

Fame & Misfortune

By Reg P. Wydeven
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It seems as if some people would give anything to be famous. Then, once they're in the spotlight, some stars complain about all the attention and want to fade back into obscurity. Some of these celebrities found out just how steep the price of fame can be when after they encountered legal problems attributable solely to their popularity.

For instance, Teri Hatcher was thrust into superstardom when ABC's hit series *Desperate Housewives* became an overnight sensation. That's why Britain's *Daily Sport* tabloid newspaper sold huge numbers of its July 25, 2005, edition containing the headline "Teri's Passion Wagon".

Known for its outrages stories, the *Sport* alleged that Hatcher used a camper van parked outside of her home for romantic trysts with a series of men. Accompanying the article was a photograph of a smiling Hatcher standing next to the van with a caption that read, "Tasty Teri's old VW (Volkswagen) helps her with her sex drive."

Obviously, Hatcher was extremely upset and sued the paper for libel. In her suit, Hatcher explained that she used the camper for taking trips with her daughter. Hatcher won her suit after the *Sport* admitted the article was "entirely false" and it agreed to run a front-page apology and pay her undisclosed, but very substantial, damages.

Late-night TV star David Letterman was also recently in court where he successfully quashed Santa Fe resident Colleen Nestler's restraining order against him. A New Mexico state judge granted Nestler a temporary restraining order against Letterman after she alleged he used code words, gestures and "eye expressions" during his *Late Show* broadcasts to ask her to marry him and train her as his co-host.

In her court filing, Nestler asked the court to order Letterman to stay at least 3 yards away from her, not think about her, and release her from his mental harassment. According to Nester's statement, Letterman's on-air communications to her started in 1994 and amounted to mental cruelty, caused sleep deprivation and ultimately bankrupted her.

In their motion to quash the order, Letterman's attorneys claimed Nester's allegations were absurd, frivolous and completely without merit. Letterman's lawyers explained, "celebrities deserve protection of their reputation and legal rights when the occasional fan becomes dangerous or deluded" and that Nestler's request "constitutes an unfortunate abuse of the judicial process".

Joe Francis, infamous creator of the *Girls Gone Wild* video series, alleged he was recently robbed, held hostage and blackmailed in his mansion at gunpoint by Darnell Riley. Francis testified at Riley's trial, but while on the stand, Riley's attorneys peppered him with questions about charges filed against him stemming from his risqué videos.

Francis invoked his 5th Amendment rights and refused to answer the questions to avoid self-incrimination. After the hearing Francis lashed out saying, "even if you think I'm a bad guy 'cause I do 'Girls gone Wild', it didn't give him the right too break into my home and rob me and threaten me".

Even barely-known newspaper columnists can be targeted, like me, when the *Gamefowl News*, on www.cockfighting.com, pointed out that I am unaware of the Animal Liberation movement. In a past article I wrote about Louisiana banning cockfighting. According to the *Gamefowl News*, however, this is only a small step toward abolishing the keeping of animals as pets, which robs them of their freedom.

Great, now I have to wear dark glasses and a baseball cap whenever I go to PetSmart.

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