

Princess Diana's last hours

A reconstruction: What took place 20 years ago in the Alma tunnel in Paris



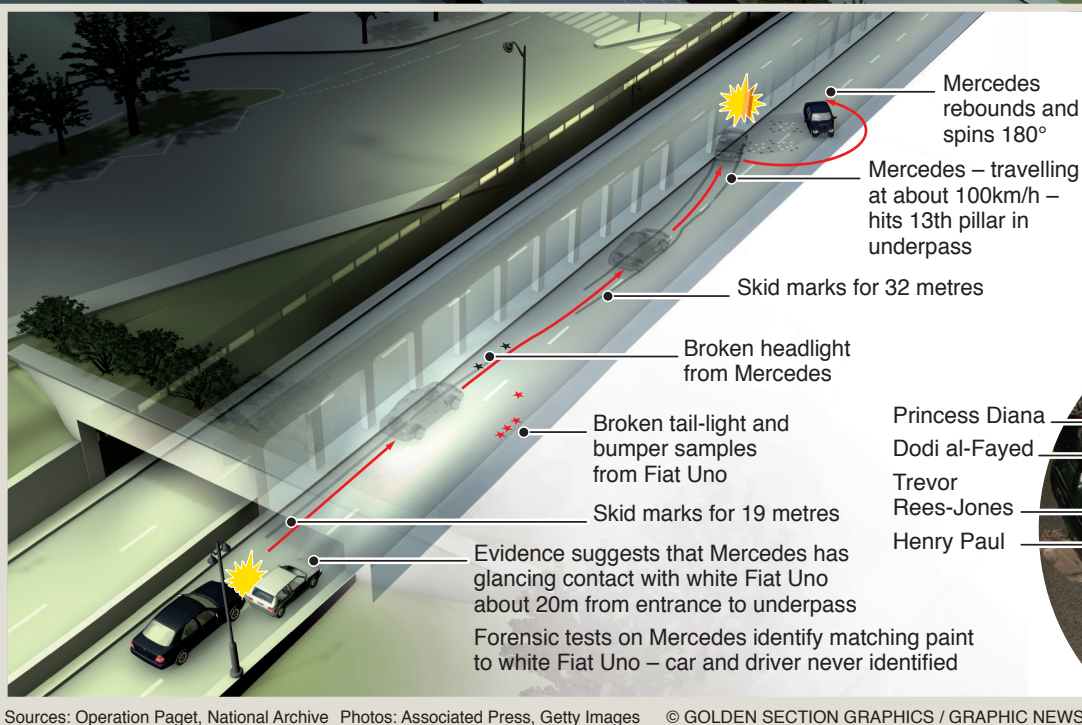
Ambulance drives slowly to prevent exacerbating internal injuries

Crash site in Alma underpass

Slow moving white Fiat Uno

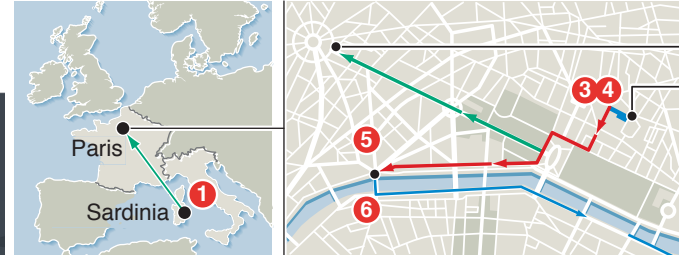
Alma tunnel

- ◆ Henri Paul is driving Mercedes S280, capable of about 210km/h
- ◆ Princess Diana and Dodi al-Fayed sit in rear seats. Only bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones is wearing seatbelt
- ◆ On hitting pillar, two front airbags deploy. Whole front end of S280 crumples, as it is designed to do
- ◆ Momentum makes car spin round before coming to rest, horn blaring
- ◆ Driver and al-Fayed are dead, having both suffered rupture of aortic artery and fractured spine. Rees-Jones suffers injuries to face and chest – his life is saved by seatbelt and airbag
- ◆ Princess Diana found in gap between front and rear seats, barely conscious, with head and chest injuries



