

# EPSTEIN, MAXWELL AND THE PALACE

**‘Excruciating details.’**

ROSAMUND URWIN, SUNDAY TIMES



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N I G E L C A W T H O R N E

**PRINCE  
ANDREW  
EPSTEIN, MAXWELL  
AND  
THE PALACE**

**NIGEL CAWTHORNE**

GIBSON SQUARE

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*Prince Philip*

*'I Know I Am Rude, but I Like It'*

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## **A LEGAL BOMBSHELL**

On Monday 9 August 2021, a legal bombshell exploded at the gates of Buckingham Palace. On that day, Virginia Roberts Giuffre filed a lawsuit for sexual misconduct in a New York State court in New York against Prince Andrew, Queen Elizabeth's second oldest son. It was an extraordinary moment. In the long history of the British monarchy since 1066, there was no case like it. Never before had a British royal been challenged on such charges. By extension, the most respected royal family in the world was all of a sudden embroiled in allegations of sordid and legally reprehensible acts, behaviour not usually associated with the family of a head of state.

Allegations made by Giuffre had circulated in the press since early 2015 and consistently been denied as untrue by the prince and his close friend Ghislaine Maxwell. Even so, Giuffre's fifteen-page-long claims that she submitted to

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan's court were hair-raising. Giuffre accused Andrew of sexually abusing her at convicted-paedophile Jeffrey Epstein's mansion in Manhattan and at other locations in 2001 when she was 17. Giuffre stated she 'was compelled by express or implied threats by Epstein, [Ghislaine] Maxwell, and/or Prince Andrew to engage in sexual acts with Prince Andrew, and feared death or physical injury to herself or another and other repercussions for disobeying Epstein, Maxwell, and Prince Andrew due to their powerful connections, wealth and authority'. It further alleged that the prince knew she was a sex-trafficking victim and that she has suffered—and continues to suffer—'significant emotional and psychological distress and harm'.

Normally, Giuffre's civil claims against the prince would have floundered after the lapse of some twenty years under applicable statutes of limitations. But New York State passed the Child Victims Act in 2019 that gave survivors of sexual abuse a one-year window to file a civil case no matter how long ago they were abused. Following the corona lockdowns, its deadline had been extended and Giuffre's explosive legal allegations were dramatically lodged only days before the window finally closed on bringing litigation.

Previously, Andrew had 'absolutely and categorically' denied having sex with Giuffre from when this was first reported and Buckingham Palace called her statements 'false and without foundation'. But their response to the legal appeared to cause great confusion. The day after the filing, Andrew left his Windsor home to join the Queen and her advisors at Balmoral, his mother's 50,000 acre estate in Scotland where she was on holiday.

When Giuffre's legal team sought to serve papers on the prince at his residence, Royal Lodge in Windsor, the full-time security staff on duty refused

to accept them. They had also sent them to his lawyers and posted them to him by royal mail, on the assumption that it would have no trouble delivering the papers to the senior royal.

The prince's refusal to accept the papers created a major standoff between the Queen's second son and the US legal system. It appeared to some observers as if he was above US law. David Boies, the star lawyer representing Giuffe, did not take kindly to the royal's cat-and-mouse game and warned, 'ignore the courts at your peril', adding, 'It would be very ill-advised for Prince Andrew to ignore judicial process'.

While multiple attempts were made, Andrew was at the Queen's 50,000-acre Balmoral estate with his ex-wife the Duchess of York some five hundred miles away. It was reportedly said, 'Andrew was going stir-crazy inside Royal Lodge for the past few weeks. He wasn't going horse riding and couldn't step outside because of attempts to serve him with the legal papers. He knows he is far safer up at Balmoral.'

The direct aftermath of the bombshell raised many questions, including ones that were constitutional in nature. How did Queen Elizabeth II end up as her son's shield against the US legal system? Was Britain's head of state prepared to undertake further measures? How and where was the palace's Epstein Affair going to end up?

