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Diana: The Last Days

Martyn Gregory

DIANA THE LAST DAYS

Martyn Gregory



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Epub ISBN: 9780753544310

Version 1.0

www.randomhouse.co.uk

This updated edition published in Great Britain in 2007 by
Virgin Books Ltd
Thames Wharf Studios
Rainville Road
London W6 9HA

First published in Great Britain in 1999 by
Virgin Publishing Ltd

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Translation of the Final Report by the Paris Prosecutor's Office on the death of
Diana, Princess of Wales © Times Newspapers
Limited, 4 September 1999

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 0 7535 1162 6

The paper used in this book is a natural, recyclable product made from wood
grown in sustainable forests. The manufacturing process conforms to the
regulations of the country of origin.

Typeset by TW Typesetting, Plymouth, Devon
Printed in the UK by CPI Bookmarque, Croydon, CR0 4TD

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

*To Paul Foot (1937-2004),
my friend and inspiration*

CONTENTS

Author's Note

Map

Preface

1. 'Mr Wonderful'
 2. Kiss Chase
 3. Paris – the Last Day
 4. The Accident
 5. The Paparazzi
 6. 'A Model Employee'
 7. The Final Hours, the First Myths
 8. Diana's Fayed Future?
 9. Red herrings and White Fiats
 10. The Myth Maker
 11. Mohamed's Media
 12. The Bodyguards
 13. The Verdict
 14. The Judges' Report
 15. The Masks Fall
 16. Twisting Reality by the Neck
- Appendix: The Operation Paget Inquiry Report into the Allegation of Conspiracy to Murder
- Acknowledgements
- Cast of Characters
- Chronology
- Footnotes

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Some of the key witnesses to the events of 30/31 August in Paris have made important contributions to this book and, where appropriate, these have been acknowledged. Some witnesses have extracted money from the media for their stories; no witness quoted in this book has received any money at all from myself or my publisher.

In attempting to piece together Princess Diana's last days I have obtained information about statements made by some witnesses to Judge Stéphan's enquiry into the Alma tunnel crash that killed Diana, Princess of Wales. France's severe legal and medical secrecy laws are designed to prevent this from being done. In practice, documents emerge unofficially, and many of them have informed this book. Readers can be sure that all factual references and quotations relating to the investigation are reliably sourced, but none can be acknowledged in my footnotes. I would like to thank those who have made this possible, and particularly those whom I am unable to identify.

Jean-Marie Pontaut and Jérôme Dupuis' excellent book *Enquête sur la mort de Diana* (Éditions Stock, Paris, 1998) makes liberal use of statements made by witnesses to the events of 30/31 August in Paris, and extracts from their book are acknowledged in the footnotes. *Death of a Princess* was painstakingly, if very rapidly, researched by *Time* magazine journalists, Thomas Sancton and Scott MacLeod and was published less than six months after the crash. Their book, too, had good access to the early months of Stéphan's investigation, and some excellent French sources. I interpret events around the crash in a different way to the two Americans, but I would like to acknowledge the value of their book's contribution to understanding how Fayed

worked after the crash, and for its detailed study of the technical aspects of the crash itself.

