

APPENDIX 1

ACCIDENTAL WITNESSES – BEFORE THE CRASH

Taxi driver, Mohammed Rabouille, was in the Place de la Concorde at approximately 12.21 a.m. when the Mercedes passed with several motorcycles close behind. He initially thought it was an escort, but then realised there were too many bikes for one car. The Mercedes did not seem to be speeding.

His story appeared in 'USA Today' on September 5th, 1997. Rabouille is not mentioned in the Stevens Report and the inquest jury did not hear his evidence.

Jean-Louis Bonin

A few seconds later, Henri Paul stopped at the red traffic light at the junction of Place de la Concorde and Champs Elysées.

Jean-Louis Bonin wrote to the police on September 1st after learning of Diana's death and the opening of an investigation. He was alone in his Fiat Punto when the Mercedes stopped on his right. A black scooter with two riders wearing dark helmets came between the two cars. The passenger started taking photographs of the Mercedes occupants through the untinted window. Bonin immediately recognised Diana and Dodi.

As the lights turned green, he saw a dark car blocking the Mercedes. On September 24th, he told Eric Crosnier of the Brigade Criminelle that the bodyguard seemed very annoyed, turning his head a lot. When it was able to, the Mercedes drove off with the scooter and the dark car following at the same speed.

Having travelled about ten metres in the left lane, he was preparing to bear right onto the Riverside Highway, when the Mercedes overtook him on his right. There was very little traffic and he drove at 50 to 60 kilometres per hour (31 to 37mph) in the left lane.

As he came out of the Alexandre III Tunnel, a car was travelling very fast behind him with its headlights full on. It stuck to his bumper, sounding its horn. Bonin pulled over and a light-coloured Peugeot 205 passed him. He was sure it was a Peugeot 205, registered in Paris department 75.

At the start of Cours Albert 1er he saw in his mirror a trials-type motorcycle approaching at high speed with its headlights on full and sounding its horn. He described the bike as an all-terrain type registered in department 91. He pulled over again.

A few moments later, he arrived in the Alma Tunnel, avoided the crashed, smoking Mercedes and saw people taking photographs.

Bonin recognised the dark car from the Place de la Concorde. He also recognised the scooter, the motorbike and the Peugeot 205. He saw two people taking photos and two others running towards the crashed Mercedes from the parked cars. Rather than assist the injured, the paparazzi took photographs of the tragedy. Sickened by their actions, he went home.

His second statement was made on April 27, 1997 to Judge Stéphan. The only differences were that the Mercedes doors were still closed and there were *several* photographers taking pictures. He identified a scooter in front of the Mercedes, a motorbike in front of that, the 205 in front of the motorbike and a dark car at the exit slope. He was definite that the white motorbike (448BME91) was the one that overtook him. He also repeated his assertion that the pale or white car was a Peugeot 205.

Comment:

As will be proved later, it was physically impossible for the Mercedes to reach a high speed by the point where Bonin said it overtook him.

After the Peugeot 205 passed him, Bonin said he went back to the left because cars enter from the right. Although he said he knew that stretch of road well, this statement is wrong. The only entry slip road after the Alexandre III tunnel is at the Alma Tunnel.

We know from Darmon's testimony that he and Rat were on the motorbike closest to the Mercedes in the Alma Tunnel, whereas Bonin said the scooter was closest. The only scooter in the chase was Serge Benhamou's, but he was the sole rider. The only dark car known to have been parked in the tunnel was Arnal's black Fiat Uno.

Bonin stated that the white all-terrain motorbike he identified as Arsov's had two riders, but Arsov was alone on his bike. However, he stated that he saw the same motorbike parked in the tunnel. If this was not Arsov's bike, but part of a plot to assassinate Diana, its rider would hardly have parked near the Mercedes for all to see.

Antonio Lopes Borges & Ana Simao

Lopes Borges was first interviewed on September 24th, 1997 and then by the magistrate on April 30th, 1998. He was driving his Peugeot 306 with Ana Simao as his passenger. At the Place de la Concorde traffic lights, he stopped behind other cars, including the Mercedes. When the lights changed, three or four dark-coloured cars followed the Mercedes at the same speed and a white 4x4, rather like a Pajero, almost crashed into him.

Ana Simao stated that, as they entered the Riverside Highway, two white cars, one like a Peugeot 205, and a larger one, cut them up and continued at very high speed. They followed at 40 to 50 kilometres per hour (km/h) in the right-hand lane with no other cars in front of them.

