

Paparazzi protest claims

■ The photographers say they are seen as scapegoats in Princess Diana's death.

PARIS (AP) — Paparazzi pushed away the first police officer to rush to the scene of the Princess Diana car wreck, police said Wednesday. But the photographers protested they are being turned into scapegoats.

"There is enormous government and public pressure," Jacques Langevin, a photographer being investigated in the case, told The Associated Press.

Another photographer, one of the first on the scene, said he opened the car door hoping to help.

"I saw the princess sitting on the floor, her back to me," Romuald Rat told France-2 television. "I said in English to stay calm, that I was there, that help would arrive." Doctors later said she was unconscious.

But now, Rat's boss said "a total injustice" is being done to the photographer through the criminal investigation.

Langevin, Rat, four other photog-

raphers and a photo-agency motorcyclist are under investigation on allegations of manslaughter and failing to aid an accident victim in the deaths of Diana, her companion, Dodi Fayed and their driver. They were killed when their car crashed at high speed in a tunnel along the Seine River early Sunday.

Driver Henri Paul, whose blood tests indicated he was drunk, apparently had been trying to elude photographers following on motorcycles. Paul was an employee of the Ritz Hotel, owned by Fayed's father, Mohamed Al Fayed.

The Paris daily Le Monde reported Diana's family and the British royal family are considering joining the case as civil parties, which would give them representation in court and access to documents. A lawyer for the elder Fayed has said he also would join the case.

In central London on Wednesday, thousands of mourners thronged the royal palaces for a fourth straight day, leaving flowers and other remembrances on sidewalks, and waiting for hours in line to sign books of con-

lence at St. James's Palace, where Diana's coffin lay inside a closed chapel, awaiting Saturday's funeral at Westminster Abbey.

Fearing an unmanageable crush of crowds Saturday, Buckingham Palace extended the funeral procession route by more than 2 miles. It will now start from Kensington Palace, Diana's home.

The royal family said it was "deeply touched and enormously grateful" for the nation's response. Some had criticized the Windsors for their stoic near-silence in public since the tragedy.

There were earlier reports the pursuing paparazzi tangled with police at the accident scene, but Wednesday's article in the Figaro newspaper was the first of an official police account.

Citing initial reports by investigators, Le Figaro said unidentified photographers pushed back the first officer at the scene. All the first policeman could see was "a blonde head" in the crushed vehicle, investigators' reports said.

"They pushed back and blocked the officer from coming to the aid of

the victims," the newspaper quoted the police report as saying.

Rat's boss, Didier Contant, chief editor of the Gamma photo agency, said his photographer, who has first-aid training, was one of the first at the scene and was quickly at Diana's side.

"He took her pulse and said, 'Do not move, please. Help is coming.' As soon as help came, he moved back right away," Contant said.

Rat said in the TV interview he did not call for help because he heard someone else saying he would do so. He said he began shooting photos after help arrived.

"He is in shock because he saw a terrible drama and he thinks a total injustice has been done to him," Contant said. He blamed "diplomatic pressure" to show that France is taking action on the British princess's death.

Langevin, a journalist with more than 20 years of experience covering dangerous stories from Beirut to Beijing, called the charges "exaggerated."

Baldwin lawsuit rejected

OMAHA (AP) — A judge Wednesday rejected former Nebraska football player Scott Baldwin's \$1 million lawsuit against the city of Omaha, saying two police officers were negligent in a shooting that left Baldwin paralyzed, but Baldwin was more to blame.

Baldwin's attorneys said they will appeal.

Douglas County District Judge Michael Amdor said Baldwin did not take his antipsychotic prescription medicine, and he should have known that not doing so could result in a violent encounter with police.

Baldwin, 28, has been diagnosed as having bipolar disorder. He remains paralyzed from the chest down as a result of his injuries. A bullet is lodged in his spine.

Baldwin was shot the night of Sept. 5, 1992, after losing control in a psychotic episode during which he took off his clothes and ran through the streets of north Omaha.

Officer Anna Doyle shot him after finding him naked and ramming a glass door of a house.

When she and Officer Peggy Truckenbrod ordered him to put his hands behind his back, he resisted, and a struggle and the shooting followed.

Amdor's 38-page ruling called Baldwin's lawsuit a "close case." The judge found that Doyle, Truckenbrod and the city were negligent and their negligence caused the officers to use deadly force against Baldwin. But Amdor said Baldwin's decision to not take his medicine was "intentional" and a "heedless course of conduct" that suggested recklessness on his part.

"We're disappointed," Baldwin's attorney, E. Terry Sibbersen of Omaha, said of the ruling. "We don't feel there was any factual evidence that would substantiate that Scott was negligent."

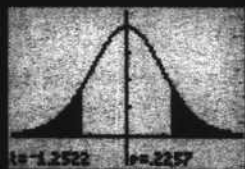
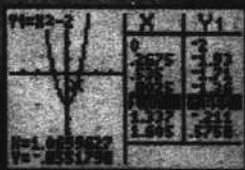
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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.
Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.
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