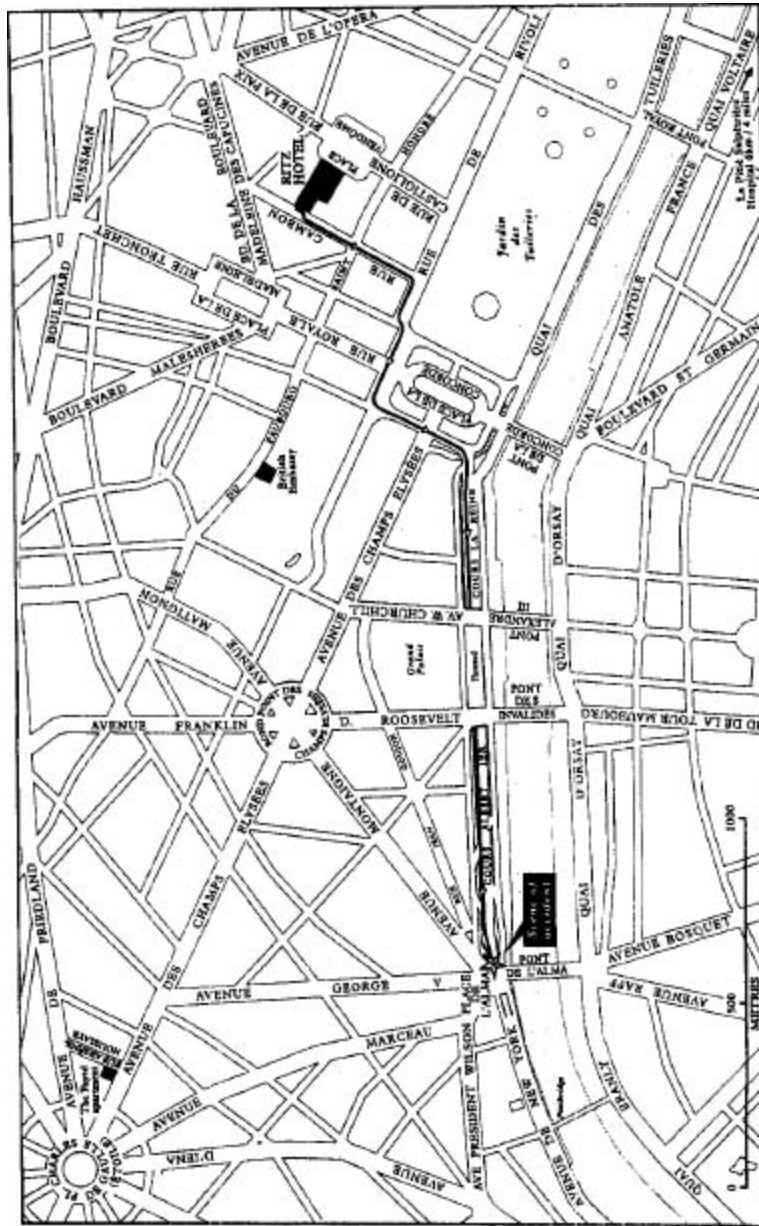
Mohamed Fayed refused my requests to speak to him or any of his staff in Paris or in London. I am, therefore, particularly grateful to his past and present associates and employees who did speak to me. Their insights, and their information about what happened both before and after Princess Diana's death, have been invaluable. Where appropriate, their contributions are identified in the footnotes. Two of Fayed's key security personnel, Kez Wingfield and Ben Murrell, were both generous with the time they devoted to lengthy conversations with me. I am particularly grateful to them for helping me to understand what really happened during Princess Diana's last days in the Fayed family's care. Lawyers in France and Britain, who must remain anonymous, have given me valuable assistance with documents, guidance and insight.

I lent Tom Bower the interview files from my *Dispatches* investigation while he wrote his first-class, unauthorised biography of Mohamed Fayed which has already become the standard work on the Egyptian. I would like to thank him for his generous response in allowing me access to the invaluable notes he took of interviews he was permitted to conduct with Fayed's staff in Paris and London in the week after the crash.

Dr Murray Mackay, professor emeritus of Transport Safety at Birmingham University, is one of the world's leading analysts of car crashes, and he helped me to interpret the findings of the French investigation. Professor Peter Vanezis, Regius professor of Forensic Medicine and Science at Glasgow University, was kind enough to discuss his analysis of the autopsy conducted on Henri Paul.

Some of Princess Diana's closest friends have helped me both off and on the record. The personal devastation they experienced when she died has only been exacerbated by the fantasists who have feasted on her memory. This

motivated many of them to speak to me; I am deeply grateful to all of them. Any mistakes I might have made are entirely my own responsibility.



PREFACE

Like most people I know, I remember vividly where I was when I learnt the awful news that Princess Diana was dead. I woke at 04.00 on 31 August in a hotel room in the north of England. The television was on, showing 24-hour news – I think I must have rolled on to the remote control in my sleep. The screen showed a static shot of the entrance to the Alma tunnel. The rear of a black Mercedes was visible in a scene that was bathed in an eerie orange light and the studio presenter's voice informed me that 'Dodi Fayed is dead, and Princess Diana has been rushed to hospital . . .' I watched in stunned dismay until the Princess's coffin emerged from the Pitié Salpêtrière hospital many hours later.

From a personal point of view, the timing of the tragedy could not have been more hideously inappropriate. The previous day my brother, the Reverend Clive Gregory (who became the Bishop of Wolverhampton in 2007), had married Jenny Hyde in the village of Tetney. Some of our family's happiest moments had been celebrated that afternoon in the Lincolnshire wolds. On the morning that Princess Diana died, I made my way back to London with my other brother, Adrian, his wife Lisa and their baby daughter, Holly, listening in virtual silence to the blanket coverage of the tragedy on every radio station we tuned in to.

Princess Diana's life and death became the most ploughed furrow in world journalism in the months that followed the crash. I started my own investigation at the invitation of Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme in 1998. On the day the film was broadcast, 4 June 1998, I was the first journalist to meet with Princess Diana's bodyguard from the night she died – Alexander 'Kez' Wingfield – since he had left his post

with Mohamed Fayed less than 48 hours earlier. He told me what he had witnessed that night. I could not report what Wingfield said in my film that evening, but he confirmed what I had long suspected – despite the unprecedented coverage, the real story of Princess Diana's last days, and how she came to die, had not been told. This book is my attempt to rectify that state of affairs.

1. 'MR WONDERFUL'

'I'm never going to date an Englishman again, they're such inadequates.'

