

### **The Case of the Aggressive Paparazzi**

One of the first cases to pit a celebrity against a paparazzi was *Galella vs. Onassis*. Ronald Galella was a high profile, freelance photographer who specialized in the taking and sale of photographs of well-know subjects. His subjects (more accurately, "targets") included Marlon Brando, Robert Redford and Elvis Presley. His favorite and most frequent target was Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, the former first lady and, at the time, wife of Greek shipping magnate, Aristotle Onassis.

Galella stalked, Mrs. Onassis, also known as Jackie O, and her children. He took pictures of JFK, Jr. riding his bicycle in Central Park. On one occasion Galella jumped into the boy's path to get a closer shot. On other occasions he interrupted Caroline Kennedy while playing tennis and came "uncomfortably close" (the Court's words) to Jackie with a powerboat while she swam.

Following his arrest by secret service agents, Galella sued the agents and Mrs. Onassis. Jackie counterclaimed for invasion of privacy.

After a six week trial the court dismissed Galella's claim and entered a restraining order prohibiting him from coming within 100 yards of Jackie and her children. Galella appealed. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that "Relief must be tailored to protect Mrs. Onassis from the 'paparazzo' attack which distinguishes Galella's behavior from that of other photographers; it should not unnecessarily infringe on reasonable efforts to 'cover' defendant." The trial court's restraining order was modified such that Galella must stay 25 feet away from Jackie to protect her from his paparazzo attacks. The Court also ruled that Galella had a right to make a living and should be permitted to continue taking and selling his pictures of Jackie O.

Following *Galalla v. Onassis*, restraining orders against paparazzi were relatively uncommon. To obtain a restraining order the victim must have already been harassed by a specific photographer.

That said, restraining orders are a tool that continue to be used. In 2009 Nichole Richie obtained a restraining order against two paparazzi that rear-ended her car while chasing it in Beverly Hills. Richie sought a restraining order and the photographers were ordered to stay 100 yards away from Richie and her children, Harlow and Sparrow.