Reaching the Alma Tunnel, Borges stopped and they saw the crashed Mercedes. A small white car drove between the Mercedes and the central pillars. He saw pedestrians going towards the tunnel. Bouzid came from the tunnel and told him to go back in case there was an explosion. He and the cars behind reversed away.

There was *already* one photographer taking flash photos in the tunnel. Another joined him, took some shots, and then made a call on his mobile. He saw no motorbikes arrive while he was there. Ana Simao described the car seen driving between the Mercedes and the central pillars as small and light-coloured. She thought there was only the driver.

Comment:

At the inquest, Ian Burnett asked Ana Simao what the small white car did. Ana said it was light-coloured, not white and that several cars pursued the Mercedes away from the lights, some dark, and two white. The Peugeot 205 belonging to Alain Guizard, agent for Christian Martinez was pale grey/blue, but others described it as white.

If that was the fabled white Fiat Uno, it was too late to have been involved in the crash. Lopes Borges assumed it had come from the slip road, but it could already have already been at the tunnel entrance.

Thierry Hackett

Thierry Hackett first gave evidence on August 31st, 1997, only a few hours after the crash. He was driving a grey Peugeot 205 at about 50 miles per hour (80 km/h) in the same direction as the Mercedes. However, his evidence contrasted with that of Bonin and changed by the time the judge interviewed him.

In the Alexandre III Tunnel, a powerful black car, possibly a Mercedes, overtook him. He put the vehicle's speed at around 120 or 130 km/h (75 to 80 miles per hour), or even more. This car was clearly being chased by between four and six motorcycles, some with two riders. The motorcycles were sitting on the vehicle's tail and trying to get alongside it. He thought it could be a police chase. However, the car in the left lane was veering from side to

side. Clearly, the motorbikes were hindering the driver. He added that they were motorbikes, not scooters.

In his interview with Judge Stéphan on September 18th 1997, he said that he did not identify the black limousine that overtook him at the time. One of the motorbikes overtook him at the same time and was on the broken line between him and the Mercedes. It was light-coloured with two riders.

However, instead of the other bikes being on the limousine's tail and trying to get alongside it, the other four or five that overtook him in the fast lane were now about 15 to 20 metres behind. This in itself is strange as, in the signed sketch he provided, dated September 18th 1997, he had not yet reached the Alexandre III Tunnel, and three other bikes were immediately behind the Mercedes. Even stranger is the fact that the judge, who apparently did not notice the discrepancies, also signed the sketch.

Having passed through the Alexandre III Tunnel, he saw the Mercedes swerving left to right in the left-hand lane and he could see the light-coloured motorcycle at the same level as the Mercedes on its right with the others behind. At the inquest, Hackett said he saw the last of the motorbikes come off at the exit slip-road before he exited there. He also thought that the Mercedes was caused to swerve by the motorcycles surrounding him.

Comment:

If Hackett was travelling at about 50 miles per hour and the Mercedes overtook him at 75 to 80 miles per hour before the Alexandre III tunnel, he could not possibly have seen the Mercedes swerving about after he passed through the tunnel, which is 330 metres long. He could only have seen both events if he and the Mercedes were driving at roughly the same speed, otherwise the Mercedes would have been too far in front by then.

In any event, if Henri Paul was swerving about at 75mph in the narrow fast lane of the Alexandre III Tunnel with bikes surrounding him, it was a miracle that he didn't crash then.

Also, in his first statement on August 31, Hackett was certain that 'the driver of the vehicle was being hindered by the motorbikes'. However, by the time he gave evidence to Judge Stéphan on September 18, he was no longer certain and said it was just an impression. On August 31st, he said the time was about 12.30, but on September 18th to Judge Stéphan, he said it was about 10.30, even 11pm.

Alain Remy

Alain Remy's statement completely contradicts Thierry Hackett's. Shortly after passing the Alexandre III tunnel, he was overtaken by a large dark saloon travelling at approximately 140 km/h. He saw *no vehicles around the car*. Remy continued towards the Alma underpass where he came across the crash scene. He saw five two-wheeled vehicles parked in the tunnel, one of which he described matched Benhamou's scooter.