Diana, Princess of Wales

Summer 1997

Less than a year after her divorce from Prince Charles, Princess Diana had fallen deeply in love. She knew she had to hide her feelings from a public whose interest in her romantic liaisons had soared since the divorce had been finalised in August 1996. The man she had fallen in love with, and whom she called 'Mr Wonderful', was a Muslim. Diana feared that because of this he would be unacceptable to certain elements in her British constituency. Privately, however, she told friends that she dreamt of having his children. She had even asked friends to scout out possible places for the two of them to live after they had married. She thought that they might settle in Nelson Mandela's apartheid-free South Africa, or possibly on the west coast of the USA. Diana longed to become a plain 'Mrs' rather than a Princess, and she had even travelled abroad to meet her new man's extended family.

The lovers had shared nights together in Kensington Palace. Only Diana's closest friends and her butler, Paul Burrell, whom she once described as her 'rock', knew of her new romance, and her secret was very safe with him. In London the couple loved the West End, taking in clubs and restaurants in Soho and Camden. Because Diana was probably the best-known face in the world, she wore wigs, scarves and glasses to disguise her appearance. Dressing up, or more accurately dressing down, gave Diana an enormous thrill. A close friend who saw her in her dark wig said that it succeeded in making Diana look 'ordinary'. The

wig enabled her to do everyday things, such as shopping in supermarkets and queuing, without being recognised. She would place excited phone calls to friends from the queue for Ronnie Scott's jazz club in London. She was 'hiding in plain sight', as one of her friends who received such calls put it.

The risk of the disguised Princess being detected on such expeditions was reduced by her companion's appearance. He was a slightly overweight, chain-smoking, dark-skinned foreigner. Rather than use one of her own limousines or expensive and powerful run-arounds, Diana and her lover would drive into the West End in his clapped-out old car that regularly backfired. The Princess was more worried about being rumbled by a policeman stopping the car than being recognised by anyone in the street. She called her companion on these trips 'Mr Wonderful'. He called himself Dr Hasnat Khan.¹

'Isn't he drop-dead gorgeous!' Princess Diana remarked immediately after she met Dr Khan for the first time at the Royal Brompton hospital in 1995. The surgeon had chatted with Diana in blood-spattered surgical boots for a few minutes after she had dropped into the hospital to visit a friend. The talented Pakistani had arrived in England to work under the internationally renowned heart surgeon, Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub. His life's ambition was to become a consultant, and working under Yacoub represented an enormous step in that direction.

Diana took the initiative by inviting Khan to dinner at Kensington Palace in the autumn of 1995, after meeting him casually several times at the hospital. The couple enjoyed weekends in the Stratford-upon-Avon home of Khan's relatives. They would spend some nights together in the luxury of Kensington Palace, others in the more spartan accommodation of Hasnat's on-call quarters at the Royal Brompton. Sometimes a bewigged Diana would steal into

the hospital. On other occasions she would visit patients before slipping into Hasnat's rooms.

Khan insisted that their relationship remain private and thus they were obliged to embark upon a series of deceptions to ensure that it stayed that way. Even though Khan's name was occasionally mentioned in the papers as being a 'friend' of Diana's, he was not prepared to countenance the publicity that would engulf an announcement of their true relationship.

Diana was prepared to feed disinformation to the media to keep the illusion that her friendship with Khan was simply a professional one. To do this she ruthlessly exploited her media contacts. In November 1996, for example, the *Sunday Mirror* splashed the story of her romance with Hasnat Khan while Diana was in Australia. Knowing that such exposure could be fatal to her relationship with the publicity-shy doctor, she briefed the *Daily Mail's* Richard Kay with information to defuse the *Mirror* story. Kay was probably closer to Diana than any other journalist, and Diana knew a story under his byline would be influential as other journalists were aware of their friendship. Kay was also in Australia at the time, and his 4 November story appeared to demolish the *Sunday Mirror's* scoop. He wrote, 'Princess Diana succinctly described a report that she was in love with a doctor as b*****t.' An 'aide' was then quoted as rubbishing the report, claiming, 'It is no secret the two are friends, but in an entirely professional way. Mr Khan is one of many doctors that the Princess knows at the Brompton and Harefield hospitals in London. That is all there is to it.'

The previous year Diana had been caught by a photographer from the *News of the World* as she left the hospital after visiting Khan. To prevent her romance being exposed, she gave the reporters a sensational reason for her presence at the hospital. That Sunday's front page featured a 'World Exclusive' on how the Princess had been secretly visiting patients at the hospital late at night, in

order to spare them the inevitable press attention that followed her everywhere.²

Another celebrated public sighting of Diana disguised a Hasnat-related mission, and illustrated her determination to keep her friendship with him out of the papers. Diana was famously photographed in April 1996 observing an operation at the Royal Brompton in the *News of the World*. The pictures, showing her heavily mascaraed doe eyes peeping out from over a surgical mask, were widely seen as part of her bid to achieve her objective of becoming, as she herself later put it, 'Queen of people's hearts'.³

On another occasion when the *News of the World* was preparing an exposé of her relationship with Khan, Diana asked one of her friends, Simone Simmons, to phone and tell the *News of the World* that she was still seeing Oliver Hoare.⁴ Hoare was a former 'friend' of Diana's - an art dealer who had come into the public eye over a series of late-night nuisance phone calls which Diana was accused of making.

