

## Paparazzi

I would like for you to think about the person in the world that you least like. Let's assume for the moment that it is a man. Now if you will, attribute characteristics to this person that make you not like him. Some of you might be thinking about a misuse of power. Others may be considering lying, or cheating, or an inability to be trusted. "Love of money above all else" is seldom considered a good trait; neither is willfully endangering other people or invading their privacy. We most surely dislike anyone who would take advantage of or endanger our children.

Let us now assume that this is not just one person but a group of people and let us assume that these rotten things are being done not to us, but to an entirely different group of people. Even though we are not actually the offended persons, surely we as a group can summon the Christian decency to hate these people, too.

I'm probably going about this all wrong. We shouldn't hate anyone; it would be much more prudent to ask you to listen to what I have to say and judge for yourselves. But doesn't it really hack you off to see someone who is so pushy and cares so little about other people that they would invade another person's world and stalk them and keep them from enjoying the things that they like to do? They might even hurt the person or scare their kids or do all manner of vile, offensive things to them, and just when you think that this monster can't sink any lower, this creature takes a picture of the defenseless person and puts it in some cheap magazine.

That's right. We are talking about the paparazzi, that group of photographers who make a living taking pictures of celebrities. It all started a long, long time ago in a country far, far away.

The first famous paparazzi was Tazio Secchiaroli, who was born in Italy in 1925. As a young man, he spent five years taking photos of locals and tourists in Rome. He worked long hours and for very little money. He soon came to see that there was much more money in making pictures of those who did not want to be photographed than in taking shots of those who wanted their pictures made. It occurred to Secchiaroli that fans of movie stars and other celebrities would pay for candid pictures of these stars. At the same time, the publishers of magazines realized filling their pages with less than favorable pictures of well known people would guarantee huge revenues from sales of their magazines. So the fifties in Italy witnessed a growing popularity for scandal magazines and a shift by Secchiaroli and other photographers to the pictures that would fill the pages of those magazines.

Secchiaroli not only knew these pictures would pay; he knew why. During the early years of his career, he told a fellow worker:

The public is particularly attracted to scenes in which famous people attempt to escape the photographer's gaze: the struggle by which these people pay for their celebrity with the loss of privacy demonstrated a vulnerability. The fiercer the celebrity's struggle, the more enthralled the public becomes. This has turned us into a hunter of faces and gestures, pursuing and then capturing our prey.

Through most of the decade of the fifties, Secchiaroli took pictures of stars in clubs, in the street, at their homes, any place he could find them. He made lots of money selling the shots to the scandal sheets, but little happened to make him stand out among dozens of photographers doing the same thing. Then at about 2:00 a.m. on August 19,

1958, he was taking pictures of ex-King Farouk of Egypt (and probably making a menace of himself) when the former King attacked him. As if this melee was not enough, later that morning, he was taking pictures of Ava Gardner and Anthony Franciosa when he was attacked by Franciosa. On another occasion, he was chased by Anthony Steel who was escorting Anita Ekberg. It seemed like someone was always wanting to hit poor Tazio. But the beatings led to lots of publicity, and he was becoming very well known, and the pictures he was able to take as he retreated sold incredibly well. This made Secchiaroli realize that what he really needed was conflict, and the ability to get all of the action on film.

His first attempt to test this theory occurred one evening as he followed Walter Chiari and Ava Gardner around Rome. Secchiaroli took his friend Elio Sorci with him so Sorci could take shots of any action. The two were taking pictures of the couple but did not have anything of real value. Secchiaroli decided to stage an incident. After telling Sorci to be ready, he got very close to Gardner and set off a flash very near her face. She screamed, and Chiari attacked Secchiaroli. While the two men scuffled, Sorci took shots of the fight. Secchiaroli had his valuable pictures, and a new art form was invented.

Secchiaroli's nerve and guile moved him to the top of the paparazzi ladder, and he had this to say to his fellow photographers:

Now, there's our target, our face. Who's going to let it get away?

Obviously on these occasions, nothing will stop us, even if it means overturning tables and waiters, or raising shrieks from an old lady who doesn't quite get what's happening, even if it means shocking John Q.