Comment:

Operation Paget does not mention the fact that Remy saw five two-wheeled vehicles parked in the tunnel, yet he apparently did not see them on the road to the tunnel. The Mercedes could not possibly have been travelling at 90mph (see Section 4, The Speeding Driver). He did not see the Mercedes swerving about on the road. Neither Hackett, who must have been quite close to him, nor Bonin saw Remy's car in front of them.

David Laurent and the Blanchards

French senior police official, David Laurent described 'a small, light-coloured hatchback car going very slowly just outside the tunnel entrance. His girlfriend, Nathalie Blanchard, stated

that 'the little car we overtook was light-coloured, beige, grey, or white. ...something like an Austin Mini or a Fiat Uno.' She only remembered a driver in the car.

Nathalie's father, Lillian Blanchard, stated that both cars that David Laurent overtook in the tunnel were light coloured, one lighter than the other. They must have been small cars like Renault Clios, Renault 5s, or Peugeot 104s (forerunner of the Peugeot 205).

In his April 1998 statement to the investigating judge, David Laurent stated, 'It was an old model, light coloured, white, or beige, a *Fiat Uno type car*. I cannot tell you whether or not there were passengers in the car. I passed a second car, a ZX Citroen or R19 Renault-style sedan, which was driving in the right lane at a normal speed, 60 or 70 kilometres per hour.' He heard the crash as he came out of the tunnel.

His reason for the changes was that he discussed it with his girlfriend and her family. In June 1998, he stated that the light-coloured car he overtook outside the tunnel had *earlier sped past him*.

Comment:

Nathalie's father, Lillian, was best placed to notice the type of car, as he was the front seat passenger on the right-hand side. He described a Clio, Renault 5, or Peugeot 104. The Peugeot 104 was very similar to the 205.

The car that he and the Blanchards described was light-coloured, beige, grey or white, a hatchback, like an Austin Mini, Fiat Uno, Renault Clio, Renault 5, or Peugeot 104. At night, it would be easy to confuse the rear of a Fiat Uno, Peugeot, Renault 5, or even a Renault Clio. But the rear of an Austin Mini is in no way similar to any of the others.

Brian Anderson

American businessman, Brian Anderson, was riding in a taxi along the Riverside Highway when the Mercedes overtook his taxi. He estimated its speed at between 60 and 65mph, 25% faster than the taxi. The Mercedes had three motorcycles on its tail 'The bikes were in a cluster, like a swarm.'

One motorcycle with just a driver was tailgating the Mercedes two feet behind. Another with two riders was trying to overtake the Mercedes on its left. Referring to the motorbike driver, Anderson said to the taxi driver, 'The guy's fucking crazy'. The third with one rider was a little further back.

The taxi stopped abruptly about 40 to 50 yards outside the tunnel entrance. Hearing a loud bang, he looked up and saw the Mercedes slam into the wall on his right. He also saw what he described as an increase in the intensity of light. After a minute or so, the taxi drove on through the tunnel. Photos were being taken. The driver pumped his horn a couple of times as there were people in the road. Anderson noticed a number of people in the tunnel. One was at the rear of the Mercedes, bending in and appearing to take photos.

He also saw a young woman with shoulder length blonde hair. Anderson asked the driver to stop, but he said it was dangerous and drove on. As the taxi crept slowly past the crashed Mercedes, he saw one of the motorbikes lying on its side. About 20 feet further on, he saw a second. The two bikes were similar if not the same as those he saw tailgating the Mercedes. Although two bikes were seen in those positions, nobody else saw one on its side.

His estimation of the Mercedes' speed agrees with the speed assessment by Mercedes-Benz and various crash experts. The French police's estimation of Henri Paul's speed was over 90mph and they said the speedometer had stuck at 196 km/h or 120mph. That was retracted when Mercedes stated that after a crash the speedometer always returns to zero. Anderson believed the motorbikes contributed to the car losing control.

The French police denied having interviewed Anderson. Operation Paget stated that there were no witness statements in the French Dossier attributed to him that describes the account he provided to them. The taxi driver was never identified.

Comment:

I did initially have doubts about Anderson's story, but what made me believe the important parts of his testimony was the blonde girl he saw in the tunnel and the fact that other witnesses saw a taxi with a sign stop outside the tunnel. It doesn't surprise me that the French police were not interested in his story. His description of the increase in light intensity was misinterpreted by conspiracy theorists as the bright flash that supposedly blinded Henri Paul.