# 1

## BETTING THE FIRM

The first warning sign of a hurricane aiming for Buckingham Palace came on 6 July 2019 when billionaire businessman Jeffrey Epstein was arrested on federal charges related to sex trafficking. Twelve years earlier he had pleaded guilty to Florida State charges of soliciting girls as young as thirteen for prostitution and served nearly thirteen months in low-security Palm Beach County Jail. The sixty six year old now faced as much as forty-three years in a federal jail. Though guards were supposed to check on him every thirty minutes, he was found hanged in his cell on 10 August. Verdict: suicide.

Most of Epstein's influential friends, including Donald Trump and Bill Clinton, distanced themselves from him after his first fall from grace. However, for another friend—Prince Andrew—it was too late.

The US Appeals Court in New York City released two thousand pages of papers from a defamation suit by Virginia Roberts Giuffre that included her claim that Epstein had used her as a sex slave while underage and had forced her to have sex with Andrew on three occasions. Even before these

allegations, a photograph had surfaced of the prince with his arm around the seventeen year old's naked midriff.

Also in the picture was Andrew's close friend Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's girlfriend and daughter of disgraced media mogul Robert Maxwell, who died under mysterious circumstances after he went missing from his yacht Lady Ghislaine off the Canary Islands in 1991. In a lawsuit, Giuffre claimed Maxwell had procured her when she was fifteen for Epstein and worked at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for \$9 an hour, and that Maxwell was Epstein's accomplice in trafficking her to Andrew and others. Maxwell denied the allegations outright when she was deposed under oath and called Giuffre a liar, leading Giuffre to sue for defamation. An attempt to get the prince to testify under oath in the defamation case failed. When Giuffre's law suit was settled in May 2017, its court papers were sealed, only to be released in part by the New York Court of Appeals the day before Epstein died.



*Case 18-2868 unsealed papers, US District Court, Southern District of New York*

The first weeks of August 2019 dramatically changed Andrew's life and forever changed the light in which these allegations placed the royal family. All of a sudden, the Queen's favourite son stood at the heart of the Epstein Affair and became someone US law enforcement was interested in talking to. The sex crimes the billionaire orchestrated, involving up to a hundred victims by now, remained under FBI investigation—despite his death. Andrew became the first British royal ever whose extradition to the United States was mooted in the press.

But the scandal went well beyond the fate of one man. Ex-New-York federal prosecutor and Columbia Law School professor Jennifer Rodgers said, 'In theory, if he comes to the US, he could be arrested pursuant to a material-witness warrant'. Could Andrew ever return to America under these circumstances? Though strenuously denied, Giuffre's accusations against Andrew now threatened Britain's monarchy as a whole—an institution reliant on broad public support for its very existence—in an unprecedented way. Like the catholic church, Buckingham Palace found itself yet again engulfed by headlines connected to an underage-sex scandal.

The renewed media scrutiny and the attendant furore that shook the royal family to its core all stemmed from the prince's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein. Each time the Epstein allegations bounced back into the ether as a result of new facts, the media storm gathered in potency, and the monarchy looked increasingly at risk of its half-cocked handling of the crisis.

In 2011, it had first been reported that the prince had partied with Epstein at the paedophile's New York mansion—three months after the financier had been released from Florida State custody and house arrest at his New York

home. Alongside the news, the press had published hand-written telephone messages from high school girls for Epstein that had been retrieved in 2005 as material evidence from the billionaire's Palm Beach home. It included one that said, 'She is wondering if 2.30 ok cuz she needs to stay in school'. Another girl, 'Colleen', phoned to tell Epstein, 'Going into class—will be out in 45 min'. 'Sarah', a further message read, 'doesn't know at what time she must come this night for the massage'.

Epstein threw the intimate dinner party in December 2009 for fifteen at his \$80 million Manhattan townhouse. Located on 71st Street, just off Central Park, it was considered the largest private residence in Manhattan. The prince was guest of honour and stayed at the mansion for a few days. Also present at the bash were Woody Allen, the subject of sexual misconduct against his seven-year-old daughter since the 1990s, and Charlie Rose, the CBS anchor who would later lose his job after numerous allegations of being a sexual predator. The prince was then photographed strolling with Epstein in Central Park during his stay. Both were deep in conversation.