Citizen who protests in the name of the rights of man. Even if the police

intervene or we chase the subject all night long, we won't let go. We'll fight with flashes; we'll help each other out. We can't afford to be delicate; our duties, our responsibilities as picture hunters, always on the lookout and pursued ourselves on every side, make it impossible for us to behave otherwise.

Secchiaroli had gained fame on his own, but nothing compared to that he was granted because of Federico Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita* which created the word "Paparazzo" and the mystique of Via Veneto. In the movie, a photographer was assigned to photograph the grieving widow of a famous man who had died in an accident. His film was exposed, and the photographer had no pictures. His employer gave him two hours to get shots of the grieving widow or lose his job. The photographer went to the widow's home and convinced her to let him take several pictures of her. The photographer was named Paparazzo and the character was unmistakably based on Secchiaroli. The Via Veneto was a wide, tree-lined street in Rome which was the home of expensive restaurants and bars and a hangout for the rich and famous. Since Anita Ekberg, Ava Gardner, Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Anthony Steele, and Frank Sinatra all frequented the street, men like Secchiaroli could be found there also.

When you are mean and underhanded, people don't like you very much, and you sometimes get hurt. This is the case with Ron Galella, who, like so many other during the early years, had started out on Via Veneto. Galella was threatened by Richard Burton and later beaten up on the set of one of Burton's films. His most famous encounter, however, was one with Marlon Brando. In 1973, Brando was scheduled to appear on the *Dick Cavett Show*. Galella had gained information that Brando would be arriving in New

York by helicopter. When Brando arrived, the photographer was waiting. After getting all the pictures he could at the airport, Galella followed the actor to the TV studio. After the show, Cavett and Brando took a limo to Chinatown, and Galella continued to take pictures. Brando eventually called him over, asked a couple of questions, and hit him (right hook to the jaw). The punch knocked five of Galella's teeth out, and the injury to Brando's hand resulted in a three day stay in the hospital for him. The punch also cost Brando \$40,000 that he paid in an out-of-court settlement. About a year later, Brando had a press conference in New York. Naturally, Galella attended. He was not allowed into the press conference, but got shots of Brando leaving. The best shots of the day, however, were of Brando and Galella. They showed an aloof Brando walking a few feet in front of the photographer. Galella, camera in hand, was wearing a football helmet.

The two Brando episodes gained Galella a great deal of notoriety, but his true obsession was Jacqueline Kennedy. Her glamour was a mystery to him. He originally shot her in New York in 1967. Shortly after that, he started shooting her regularly. He soon figured out her schedule and tried to be outside her apartment each evening from 6:30 till 8:00 (dinnertime and ballet time). He sold his first picture to *Newsweek* in December of 1967 (a shot of Jackie at a \$500 a plate dinner that he had crashed). From 1967 until 1972, Galella spent most of his working hours shooting Jackie. But then in 1972, after taking pictures of Jackie's children, Galella was stopped by the Secret Service. He was arrested and charged with harassment, but the charges were dropped by a judge who also said that Jackie should pay his attorney fee. Galella sent her a bill for the \$500 he paid his attorney. He is still waiting for her response.

After the incident that led to his arrest, Galella continued to have problems. When he tried to follow Jackie, Secret Service agents would block and harass him. Finally, Galella sued her and three agents. Jackie (now Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis) countersued for invasion of privacy and harassment. The trial lasted 26 days. Judge Irvin Ben Cooper, a President Kennedy appointee, threw the book at Galella. He was ordered not to go within one hundred yards of Jackie's apartment and not to photograph her closer than fifty yards or the children closer than seventy yards. This was appealed and eventually changed to twenty-five and thirty feet with no restriction on the apartment. Once again, Galella started shooting Jackie and gradually started breaking the twenty-five foot injunction as he found that unworkable in large crowds. In 1981, he photographed her at Martha's Vineyard with Maurice Tempelsman, whom she was dating. Jackie and Tempelsman went out in a boat off the Vineyard. Galella hired a boat and went after them. He was reported to the Coast Guard, and they escorted him back to land and issued a summons to the boat owner. Again, Galella was arrested and charged with breaking the twenty-five foot injunction. He went back in front of Judge Cooper, and, predictably, things did not go well. He was facing a \$120,000 fine and seven years in jail, so he agreed to a deal with a \$10,000 fine and never photographing Jackie and the children again.