Anderson had trouble describing it or its precise source. However, at least one other witness close to the crash said that the headlights of the Mercedes lit up the other carriageway as it spun in the air. The police clearly did not wish to trace the taxi driver, though it should have been a fairly simple task.

Clifford Goroovadoo

Chauffeur, Clifford Goroovadoo, made a statement at 2.30am on August 31st, 1997. He was waiting for clients on a triangular grass area opposite the tunnel when he heard the sound of the Mercedes downshifting to overtake a slower car. Having driven Mercedes cars, he recognised the sound.

A colleague, Olivier Partouche, was close by and heard the same sound. Goroovadoo saw a motorcycle very close behind and the pillion passenger was taking one flash photo after another in the direction of the Mercedes. There was another car in front, travelling at a slower speed. The vehicles disappeared into the tunnel and he heard a tremendous noise. He then heard the horn sound and immediately ran to see if there were any injured.

Two or three photographers were already there taking pictures of the car and the occupants. None of them tried to render first aid. He told the passengers not to move and to wait for help. He held Trevor Rees-Jones's head and saw Dodi and Diana in the rear. Diana was trying to get out. He told her not to move and that somebody would come to help. Meanwhile, the photographers kept on taking photos and shouting at each other.

His second statement was made at 6 a.m. The car in front of the Mercedes was travelling at a considerably slower speed. He didn't know if that was to make the Mercedes slow down. Now he is not sure if he saw flashes from cameras or the reflections of neon lights in the tunnel. He could not see the Mercedes properly as it had entered the tunnel. Then he heard the crash and the horn blaring.

A new element was then added. Instead of running to the tunnel as in his first statement, he said he went to lock his car first, which would have distanced him by three or four minutes from the immediate aftermath.

Arriving in the tunnel, he noticed four or five men, at least three of whom were taking flash photos. Among them were the two men from the motorbike. Another new observation was that no other cars were parked in the tunnel, only the motorcycle. He named Martinez as being there with Rat and not helping the passengers. Martinez arrived in Serge Arnal's car and Arnal took the first photo of the wreck.

Goroovadoo shouted at the paparazzi, 'What do you think you are doing, not calling for help? The photographers did not answer me, they carried on taking photographs. They were arguing amongst themselves, each of them wanting to be at the front to get the best picture. They were even jostling one another and throwing punches. I could hear them saying 'Fuck off. I am doing my job. I am the same as you, and suchlike.' Then Dr Mailliez arrived with an oxygen mask.

He then described what happened when the police arrived:

‘Among the photographers who were arrested, there are two that I saw at the First Judicial Police Division police station. They are definitely the photographers who did not do anything to help the injured. One of them is apparently called Romuald Rat and the other is Christian Martinez, according to what your colleagues told me. I would add that I had to push the bigger and stronger one of the two away as he was taking photos without helping. I was outraged. I could not understand their attitude. Apart from the two I saw arrested, I would not be able to recognise the other four who approached and photographed the car. I was too busy helping the injured.’

At the end of this statement, he added:

‘I would point out that on the way to your offices I was followed by a motorcyclist who asked me my name and address because according to him I was the main witness of this incident. I sent this journalist packing and I will inform you if I am approached in the future.’

Statement three was made at 9am. He recounted the violent argument between Rat and Martinez, and said he also recognised Serge Arnal. In his fourth statement on September 5th, he also recognised David Odekerken, the driver of the Mitsubishi Pajero and one of the three who ran off when the police arrived.

Statement five was made to Judge Stéphan on September 12, 1997. This time he said he heard the downshifting noise as the Mercedes came out of the Alexandre III Tunnel two or three seconds before he saw it. He was no longer sure what lane the Mercedes was in, how many people were riding the powerful motorcycle that, in this version, was thirty or forty metres behind the Mercedes. He cannot say that photographs were being taken, but he was sure there was a motorbike.

Comment:

Initially, he said he heard the crash and ran to the tunnel. Later he stated that he went to lock his car first and it was three or four minutes before he reached the tunnel. The Alexandre III Tunnel is between 400 and 450 metres from where he was standing. He was clearly prompted to amend his story, as he could not possibly have heard the Mercedes downshifting from that distance.

Also, it is known that Mohammed Medjahdi’s Citroen BX, Brian Anderson’s taxi, David Laurent’s Volkswagen Polo, and Jean Peyret’s Saab 900 convertible were all in front of the Mercedes. Those cars would have obscured his view of that section of the road. He initially stated that the Mercedes was in the right-hand or slow lane, but in his last interview, he couldn’t say which lane it was in.

