

Journalist Michael Hastings was investigating CIA director at time of deadly crash

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The widow of Michael Hastings has confirmed that the investigative journalist was working on a story on CIA Director John Brennan when he was killed in a fiery car crash in June.

In an interview with CNN's Piers Morgan on August 5, Elise Jordan said that the story on Brennan will appear in an upcoming issue of *Rolling Stone*. The story apparently relates to Brennan's role in targeting journalists who were working on government secrets.

In its report on Hastings' investigations, *San Diego 6 News* cited an email obtained by WikiLeaks, which alleges that "Brennan is behind the witch-hunts of investigative journalists" who reveal government secrets. It was an internal communication within Stratfor, a global intelligence company with connections to the US state, with a subject line stating that the message was for internal use only and should not be forwarded.

The email went on: "There is a specific tasker from the [White House] to go after anyone printing materials negative to the Obama agenda (oh my). Even the FBI is shocked. The Wonder Boys must be in meltdown mode."

Hastings died in the early hours of the morning on June 19, when his Mercedes exploded after apparently crashing into a palm tree in Hollywood, California. The vehicle burst into flames and the engine was launched 100 feet down the street. One witness compared the sound coming from the blast to a bomb explosion. The impact shook nearby houses.

While initial eyewitness testimony indicated that Hastings had been speeding, new evidence is surfacing that questions such statements. According to the same *San Diego 6 News* report, a surveillance video taken from a nearby restaurant has been studied and shows that Hastings may have been traveling as slowly as 35

mph when the collision took place.

According to *San Diego 6 News*: "That revelation is important because Jose, an employee of ALSCO, a nearby business, and a witness to the accident, told KTLA/Loud Labs (Scott Lane) the car was traveling at a high rate of speed and he saw sparks coming from the car and saw it explode BEFORE hitting the tree."

Hastings, who was 33-years-old when he died, had received threats from government officials in response to his work. In one of his books, he revealed that a staffer of General Stanley McChrystal, whose career was ended in part by an exposé written by Hastings, had told him, "We'll hunt you down and kill you if we don't like what you write."

In response to recent attention to Hastings' death, a CIA spokesperson told reporters that "any suggestion that Director Brennan has ever attempted to infringe on constitutionally-protected press freedoms is offensive and baseless."

However, the connection between the death of Hastings and the leaked email raises serious questions about the death. Los Angeles Police Department officials have declared that there is no evidence of foul play.

Hastings was best known for his *Rolling Stone* exposé that led to the removal of McChrystal as chief of command in Afghanistan.

Following his death, friends of Hastings explained that the journalist had been in a particularly agitated state following the revelations of NSA spying by Edward Snowden in early June. Hastings was meeting with a WikiLeaks lawyer just hours before the crash.

Another *San Diego 6 News* report from July included an interview with Staff Sergeant Joe Biggs, a close friend of Hastings, who explained that the journalist's body was returned to family members in an urn, which

was not in line with their wishes. The fact that his body was returned in this fashion raises even more suspicion regarding his death.

Biggs also released an email sent by Hastings prior to his death with the following subject line: “FBI Investigation, re: NSA.” Hastings suggested that his associates at BuzzFeed request legal counsel before speaking to “the Feds,” before adding, “I’m onto a big story and need to go off the rada[r] for a bit.” Reportedly, Hastings, who frequently posted to social media web sites, made no such posts during the final week of his life.

In reference to this email, Biggs told reporters, “This wasn’t an accident, and I will continue to investigate his death.”



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