

Al Fayed suit targets intelligence ties to Paris crash, Diana's death

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On July 20, after waiting for nearly 15 months while U.S. Federal prosecutors and the FBI probed the April 1998 attempted \$15-20 million extortion and forgery scheme against him, Mohamed Al Fayed filed a lawsuit in Federal court in Los Angeles, demanding more than \$6 million in damages from Oswald LeWinter, Keith Fler, Pat McMillan, and George Williamson, four of the principals in the extortion plot. Fler is a prominent Los Angeles entertainment industry lawyer. McMillan and LeWinter both claim to be former "CIA agents." Williamson is an independent journalist. The four men are accused of attempting to swindle the Harrods department store owner out of \$15-20 million, by peddling forged "CIA documents" suggesting that intelligence agencies, including MI6, had arranged the Paris car crash that killed Princess Diana and Al Fayed's son Dodi Fayed, along with their driver, Henri Paul.

The approach from the four men, which began in March 1998, came shortly after Al Fayed had given a widely reported interview to the London *Daily Mirror*, voicing his conviction that the Paris crash had been the work of professional assassins, not a garden-variety traffic accident, caused by drunk, reckless driving by Henri Paul — the official cover story of the French police. He told the *Mirror* that he was "99.9% certain" that his son and Princess Diana had been murdered, and he announced that he would pay up to \$20 million for evidence documenting what actually occurred in Paris on Aug. 30-31, 1997 that led to the crash.

The 17-page civil suit provides a detailed chronology of the approach by the defendants, first to Al Fayed's Washington attorney Doug Marvin, and, later, to John Macnamara, the director of security for Harrods department store. LeWinter et al. claimed that they had stolen CIA documents that proved that British MI-6, with the full backing of the British royal family, had arranged the assassination of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, employing a Geneva-based Mossad hit team, code-named "K Team."

Al Fayed, after consulting with the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI, and the CIA, agreed to put up \$25,000, which was provided to Williamson, to arrange a face-to-face meeting in Vienna, Austria, where Macnamara was to turn over a bearer pass book for a bank account at the Kreditanstalt in Vienna, containing \$15 million. In return, Macnamara was to receive a series of CIA documents, proving the role of MI-6,

the Crown, and the Mossad in the assassination of Diana and Dodi. He was also to receive a medical report, showing that Diana was pregnant at the time of her death, and an internal CIA document assessing how the assassination was carried out. When LeWinter showed up at the designated hotel in Vienna to meet Macnamara, he was arrested by Austrian police, with CIA and FBI personnel in the vicinity as observers.

Despite the fact that the \$25,000 provided by Al Fayed, which was wired interstate to Williamson, had all been arranged with Justice Department prosecutors and the FBI, so far, the U.S. government has failed to bring any criminal charges against LeWinter's co-conspirators, including attorney Fler. Fler had been key to the deal, according to the suit. He had had previous dealings with Doug Marvin, Al Fayed's American representative. On the strength of his vouching for the purported "CIA agents," Al Fayed proceeded with the arrangement, only to later become suspicious. At that point, he sent Macnamara to confer with U.S. authorities. Fler vouched for the so-called CIA agents and their documents, knowing that they were fake, according to the court filing. There is prima facie evidence of interstate crimes having been committed; and the DOJ has so far failed to explain why there was no criminal action taken against the men.

LeWinter was prosecuted and sentenced to four years in prison in Austria for his role in the documents hoax. The Austrian authorities acted swiftly, despite the fact that they had only limited access to the investigative files, which had been opened by the U.S. Justice Department and the FBI.

Documents found in LeWinter's Vienna hotel room, with CIA letterhead and various coded markings, have been determined to have been forgeries. It is a Federal crime to forge U.S. government documents. Yet, the identified co-conspirators in the shakedown have so far been allowed to go free.

Why the cover-up?

The wire transfer of \$25,000, from Washington, D.C. to a Las Cruces, New Mexico bank account, used by Williamson, constituted one undisputed instance of a Federal felony, according to sources close to the probe. The funds were wired by Al Fayed, in response to a demand by Fler that travel expenses be provided, so that his "CIA agent" clients could travel to Europe for the rendezvous with Macnamara.