In 1969, Galella took enough time off the Jackie watch to take pictures of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. They would occasionally stay on a yacht they had moored on the Thames. One weekend when he knew the couple would be on the boat, Galella paid a watchman to lock him in a five story warehouse that gave him good visibility. Indeed, from his vantage point, he was able to get many good pictures without

being discovered by the stars. The down side, of course, was that the accommodations were not first rate. Galella had to share his sleeping area as well as some of his food with rats. But he got his shots and a double-page spread in *The Enquirer*.

I would like to make one comment about the papers and magazines who publish these “invasion photographs.” Naturally, their “anything goes” policy of putting any kind of pictures in their publications is partially responsible for the rash behavior of the photographers. In fact, the ownership of the *National Enquirer*, which has been an outlet for the work of the paparazzi since 1952, has always very candidly bragged that their publication is devoted to sex, scandal, murder, and mayhem. So from my perspective, they are also devoted to the moral breakdown of society. They have robbed us of our innocence. They have destroyed our moral fiber. They make our youth dance funny, forget their manners, and be fat, and in some small way, I think they may also be responsible for the invention of the fax machine. If you can’t make these connections, at least you will agree that today these magazines and photographers are making life miserable for a lot of famous people.

Today’s paparazzi are just as innovative, just as money hungry, just as sleazy as their predecessors. The former “flash in the face” has been replaced by intentional auto crashes. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver were forced off the road several years ago. Recently, *Herbie Fully Loaded* star Lindsay Lathan’s car was hit by a minivan belonging to photographer Galo Ramirez. Many feel this was done deliberately. The twenty-four-year-old Ramirez was arrested by Los Angeles police and released on \$35,000 bail. Some still blame the death of Princess Diana on the paparazzi who were chasing her in Paris in 1997. Several paparazzi were taken into custody; none was

convicted, and the French investigation concluded that they had not caused the crash. On August 31<sup>st</sup>, Diana's brother Earl Spencer said,

I always believed the press would kill her in the end. But not even I could imagine that they would take such a direct hand in her death as seems to be the case. It would appear that every proprietor and editor of every publication that has paid for intrusive and exploitative photographs of her, encouraging greedy and ruthless individuals to risk everything in pursuit of Diana's image, has blood on his hands today.

Of course, the greedy and ruthless individuals that Spencer was talking about were the paparazzi.

One interesting result of Diana's death was the immediate desire of the mainstream newspapers to distance themselves from the paparazzi and the tabloids. The *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* define "paparazzi" for a confused public: "That Italian word means a swarm of stinging, biting insects or free-lance photographers aggressively pursuing celebrities." The paparazzi were also described as outrageous, relentless, obnoxious, and cruel. Some newspapers used wildlife metaphors such as hounding jackals, birds of prey, bottom-feeders, reptilian, wolfpack, feeding frenzy, and vultures trolling on the fringes of journalism. *The New York Daily News* suggested that "they confirm the worst stereotypes of the media: vultures who will do anything to make money."

It's true. These "stalkerazzi," as Leonardo DiCaprio calls them, will do almost anything. In January of this year, a listening device was found in a garden across the street from Nicole Kidman's house. The garden was an area where security personnel



who work for Ms. Kidman camp out. Kidman was concerned and wondered if she was the target of the device. Her father, Anthony Kidman, said that the paparazzi have made his daughter a prisoner in her own house. Ms. Kidman said recently that she had used wigs and fake accents so she can go out without being bothered. It appears that whoever placed the bug hoped to hear security staff organize Kidman's daily activity. Following the discovery of the device, two paparazzi were arrested for pursuing Kidman's car in a dangerous manner.

Ten years ago, Alec Baldwin punched a paparazzi who was trying to get shots of him and then-wife Kim Basinger and their new daughter.

In April, *Legally Blond* star Reese Witherspoon told police that photographers surrounded her car and tried to force her off the road.

