

---

## New Angle in Diana Case

---

# Rowland linked to accused extortionist

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Oswald Le Winter is one unhappy fellow these days. The Austrian-born American “English literature professor,” self-described “high-ranking CIA officer and NATO general,” and “disinformationist,” has been in solitary confinement in a Vienna, Austria jail since April 22. He was arrested by Austrian police, backed up by officials of the U.S. FBI and CIA, at a Vienna hotel, and charged with attempting to extort \$15-20 million from Mohamed Al Fayed, in exchange for a series of forged CIA documents, purporting to prove that British MI6, with the assistance of the CIA and the Israeli Mossad, assassinated Princess Diana and Al Fayed’s son, Dodi Fayed. Four of those CIA papers were found in Le Winter’s hotel room in the Vienna red light district. He faces up to ten years in prison in Austria, if he is convicted of the crime.

Even as Le Winter was stewing in his jail cell, authorities in Germany were moving to indict him on charges of art forgery and tax evasion. It is not yet clear whether the U.S. Justice Department plans to indict Le Winter on other charges related to the attempt to swindle Al Fayed. By pre-arrangement with the FBI, the CIA, and an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., Al Fayed wired \$25,000 to a business in New Mexico, to cover the costs of Le Winter’s travel from California, where he was living with his wife, a German-born computer software specialist, to Vienna, where he met with John Macnamara, the security director at Harrods, and the man designated by Al Fayed to pursue the Le Winter affair. The payments to the New Mexico account implicated Le Winter in interstate wire fraud, a felony charge under U.S. law.

*EIR* has conducted an exhaustive investigation into the Le Winter affair in Vienna. For years, while Le Winter was living in West Germany, working as a psychoanalyst (according to one source, using a phony certificate of graduation from a New York psychoanalytic institute) and as an editor of a Jewish magazine, *Semit*, he maintained contact with *EIR*’s European headquarters in Wiesbaden. Over time, *EIR*’s researchers came to be highly suspicious of Le Winter’s tales of intrigue and conspiracy, which were always a mix of accurate and sometimes sophisticated information and analysis, and flagrant disinformation. Le Winter was clearly someone’s agent. But the question was, whose?

The caper in Vienna has shed some further light on Le Winter’s pedigree, and has raised the possibility that, behind the 67-year-old operator and his latest scam, stands none other

than Tiny Rowland, the product of wartime British intelligence’s appropriately named “Double Cross Committee,” who went on to serve as one of the British Crown’s filthiest thieves and murderers in Africa. In the mid-1960s, with the open backing of the British monarchy, Rowland took over the London Rhodesia Company (Lonrho), and turned it into one of the nastiest raw materials cartels and slave-labor operations in the world. While serving British imperial interests on the African continent, Rowland entered into a series of “business arrangements” with the East German State Security Service (“Stasi”) and with the Israeli Mossad. Rowland and his in-house “security” personnel have been implicated in the assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, in the Iran-Contra affair, and in the imposition of the “Greater Tutsi” genocidalist Yoweri Museveni, in power in Uganda.

After Rowland’s mid-1980s effort to take over Harrods department store went sour, Rowland became an avowed enemy of Mohamed Al Fayed, who succeeded in taking over the prestigious store, with the grateful backing of the firm’s stockholders. Following the death of Dodi Fayed and Princess Diana in Paris, last August, Rowland reappeared as one of the Crown’s dirtiest weapons in the campaign to drive Al Fayed out of Britain and France. The destruction of Al Fayed was defined, by the British establishment, as a first priority in the campaign to cover up the facts behind the Paris crash.

Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed died in a car crash in Paris on Aug. 31, 1997, and, to this day, a Paris judge has still not ruled on whether their deaths were the result of a traffic accident, manslaughter, or a premeditated murder plot. Judge Hervé Stephan has been probing the crash since Sept. 1, 1997. Among the most vital unanswered questions about the crash is: Where is the Fiat Uno that collided with the Mercedes at the entrance to the Place de l’Alma tunnel? Eyewitnesses saw the car speed out of the tunnel seconds after the crash, and since that moment, the car and the driver have apparently disappeared from the face of the Earth.

In a series of media interviews, beginning in February 1998, Mohamed Al Fayed said that he is “99.9% certain” that Diana and Dodi were the victims of an assassination.

### **A despicable con job**

Seeking to take advantage of Mohamed Al Fayed’s grief over the death of his son and Diana, Le Winter and a team of

still-unidentified collaborators apparently constructed a series of sophisticated forged CIA documents, “proving” that MI6 had solicited CIA and Mossad assistance in staging the fatal Paris crash. Through Hollywood lawyer Keith Fler, Le Winter made contact with the Al Fayed interests in March 1998, and offered to provide “proof” of the plot.

