

Comment & Opinions

Thursday, September 4, 1997
Vol. 109, No. 54

Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Our photo policy

This week the entire world is mourning the passing of Diana, the Princess of Wales, and the spotlight is on the photographers who dogged her every move and the media who published pictures of her by the millions.

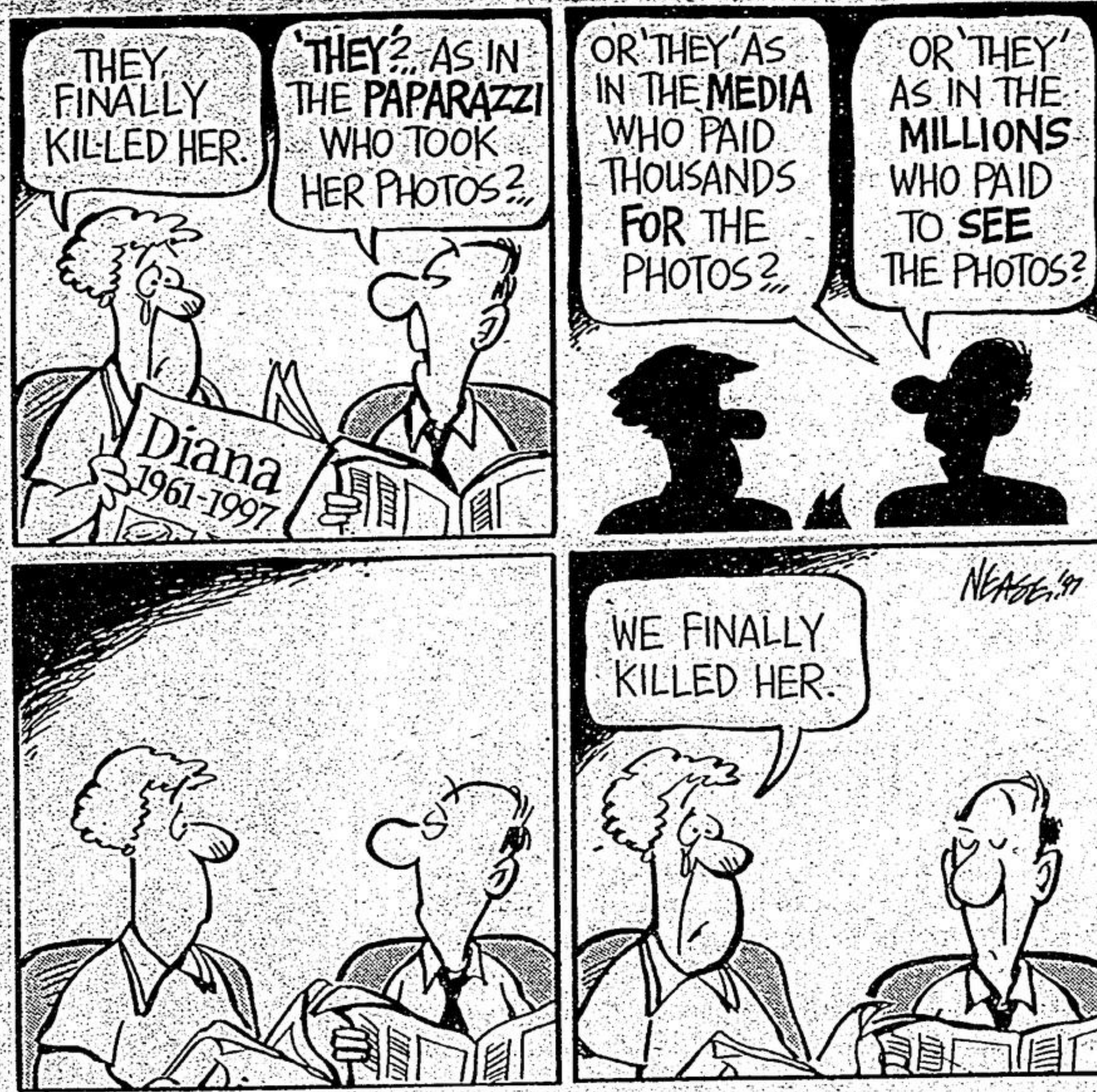
We have no paparazzi at The Tribune. We do have staff photographers, however, and we do use freelance photographers. So it's appropriate to remind our readers what this paper's policies are regarding accident-scene photos and respecting the wishes of people being photographed.

We do shoot car accidents and fire scenes. Unfortunately, they happen in our communities. Though it is rare that we arrive before emergency crews, any reporters, photographers or freelancers connected to this paper would naturally offer what aid they could to victims first before taking any pictures.

When we are choosing which picture to publish, or deciding on which page to put such local tragedies, the utmost sensitivity is used. While we will not withhold or censor the news, we do try to be respectful of grieving family and friends. Obviously not everyone will be happy with our decisions, but we try not to exploit situations.

If our photographers encounter children playing in a public park, and wish to take photos of them, they identify themselves as photographers for the paper and ask them first if they agree to be photographed. If they decline, their wishes are respected. We do not hound people, and the thought of a high-speed chase to photograph a celebrity is preposterous.

