



Diana - Closely Guarded Secret

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Inspector Ken Wharfe, the first royalty protection officer to publish a memoir, was a crucial figure in the life of Diana, Princess of Wales, for nearly seven years. In that time, he became a close friend and trusted confidant who shared her most private moments. His first-hand account contradicts many of the so-called 'facts' about the Princess and provides an affectionate, if not always uncritical, insight into this complex, troubled, but ultimately fascinating woman. Here is the authentic voice of a man who played an important role during Diana's most trying times, and in her beloved sons' formative years, and who shows himself to be an exceptionally perceptive observer of the events that unfolded around the Princess. After Inspector Wharfe resigned his position in 1993 (making headline news), Diana announced her withdrawal from public life and axed her Scotland Yard protection - a decision her former 'top cop' believes led ultimately to her death. This account presents the most intimate portrait of Diana to date, as well as a fitting tribute to one of the outstanding figures of our age.

Diana - Closely Guarded Secret Details

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Nada says

Although it was not bad, I'm surprised that people seem to think that this book is great. Ken Wharfe was Diana's Scotland Yard PPO (personal protection officer) for 6 years, and he did have the privilege of an insider that is why I was enthusiastic about the book. However, I was let down multiple times. Ken is pretty much absorbed by himself, he takes every event and manages to make it about him. Although, his admiration of Diana is clear but he doesn't seem to like her due to many reasons and throughout the book I felt he was somewhat judgemental, and he really minimizes her role as merely a woman who is interested in charity and vindictive towards her husband. But what turned me off the most is that he repeatedly defends the media! The last chapter he appears to be blaming the victim(s) for the cause of death. Ken says that Diana and Dodi should've gave the paparazzi their desired photos to prevent being chased to death by them,...excuse me, what the F? FYI, he repeatedly mentions that the media were always fair to him hence why he defends them. Put in mind that Ken indirectly defends the establishment and denies any wrong doing in their part and he rules her murder as a merely a tragic accident which could've been avoided if Diana were a good girl who obeyed rules, knew her place and did not runaway from the paparazzi who were only doing their job. I can't say that I hated the book because there are some certain anecdotes which I enjoyed, and it did give me a few interesting information but overall it doesn't really do Diana's story its justice. It's lacking and purposely shows Diana in a specific biased light that certainly appeals to the establishment and the media. I just couldn't trust Ken.

Belinda in Alabama says

Very Good

I really enjoyed this book. Mr. Wharfe lays out a story of his time protecting Princess Diana. It seems to me to be very truthful. I've read many books about the princess, but found this to be believable from someone who was not a relative or member of the royal family. Mr. Whafe was obviously fond of the princess but was realistic in dealing with her. His views on the death of the princess are also very realistic. They aren't far fetched or looking for secret agents hired to kill. I hope you enjoy this book and see that everyone is still just human after all. Happy Reading.

Carla Cunningham says

I really liked the way Mr. Wharfe writes. Very easy to read and he made a subject I was not, at first, particularly interested about. We, as a planet, have been inundated with supposed 'first-hand' accounts of the enigmatic Princess Diana, and I chose this book thinking I would probably tire of it before I finished it. However, he seemed genuinely determined to give the reader a true picture of her, both nice and not so nice. I truly enjoyed reading it, and felt like I learned more about her than I had ever known before, and I still admire her!

Regency says

5 Stars. Extremely well written and honest account of the late Princess of Wales and of Detective/Inspector Wharfe's time protecting both her and the Princes William and Harry (when they were children). I have read many books about her, and this is most definitely one of the best. He didn't paint Diana as a saint, however, neither did he viciously malign her as so many others have done. It also didn't veer into fantasy land, as some other accounts have. This is a man who truly was with Diana nearly 100% of the time and believed in both her, as well as her work. He did his very best to protect her (and the boys) which was his main responsibility, but was also a valuable friend and support for the Princess. Wharfe's compassion for the Princess as a person and understanding all of the struggles that she went through shone throughout the book. Rather than paint her as a "mad cow" as others have done, he writes compassionately, sympathetically and reiterates the stress that the Princess had to experience in her day-to-day life.