Experienced by now in manipulating the press, Diana was able to keep the lid on the story of her romance, but she found Hasnat's reticence to go public both alluring and frustrating. She loved being with a talented man who was so dedicated to his work and who was not the least bit impressed with her status. Friends said that he was drawn to Diana's caring and her compassion. He feared that a public relationship with Diana would prevent him carrying on with his own work. Khan's family welcomed her into their midst with a lack of pretence that deeply impressed her. One friend summed it up succinctly: 'Diana had spent years meeting a selection of complete arseholes, aristos and people always trying to impress her but she was completely unimpressable. She said, "I'm never going to date an Englishman again, they're such inadequates."' ⁵

A sign of Diana's commitment to Hasnat was that she introduced him to her sons, William and Harry, on several

occasions. According to Diana's friends, the two boys approved of him. The Princess was determined that William and Harry should learn about her loves first-hand rather than reading about them in the papers.

Diana's well-publicised and much photographed visit to Pakistan to see Jemima Goldsmith and her husband Imran Khan, also involved a degree of subterfuge. Her main reason for being in the country was to visit Hasnat's mother, Mrs Naheed Khan, in the hope that she could convince her that she would make a suitable wife for her son. According to Diana's friends, Naheed Khan was not convinced. Mrs Khan wanted her son to marry a woman from the family's own, aristocratic Pathan clan. She felt that Diana was not 'dignified' enough, despite the Princess's strong desire to fit into a Muslim family with loving and supportive bonds. Maternal objection to Diana weighed heavily with Hasnat, and was one factor in the relationship's foundering in the early summer of 1997. According to very close friends, Diana was at a loss to think how she would be able to overcome Mrs Khan's reservations. Playing on Hasnat's jealousy might flush out his true feelings.

In early June, Diana was seen nightclubbing for the first time since her divorce from Prince Charles. Her companion was Gulu Lavani, an extremely wealthy businessman, also a Pakistani. According to her closest friend she had a major row with Hasnat after a description of how the couple danced until well after midnight in Annabel's nightclub was reported in the papers.

As she danced with Lavani, Diana was trying to decide whether to accept his offer to holiday with him at his luxury beach house in Thailand, which would surely have made Hasnat even more angry, or another offer she had received from Mohamed Fayed and his family. She had known the Egyptian billionaire for some time as he was a friend of her late father, Johnnie Spencer. Diana's father had been one of Harrods' most loyal customers. His widow, Raine Spencer,

had subsequently accepted Fayed's invitation to become a member of the board of Harrods. Diana had declined Fayed's invitation to follow in her stepmother's footsteps. However, she thought fondly of the controversial Egyptian businessman and his family. He had invited the Princess to holiday with him in the past but she had always refused. Diana knew that successive governments had refused to grant him British citizenship. Because Diana was divorced, she was free to holiday where she wished; however, she required permission from Her Majesty the Queen if she wanted her sons, the heirs to the throne, to accompany her on holiday. As Prince Charles had expressed no objection to the idea, Diana did not imagine there would be a problem.

Diana was primarily concerned that William and Harry should have a really good holiday in the first summer since her divorce. She also wanted to enjoy her summer. She told the designer, Lana Marks, that she did not intend to spend it staring at the walls in Kensington Palace.⁶

Friends she discussed her holiday dilemma with in private expressed little enthusiasm for the idea of her going away with the Fayed. One close friend, Rosa Monckton, strongly advised Diana not to go on the holiday.

Rosa Monckton is the wife of Dominic Lawson, the editor of the Conservative-supporting *Sunday Telegraph*, and Princess Diana would not necessarily have expected her to think favourably of Fayed after he had been involved in discrediting John Major's Conservative government in the Cash for Questions scandal.⁷ However, Diana was also godmother to Monckton's daughter, Domenica, and Rosa insists her concern for Diana was personal and not political. The two women had forged their strong friendship while Diana's marriage to Prince Charles was disintegrating. Princess Diana regularly sought Rosa Monckton's friendship and guidance as she parted from the Prince. Over the years neighbours had frequently spotted the Princess calling in at

Monckton's West London house which was close to Kensington Palace.

