

Scotland Yard confirms Lalith's killer. (1993, July 18). *The Sunday Times*.

Scotland Yard confirms Lalith's killer

By Suresh Tissaratchy

Scotland Yard Forensic experts have confirmed that the assassin of DUNF leader Lalith Athulathmudali was the man found at Mugalan Road.

The Scotland Yard report has clearly stated that the bullet embedded in Lalith Athulathmudali's body had been fired from the 9mm weapon which was in the assassin's hand at the time the body was found.

The report also dispelled the theory that the gun may have been placed by another person in the hands of the alleged

assassin. The Scotland Yard finger prints expert has confirmed the gun contained only the alleged assassin's finger prints.

However, the forensic experts have brought to light that there was no firearm discharge on the victim's hands or garments at the time they examined the body. The report also states that in normal circumstances there would be gun shot residue like sarium on the gunman.

They have also said the discharge particles may have been washed away during the heavy shower that took place after the shooting.

Meanwhile Scotland Yard experts have re-

vealed that the gunshot fired at the assassin by Mr. Athulathmudali's bodyguard Thilak Shantha Kumar had not been a direct hit on the assassin and had not caused an injury severe enough to kill him.

The report states "This projectile was distorted at the base and much of its surface had been also damaged.

This indicates that the shot received by the assassin had not been a direct hit since the bullet had ricocheted off another surface and then hit him.

The experts have further said the way in which the bullet had entered the body through the three garments the assassin

wore further proved the theory that the shot was not direct. They have stated that the assassin could have walked much further before he collapsed.

The report also states that although the bullet wound was not severe since the bullet was embedded in the spine the victim would have undergone severe pain.

Meanwhile, Scotland Yard has confirmed that 11 shots had been fired; six shots from the assassin's weapon, and five from Mr. Athulathmudali's bodyguard's weapon.

Analyzing the audio recording of the DUNF meeting the report states that during the beginning

of the meeting there was a series of loud bangs which they have been informed were fire crackers. Thereafter the first string of five gun shots took place during a period of 15 seconds. Then an interval of 2.8 seconds which was followed by a string of four shots fired during 1.7 seconds. Then after an interval of 14.5 seconds the last shot was fired.

This reveals that only 10 shots had been fired not 11. The report says however that one shot could have gone unheard due to the conditions that prevailed at the site.

The controversy which raged over the alleged assassin's identity too, seemed to have been

solved when the forgery experts confirmed that the identity of the victim had been forged. They state that the two layers of plastic and the ink marks where the snap was placed proved that the identity card had been tampered with and another photograph had been placed earlier.

About 23 items were taken to the Metropolitan Police forensic science laboratory in London by SSP Ranjith Samarakoon on June 7.

Immediately on arrival SSP Samarakoon together with Deputy Superintendent Alec Edwards who was in charge of International and Organised Crime Branch of

Scotland Yard handed over all samples to scene of Crime Officer Michel Clothier.

After returning to Sri Lanka on June 23, SSP Samarakoon handed over the sealed documents and samples to Dr. R.A.D. Kumara Wickrema who is the Senior Assistant Government Analyst.

Four items of samples were destroyed during the process of investigations since it was deemed a health hazard. These were the stomach contents and brain contents of the assassin.

Meanwhile in a review of the investigation into the death of Lalith Athulathmudali, Detective Superintendent Alec Ed-



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wards in charge of International and Organised Crime, states that the person known to be Ragunathan alias Appaiah Balasingham shot and killed Mr. Athulathmudali and was later found dead at Mugalan Road.

Injured and fearing imminent capture, he un-

doubtedly took his own life by way of cyanide poisoning. There is no evidence direct or circumstantial to support the allegations that this tragedy was orchestrated by or in any way linked to the Sri Lankan Government, UNP members or other officials including the Police.

An analytical study of LTTE modus operandi showed that this act is in total concert with its current subversive activities.

However, the review or the extract of the investigation had not made any mention of whether any other Tamil militant group was responsible or not.