The paparazzi being thirty or forty metres behind and his three or four-minute delay in reaching the tunnel statements are intended to distance the paparazzi further from the crash.

Finally, in his sixth statement on November 4th 1997, to another examining magistrate, he said that when he reached the Mercedes there were more than a dozen people talking and shouting. There were also two BMW motorbikes, a black scooter and a car stopped behind the Mercedes. Also, both right-hand doors of the Mercedes were open.

If he saw a scooter, it could only have belonged to Serge Benhamou and was in fact dark green, although it possibly appeared black in the tunnel. This statement was intended to distance him further still from the crash.

It is worth noting that fellow chauffeur, Olivier Partouche, also described more than one motorcycle behind the Mercedes as it approached the tunnel. He was also waiting for clients in the same area as Goroovadoo. At the inquest, it was suggested that Goroovadoo

had been got at because his evidence changed to exculpate the people on the motorcycle. Another suggestion was that he was put under pressure to change his statement.

Olivier Partouche

Chauffeur, Olivier Partouche was also on foot awaiting clients, close to Cours Albert 1er. He gave five statements, four of which were to the police. The first was two hours and 25 minutes after the event. The second was six hours and 50 minutes after the crash. The third was on September 5th. He was interviewed again by the magistrate on September 12th.

As he was walking, his attention was drawn by the sound of a high-revving engine coming from the expressway. He saw the black Mercedes approaching quickly and immediately followed by a number of motorcycles. 'Behind the Mercedes, tailgating it was a motorcycle, although I could not see if two people were on it. It was a powerful one. There was a dark car just in front that was clearly trying to slow the Mercedes down to allow the paparazzi to take photographs. The Mercedes and the blocking vehicle were in the right-hand lane and were heading towards Boulogne. The Mercedes driver pulled out to the left.'

In his fourth statement, he replied that he was simply in the vicinity of the tunnel, saw the car speed into the tunnel and nothing else. In his statement to the magistrate, he said that the car in front was not performing any dangerous manoeuvre to slow the Mercedes down. Although he thought the blocking car was a hatchback, he could not identify the make or model, but the police suggested a Ford Mondeo type of saloon car.

He saw flashes from the motorcycle close behind the Mercedes before the vehicles disappeared into the tunnel. Then he heard a skid, followed by an impact he thought was outside the tunnel. After he heard the crash, he went to look after his clients.

Goorovadoo phoned him to let him know who was involved in the crash and he went to the tunnel later.

In a statement on August 31st, he said, 'During my first statement to the first judicial police, I saw some photographers being questioned. I know three of them who are known for their working methods. They stop at nothing and live for the shot and nothing else.'

Comment:

At the inquest, Partouche said, 'I think it was just a kind of impression of the speed. I do not think the car was driving so fast.' The Stevens Report misrepresents his evidence, but it does appear to accept that there was a dark car blocking the Mercedes.

As you'll see later, Benoit Boura's evidence suddenly changed from his initial description of a dark saloon car (berline) to a Citroen Berlingo, which is square-backed and more like a van. Were the authorities attempting to divert attention away from a medium-size dark saloon car that was trying to slow the Mercedes down?

David Le Ny

Le Ny's first statement to the police was on September 3rd, 1997. Then on 24th September 1997, he made a statement to the magistrate.

He and the Catheline family were walking along the grass area separating the Cours Albert 1er road from the Riverside Highway. He saw the Mercedes in the left-hand lane and another large dark car in the right-hand lane approaching the tunnel entrance. The Mercedes was driving normally within its lane. Behind the Mercedes was a motorbike driving quite fast in the left-hand lane with two riders. The Mercedes overtook the other car.

He lost sight of the Mercedes, and then heard braking, followed by a shock, which was not so significant, and then a loud noise of a very significant shock and crash. He managed to wave down the following traffic before it entered the tunnel and the cars stopped.

At the inquest, he was only asked if the following traffic included a taxi, not to describe the other vehicles, other than the motorbike.

The Catheline Family

Jean-Claude Catheline, his wife, Annick, and their daughter, Marie-Agnes, now Marie-Agnes Le Ny, were walking back to their car with David Le Ny. Although they were walking together, their evidence was more detailed than his.