Close friends in the media warned Princess Diana that there would be an almighty outcry if she were to be seen anywhere near Fayed and his family, particularly with her sons. Anti-Fayed newspapers and media outlets, of which there were many, would not miss the chance to criticise Diana's choice of her first holiday host since her divorce. Some media friends told Diana they would ensure they were on holiday so their editors would not be able to ask them to cover the story if she decided to accept Fayed's invitation. Diana replied that she 'couldn't understand' what they were making a fuss about. The Princess told them that Fayed 'seemed so charming'.⁸

Diana had an ability that many friends had noted to close her ears to advice she did not wish to hear. Some of those who had advised the Princess against the Fayed holiday did not hear anything from Diana until they saw her picture on the front pages of the newspapers with the Fayed family in the middle of July. A key factor in Diana's decision to accept the Fayed family's invitation had been her feeling that William and Harry would enjoy themselves with other children of their own age: she hoped that her two sons would get along with the four young Fayed children – Karim, Jasmine, Camilla and Omar. Fayed had promised the Princess that the privacy she craved would be guaranteed by his own security around the villa in which they would be staying. In correspondence with Fayed's office Diana was assured, 'If we handle this thing properly, nobody will ever even know that you've gone. The idea is that you have a quiet family holiday.'⁹

Everyone in the Fayed family circle was aware how much the Princess's decision to bring the two princes to the South of France would mean to Mohamed. In June, shortly after Diana had told him she would accept his invitation, Mohamed led a family expedition to Pisa in Italy to inspect a luxury yacht he was thinking of buying to entertain the royal

party. The *Jonikal* was a fifty-five-metre long, 873-tonne pleasure yacht he thought might be suitable for the holiday. He brought an interior designer to give him professional advice. Fayed's eldest son by his first marriage, 41-year-old Dodi, joined his father on his Italian jaunt. Dodi was accompanied by his girlfriend, Kelly Fisher, the Calvin Klein model he had been dating for nearly a year.

Fayed was keen to ensure that everything was in place for the royal party, and he wanted the yacht's decor to be appropriate. As Kelly toured the boat with Mohamed, he asked for her opinion.

'We went over some pictures that Mohamed wanted to hang around the boat, and he asked me if I liked them. They were posters so I said, no I didn't like them. I didn't think he should put posters up on a multimillion dollar yacht.'¹⁰

Despite such light-hearted disagreements over decor, Kelly enjoyed the trip to Pisa. She knew how excited Mohamed was at the prospect of welcoming royal visitors and how he craved acceptance. Earlier in the year he had invited Kelly to meet the Queen at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. Her modelling commitments prohibited her from taking up the invitation.

On 11 June, shortly after the family returned from Pisa, Princess Diana wrote to accept Fayed's holiday invitation, on behalf of herself and Princes William and Harry. The following day Mohamed bought the yacht for twenty million US dollars from its Italian owners. It was registered in the name of his Bermuda based company, Mohafa (an acronym of Mohamed Al Fayed) Shipping Co. Ltd, twelve days later on 24 June.¹¹ Mohamed Fayed was ready to receive the Princess of Wales and her two sons.

Few people were in a better position to understand Fayed than Adnan Khashoggi, who knew the Italian textile manufacturers from whom Fayed bought the *Jonikal*. One of the best-known arms dealers in the world, Khashoggi had known Fayed for over forty years. Once his inspiration,

mentor and business partner, the Saudi Arabian had also become his brother-in-law when Fayed married his sister Samira Khashoggi in 1954. The two men later fell out very badly after Fayed's adultery led to Samira divorcing him, a year after the birth of their son, Dodi. Khashoggi terminated his business relationship with Fayed in 1958.

Khashoggi remained an acute observer of Fayed's business career which had prospered in the shadow of his own, and had an interesting observation about the royal visit:

As a Middle Easterner, if you have a VIP visiting you, you make a special effort. But I think in this case the special effort to get a boat for \$20 million had other meanings than the high seas. To over-impress Princess Diana. I think basically he wanted to get closeness to the British Royal Family, to the British government . . . we say when an opportunity knocks on your door either you open the door and take advantage of it or you don't answer it. Well, Mohamed is the type that would open the door. That's what he was doing in Saint-Tropez.¹²

Someone else who could have been expected to be acutely aware of the opportunities that the royal visit could present for his boss, was Fayed's 54-year-old spokesman, Michael Cole. The former BBC news reporter had developed a second career after joining Harrods as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. He was well placed to manage the PR side of the royal visit as he had been the BBC's court correspondent until shortly before he left the corporation. He thus had firsthand experience and knowledge of royal protocol, and had got to know Princess Diana professionally while at the BBC. Indeed, it was while making a BBC film about the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, a film which I directed, that Michael Cole first met Mohamed Fayed.