According to one scenario, it was hoped that Al Fayed would jump at the chance to obtain smoking-gun evidence that British intelligence had killed Diana and Dodi, and that he would go public with the sophisticated, albeit fraudulent documents, without doing adequate checks. Had Le Winter asked for a reasonable sum of money, it cannot be ruled out that Al Fayed would have purchased the documents. But the \$15-20 million price tag was, to say the least, steep; and the Harrods owner, instead of purchasing the documents, assigned his security chief to consult American officials, and then, with that official cooperation, to play along with the still-unidentified holder of the documents.

What evidence points to a Tiny Rowland hand behind the scheme? First, Le Winter had worked on Rowland’s payroll in the making of a 1994 documentary film, “The Maltese Double-Cross,” which sought to exonerate the Libyan government of involvement in the December 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing, over Lockerbie, Scotland. At the time, Rowland was in the middle of extensive business dealings with the Qaddafi government, and would soon escalate his Africa joint-ventures with the East Germans as well.

American-born filmmaker Alan Francovich had already been in touch with Le Winter, and when Le Winter told him that he had been part of a “secret CIA team” in Frankfurt, West Germany that was complicit in the Lockerbie bombing, Francovich, after checking Le Winter’s story with intelligence sources in London, featured Le Winter prominently in the movie, billing him as a longtime “CIA officer.”

When Le Winter finally surfaced, at a face-to-face meeting with John Macnamara in Vienna on the afternoon of April 22, 1998, to finalize the swap of the \$15 million for the CIA documents, he discussed Rowland’s ties, as well as those of Kenneth Etheridge, Rowland’s former chief of security, to the CIA. Etheridge’s name also appeared on one of the forged documents seized in Le Winter’s hotel room, as a “confidential American source,” a reference to someone who is working as an informant for the CIA.

## **Karel Koecher**

One man who was in Vienna in April with Le Winter, and who shed light on the events leading up to the arrest, is Karel Koecher. A former Czech intelligence officer who, along with his wife, infiltrated the CIA in the 1970s, Koecher was arrested in 1984 on espionage charges and placed in the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in New York City. Fourteen months later, the Koechers were freed in a swap for Soviet “refusenik” Natan Scharansky.

While he was in prison, Koecher met Le Winter, who

had been arrested in West Germany on charges of smuggling methamphetamines to the United States. He was extradited to the United States and jailed at MCC. While in MCC, Le Winter was an informant for the FBI or the CIA, reporting on conversations he had with Koecher. Koecher told *EIR* that, after his return to Prague in the East-West swap, he was recontacted by Le Winter, who finished his jail sentence and returned to West Germany. Between 1992 and 1998, Koecher visited with Le Winter in West Germany and in Prague once or twice a year. Le Winter claimed that he was working for the CIA, under the cover of being a professor in a University of Maryland program on U.S. military bases in Germany. Koecher reports that some of Le Winter’s close friends in Germany during the 1990s were, indeed, U.S. Army officers, involved in the military education programs.

Koecher was called by Le Winter in March 1998, and asked if he would be willing to meet for several days in Vienna. Koecher was called again by Le Winter in early April, and asked to drive to Vienna on April 20, to join Le Winter for several days. Koecher made reservations at a modestly priced hotel on the outskirts of Vienna, and the two men spent much of the day of April 20 together. According to Koecher, Le Winter told him an elaborate tale about MI6, the CIA, and the Mossad plotting to kill Princess Diana. He said that he was trying to “sell” his story to media mogul Rupert Murdoch, and that he was also trying to pass the “proof” of the conspiracy on to Mohamed Al Fayed.

Koecher told *EIR* that he found Le Winter’s behavior erratic and decided to leave Vienna, to return home, on the morning of April 22—the day Le Winter was arrested. Koecher described one other man, in his early 40s, who was with Le Winter, as well as a middle-aged woman who claimed to be a longtime close friend of Le Winter.

If, as Koecher claims, he was not involved in the extortion scheme, the question arises: Who forged the CIA documents?

Washington, D.C. sources familiar with Le Winter say that he has been involved in prior forgeries. In 1996, according to one account, Le Winter conned the London *Independent* newspaper into paying \$60,000 for a bogus U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration document that purported to prove that Syrian drug runner Mansour Al-Kassar was involved in shady business deals with Mark Thatcher, the son of the former British Prime Minister.

Indeed, from the moment he got out of jail in New York in the late 1980s, Le Winter appears to have launched a second career as a “disinformationist.” He told former *Newsweek* reporter Robert Parry that he had been paid \$100,000 by “intelligence community friends of George Bush” to put out phony versions of the October Surprise story, about Republicans secret dealings with Ayatollah Khomeini, to delay the release of American hostages in Iran until after the 1980 elections. Le Winter’s claim of the \$100,000 payoff may have been disinformation, although it is true that Le Winter was prominent in the effort to circulate phony information about

the October Surprise events, according to a House of Representatives study.

