

# My two days in the glare of paparazzi



Everyone knows the most flattering photographs are taken when you least expect them (no rictus grin

or stilted poses). But what if, like the stars, you had a photographer watching your every move and secretly snapping you without your knowledge? New York agency Methodizaz claim to do just that. Harnessing paparazzi tactics for good rather than ill, it will send an anonymous photographer to follow you around for between \$600 and \$10,000. All you have to do is upload some details about your daily routine, along with a picture so they can recognise their “target”, and bingo, you’ve got your very own pap-stalker. It might sound like a service for a very select breed of egomaniac but founder Izaz Rony launched the site six months ago and already has 60 clients.

The Guardian doesn’t publish intrusive paparazzi photographs but to find out what this would be

like, I arranged for one of our photographers to snap me surreptitiously over two days. For the first few hours, I didn’t dare scratch my nose in case that was the moment she struck. I eyed bushes suspiciously and constantly looked over my shoulder. Was my posture good? Did my hair look all right? Was my skirt tucked in my knickers?

I’d given her a detailed list of where I would be, and when, but while I knew she would be lurking outside Sainsbury’s waiting to pounce, she almost always caught me unawares. Wearing a constant camera face soon grew tiring: if natural was what we were after, natural was what I should be. It was only two days . . . how bad could it be? Then I saw the photos.

There I was putting out the rubbish, devoid of makeup in my

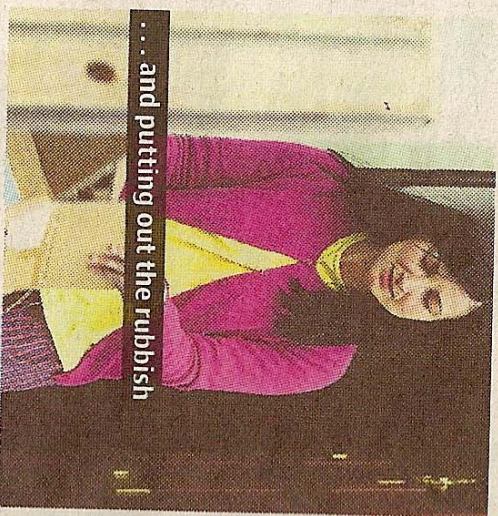
mismatched pyjamas and bobble cardigan. There I was again, yawning out of my office window; eating prawn puri – with my fingers; wildly gesticulating over a glass of pinot grigio at my local and snoozing on my boyfriend’s shoulder at the bus-stop. It struck me how unaware I looked; how vulnerable I must have been. I shrugged off an eerie chill.

Like anyone, I zoom straight in on my bad points whenever I look at a photograph of myself – that annoying kink in my hair, the way my top lip all but disappears when I smile. Strangely, I didn’t recoil in horror when confronted with my unedited self, in fact, some of the photos were actually quite nice. But will I be hiring my own pap-stalker again? I don’t think so.

**Liz Frost**



Liz Frost in the bar . . .



. . . and putting out the rubbish