Jean-Claude was interviewed by the police on September 16th, 1997. He was not interviewed by the judge, but was interviewed by Al Fayed's representatives in 2006.

Jean-Claude saw two large dark cars coming towards him, side by side and close together in their own lanes. They were travelling fast, but not faster than the other cars that were in front or behind. Asked if David Le Ny commented about the speed of the cars, he said 'no', but earlier when they watched the traffic, David had said the Parisian drivers were crazy.

Behind the Mercedes and the other dark car, he saw a motorbike and a taxi. As soon as the car disappeared from view, they heard what sounded like the bodywork bumping, like a collision between the two cars before they entered the tunnel.

In an excerpt from his original police statement, he said, 'Almost immediately I heard a second noise, very, very loud, quite different from the first, it was a dull noise and followed by a second, identical noise.' Jean-Claude added, 'I heard a squeal of tyres.'

Stevens Report:

'On foot with his family he saw two large dark vehicles enter the underpass. Seconds after the crash, he saw a motorcycle and taxi approach.

French Dossier: D2375-D2377.

'He then described the arrival of a motorcycle and a taxi, which he said arrived only seconds after the crash.'

Comment:

He did not see the two dark cars enter the underpass. He said the motorbike and taxi were behind the Mercedes, but did not say 'seconds after the crash'. Stevens appears to have invented this. He said that the first collision was 'before the car entered the tunnel'.

Annick Catheline was interviewed by the police on September 16th, 1997 and by Al Fayed's representatives in 2006. She echoed her husband's evidence, except regarding the taxi. She said it was a light colour and it had a taxi sign. They kept walking until they heard the crash and reached the entry slip road, where they tried to stop traffic. The taxi stopped on the right before the tunnel.

She walked towards the tunnel and saw the crashed Mercedes. She did not see the other dark car. They remained there until they heard the police.

In another interview, she said that a taxi was following behind at a normal distance. It stopped just at the entrance to the tunnel, nobody got out of it, and they thought that the occupants were telephoning for help. 'Apart from the statement we made to the French police nobody asked us any questions about the taxi or its occupants.'

Stevens Report:

French Dossier: D2372-D2374.

'She was walking in the direction of Place de la Concorde and saw two large dark vehicles travelling abreast at high speed towards the underpass. [Paget Note: One of these cars was the

Mercedes.] Following the crash, she walked down to the underpass entrance and saw a large dark motorcycle with a single rider approaching at speed. She saw the motorcycle take avoiding action around the Mercedes but was unable to state what happened next. She saw a light coloured taxi, which was behind the motorcycle stop at the entrance to the underpass’.

Comment:

The motorbike she saw approaching with one rider was clearly not Darmon and Rat’s bike. It could only have been Arsov on his BMW or Benhamou on his scooter. If Rat’s bike was trying to overtake the Mercedes on its left as Brian Anderson described, it is possible that Annick Catheline did not see this as the Mercedes and the other dark car obscured her view. She did, however, see Brian Anderson’s taxi stop outside the tunnel.

Marie-Agnès

French Dossier: D1091-D1093 and D1535-D1537.

She gave a statement to police on September 4th, 1997 and another to the magistrate on September 24th.

She saw the Mercedes in the left-hand lane at the top of the entry slope. There was another car in the right-hand lane. In the first interview, she said her attention was drawn to the large dark car by the sound of braking. It was going fast, ‘but not much faster than what people currently drive at’. She saw it going towards the tunnel, but lost sight of it as it went down the entry slope.

She said, ‘I followed this car with my eyes. It reached the entrance to the underpass. There I could only see the back of the vehicle, but I had the impression that the vehicle was slightly diagonal, the back slightly oriented towards the centre line.’

A motorbike with two riders was going after it and had *already entered the tunnel* when she heard the crash. It was as if the Mercedes had hit a pillar and was followed by another that was stronger. Then she heard the continuous sound of the horn. She tried to stop the traffic, remembered seeing a taxi, and drew it on a diagram.

Stevens Report:

‘She heard the sound of brakes screeching and saw a large black car [Paget Note: the Mercedes], in the left hand lane, at the beginning of the descent into the underpass. She recalled that there was another vehicle in the right hand lane as the large black car entered the underpass. She could not describe it.

She could not categorically say whether there was an impact between these two vehicles. *She heard the crash and subsequently* saw a motorcycle carrying two passengers approaching at speed. The motorcycle *entered the underpass* and manoeuvred around ‘something’.

