ample evidence of the French perfidy. On Sept. 3, ITV, one of two national independent television networks in Britain aired a documentary exposing several of the most glaring lies in the French government's "Final Report" on the Aug. 31, 1997 Paris car crash that claimed the life of the "People's Princess," her boyfriend, and their driver.

The ITV broadcast, produced by the same individual who did a June 1998 show presenting evidence of a possible professional assassination of Diana and Dodi, documented some of the glaring holes in the French probe. But the magnitude of the coverup went far beyond the specific "errors" revealed by Nicholas Owen in his exposé.

While the French report, which rejected any criminal action against ten paparazzi who stalked Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed throughout their fateful final visit to Paris, may have caused momentary sighs of relief at Buckingham Palace and at the French ministries, the reality is that the French coverup is sure to trigger a new firestorm of protests, as the full extent of the French police abomination sinks in, and as more suppressed evidence continues to surface.

Mohamed Al Fayed, the father of the late Dodi Fayed, recently told *Talk* magazine that he believes that the British Royal Consort, Prince Philip, personally ordered the execution of his son and Princess Diana. Through his lawyers, Al Fayed has already filed an appeal of the decision by magistrates Stephan and Devidal in the French courts. This is one ticking time-bomb.

He has also filed requests in Britain to be a civil party to the English coroner's inquest, which is scheduled to begin shortly, into the circumstances of the deaths of Diana and Dodi. The Royal Coroner, Dr. John Burton, has granted Al Fayed permission to attend the inquest into his son's death, but has refused to grant him legal standing in the inquest into the causes of Princess Diana's death. Al Fayed has appealed to the High Court for judicial review of Dr. Burton's decision, and this has already caused a stir in Britain — a second ticking time-bomb.

The Final Report

On Sept. 1, the Paris prosecutor's office issued a 28-page "Final Report," dropping all pending charges of manslaughter and failure to assist at the scene of an accident, against ten paparazzi. The prosecutors' document, which was endorsed two days later, in a terse one-page statement by magistrates Stephan and Devidal, placed the entire blame for the crash on driver Henri Paul, based on contaminated blood samples that purportedly showed him to have been drunk and under the influence of two prescription drugs; and on a carefully selected series of eyewitness accounts, mostly provided by the paparazzi themselves.

By dropping the charges against the ten paparazzi, the French authorities, for the time being, blocked public release of the 6,000-page documentary report, prepared by magistrate Stephan, based on his two-year probe. Sources familiar with the contents of the full document have told *EIR* that much of the material directly contradicts the conclusions reached by the Paris prosecutors, and demonstrates that the French police badly bungled the probe — to put it mildly.

Indeed, on the first anniversary of the crash, Stephan had released an interim report which had admitted that there were several gaping holes in the investigation to date. The Aug. 31, 1998 document acknowledged that there were perplexing problems with the autopsy blood tests done on Henri Paul. The same tests that showed high alcohol levels and traces of two prescription drugs, *also showed near-fatal doses of carbon monoxide in Paul's blood.*

As both the June 1998 and Sept. 3, 1999 ITV documentaries also argued, with estimated carbon monoxide levels of near 30% in the hours before the crash, Paul would have been unable to carry on a conversation, walk, or drive a car! He would have been overcome with violent pains in his temple. Yet, nearly two hours of video camera footage of Paul, taken between 10:07 p.m. on Aug. 30, 1997 — when he arrived back at the Ritz Hotel after being off-duty for three hours — and the midnight departure from the rear of the Ritz Hotel, showed no signs of carbon monoxide poisoning, according to several world-renowned experts. Even the final French report acknowledged that almost every eyewitness who spoke with Paul at the Ritz Hotel that night detected nothing unusual in

his behavior. He did not appear to be drunk, and he certainly did not exhibit any of the symptoms of someone with near-lethal levels of carbon monoxide.

When the French prosecutors issued their Final Report, there was no mention of the carbon monoxide presence in Paul's blood samples—a flagrant coverup of an important piece of evidence that magistrate Stephan had highlighted one year earlier!

The Fiat Uno

The Final Report did acknowledge that the Mercedes carrying Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed had collided with a white Fiat Uno, seconds before crashing into one of the pillars of the Place de l'Alma tunnel. Yet, incredibly, the Final Report stated, "the experts' reports have underlined that, in every hypothesis, its role could only have been a passive one."