Following his arrest, swift trial, and conviction, LeWinter

claimed that the documents he was offering for sale were, indeed, forgeries, but that they contained the true contents of CIA documents, still in the files at the Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

It is the case that the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the U.S. State Department, and the National Security Agency have thousands of pages of documents about Princess Diana, some of which have been released to *EIR* and other news organizations under the Freedom of Information Act. A U.S. Federal judge in Washington, D.C. has ordered the CIA and the DIA to produce all of the documents in their files, for review by attorneys for Al Fayed.

Furthermore, at least up through the early 1970s, LeWinter did have ties to the CIA. At the time, he was an English professor, and he occasionally travelled behind the Iron Curtain to attend scholarly conferences. According to a former senior CIA officer, who had personal dealings with LeWinter in the past, the 67-year-old Austrian-born American citizen had been debriefed by the CIA about some of his East bloc travels. But, eventually, LeWinter proved to be "too much of a flake," and his status as a CIA informant was terminated before the end of the 1970s. The source, however, did not rule out that some CIA operations officers maintained contact with LeWinter, after the formal ties were severed.

In the early 1990s, LeWinter surfaced as a central figure in a documentary film on the crash of PanAm Flight 103, over Lockerbie, Scotland, which occurred in December 1988. LeWinter was depicted on the documentary film, produced by Alan Frankovich, as a high-level Frankfurt-based CIA officer. The film, "The Maltese Double-Cross," was bankrolled by

the late British raw materials magnate and self-confessed MI6 operator, Tiny Rowland. Rowland was one of the most vicious operatives unleashed against Al Fayed on behalf of the British monarchy, following the Paris crash.

All of this makes for a very messy picture. While there is no indication that the content of the LeWinter forgeries in any way reflects material actually in U.S. government files, sources have told *EIR* that, in the spring of 1997, CIA officers posted in the Middle East and elsewhere did receive indications of possible threats to the Princess and to Dodi Fayed, following the earliest revelations of their intimate relationship. Such information should have found its way into the CIA's intelligence database.

Through an elaborate series of bilateral intelligence sharing treaties, some of which date back to World War II, much of the "national reconnaissance" data, gathered by the U.S. National Security Agency and military intelligence branches, is automatically shared with the British secret services. Given the fact that there are growing indications that MI6, at the behest of the House of Windsor, may have played a role in the wrongful deaths of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and Henri Paul, even an unwitting transfer of U.S. intelligence data to Britain's GCHQ—their National Security Agency equivalent—could shed crucial light on the Paris tragedy.

For all of these reasons, the Justice Department has chosen to sit on the LeWinter probe and take no action for more than a year. The Al Fayed suit promises to put a renewed spotlight on the issue of what the U.S. intelligence agencies know about the death of Princess Diana. Now, more than ever, the Justice Department is going to have a lot of explaining to do.

A plot to kill Al Fayed?

A recently published book by two prominent British journalists, Peter Hounam and Derek McAdam, charges that "the British Establishment" attempted to recruit two well-known crooks to carry out a "plausibly deniable" assassination of Mohammed Al Fayed, shortly before the Paris car crash that claimed the lives of Princess Diana, Al Fayed's son Dodi Fayed, and driver Henri Paul.

Who Killed Diana? (London: Vision Paperbacks, 1998) reports that a well-known British cat burglar, Peter Scott, told the authors that he was approached by "people with impeccable links to high society who first wanted Mohamed Al Fayed killed, and later Dodi." The authors, who interviewed Scott in prison, reported, "Beginning three years ago, Scott said he became aware that certain people 'including a former Tory Cabinet Minister' were eager to see Dodi's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, dead. He explained: 'There was a concrete offer doing the rounds

here from the right sources to send Al Fayed home—dad, not Dodi. There was money on the table. . . . The Establishment were looking for a way to get rid of them.' "

Scott told the authors that the effort to stage a hit against Al Fayed intensified in the spring of 1997, as Dodi Fayed's relationship with Princess Diana bloomed. A criminal cohort of Scott's, Russell Grant-McVicar, was also solicited for the assassination plot, according to the authors. And Scott claims that he wrote a series of letters to Frances Shand Kydd, Princess Diana's mother and an old acquaintance, warning her that the affair between Diana and Dodi would soon end "in blood red ruin." He told the authors that, on the morning of Aug. 31, 1997—hours after the fatal car crash—he received a call from Shand Kydd.

Sources in Britain have told *EIR* that they have independently corroborated that the Hounam and McAdam account of Scott's story is an accurate version of the burglar's claims; however, they have not been otherwise corroborated.