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By Keith Colquhoun, Ann Wroe



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Obituaries of 199 people and a dead parrot from “The Economist’s” popular column. Each stylishly written story and accompanying photograph surprises, entertains, and stimulates. The titled, wealthy, and powerful are here, of course, including Diana, Princess of Wales, Gerald Ford, Bob Hope, John Paul II, Norman Mailer, Mstislav Rostropovich, and General William Westmoreland, but so are others: a cookery teacher and spy, the inventor of instant noodles, a self-proclaimed gypsy king, a musical psychic, an American gangster, a patriotic crook, a philosopher of consumerism, a master of tabloid journalism, a protector of minorities, a veteran of Gallipoli, the greatest of second bananas, and Alex the African Grey. This book is as entertaining as it is edifying; it’s a great gift for biography, history, and popular-culture fans, as well as for everyone who turns first to the obituary pages in the daily newspaper. As Clarence Darrow (1857–1938) put it: “I never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with a lot of pleasure.”



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