Murray Mackay, a Birmingham University forensic expert on automobile crashes, had a very different story, which he presented on the Sept. 3 ITV documentary. Mackay's detailed computer simulation of the crash proved that the Fiat Uno had moved toward the center of the tunnel, causing the collision with the Mercedes. According to eight eyewitnesses, interviewed by ITV's Anthony Scrivener, who is Queen's Counsel and former head of the English bar association, at the same time that the Fiat was cutting off the fast-moving Mercedes, a powerful motorcycle had sped past the car carrying Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, and cut in front of them.

While one eyewitness, Francois Levistre, told police that he had seen a bright flash of light from the back of the motorcycle just before the crash, a number of other eyewitnesses confirmed to police that the Fiat and the motorcycle had sped out of the tunnel and disappeared.

The French prosecutors' report made only passing mention of the motorcycle in the tunnel that was chasing the Mercedes at close range. An eyewitness, Jean-Louis Bonnin, had told police that he had been driving along the highway leading into the tunnel, when he was passed by a motorcycle travelling at very high speed. Bonnin stated that there were two people on the cycle, and the license plate included the number "91." The prosecutors' report dismissed the Bonnin account, because his description of the cycle and the passenger did not correspond to that of paparazzi Nikola Arsov. No further mention was made of the possibility that the cycle was not carrying paparazzi, but might have been involved in a vehicular attack on the Mercedes.

The circumstances surrounding Diana's death

Bonnin was interviewed on the ITV show, and he complained bitterly that French police had refused to follow up on the leads he had provided, and had, effectively, blown a chance to find the owner of the motorcycle, which he and a half-dozen other witnesses saw chasing after the Mercedes near the tunnel entrance. That was the motorcycle which, along with the Fiat Uno, apparently disappeared from the face

of the earth, moments after the crash.

At the conclusion of the ITV broadcast, Scrivener declared that the still-unidentified motorcyclists should have been indicted for manslaughter.

The French prosecutors' report also flagrantly lied about the circumstances of Princess Diana's death. Although emergency rescue personnel arrived on the scene within six minutes of the crash, at 12:32 a.m., Princess Diana did not arrive at the Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital until 2:06 a.m.—a gap of over one-and-a-half hours! Medical experts on the scene immediately had diagnosed the Princess as suffering from internal bleeding, which warranted immediate surgery to repair the wounds, surgery that could only be conducted in a hospital operating room. Yet, the Final Report concluded that "no other surgical, anaesthetic or resuscitation strategy could have prevented deterioration in the condition of the patient"—a patent lie, which scores of French, English, and American medical experts have publicly countered.

Secret files still withheld

A third ticking time-bomb is secret file material in the hands of several U.S. government intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The U.S. National Security Agency has admitted that it has 39 documents on Princess Diana, which it is attempting to protect from public disclosure. All told, between the NSA, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency, there are over 1,000 pages of classified surveillance files on the Princess. Under longstanding U.S.-U.K. treaties, most NSA data is shared with GCHQ, Britain's electronic spy agency.

Despite the U.S. government efforts to keep the files from falling into the hands of Mohamed Al Fayed's lawyers, in the September 1999 issue of *Talk* magazine, author Gerald Posner boasted that he had been given access to one of the NSA tapes of a conversation between the Princess and her friend Lucia Flecha de Lima, the wife of the former Brazilian Ambassador in Washington. "The recording was made available by an active U.S. intelligence asset, who says it was one of several collected by the National Security Agency," Posner wrote.

In the same article, Posner reported that "according to an American law enforcement official and an American intelligence agent, Henri Paul spent the last several hours before the crash with a security officer from the DGSE" (the French equivalent of the CIA). The officer paid Paul 12,560 francs (roughly \$2,300), which money was found in Paul's pocket following the crash.

Posner is well known as a "cooperating" journalist for American intelligence agencies, who has written a number of coverup accounts of the John F. Kennedy assassination and other events. But the fact that he was given access to secret NSA tapes and other vital information about the Paris crash, should cause consternation in Paris and London: Vital evidence that the crash was anything but a drunk driving traffic accident is out there, and sooner or later, it will come to light.