As Michael Cole prepared for the royal visit to the Fayed's villa in the South of France he was in his element. Ever since he had taken over as Fayed's spokesman, Cole had spent much of his career on the defensive. A DTI inquiry into Mohamed Fayed's acquisition of Harrods had indelibly blemished his boss's reputation, and cast a major shadow over his extensive philanthropic and charitable work. It had also overshadowed his success in turning Harrods into his British power base. Fayed's longstanding bid for a British passport showed no signs of being resolved in his favour, despite a new government being elected. His four children by Heini, his second wife, of Finnish descent, were British by virtue of being born in the UK, but their father was still denied citizenship.

In the summer of 1997, Cole knew that Fayed faced at least two further serious threats to his standing. The first was a libel case which Fayed had launched against the society magazine, *Vanity Fair*, over an article about him two years earlier. Although mild in comparison with much that has subsequently been written about him, Fayed instructed his lawyers to sue the magazine. The case was showing ominous signs of backfiring. The lawyers representing *Vanity Fair's* owners, Condé Nast, had proved resilient and the magazine's London editor, Henry Porter, had also become a considerable thorn in Fayed's side.

The second threat came from 'Tiny' Rowland, whose ten-year feud with Fayed, ostensibly resolved in 1993, had started to become a nuisance again. By the summer of 1997 Rowland was claiming that Fayed had personally supervised a break-in to a safety deposit box in Harrods, which the former Lohrro chief had forgotten he owned until it was brought to his attention by Fayed's disaffected former head of security, Bob Loftus. Rowland was incensed by the break-in, and his allegations against Fayed were also being investigated by Scotland Yard. It was possible that the Yard's

investigation might result in criminal charges being levelled against the Harrods boss and several of his senior staff.

This police investigation into Fayed was ongoing as Princess Diana and her sons prepared for the South of France. For Cole the royal visit was a PR gamble it would be difficult to lose. He had written to Princess Diana saying that he hoped that her holiday with the Fayed family would pass unnoticed. It would have been optimistic, to put it mildly, to believe that Princess Diana and her sons were going to enjoy an undetected holiday, but if the most likely outcome occurred, and the holiday became a media jamboree, Fayed couldn't lose either. He would be seen relaxing informally with royalty.

The press, however, had different ideas. When the story broke in the middle of July, a picture of a casually clad Mohamed Fayed with his arm around the Princess's waist on board the *Jonikal* appeared all over the British press, and prompted an angry response.

Diana's holiday companion was identified as a SLEAZE ROW TYCOON on the front page of the *News of the World*, while the *Sunday Mirror* ran with the more succinct DI'S FREEBIE. Inside the paper quoted Harold Brookes-Baker, editor of *Burke's Peerage*, the directory of the British aristocracy, spluttering, 'This is totally irresponsible of the Princess'. The *Daily Telegraph* summed up a lot of people's feelings with their headline PRINCESS AND HARRODS BOSS SAIL INTO NEW CONTROVERSY.

Abroad, the press speculated about the holidaymakers' relationship in more lurid terms. *Paris Match* compared young divorcee Diana with Jackie Kennedy's widow of the murdered American President, who embarked upon a second marriage with the considerably older Aristotle Onassis, the Greek oil tycoon, during a holiday on his yacht. The magazine was forced, however, to admit that such an outcome was unlikely given the presence of Mohamed's wife, Heini, on the *Jonikal*.

Michael Cole was quick to brush off criticism in the press as spiteful and unfair, huffily pointing out to journalists that 'this is a private holiday. It is a private matter for the Princess and her children and their father.'¹³

The publicist, Max Clifford, gave his own opinion to journalists. Clifford had forged a strong personal link with Fayed during the Cash for Questions scandal, and he had also developed a rapport with Cole. Clifford says he accepted no money, as he told the *Times*:

'The Princess will have gone into this with her eyes wide open . . . One of the reasons why she is the most popular member of the Royal Family is because she mixes with all sorts of people and understands how most of us think'.¹⁴

There was no comment from Buckingham Palace.

In the London *Evening Standard*, Henry Porter reacted furiously to the pictures of Princess Diana being handled by Fayed on board his yacht: 'The judgement of the Princess of Wales - normally so acute about her public profile - plainly suffered a lapse when the idea of spending a holiday with Mohamed Al Fayed was raised. To expose herself to this tubby social climber's hospitality would be bad enough, but suggests that she has succumbed to the old allure of a yacht in the sun . . . which the Royal Family past and present has found hard to resist.'

Porter reminded his readers of the Duchess of York's reputation as a 'freeloader' and 'gift seeker'. In an article derisively entitled 'A graduate of the royal school of junketing', Porter derided Princess Diana's decision to take her sons on holiday with the Fayed family. He conjured up the spectacle of Fayed's involvement in the Cash for Questions scandal.

'We expect better these days . . . it is inconsistent to accept money from the public purse, or in the case of Diana, a large divorce settlement from her husband, at the same time as benefiting from the largesse of a man like Mohamed Al Fayed. We pay them to keep their distance, just as we

paid Neil Hamilton and his wife not to accept Al Fayed's hospitality at the Ritz hotel.'¹⁵ Porter could not have known when he wrote his article that the Fayed's would entertain Princess Diana herself at the Ritz hotel before the month was out.