In 2019, Prince Andrew again strenuously denied Giuffre's allegations and those of Johanna Sjoberg, whose unsealed evidence first became public the day before Epstein died. Sjoberg claimed that the prince had groped her at Epstein's New York house in 2001. 'I just remember someone suggesting a photo, and they told us to go get on the couch. And so Andrew and Virginia sat on the couch', Sjoberg had testified. As she herself reluctantly sat on Andrew's lap, someone touched Virginia's breast and then Andrew groped hers, Sjoberg stated under oath.

She, too, said that Andrew's close friend Ghislaine Maxwell 'lured her from her school to have sex with Epstein under the guise of hiring her for a job answering phones'. At Epstein's mansion, she found out that her duties included being a masseuse. He then induced her 'to perform demeaning sexual services,' she said.

Despite these allegations, the Queen made a show of support for Prince Andrew by sitting alongside him in a Rolls Royce as she headed for Sunday morning worship in Balmoral the day after Epstein died.

The following week the *Mail on Sunday* released a video showing Andrew waving goodbye from the mansion's fifteen-foot tall oak doors to a young brunette as she left Epstein's Manhattan home. Buckingham Palace promptly issued a statement saying: 'The Duke of York has been appalled by the recent reports of Jeffrey Epstein's alleged crimes. His Royal Highness deplores the exploitation of any human being and the suggestion he would condone, participate in or encourage any such behaviour is abhorrent.'



The mystery brunette was later named as Katherine Keating, the then twenty-eight-year-old daughter of Paul Keating, former prime minister of Australia. Keating had come forward herself as she was 'deeply upset' about the speculation. Although Keating conceded she knew Epstein, she had only met the prince for forty five minutes 'for a cup of tea' that day and did not meet Epstein on this occasion.

Keating had met the prince at a lavish party in Dubai celebrating the 2010 opening of the Meydan Racecourse and they were seen together several times that March weekend. Keating was a public relations guru—something much needed by Andrew and his New York host. The twenty eight year old was also a friend of Ghislaine Maxwell's. She spoke at a high-profile party in New York organised by Maxwell in 2013 and later Keating persuaded her to give a rare-as-hen's-teeth radio interview in 2014 on her programme for Huffington Post. Giuffre repeated her claim first made in 2015 that, from the age of seventeen, she had had sex with Andrew three times—in London, at Epstein's New York home, and at an orgy on his private island in the Caribbean. Given the popular outcry in Britain, the palace unequivocally stated the allegations were 'false and without any foundation', adding, 'Any suggestion of impropriety with underage minors is categorically untrue.'

At the end of a torrid week of more battering by the media, the palace took the unprecedented step of issuing a second statement. This one—even more unique—was from the prince himself, who must have felt cornered by the negative headlines. In it Andrew expressed 'tremendous sympathy for

Epstein's alleged victims'. The prince added: 'I met Mr Epstein in 1999. During the time I knew him, I saw him infrequently and probably no more than only once or twice a year. I have stayed in a number of his residences. At no stage during the limited time I spent with him did I see, witness or suspect any behaviour of the sort that subsequently led to his arrest and conviction.'

However, the prince's words merely intensified the cloud of questions that engulfed him. It seemed that Andrew had known Epstein for a lot longer than he would admit. In March 2011, the prince's private secretary Alastair Watson wrote to *The Times* in response to the 'widespread comment' about his employer's relationship with the paedophile, saying that the prince had known Epstein 'since being introduced to him in the early 1990s'.

It was not easy to see how Andrew did not suspect Epstein. When the police raided Epstein's Palm Beach mansion in 2005, the walls were plastered with photographs of naked and scantily clad young girls. As these even decorated the hallway, they would be hard to miss and Andrew had stayed there. The police identified at least forty victims, one as young as fourteen, though the total would double over the years.

