

# Andrew Paris did not shoot himself, claims police detective

By Karen Yu

Shortly before midnight on Saturday 2nd June, the famed debunker Andrew Paris locked himself into the study of his Oxfordshire mansion of White Gate in a bid to dispel rumours that the room was cursed. Less than an hour later he was found on the floor of the room with a bullet in his stomach. Had the ambulance arrived just a few minutes later he would have bled to death.

Until now, the circumstances of the incident had convinced everyone that the gunshot was self-inflicted. The oak-panelled study in which Paris' bleeding body was discovered was locked and latched from the inside. There was no sign of forced entry. The gun, a 1950s Colt Python once owned by his late brother John, was already in the room. It seemed like an open-and-shut case of attempted suicide or

unfortunate accident.

A new discovery now threatens to turn all this on its head. Brian Docherty, a retired detective with Thames Valley Police and an old friend of Andrew Paris, claims that the injury could not have been self-inflicted. "Whenever someone fires a gun the blast will send out a cloud of residue, like a powder" explained Docherty. "And that powder can be fairly easily detected on the shooter's hands and the victim's clothes. It's a staple of crime scene investigation."

Yet when Docherty tested the cardigan Paris was wearing the night he was shot, he found no trace of gunshot residue. "If that wound really was self-inflicted then his cardigan would be covered in residue. But there was none," he said.

This clue pushes the case in a startling – and baffling – new direction. The Colt used to

shoot Paris must have been held over four feet away from the writer and television presenter, making it impossible that Paris could have shot himself. "Someone else fired that gun," concluded Docherty. "I wish that wasn't the case, but we have to go with the evidence."

The only problem with this theory: Paris was found alone in a locked room.

The riddle of the residue therefore forces any hopeful sleuth to explain how an assailant could have entered the solidly-built and locked room, shot Paris and then vanished, all in the space of the few minutes it took for family and guests staying at White Gate that night to arrive on the scene.

Andrew Paris remains in a critical condition in hospital and has not yet regained consciousness, and so is unable to give any indication of what happened to him.

What makes this incident all the more unsettling is that Andrew's brother was found shot in the exact same room, under remarkably similar circumstances, seventeen years ago. On Thursday 25th October 1973 John Paris, a well-known writer and explorer, was found dead in that study. He was sitting at his desk with the Colt Python in his hand and a bullet in his chest. The door and windows were all locked from the inside.

John's death came as a surprise to many, sparking rumours that it may not have been suicide. Members of the Paris family have even suggested that he was killed by supernatural forces. Ironically, it was these rumours Andrew Paris was attempting to disprove when he entered his brother's old study on Saturday.

Brian Docherty's gun residue revelation lends credence to the idea that something sinister does

indeed happen to people who stay too long in the panelled room at White Gate.

Docherty himself remains cautious about such conjecture. "I think it's risky to try and link the two events," he warned. "There's no evidence that John's death was anything other than suicide." When pressed for an opinion on Andrew Paris' phantom gunman, he could offer no solution. "I think it's time my former colleagues took over the case."

Thames Valley Police have confirmed that they are now investigating the affair in the light of new evidence. "We have opened an investigation into a possible violent assault against Mr Paris," stated Sergeant Daniel Kemp. "We would ask anyone with any information about the incident to contact Thames Valley Police immediately."