We go to great lengths to get good photos and good stories for the newspaper. We also trust our readers to know the difference between professional journalism, and paparazzi garbage.



Reporter remembers visit by Diana

Can anyone stand yet another journalist writing about the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales? Or has everyone had more than enough?



Viewpoint

Kathleen Griffin

That's the question I asked myself when considering whether I should write this column. Really, what is there left to say?

Since Saturday night when I, along with millions of others, tuned into CNN to see the horrifying facts unfolding in my living room, all that could be said, should be said, would be better left unsaid, has been said - assaulting our senses for days now through newspapers, radio and TV.

The paparazzi is to blame. So are the tabloid newspapers. So are the readers of the tabloid press. The mainstream media also must take blame. After all, our Toronto dailies and TV cover Princess Di pretty much like a blanket.

Now we hear the drunk driver is to blame. Excessive speed is to blame. So is our morbid, celebrity-obsessed society. We are all to blame.

But she's still dead. That's the part that's tough to take.

She was alive when she entered the tunnel. And seconds - instants - later, she was gone, fatally injured, never to regain consciousness.

All the world is devastated. But really, who are we to be so moved?

We're not Britons, we didn't even know her. Who are all these Canadians to be so crushed by this tragedy?

Who am I to write about Princess Diana and in this newspaper? Who are we to feel so badly for her two sons, now to be brought up by the same cold, uncaring institution that raised their father? I don't know why we are so sad. All I know is we are.

So I'm writing because I do have a story to share. And I know if it's not written now it will never be written. Because now she's dead.

I covered the 1991 Royal Tour for The Toronto Sun. The

Princess and Charles had long been scheduling separate engagements on these tours and I covered Diana, while a colleague covered Charles. Thank goodness.

When she touched and held AIDS patients at Casey House, I think all the Toronto media fell a little bit in love. When she seemed genuinely delighted by youngsters at a Toronto day care centre, our hearts smiled.

And when she rushed up the gangplank of the Royal Yacht Britannia, arms outstretched and nothing but pure joy on her face, joy which was mirrored by her two beautiful boys awaiting her arrival, well that was about it for me.

Over the course of the week, she got to know the faces of the Toronto press corps, who were herded and bused about with both the international press and British crew. (They were a piece of work - but that's another story.)

She would have a nod or glance or small smile for us each day, and it was special. She was special.

Sun columnist Christie Blatch-

ford and I, along with the Toronto Star's Rosie DiManno, broke the 'fake patients' story in Ottawa.

That was when we discovered the cardiac patients lying in the beds at the Ottawa Heart Institute, scheduled to be officially opened by the Princess that day, were fakes. They were or had at some time been outpatients and were asked by the centre's directors to come in, get into bed and pretend they were infirm for the Princess' visit.

When one very cute elderly woman let it slip she had had her hair and make-up done, as well as purchasing a new pair of fluffy pink slippers for the occasion, we twigged. Not one of the dozen beds held a real patient. We don't know if Diana knew about it or not, but we suspect not. It made us wonder how many other similar set-ups had fooled us and other media around the world.

Nevertheless, we had more than a few laughs as we wrote that copy in our Ottawa hotel room, believe me. Both Christie and I were very, very careful to make sure it wasn't Diana made to look the fool.

Deep down we thought, and I'm still sure, that Diana quite possibly got a giggle or two out of it herself.

So that's the story I have to tell. She was human and we could see it plain as day.

She had it tough but she persevered. And she loved her boys more than anything.

That's why she was loved. That's why she'll be missed.

Tribune thanked for creativity

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to take a minute and tell you how much I like the @Random spot in The Tribune. It is very creative, and of high interest.

Any chance of giving us two to four items each time. Sometimes the most interesting stuff doesn't get a whole column.

Letters

Thanks for the creativity.

Ron Boyd
Stouffville

STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

A Metroland Community Newspaper

Patricia Pappas
Publisher

Andrew Mair
Editor-In-Chief
Julie Caspersen
Editor

Debra Weller
Director of Advertising
Mike Rogerson
Retail Advertising Manager
Stacey Allen
Classified Manager

Barry Goodyear
Director of Distribution

Vivian O'Neil
Business Manager

Pamela Nichols
Operations Manager

about us

News
(905) 640-2100
Retail sales
(905) 640-2100
Classifieds
(905) 640-2874
Distribution
(905) 640-2100
Fax
(905) 640-5477
E-Mail
thetrib@istar.ca
6244 Main St.,
Stouffville, Ont.
L4A 1E2

The Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distribution group of community newspapers which includes: Ajax-Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald-Courier, Barrie Advance, Brantford Guardian, Burlington Post, CityParent, Collingwood/Wasaga Beach Connection, East York Mirror, Etobicoke Guardian, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Pentagon/Whitby Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orillia Today, Oshawa-Whitby-Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, and Uxbridge Tribune Today's Seniors. Contents cannot be reprinted without written permission from the publisher. Permit #1247. The publisher reserves the right to refuse or classify an advertisement. Credit for advertisement limited to space the error occupied.



Letters Policy

The Tribune welcomes your letters to the editor.

Please keep letters to no more than 300 words. Note that letters may be edited for space, libel, spelling, grammar.

While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.