# 24 Things Netflix's The Crown Got Wrong About History

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TRENDING TOPICS



Whether or not you're a fan of the British royal family, Netflix's *The Crown* is a fascinating watch. One of the most enthralling and glossily produced dramas in recent history, this series usually stays true to historical accuracy in its intricate costumes, settings, and social contexts. However, it's not always so fastidious with events and actions.

Specifically, the show took great liberties with things said and done by the Royal Family and the people around them. In fact, *The Crown* gets

many fundamental things wrong.

## 1. Prince Philip Never Cheated on Queen Elizabeth

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

For the duration of their marriage, there was always quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) speculation about whether Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, had always been faithful to Queen Elizabeth II. However, *The Crown* implies at several points that Philip was adulterous.

For example, the show's second season strongly hints that he was involved with Galina Ulanova, a Russian ballerina. But even with all the rumors, there is no evidence any affairs ever took place.

## 2. Prince Philip's Relationship With Then-Prince Charles

Image Credit: Des Wellie/Netflix.

There have been reports that Prince Philip was quite hard on then-Prince Charles. We know, for example, that he forced him to board at Gordonstoun school against his will. However, it seems that *The Crown* may have gone too far in how harsh they made him seem.

Season 2 of *The Crown* portrays Philip terrorizing the young Prince of Wales when they're flying back from Scotland, accusing him of being "weak." But a royal insider revealed to *Glamour Magazine* that Queen Elizabeth was "particularly annoyed" with that scene and how "Prince Philip [was] depicted as being a father insensitive to his son's well-being" throughout the series.

## 3. The Aberfan Disaster

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

Season 3 of *The Crown* devotes an episode to the 1966 Aberfan Disaster, when part of a small town in Wales was buried in a landslide of mining debris. 144 people, including 116 schoolchildren, died during the event.

In the episode, Queen Elizabeth struggling to feel or express any emotion about the event. The show even implies that she needs to pretend to cry for the cameras. But in reality, while there was an eight-day delay in her visit to the town, witnesses say she was clearly emotional and empathetic.

## 4. Princess Anne, Prince Charles, and the Shand – Bowles Affair

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

Since *The Crown* covers Queen Elizabeth's full reign, we see her children grow and get an imagined idea of what life for young royals in 1960s London to be. Their version of Princess Anne listens to Fontella Bass and David Bowie — and had a brief entanglement with Andrew Parker Bowles at the same time then-Prince Charles was beginning his relationship with Camilla Shand.

The way the show tells it, Camilla started dating Charles to get back at Parker-Bowles for getting involved with Anne. In reality, Anne's brief relationship with Parker-Bowles happened before Charles and Camilla even knew each other. Charles and Camilla reportedly met for the first time in 1971 or 1972.

## 5. Princess Alice's Interview

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

In Season 3 of *The Crown*, a journalist from *The Guardian* does a detailed interview of Princess Alice, discovering fascinating details of her harrowing life. This interview was supposed to have taken place in 1969, right after the embarrassing BBC documentary, *Royal Family*.

While this storyline is effective at exploring Alice's history, this interview never happened. In fact, very few Brits were even aware that she lived at Buckingham Palace.

## 6. The Shand-Parker Bowles Wedding

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

*The Crown* spins a rather fanciful yarn of the Queen Mother and Lord Mountbatten conspiring to force Camilla Shand to marry Andrew Parker Bowles, to destroy her relationship with Charles.

The truth, however, is that while they certainly would never allow Charles to marry Camilla, they weren't the ones pressuring the young couple. Instead, it was Shand and Parker Bowles' families pressuring them into marriage by publishing an engagement announcement in *The Times* in 1973.

## 7. Why Thatcher Fought For The Falklands

Image Credit: Des Wellie/Netflix.

When it comes to the topic of the Falklands War, *The Crown* depicts a scenario in which Margaret Thatcher's emotional upset about her son, Mark, being missing as being behind her decision to go to war for the Falkland Islands.

