

# Ex-CIA Man Seemed 'Happy'

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WASHINGTON — The woman closest to John A. Paisley over the past two years Monday described the ex-CIA official as a quiet man who had passed through bouts of suicidal depression but was, at the time of his death, "the happiest I'd seen."

In an interview yesterday, Betty R. Myers, 51, also disputed a Maryland State Police assumption concerning the pistol Paisley was known to have kept aboard his

sailboat. Paisley disappeared while sailing on the boat Sept. 24 and a week later his body, with a bullet in the head, was found floating in Chesapeake Bay.

Ms. Myers said yesterday that Paisley had sold the 9mm automatic pistol this summer.

"That gun was not on the boat. John kept it in my apartment this summer and took it away when he told me he had sold it to somebody," Ms. Myers said.

Her statement about the gun heightened the mystery surround-

ing Paisley's death in light of a Maryland State Police announcement yesterday of ballistic findings showing Paisley was killed by a 9mm bullet.

Police spokesman William E. Clark said the seven-man team investigating Paisley's death, which met yesterday in Pikesville, Md., to review the case, hasn't been able to confirm that Paisley sold his pistol this summer.

Clark said that if Paisley sold the pistol to a private individual,

See MD. — Page 3, Col. 5

Continued from Page One

there wouldn't necessarily be any record of the sale.

"We have no significant leads that we are pursuing in the investigation," Clark said. "Unless something dramatic comes up, we just won't be able to tell whether Paisley's death was suicide or murder."

Betty Myers, who said she had a "close relationship" with Paisley for two years, frequently mentioned during the interview that the last few months before Paisley's death "were the happiest times for him that I'd seen."

Ms. Myers, a psychiatric social worker who took a job in Cumberland, Md., the week before Paisley disappeared, said Paisley was not a man who openly expressed his feelings.

"John was a private person. I sometimes wished for him to talk to me more about what moved him. When things were important to him, it was difficult for him to talk about it with others," Ms. Myers said.

She said Paisley, 55, who retired in 1974 from the CIA's Office of Strategic Research and who remained with the agency as a consultant, was deeply depressed two years ago and spoke of suicide.

"He realized he was growing older, he'd left his job, his kids were growing up and he was leaving a marriage that had once brought him great happiness," Ms. Myers said.

In the ensuing two years, she said, Paisley appeared happy and seemed to adjust to the changes in his life. He attended an encounter session called Lifespring last December and again in March. "Lifespring changed him consid-

erably, he worked on being more open," Ms. Myers said.

The week before Paisley disappeared, Ms. Myers said, she spoke with him three times on the phone and they discussed her move to the new job in Cumberland.

"It was the first weekend we'd been apart for six months. He said he was going to do some sailing and try to finish a paper," Ms. Myers said. Paisley was writing a paper — as part of his CIA consulting work — about the recent problems of the B-1 bomber project in getting congressional and presidential approval, according to Ms. Myers.

(CIA sources have told the News-Journal papers that Paisley helped to develop and continued as a consultant on surveillance systems. Thefts of information about the system were uncovered following the arrest of a young CIA watch officer, leading to fears the Soviets had information that would jeopardize effective enforcement of any SALT disarmament agreement. Satellites would be used to check such a pact, President Carter said recently. THE CIA is investigating whether Paisley's death is connected with the disappearance of the satellite information, CIA and congressional sources have told the News-Journal papers.)

CIA spokesmen have several times changed their stories about Paisley's role with the agency and about their own involvement in the investigation of Paisley's death.

Paisley's sailboat, the Brillig, was found aground and empty on Sept. 27, its sails set. His body was

spotted a week later near Solomons, Md., at the mouth of the Patuxent River.

Police spokesman Clark yesterday said investigators have had to "play catch-up ball" while trying to find out how Paisley died because nearly all evidence in the case has been "contaminated."

"What evidence might have been on the boat has been lost because the Coast Guard, the CIA and other people moved things around before we got there," Clark said.

The bloated, badly decomposed condition of Paisley's body "removed any evidence that might have been on the body," Clark said.

Because the bullet that killed Paisley fragmented on impact with his skull, he said, ballistic technicians needed a week to determine the bullet came from a 9 mm cartridge.

Clark said one of the only "tangible things" police have found in their investigation is the two diving belts taken from around Paisley's body. He said police are trying to trace ownership of the belts.

Paisley, according to family and friends, including Ms. Myers, owned one weight belt for scuba diving. "He kept the one belt on the boat because it was too heavy to carry back and forth to his apartment, Ms. Myers said.