Many years ago, Demi Moore and Bruce Willis listed their paparazzi grievances which included trespassing, climbing their trees, and picking through trash to discover secrets.

After his embarrassing encounter with a Hollywood hooker, Hugh Grant and girlfriend Elizabeth Hurley became a favorite target of paparazzi. The couple even complained that photographers took pictures of them in their bathroom.

Many photographers now make common practice of taking pictures of the children of celebrities. Many years ago, this was considered dangerous for the children and was rarely done.

Cameron Diaz told the *New York Times* about an incident in which a friend was knocked to the ground by a car, and a photographer inside the same care then took pictures of her helping her friend. No wonder Diaz has gained fame for her middle finger

salute to all paparazzi. It is said that the middle finger of Diaz's right hand has been photographed more than almost any other part of her body.

Well-known paparazzi Mark Rylewski admits, "I feel a little like a sleazeball but then again, you know, life is hard."

Michael Storms is a well known D.J., promoter, and photographer in South Beach. In an interview, he admitted to chasing down Britney Spears recently. He also shot Sean "P.Diddy" Combs as Combs left a club. He hid in the bushes and waited for the most opportune moment. When "P.Diddy" was close enough, he burst out of the bushes and shot. Friends complained that "He was two inches from P.Diddy's face!" Owners of South Beach clubs complain that storms and photographers like him are crazy. "They scare away our clientele and ruin our business."

When Tiger Woods married last October, he made sure to keep the paparazzi away. His camp told the tabloids that the engagement was off. Invitees were never told exactly where the ceremony would take place. They were flown in on private jets. All this for a little privacy.

Michael Douglas said in June of this year that paparazzi had used baby monitors to eavesdrop on him and his wife Catherine Zeta-Jones. Douglas, who has two children with Jones, says there is a bounty hunter quality to the act.

"Desperate Housewives" star Eva Longoria said she has also had scary run-ins with photographers. Longoria, who lives alone, said she has come home before and photographers have been hiding on her property and scared her when they suddenly appeared.

Why would one human perform this sort of atrocities on another human? The answer, of course, is money. Good shots typically sell for two to three thousand dollars. If they are exclusive shots, they can bring tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Thanks to intensified competition among celebrity-obsessed publications such as *US Weekly*, *Star*, *In Touch*, and *People*, the stakes for snagging exclusive snapshots have never been so high. One-of-a-kind pictures (a coveted celebrity wedding shot, for example) can fetch a million dollars. Recently, the first shot of Reese Witherspoon's son sold for \$100,000. A picture of Chris Martin kissing Gwyneth Paltrow's pregnant belly brought \$50,000, and a photograph of Ben and J.Lo reading *US Weekly* was purchased for \$75,000 by *People* magazine to keep it from their rival.

So as you can see, this taking pictures of people and selling them is kind of bad and something we probably should not do, but it is very lucrative. Well, bad might be a bit strong. It's really more of a neutral act that doesn't rally bother anyone, and the pay is enticing. In fact, most people like having their pictures taken and consider the photographers to be true friends.

Let's take a look at some pictures.

- Here is Happy Higgins. I was able to get this shot by impersonating a waiter bringing refreshments into his board meeting.
- This is the John Freer trio. While never gaining the acclaim that they so richly deserved, they have become moderately famous while backing two headliners.
- One is this man, Amen Marlin Anderson whose baritone chorus of Amens has punctuated every Christian Rock Album for years.

- The other is Skeets Denison whose crooning is enjoyed by every YMCA member from New York to California.

Gentlemen, please be reminded that this is a commercial venture and yet we are gathered as the Athenaeum Society. Argument during the exhibition period is strictly forbidden. Oral bids will not be honored. Sealed bids will be accepted at the conclusion of the program. Items will go to the highest bidder.