It truly was unfortunate that their working relationship had to end (as seems to be the case during the early 90's with many of her staff and friends) and I think, (as with others that either left on their own accord, or were cast aside), that Diana truly lost a valuable ally and friend, as well as a pillar of strength, and someone who had a hearty dose of common sense - all things that she really needed during her venture into her new life as Diana, Princess of Wales.

I know there was quite some fuss in the press when this book came out, but to be honest, it is certainly one of the nicer accounts about Diana - especially after having just finished reading "Shadows of a Princess" by her former private secretary, Patrick Jephson - an account which was tinged with bitterness, cynicism and the tone was at times, positively nauseating. I see no bitterness in this book, only a straightforward account of events, written cleanly (and humbly), which was not only very interesting to read, but also amusing at times.

I'd actually recommend reading this book after you've read as many of the other Diana books available, as it allows you an opportunity to compare accounts of the same events from different perspectives, and gives you a pretty good idea of which books were more fact than fiction, and vice versa. On several occasions, I found myself recalling something from another book, and would either see it confirmed by Wharfe, or at times, completely de-bunked.

Susan Williams says

Lovely book!

I have read many accounts of Diana's life and yet never got as much insight into her personality as in this one. She was fun loving and funny, a caring mother, a humanitarian at heart and an astute judge of her publicity value to her various causes. Ken Warfe, I think, presented a fair, dispassionate and telling story of his five years as her head of security. There are a few warts mentioned but mainly what shines through is their genuine friendship. He was part of the family, playing with the boys, laughing and joking and at the same time, very devoted to the children's and her safety. I don't agree with many reviewers that he injected his own ego overly much into the story. He was placing his role in context with the job at hand and explaining how certain decisions, reconnaissance and negotiations with the press were made. His place in the history was important and necessarily included therefore. It was interesting and very professionally done. I loved the humor in the book, especially the "gadget" story. A well written memoir. Thank you to the authors.

Judith Colson says

A Waste of time.

This is a very disappointing read from an author who is focused on himself. The author seems to have a need to make everything about him.

Leslie says

This is a book that does not require two months to read, it is just that I would read a bit and move on to another more compelling book then go back when I was interested. The book was originally published in 2002 when most of the world was still firmly Team Diana. as her personal protection office Mr. Wharfe was witness to tantrums, misbehavior, high spirits and the depths of depression. He tries to wrap these in a nice package but as a grownup I am pretty much ready to give him a medal for tolerance.

Whether intentional or not he paints the late Princess as the 'poor little rich girl', she is tortured by the press while on an private island holiday, while skiing at an exclusive Austrian resort, while spending a spa weekend, while shopping in Paris.

He doesn't malign her, he offers lots of praise and complements for her work with the poor and sick. Her introducing her sons to the 'real world' and her kindness, often in private.

he never witnessed any true affection between her and her HRH hubby, but he didn't start working for her until after 1985.

I don't think this breaks any new ground in Diana lore.

Victoria says

I thought I had read everything there is on this subject. There is material in this book I have never heard about before. I imagine some of the people mentioned feel very betrayed by this book. I believe it is the first time a royal security officer has talked to the public about private incidents.

I think the author tried be very hard to be balanced but, his praise of Prince Charles is faint. Despite many issues with Diana, he seems to still be her supporter. He dispels the popular idea that Diana and her Mother had a poor relationship. He says they were very close and spent lots of time together. He says that William and Harry loved Diana's Mother and saw her often.

If you are interested in this subject, this is worth your time for the further insights it offers.

Timothy Phillips says

This book, written by her security officer, provides an interesting perspective on the life of Princess Diana. There had to be mutual trust and respect between both parties if Wharfe was to do his job effectively. Wharfe, therefore, has been privy to much of the detail leading up to her divorce from Prince Charles and her eventual tragic death. Written post her demise and probably in contravention of any contractual agreement re confidentiality, the author does paint a sympathetic portrait of one of the most famous women in the world, even if it reveals her ability sometimes to effectively manipulate those in her immediate entourage.

What I found interesting is that although we get an intimate portrait painted of a princess, we are left with little knowledge about the author himself. This I find strange in view of the need for a close professional relationship between the two of them. I wonder if this is his SAS background that demands the job be done almost anonymously and without fanfare.