Readers of the *Evening Standard* would not necessarily have known that the author was involved in a bitter legal battle with Fayed at the time. When Diana was pictured on the *Jonikal*, the libel case was scheduled to be heard in the High Court in London in October 1997. As editor, Porter was at the helm of *Vanity Fair's* defence.

Having discovered in the course of preparing their defence, information about Fayed's attitude towards women, the pictures of him cavorting with a scantily clad Diana particularly appalled Porter. Diana was now, literally, in his hands.

Porter was worried chiefly about the potential danger to Diana's reputation. It would be uncharacteristic if Fayed did not seek to exploit his freshly forged royal link with the Princess and her two sons to his own advantage in the libel case. Fayed had instructed George Carman QC, the most feared libel lawyer in Britain, to prosecute *Vanity Fair*.

In addition to Porter's proprietorial concern induced by Diana consorting with his sworn enemy, Porter was concerned for Diana on a personal level. Though he did not himself enjoy a personal friendship with the Princess, he had met her socially on a couple of occasions, and was delighted when his daughter had presented Diana with a bouquet when she was the guest of honour at the *Vanity Fair* summer party in 1996.

Porter resolved as soon as he saw the pictures of Diana with Fayed that he should warn her of the danger she could be placing herself in. Through intermediaries he sent urgent warnings to the Princess. He was disturbed when both intermediaries informed him that his warnings had not been well received: 'I think she felt she could handle it all, I think

she felt that he was sometimes a “rogue” – she put it in that mild way – but that he was no threat to her. Frankly she took no notice whatsoever.’¹⁶

Porter also knew about Fayed’s dubious, yet perfectly legal, practice of bugging his staff and colleagues’ telephones, as well as those in his private residences, such as the villa in Saint-Tropez where Diana and the princes were staying with the Fayed family. On the basis of what he had learnt about Fayed’s past activities, Porter was concerned that Fayed might take a secret recording of the Princess while she was in his family’s care. *Vanity Fair’s* lawyers had come across very substantial evidence of what Porter describes as Fayed’s

almost obsessive use of eavesdropping equipment. All sorts of things have appeared from former employees demonstrating that he made a great habit of taping telephone calls, bugging rooms, filming people and so forth. And this we felt was quite dangerous for her, for obvious reasons: she was the most famous woman in the world and she could easily have been taped; she’d already had trouble with taped conversations in her life [the ‘Squidgy tapes’ of a private conversation with a boyfriend which had been leaked to the press] and she could easily have been taped talking, unawares that she was being listened to.¹⁷

Porter knew from Fayed’s former director of security, Bob Loftus, that Fayed had already used his sophisticated security setup to track the Princess when she had visited Harrods. A former major in the Royal Military Police, Loftus had worked for Fayed for nine years before he was dismissed in 1996. He had become *Vanity Fair’s* most important witness as it constructed its defence against Fayed’s libel writ. He had retained nearly 300 hours of tapes that Fayed had instructed him to record while he worked for

him. Included amongst these were several which revealed how Fayed had monitored Princess Diana's progress around Harrods before appearing to bump into her by chance.

Whenever Diana appeared in the store, security assistants stationed at every door were expected to report the fact to the control centre. Loftus would then be advised – and so would Fayed's private secretary, Mark Griffiths, or his personal assistant. They would also be told where she was heading.

Often, especially after her separation and divorce, she would have no personal-protection officer with her, unless one of the princes was accompanying her. She would be uninhibited as she walked around the store, often stopping to talk to people.

Once Fayed had been notified (assuming he was in the store) he would find out from store detectives exactly where she was, and then go down to the shop floor – with his own personal-protection team – to greet her, making the whole thing look like a chance meeting.

Porter feared that the Princess, enjoying her first summer since her divorce from Prince Charles, was a vulnerable target for what he saw as Fayed's wiles. 'She had not much to do that summer, and she needed somewhere to entertain her children when they broke up from school: he was a rich man with an apparently jolly nature, with immense generosity, offering her a boat and every possible enjoyment on her holiday, and she was really a sitting duck.'¹⁸

The pithy one-liner that perhaps best sums up the nature of the beast that Porter believed Mohamed Fayed represented, was minted by the CIA more than thirty years earlier. As they monitored Fayed's activities in Haiti, they reported that he was at once 'friendly and evil'.¹⁹

Fayed's colourful past had made him obsessed with his personal safety, and that of his family. In the intervening three decades, as Fayed's wealth and his empire had grown,

he had built one of the most extensive personal security setups in Europe. The long, dirty wars with Tiny Rowland had further heightened his paranoia over his own security, and that of his young and growing second family.