Mark had mysteriously disappeared when participating in a car race in the Sahara desert. However, this happened and he was found several months before the beginning of the war. Experts say her real motivation for the war was to distract from the chaos she'd created in the country by attacking the social safety net.

## 8. What Princess Diana Was Wearing When She Met Prince Charles

Image Credit: Des Wellie/Netflix.

In *The Crown*, we're shown Diana goes to extraordinary lengths to meet Charles and make an impression on him. In her first scene in the show, Diana is dressed like a "mad tree," a costume for her boarding school's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But it was actually during a hunting party at Diana's family home that she first met her future husband. She was just 16 but Charles still remembered how "very jolly and amusing and attractive" she was.

## 9. Michael Fagan Wasn't Political

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

A man called Michael Fagan did break into Buckingham Palace and find the queen's bedroom, but the reasons you did this were different from what *The Crown* portrayed. In the series, Michael Fagan is shown talking to Queen Elizabeth II about his unemployment and economic hardship.

The real Michael Fagan, however, was reportedly not in a rational state when he made his way into the royal London residence. In fact, he explained that he was under the psychedelic influence of magic mushrooms.

## 10. Princess Margaret Never Discovered Her Institutionalized Cousins

Image Credit: Ollie Upton/Netflix.

*The Crown* makes Princess Margaret appear as a much more caring character than she probably really was. In the series, we see Margaret investigating and exposing the scandal of two Bowes-Lyons cousins being locked away in a mental institution, to avoid embarrassing the family.

In reality, however, there is no reason to believe that Margaret ever even thought about the possibility of such a thing. Queen Elizabeth II herself reportedly didn't learn about the secret until 1982.

## 11. Queen Elizbeth II Never Publicly Complained About Margaret Thatcher

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

There's a popular legend that Queen Elizabeth II disliked Margaret Thatcher and deliberately positioned her thoughts to be exposed in the press. *The Crown* presents this storyline, showing her instructing her Press Secretary to leak her disapproval with Thatcher to the newspapers.

However, there has never been any evidence that this happened. In 1986, there was a report in *The Sunday Times* claiming that Elizabeth thought Margaret Thatcher was "uncaring, confrontational, and divisive." However, Buckingham Palace released a statement refuting that the queen had any political opinions.

## 12. Princess Margaret Wasn't Worried About Charles Marrying Diana

Image Credit: Des Willie/Netflix.

In *The Crown*, Princess Margaret expresses concerns about Charles' plan to marry Diana and says that the wedding should be called off. She can see that her nephew doesn't truly love the future princess.

This scenario is entirely fiction. In fact, there was never any indication that Margaret had the slightest worry about the marriage.

## 13. We Don't Have Evidence Philip Was Close to Penny Knatchbull

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

While it's certainly true that Philip was close friends with Penny Knatchbull over decades. In *The Crown*, that friendship is given significant attention. But it takes the relationship a bit further than friendship, to what Philip describes as a spiritual companion, implying he doesn't have a meeting of the minds with the queen.

Philip and Penny certainly enjoyed each other's company. Ingrid Seward described Penny as the "second-most important woman in the Duke of Edinburgh's life–a constant confidante, loyal companion and 'keeper of secrets.'" However, no one has shown evidence that he saw her as anything other than a good friend.

## 14. Queen Elizabeth II's "Annus Horribilis"

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

Even if you don't follow the royal family, you've probably heard of the "Annus Horribilis' speech. *The Crown*'s portrayal of this speech follows the typical view that the queen wrote and delivered her speech in a serious vein. But according to the reports, the truth is quite different.

In fact, it was a bit tongue in cheek. Yes, 1992 had been a terrible year for the royal family, with the Windsor Castle fire and a litany of separations and divorces. But there is a bit of levity in the speech, as Elizabeth is using incorrect Latin. As explained in *The Guardian*, "Classical scholars regard ['annus horribilis] as a joke on the expression 'annus mirabilis.'"