Sources: Operation Paget, National Archive Photos: Associated Press, Getty Images © GOLDEN SECTION GRAPHICS / GRAPHIC NEWS

Witnesses testify Mercedes is being chased by photographers on motorcycles

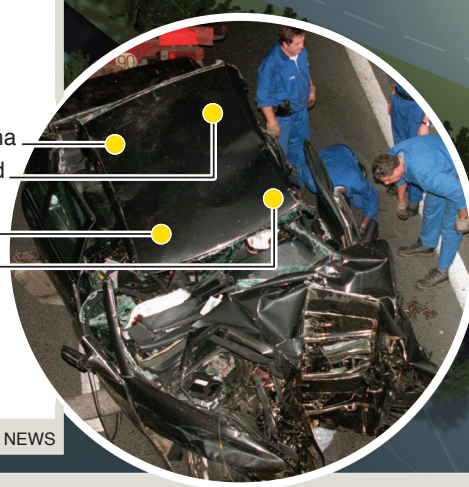


Dodi al-Fayed's apartment
Ritz Hotel
Chez Benoit restaurant
Hôtel-Dieu hospital
Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital
Gare d'Austerlitz

Chronology of events



- 1 Aug 30, 1997:** Princess Diana and Dodi al-Fayed fly by private jet from Sardinia to Paris
- 2 21:30:** Dodi's planned romantic dinner at Chez Benoit is ruined because couple are hounded by some 30 photographers. They decide to dine at Ritz Hotel
- 3 23:37:** After dinner, couple decide to drive to Dodi's apartment. Dodi plans diversion to escape paparazzi by leaving from back of hotel in unmarked car
- 4 Aug 31, 00:20:** Mercedes carrying Diana, Dodi, bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones and driver Henri Paul, leaves Ritz
- 5 00:23:** Mercedes crashes into pillar in Alma tunnel, killing Dodi and Paul. Rees-Jones and Diana are seriously injured. Off-duty doctor stops in tunnel, calls emergency services and provides initial medical treatment
- 6 01:00:** Specialist intensive care doctor and paramedics free Diana from wreckage. While being treated at site she suffers cardiac arrest
- 7 01:41:** Ambulance leaves for Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital
- 8 02:00:** Fearing further heart attack ambulance stops near Gare d'Austerlitz. Doctor stabilizes Diana's blood pressure
- 8 02:06:** On arrival at hospital Diana is unconscious. Surgeons work for nearly two hours to repair tear in pulmonary vein. During this period she suffers another heart attack
- 04:00:** Diana, Princess of Wales is pronounced dead



Diana inquiries

Sep 2, 1997 – French inquiry: Official inquiry opens, headed by judges **Herve Stephan** and **Marie-Christine Devidal**

Sep 18: Witnesses describe slow-moving white Fiat Uno entering Alma tunnel prior to accident – car is never found

Sep 3, 1999 – French report published: Stephan publishes 6,000-page report placing blame on driver Paul, concluding he was drunk and under influence of antidepressants

Nine paparazzi and one press motorcyclist cleared of manslaughter charges

Aug 29, 2003 – British inquest: Royal coroner **Michael Burgess** announces inquest into deaths of Diana and Dodi

Jan 6, 2004 – Operation Paget: Metropolitan police commissioner **Sir John Stevens** begins criminal investigation into deaths and allegations of cover-up

Dec 14, 2006 – Paget report published: Three-year inquiry – which brings together 1,500 witness statements – finds there is no evidence that Diana and Dodi were murdered and there was no cover-up
Metropolitan Police concludes crash was “tragic accident”

Oct 2, 2007 – Coroner's inquest begins: Hearing opens 10 years and 32 days after death of Diana
Lord Justice Scott Baker tells 11 jurors at London's Royal Courts of Justice to “**fully and fearlessly**” examine whether there is any truth in claims that Diana was assassinated

Apr 7, 2008 – verdict: After listening to evidence from 268 witnesses, jury fails to reach unanimous verdict
By a majority of 9-2, jury returns verdicts of unlawful killing as result of “**gross negligence**” of Mercedes driver Henri Paul and paparazzi