‘She recalled a car arriving after the motorcycle but was not aware of how many vehicles passed, although she recalled a taxi at the scene. She believed that several cars entered the underpass after the crash. ‘I should tell you I got the impression that a vehicle was being driven in the right-hand lane and was overtaken by the car that went on to have the accident. But I cannot tell you anything with regard to this vehicle’.

‘On foot with her family, she saw a large dark car enter the underpass and saw a rear view of the crash. She saw a vehicle to the right of the dark car as it entered the underpass but could give no details. She also saw a motorcycle drive around the crashed car’.

Comment:

The Stevens Report says, 'It is significant to note that Marie-Agnès Catheline stated that she saw the rear of the Mercedes as the vehicle impacted with the central pillar'. This is simply not true! She did not see the Mercedes impact, she only heard it. Regarding the motorcycle, the Stevens Report says that she heard the crash and subsequently saw a motorcycle. This is also untrue. She stated that a motorbike with two riders was going after it and had *already entered the tunnel* when she heard the crash.

The Stevens Report has also substituted 'subsequently' for her phrase '*going after it*'. Stevens Report says that David Le Ny described the motorbike as being 200 - 300 metres behind the Mercedes, but he only said '*behind*'. Stevens also says 'He believed there may have been a large dark car overtaken by the Mercedes but was uncertain', whereas he was only uncertain of the colour.

The Report also introduces the white Fiat Uno that no witness saw in an effort to discount the 'dark' vehicle that many witnesses saw.

The Report says, 'If another dark vehicle were alongside the Mercedes, the white Fiat Uno would have presented an even more hazardous situation than that experienced by Henri Paul'.

'David Laurent and the Blanchard family, who were travelling in the same direction as the Mercedes and were a little distance in front of it, described overtaking a small light coloured vehicle, variously described as a hatchback, Mini or Fiat Uno size.

They made no mention of being overtaken by a *dark* car and nor do any of the other witnesses travelling west in the underpass.'

Whether or not there was a white Fiat Uno, the Mercedes hit another car, white or otherwise, as the tail-light debris apparently proved.

Mohamed Medjahdi

In his first interview at 6.35 p.m. on August 31st, 1997, Mohamed Medjahdi stated that he was driving the light grey Citroen BX in which Souad Moufakkir was his passenger.

He was driving in the right-hand lane at around 50mph (80 to 90km/h). He was in front of Diana's Mercedes, which did not pass him. Seconds after entering the tunnel, he was overtaken by David Laurent's green Volkswagen Polo. He also noticed a motorbike with a woman and a man on board passing him at speed just before the crash.

Still on the flat section of the underpass in the right-hand lane as he was nearing the exit incline, he heard a loud screeching of tyres. Looking in his mirror, he saw the Mercedes rapidly approaching at an angle across the road. *He could see its headlights illuminating the other carriageway.* The Mercedes then straightened up and crashed into the central reservation. He saw the Mercedes rebound and spin towards the right-hand wall.

In a 1998 TV interview, he said he accelerated so that the Mercedes would not hit him from behind. He could not estimate the precise distance between himself and the Mercedes, but he guesses that it was 40 or 50 metres. It was the following morning when he discovered that Diana was involved.

His next interview was on September 17th to a magistrate. He said, 'Whilst in the tunnel, I was overtaken by some vehicles which were travelling faster than myself. My attention was attracted by a screeching of tyres. I then looked in my rear-view mirror and saw a Mercedes coming towards me sideways on with its front turned towards the other side of the tunnel. I heard the screeching of tyres for roughly 20 or 30 metres. I saw the vehicle straighten up in the right direction and immediately afterwards, there was a crash.' Replying to a question, he said that he was not overtaken by any vehicle whatsoever before the exit.

Comment:

Medjahdi could not have been very far in front if he saw two cars speed past the Mercedes, presumably in his rear-view mirror. He also said that others were coming up menacingly from behind. He was still in front of the Mercedes as he drove down the entry slope leading to the tunnel.

First, he said he could not estimate how far he was in front of the Mercedes, then it was 40 or 50 metres. He stated that while in the tunnel he was passed by some vehicles, but later, he said he was not overtaken by any vehicle whatsoever.

