

# NEW YORK POST

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## BUZZ BOOK: *Imagining Diana*

Aug. 29 marked the 20th anniversary of the death of Princess Diana, and with it came many retrospectives on the woman, her impact and the meaning she held for millions of people. But as writer Diane Clehane began to take stock of Diana's influence — which, she says, "seems to have grown stronger over time" — Clehane, who writes the weekly 'Lunch' column for *Adweek*, began to ponder what might have happened had Diana lived. Her new novel, *"Imagining Diana,"* (Meta-Book, out Sept. 19) has Diana surviving her 1997 Paris car crash and emerging, albeit with a few visible

scars, to create a new life for herself. In real life, Diana finalized her divorce on Aug. 28, 1996, after a four-year separation from Prince Charles. Almost exactly a year later, she would be dead at age 36. But, in Clehane's novel, Diana decamps to Manhattan after the crash, where she is "just one of many famous faces," and where the press follows an "unwritten code of civil conduct" not followed in London,

where she was chased and hounded. She makes a new home for herself on the Upper East Side and almost gets engaged to billionaire Teddy Forstmann (whom she did briefly date in real life).

Whether she's spending weekends in the Hamptons or giving Kate Middleton advice about how to deal with the media, the effect is realistic, not gimmicky or overwrought. "First, I didn't want to sensationalize her life or death. I re-

spect her tremendously for being the person she was, someone we could identify with," says Clehane, who revisited the 30-plus interviews that she conducted with Diana friends and associates for her 1998 fashion book *"Diana: The Secrets of Her Style."* "The stuff that did happen was interesting enough. It was great to have a framework to build on. And as someone who has been a student of Diana through the '80s, I felt like I had a wealth of information and I wanted to do something with it. The dialogue practically wrote itself."

— Mackenzie Dawson



SEPTEMBER 6, 2017

## Sightings...

Ann Curry at Michael's, telling author Diane Clehane that her new book, *Imagining Diana* — about what would've happened if Princess Diana had survived the car crash — should be made into a movie.

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