- Items such as this photograph of Dr. Ken Dougherty. At this local gathering, Dr. Dougherty is explaining to his waiter that the medical advice he is giving him is vastly superior to a gratuity.
- Here Drs. Dougherty and Schweizer try to explain what's wrong with England to a true Brit.
- In this shot, Marvin Denison is asking the question, "If you were in Athenaeum Society and had to write a paper by next Thursday, what would you write about?"
- "I am too the president of the Athenaeum Society!"
- Logan Askew explaining to the young lady that billable hours are billable hours even if he is wearing shorts.
- "That story about Petey Rogers being a gentleman attorney and me confessing to a bunch of crimes when I heard him in court – I wrote that story."
- Somewhere in the middle of this picture is Danny Guffey. Figuring out just where is as impossible as figuring out Danny.
- Fred May standing beside the Director of Music sign. Must have had his group working on the new Starbucks jingle.
- Down the steps and to the left. Light switch is on the right as you go in the door.

- “You see I was in this society and then I got out for a few years and then I got back in. No, I don’t think I owe any back dues.”
- William Turner (drink in right hand and food in left), the Christian County Historian designee, and in the center, Mike Croft, the mayor of Crofton.
- In search of celebrities, but alas, only a WHOP van and a locked door.
- There is more than one way to track down Jim Love. Keep your eyes on the food line, and sooner or later, he will show up.
- Judge Steve Tribble supporting the local teams.
- Hal King enjoying some friends, a meal, and whoever the speaker is. Everyone else at the gathering thinking, “I would sure rather be listening to Hal.”
- George explaining to listeners that this year we would be going by Byers Rules of Order.
- Three trips to the concession stand and it is only halftime.
- Lots of pavement and Bob Cope’s legs.
- Rob Harper recently hosted a brunch for his “Elimination of Extraneous Letters Society.” Note the upper left corner where Rob demonstrates a sign as it will now appear.
- Charles Tilley, master of limerick, and his English teacher wife who has written nine papers for him.
- John Tilley and his daughter Emma, who has written one paper for him.

The individual pictures that you see this evening are not your only opportunity to purchase. My staff and I have put together a set of prints available only this evening at this location. We have chosen to title this entry into photo heaven the “Blue Scrapbook.”

The “Big Blue” or “Old Blue” as we fondly refer to it, contains not only everything that you see here this evening, but also glimpses of our past as well as a fresh look at our lives today. Follow Charles Tilley as he takes part in the coin toss preceding the big homecoming game at Tiger Stadium and then to the dance afterwards and that awful incident with the homecoming queen. Own Russ Guffey as young soccer star and as veteran soccer coach. This and much, much more can be found in “Blue Scrapbook.”

Don’t think you have the bank account for “Old Blue”? Then you are going to love what we have for you now. This is “Three Ring Binder,” and it comes in both red and green. I prefer the green, but that is a preference based solely on eye color because they are both packed. Go to eastern Kentucky to see young football star Hal King preparing for a game. Follow action in the second region as Wendell Lynch stars for the state-tournament-bound Tigers and then see him years later as he leads Hopkinsville bankers into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If you must have “Three Ring Binder,” write your bid on the bid sheets provided, specify green or red, sign the sheet and give it to one of my associates. Remember when you bid, the man sitting beside you wants “Three Ring Binder” almost as much as you do.

Now let’s see some more pictures.

- Pierre Denison and former Athenaeum member Jean Daniel Kemp are seen here with Charles DeGaulle.
- King Fred of Siam.
- Jean Freer seen here with a fact sheet on coffee futures that King Fred asked him to bring.

- These men have come to our area from all over the world because of this man, Sheik Ali Ben Anderson who has promised them untold riches from the oil rich lands of northern Christian County.
- This is the home of Robert Sivley who has kept us from taking his picture for three weeks through the clever use of wigs and accents.
- I have finally cornered the good doctor at Backyard Burgers across from the old Shell station. Filled with what I later realize is overconfidence, I fall for the oldest trick in the business – the hand in front of the lens.
- Dr. Sivley then explains that he truly hates “Baby Boomers” and gives me his Cameron Diaz salute.
- No act of defiance here – this is merely Ken Dougherty at a health fair answering a young man’s question about prostate examination.
- Be it maze or labyrinth, George has gotten himself lost again. This time he has been lost for two days and a night with only his muted cries to indicate his true condition.
- Rescue will only be possible through the use of the bloodhounds. Here the K-9’s get George’s scent as we hear George pleading, “Don’t send the dogs in again!”

Bids will now be accepted.

Dave Cavanah

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