



THE DEATH OF

Diana

The first Diana Conspiracy Site appeared on the Internet in Australia only hours after her death on August 31st, 1997. Since then an estimated 36,000 Diana conspiracy websites have been set up – breathtaking by anyone's standards. Hypotheses range from pure James Bond ('it was all an MI6 plot to protect the monarchy') to farce ('it was a fiendish murder plot thought up by the world's florists to sell lots of flowers'). And most popular of all, Diana, Princess of Wales, isn't dead after all – that terrible car crash in Paris was an elaborate hoax to enable the Princess and Dodi Fayed to fake their own deaths so that they could live in blissful isolation for the rest of their lives. Subscribers to this theory say that Diana was fed up with the intrusions into her private life and used the wealth and resources of the Fayed family to fake her death, and now she and Dodi are living on a small tropical island, communicating with her sons by satellite video conferencing. Think about it, they say, we never actually saw her body, did we?

You don't buy into any of these theories? Don't worry. There are plenty more to choose from. For example, Paul Burrell, Diana's former butler, claims that the Princess predicted her own death in a car crash. Apparently, she was so frightened that ten months before her death she wrote to Burrell saying that a plot was being hatched by a member of the Royal family and her car's brakes would be tampered with and she would suffer serious head injuries. And all of this so that the Prince of Wales could marry again. These theories multiply because it is so hard for us to believe that a princess, with all her wealth and bodyguards, could be killed by something as arbitrary and mundane as a traffic accident. Psychologically, we need conspiracy theories to make the tragedies of life more bearable. And the Internet helps feed the global paranoia.