Former employees, headed by Bob Loftus, had given detailed accounts of Fayed's extraordinary obsession with his personal security, details which could only have comforted Princess Diana as she flew with her sons to the South of France in the Gulfstream jet provided by her host. She could not have failed to notice how Fayed's team supplemented the security provided by the Royal and Diplomatic Protection squad.

In charge of Fayed's personal close-protection team was a large, bespectacled former British soldier, 32-year-old Paul Handley-Greaves. Michael Cole had liaised with Kensington Palace over the details of Diana's holiday and Handley-Greaves would be responsible for the close protection that would be required. Handley-Greaves had served in the Middle East, guarding the British Ambassador in Beirut at one stage in his career, before joining Fayed in 1996. Fayed had been particularly pleased to hire Handley-Greaves, as he had obtained the distinction of winning the 'sword of honour' when he was at Sandhurst.

Fayed's own bodyguards – usually referred to by him and his family as 'donkeys', or even, to the knowledge and disgust of the guards, as 'dickheads' – were trained in Close Protection to guidelines developed by the Royal Military Police. These had been devised by the RMP to protect members of the British government and the Royal Family. The guidelines prescribe that, 'Each company in overseas theatres is to maintain a five man team for tasks within the theatre'.²⁰ For his own family, Fayed insisted on even more rigorous measures – undercover bodyguards were inserted into his children's schools, and car patrols cruised through the area to spot potential kidnappers when they were away from home.

The Fayed team's quasi-military bearing and communications were impressive. The whole family were allocated secret codewords that the bodyguards used when they spoke to each other on shortwave radios, or muttered into mobile phones. Fayed himself was known as 'Condor', his Finnish wife, Heini, as 'Dove'. Three of Fayed's children were known by the codewords 'Hawk', 'Kestrel' and 'Raven'. Fayed's bulletproof car that he uses in London is known as 'Lion', and his gold jet ranger helicopter is codenamed 'Greyhound'. The epicentre of Fayed's empire, Harrods, is known as 'Snowdon', and his favoured London heliport at Battersea as 'Sparrow'. Fayed's head of security in Paris, Ben Murrell, remembered how close protection personnel waiting for Fayed to land at 'Sparrow' were required to communicate: 'If you are waiting at the heliport, instead of saying "Mohamed is two minutes away", we used the word "Moon" which meant that he was two minutes away from landing.'

When questioned over the Princess's security in Saint-Tropez by journalists concerned about the arrangements that had been made for Diana and the two princes, Fayed was able to boast, 'she has superb security, both Scotland Yard and my own 24-hour bodyguards, who are ex-British army, either SAS or the marines. There are always four security men wherever she and the children go.'²¹

Even though the team around the royal party was one short of the RMP textbook requirements, and only half the number who routinely surround Fayed whenever he emerges in public himself, the presence of the princes' two Royal and Diplomatic Protection Squad officers compensated for the shortfall.

Princess Diana and her two sons struck up a good rapport with the Fayed guards during the holiday. Diana was particularly struck by the performance of a former royal marine, Alexander 'Kez' Wingfield, and made a point of writing to him personally when she returned to Britain.

Wingfield had worked for Fayed for five years since leaving the marines, and he was the leader of the close-protection team Handley-Greaves assigned to Princess Diana. As a marine corporal Wingfield had completed the Royal Military Police Close Protection course, and he had served at NATO HQ at Northwood, where he was stationed.

Dodi Fayed did not join his father in the South of France for the start of the royal visit. He was enjoying a break with his girlfriend Kelly Fisher in Paris. Kelly had a modelling assignment in Nice in the week that Princess Diana was to spend with the Fayed, and she hoped they would meet the Princess later in the week. Dodi had been presented to the Princess on a couple of occasions in the past, but Kelly had never met her. As France celebrated Bastille Day on Monday, 14 July, the couple paid a visit to Mohamed's villa Windsor, in the Bois de Boulogne on the outskirts of Paris. They both knew it would be their last visit to see the villa in its current state because Mohamed had decided to auction its entire contents in two months' time. What neither knew as they played with their pet dog, Bear, in the villa's spacious grounds was that they would never again visit the villa as a couple.²²

The villa had been the Duchess of Windsor's home until her death in 1986, and Mohamed Fayed had rented it from the city of Paris since that time. The then Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, had allowed Fayed to take over the property at a nominal rent, as the Egyptian had promised to restore the shabby house to the standard that the former King Edward VIII and his wife had maintained. Fayed's restoration of the Paris Ritz in the 1980s had greatly impressed Chirac, and in recognition of the millions he had spent on the hotel, he was awarded France's 'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur' in 1986. In 1993 he was promoted to the rank of 'Officier'.

The villa's main rooms and the Windsors' living quarters on the first floor had been faithfully restored, and kept as a private museum, while the top floor was an apartment for