David Laurent and his passengers said that Laurent overtook two cars in the tunnel. They estimated Laurent's speed as about 70 - 80km/h (43 – 50mph). The second was Medjahdi's, which was travelling at about 30 to 37mph. This means that there was another car behind Medjahdi. However, Medjahdi stated that there were no cars between himself and the Mercedes. It also means that Medjahdi was not driving at 50 miles per hour and did not rapidly accelerate.

Henri Paul only accelerated after the blocked Exit Slip Road, which means that if Medjahdi was doing 50mph, he must have been a long way in front. He only became aware of the Mercedes in the tunnel when it was skidding behind him. He contradicted himself by saying that he was still on the flat section of the tunnel and then that he was at the beginning of the exit incline.

Interviewed on a TV programme he said he thought the Mercedes was right behind him, but changed that to 'much farther behind'.

At the Inquest, there was an attempt to say that the medium sized dark vehicle with a rounded back that Benoit Boura saw was Medjahdi's Citroen BX. However, there is no way Boura could have seen them that close together. They were half the length of the tunnel apart when he heard the screech of tyres. In any case, Medjahdi's car was light grey, not dark.

Souad Moufakkir

Souad Moufakkir was travelling with Medjahdi (above), some way in front of Diana's Mercedes in the slow lane. The police first interviewed her at around 6pm on the day of the crash. A magistrate then interviewed her 17 days later. In the first interview, she testified that they were over halfway through the tunnel, close to the exit, when they heard sounds behind them.

First, they heard the sound of brakes. She turned back and saw the Mercedes 30 or 40 metres behind and gaining on them. She also said it was a maximum of 80 metres behind them. This is quite a difference considering the tunnel is only about 140 metres long. 80 metres would mean they were beyond the tunnel exit and Medjahdi would have had no reason to accelerate.

Looking back, she saw the Mercedes slide out of control and come towards them. She also saw six or seven other cars, but no motorbikes, coming up behind the Mercedes and passing it after the crash. She also said that they did not call emergency services because at the moment they exited the tunnel, they heard the emergency vehicles. This statement cannot be true, as the first didn't arrive until 12.32, ten minutes later.

In 2004, Alexander Hitchen interviewed her. Souad told him that there was a car in the fast lane alongside or ahead of Medjahdi's car before the crash happened. She described it as a white Fiat Uno travelling at the same speed. She described the driver and a large dog in the back. She stated that Medjahdi overtook the Fiat. However, if the Fiat was in the fast lane, Medjahdi would have passed it on the wrong side. And, if he overtook it, the Fiat would have been behind them when they heard the crash. That's academic anyway because Medjahdi said he did not see it at all.

Souad didn't mention the Fiat in the first interview on August 31st. The reason she gave at the Inquest was because Medjahdi asked her not to speak about it. The problem is that the police were not looking for a white Uno until October 3rd. To add to the drama, the media reported that she kept silent because she was afraid for her own safety.

Comment:

Alexander Hitchen, writing in *The People*, was seemingly responsible for the 'afraid' comment, as at the inquest Souad denied saying that. Her description of the Fiat was what the Dazonnnes said they saw. However, it was too early for the Dazonnnes to have seen the same car. At the inquest, she finally admitted becoming aware of the Fiat Uno story when she saw it on the TV news.

Jean-Pascal Peyret

At least 50 yards in front of the Mercedes, Jean-Pascal Peyret was driving in his Saab Convertible through the Alma Tunnel at about 50mph when he heard two impacts. He described the second as much deeper, like a car ramming into a truck. He also reported that seconds after the crash, a motorbike with one rider wearing a white helmet and dark jacket passed his car.

He called his local police in Versailles the following morning. They took his name and number. His phone rang within five minutes.

'Monsieur Peyret?' said the caller. 'This is the criminal brigade. Thank you for contacting us. As a matter of fact, *we were expecting your call.*' Peyret found the remark curious, and vaguely worrisome.

'Death of a Princess', p.187.

If they were expecting his call because a speed camera just before the crash caught Peyret's number plate, it proves that a speed camera was working in the vicinity of the tunnel. It also intimates that there was never a search for the mysterious white Fiat Uno. If a white Uno had hit the Mercedes, a search would have been unnecessary. The speed camera would also have caught the Fiat and the police would have easily discovered who owned it.

The camera would also have caught the paparazzi vehicles and, if they were as far behind the Mercedes as they stated, the photographs could easily have proved it. Those are two good reasons for the French not to admit the presence of a speed camera.