## 15. The British Public Didn't Call For Elizabeth's Abdication

Image Credit: /Justin Downing/Netflix.

One of the storylines in *The Crown* is discussion of the possibility of Elizabeth abdicating as a wedding present to Charles on his marriage to Camilla. However, it's well known that Elizabeth never considered abdication.

Queen Elizabeth II saw her duty as queen as a sacred and religious duty. That was why giving up the throne was something she would never consider.

## 16. John Major Wasn't Involved in the Divorce Negotiations for Prince Charles and Diana

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

One of the most improbable elements of *The Crown* is the portrayal of John Major getting involved in brokering the Charles and Diana divorce settlement.

As PM, John Major was a busy person, and he certainly wasn't involved in helping Charles and Diana work out an arrangement. However, there have been reports that the prime minister had a meeting with Charles, Diana, and the queen leading up to the divorce.

## 17. Diana Never Warned Queen Elizabeth II About the BBC Interview

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

The 1995 BBC *Panorama* interview with Princess Diana is one of the most memorable events in modern royal history. So, it makes sense that it was portrayed in The Crown. The series does an impressive job of making the depiction realistic and engaging.

One major addition *The Crown* made that wasn't based on historical record was where Diana is shown warning Elizabeth II about the upcoming interview. This never happened. The queen only found out about the interview when Patrick Jephson, Diana's press secretary, informed her.

## 18. Queen Mary Didn't Convince King George To Abandon the Romanovs

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

*The Crown* seems to put all the blame on Queen Mary for the eventual death of the Romanovs. In a memorable (but completely fictionalized) scene, Queen Mary influences her husband, King George, to refuse the Romanov family refuge. However, George is much more likely to have made the decision together with his government.

## 19. Dodi Probably Didn't Propose to Diana

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

According to *The Crown*, Dodi proposed to Diana on the night they would end up in their fatal car accident. He does this because of pressure from his father. But no one really knows if Dodi proposed, and many experts believe it's unlikely that he did.

In the series, Diana rejects Dodi's proposal. According to Tina Brown in *The Diana Chronicles*, Diana had no intention of ever accepting any proposal from Dodi.

## 20. Hospital Workers Couldn't Hear Charles Weeping

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

If you've watched *The Crown*, you remember the harrowing scene where Charles weeps so loudly on seeing Diana's body in Paris that nurses and other hospital workers can hear him. However, all indications are that Charles was quiet at this time. As we read in *The Diana Chronicles* by Tina Brown, he was quite "calm" but was "shattered" after he had seen her body.

## 21. William Didn't Disappear for 14 Hours

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

It's a heartbreaking sequence in *The Crown* when Prince William runs off into the wilderness around Balmoral, going missing for a long 14 hours after his mother's death. While it's true that William is known to have benefited from alone time in the highlands when he was healing in the wake of Diana's death, there has never been reporting that he was missing for that long.

## 22. No Members of the Royal Family Attended Camilla's 50th Birthday Celebrations

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

Contrary to what we see in *The Crown*, no one in the royal family (other than Charles) attended Camilla's 50th birthday party. He was the one who organized and hosted the party, but none of his relatives attended it.

## 23. William Wasn't Immediately Interested in Kate

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures; Sony Pictures Television; Netflix.

*The Crown*'s William and Kate characters have immediate chemistry, but that's not exactly how it happened in real life. According to reports, William thought of Kate as just a friend until he saw her model in a fashion show.

## 24. Elizabeth and Margaret Didn't Have a Wild Night Out at the Ritz

Image Credit: Left Bank Pictures and Sony Pictures Television.

There are flashback scenes in the final season of *The Crown* showing young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret having a wild night out on the town in London at the end of World War II. While it's accepted that the two girls did go out on VE Day to take part in the celebrations, it was under close supervision.

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