This is not normally my choice of reading material. I bought it in a second-hand bookstore in the southern U.S. It was being offered as a package along with a "Diana" doll. The latter, I returned to the store to dispose of however they might wish.

Annie Watson says

One man's attempt on the world record for mentioning his own name the most times in one publication. Drove me barmy and detracted from an otherwise interesting read.

Linda says

"I just hope that people will remember her as she was at her best, a warm-hearted and fun-loving woman who, as she wished, really did make a difference. It is probably a vain hope, but I owe it to her."

These are the last sentences of the book, and they seem to be a direct contradiction to what the entire book was about. If this was the intention, then why was there 5 criticisms for every compliment about Princess Di? I do not view the princess as this wonderfully perfect person, but it did feel tacky that he was saying the things he was when she is no longer here to defend herself. Maybe if it didn't feel like a vendetta given the nature of his resignation as PPO, or even a justification for the guilt he seemed to have over her death, then I wouldn't see this book as such an unfair and lop-sided portrayal.

Also, I was rather bored reading this book. Some of the stories were interesting, but now I am left wondering how accurate they are. One of the biggest criticisms I have of this book is that Mr. Wharfe somehow re-frames every story to be about himself and his overly-sensitive ego. This made the book very repetitive (boring) because he viewed almost every scenario in the exact same way- Diana was ridiculous and he responded with perfect finesse.

All in all, I don't think he delivered what he had hoped to in the end.

Lorraine says

Diana: Closely Guarded Secret by Inspector Ken Wharfe with Robert Jobson details Inspector Wharfe's job

as Princess Diana's protection officer from 1988--1993. The book explains how the Inspector did his job as the Princess's police bodyguard. I found it quite interesting, and what was refreshing is the book is factual and not just someone who was close to Diana and wished to grab some money by writing what he knew about Diana and her life during those six years. And what six years those were.

Diana's marriage was falling apart, her husband, Prince Charles was constantly seeing his mistress, Camilla Parker-Bowles, the Princess' affair with James Hewitt, The British Royal Family versus Diana and vice versa, the Princess as a world figure, Diana's children, The Princes William and Harry, and the list goes on. Being a police protection officer (PPO) entailed a great deal. Much of his job I was unaware of and reading about it, I truly did find it fascinating. All that he had to do such as attending a wedding or funeral or even an art exhibit, the Inspector had "blend in". Thus, he had to have all the correct clothes. Plus, there was much he needed to do ahead to ensure Diana's safety. His final chapter discussed her death and what he felt should have been done but was not. He outlined what he thought should have been done or what would have been done if Scotland Yard, his boss, had been involved. The Inspector wanted to tell his side of those six years and give his opinion of August 31, 1997, the night Diana died. No gossip! No spilling of secrets. He felt "I owe it to her". I believe that he did what he set out to do.

Annie Booker says

Made me see the Princess in a more human and positive way than I had before. A good and interesting read.

Amresh says

This book is written by Inspector Ken Wharfe with Robert Jobson. Ken Wharfe had been the personal protection officer of Princess Diana for almost six years from 1988 to 1993. He has been not only her police officer but also a trusted aide and confidant. Through this book, he shared his numerous personal experiences and the marital rift between Princess Diana and her husband Prince Charles. However, I am not an admirer of such personal disharmonious relationship for entertainment purpose. On the bright side, Princess Diana was a responsible mother to her sons William and Harry and had a great spirit of altruistic desire to help less fortunate people.

Author's has written this book from an unbiased point of view. He projected some of the Princesses Diana's weaknesses which were partly responsible for her separation from Prince Charles and also a reason for her untimely demise. In the last chapter of the book, Author has explained various logical explanations behind the fatal car accident in Paris which resulted in Princess's Death.

Shelly says

This is a good addition to the books written about Diana since her death. It provides a balanced view of the princess during the years Ken Wharfe worked in her security detail. He focuses on those years, and does not attempt to make excuses for Diana's sometimes erratic behavior. Wharfe also offers an interesting analysis of the security issues (related by Trevor Rees-Jones in his book "The Bodyguard's Story") that led to Diana's fatal car accident.