Le Winter is facing hard time in jail in Austria and in Germany. His wife is filing for divorce. He is in his late 60s and in poor health. If there was ever a time when “the truth might set him free,” it is now. If, as the circumstantial evidence suggests, Le Winter was acting as a pawn in a Tiny Rowland scam-gone-awry, he’d do well to let his story be known—this time, with enough documentation to allow corroboration. It might help repair some of the damage he has already done, by attempting his \$15 million hoax upon a family grieving over the loss of a son, and a beloved family friend.

## A critical new lead on Diana’s murder?

On July 6, *EIR* investigative reporter Roger Moore attempted to interview a man who is suspected of having first-hand knowledge of the events of Aug. 31, 1997, when Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and Henri Paul died in a collision with a still-missing white Fiat Uno. The Fiat was seen by eyewitnesses, speeding out of the Place de l’Alma tunnel in central Paris, seconds after the crash, and it has since disappeared from sight, despite the most intensive search effort ever undertaken.

It has been widely suspected, since the crash, that the Fiat Uno was disposed of, as part of a coverup, of what *EIR*’s investigation suggests was a premeditated vehicular assassination.

Well-placed sources have informed *EIR* that a criminal apparatus, based in the Paris area, is believed to have provided logistical support to the actual architects of the murder plot. Among the elements of logistical backup provided by this organized crime milieu was the assault car, and the disposal of the car following the collision.

The environment for such a vehicular attack had been set by hours of intensive harassment of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed by swarms of paparazzi, who were waiting for the couple to arrive on Saturday afternoon, Aug. 30, 1997, at a small Paris airport. When Diana and Dodi left the rear of the Ritz Hotel, shortly after midnight on Aug. 31, they were chased by a number of paparazzi in cars and on motorcycles. Nine paparazzi are still under investigation and face possible manslaughter charges.

A crucial piece of evidence was made public at the beginning of June, when off-duty senior French police official David Laurent provided his own account of a run-in with the white Fiat Uno, just a moment before the fatal crash. Laurent was driving on the riverfront highway, leading into the Place de l’Alma tunnel, a minute ahead of the Mercedes carrying

Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, when he was passed at high speed by the white Fiat. When Laurent drove up to the tunnel, the Fiat was practically stopped, near the tunnel entrance. Laurent’s testimony, which was suppressed for eight months by the French Criminal Brigade, is the first account that suggests that the Fiat driver may have been lying in wait for the Mercedes.

The man whom Moore attempted to interview on June 6 is Jacques Pottier, a 68-year-old resident of the Paris suburb of Asnières sur Seine. Pottier passes as a paparazzo, but also owns a garage, at his residence at 8 Rue du Congrès, which modifies antique automobiles. Pottier has a criminal record, according to law enforcement sources, which goes back to the early 1970s, when he was jailed on car theft and forgery charges. He was released in 1975, but was sent back to prison in October 1984.

The suburb of Paris where Pottier lives and maintains his “shop” has been recently singled out in several books and newspaper exposés as a base of operations for the *ferailleux* (“junkers”), a loose network of criminals who deal in stolen cars, and function as low-level thugs for factions of the French political establishment. The Asnières sur Seine area has been identified as a base of operations for Charles Pasqua, the former Interior Minister, and a long-suspected link between the neo-Gaullist RPR party and organized crime in France and North Africa. One source has linked Pottier to the hoodlum networks that were employed, in the late 1960s by the Secret Army Organization (OAS), the group that tried, on over a dozen occasions, to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle.

While Pottier refused to discuss the Diana case with Moore, his comments, in the brief confrontation with *EIR*, were revealing. Pottier’s girlfriend, Monique, opened the gate to Pottier’s apartment/garage. Here is the interchange (initially in French) that followed at approximately 6 p.m., Monday, July 6, 1998:

**Monique:** You wish to speak with Jacques Pottier? And who are you?

**Moore:** Mr. Moore.

**Monique:** You are? You desire Mr. P., but he is busy in his garage. I’ll check.

**Moore:** I’ll explain. I am Roger Moore. I am an American journalist, and I think it would be very good for you that we talk.

[The rest of the discussion is in English.]

**Jacques Pottier:** No, I don’t think so.

**Moore:** Okay. Why not?

**Pottier:** How did you get my address and my name?

**Moore:** Well, not in the telephone book.

**Pottier:** You tell me, you tell me just right now, you tell me the truth.

**Moore:** I’ll explain it.

**Pottier:** I don’t like visits from people who are not invited,