He had also stayed on Epstein's private island in the US Virgin Islands, Little Saint James or 'Little Saint Jeff'. After the law suits it had become popularly known as 'Orgy Island', 'Paedophile Island' or the 'Island of Sin'. Epstein's home there was decorated like his place in Palm Beach.

'There were topless photos of women everywhere,' said Steve Scully, a former phone and internet contractor for Epstein from 1999 to 2005. 'They were on his desk, in his office, in his bedroom.'

Guests at Epstein's home in Manhattan said it was impossible not to notice the number of young girls going in and out. Visitors were often offered a massage on arrival.

Somehow Andrew had missed all of this. The palace's second statement acknowledged that Andrew met Epstein again in 2010 after he had been released from jail.

'I have said previously that it was a mistake and an error to see him after his release in 2010 and I can only reiterate my regret that I was mistaken to think that what I thought I knew of him was evidently not the real person, given what we now know,' the prince said. 'This is a difficult time for everyone involved and I am at a loss to be able to understand or explain Mr Epstein's lifestyle.'

Former palace press secretary Dickie Arbiter said: 'It is unusual for Buckingham Palace to put out not just one statement, but two statements. But the palace felt that they had to do it.' Four statements were made in all.

Virginia Giuffre asked the prince to own up. She told the press, 'He knows exactly what he's done and I hope he comes clean about it.'

Things got more doom-laden for Buckingham Palace on 5 September when *The Times* reported that more documents from the Giuffre-Maxwell lawsuit could be unsealed.

Then, on 21 October, Channel Four's Dispatches aired *The Prince and the Paedophile* in which it was revealed that Epstein had no fewer than thirteen phone numbers for Prince Andrew, including, interestingly, the direct line to his computer's modem—then the way to connect to the internet—and a direct line to Buckingham Palace. In fact, they turned out to be numbers from

Ghislaine Maxwell's address book, which state police had taken in evidence during their raid of Epstein's Palm Beach home in 2005. The prince's friend was the paedophile's walking rolodex.

In June 2000, the billionaire was close enough to Prince Andrew to get an invitation to the Dance of the Decades, marking Andrew's fortieth birthday, the Queen Mother's hundredth, Princess Margaret's seventieth and Princess Anne's fiftieth. It was hosted by the Queen herself at Windsor Castle. Epstein attended with Ghislaine Maxwell.

Andrew's relationship with Epstein appeared to be very friendly. Over their long acquaintance, Andrew stayed with Epstein at his various residences, sometimes spending days on end with him. Epstein was also in contact with Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York—aka Fergie—speaking regularly on the phone. Dispatches had obtained the flight log for Epstein's private jet, which showed that on 16 April 1998 Epstein met 'Princess Sarah Ferguson and kids' at Nassau in the Bahamas. In February 1999, 'Prince Andrew' himself appeared in the log for the first time, flying into the Virgin Islands. A few days later, he flew out again with 'JE'—Jeffrey Epstein; 'GM'—Ghislaine Maxwell; and a number of other people. And Andrew flew on Epstein's private jet from Luton to Edinburgh with Ghislaine Maxwell on 1 September 2006, six weeks after Epstein had been arrested on charges of soliciting prostitution.

The programme pointed out that, even before he met Epstein, Prince Andrew's reputation had already been called into question. Once praised for his service in the Falklands War, he became known as 'Randy Andy', the 'Playboy Prince' with a series of high-profile girlfriends. He was mocked on the satirical TV programme Spitting Image as the 'prince who can't say no'.

The documentary then re-examined the court papers which claimed that Epstein and Andrew had group sex on Little Saint James. In evidence given to a Florida court in January 2015, Giuffre said: ‘The third time I had sex with Andy was in an orgy on Epstein’s private island in the US Virgin Islands. I was around eighteen at the time. Epstein, Andy, approximately eight other young girls and I had sex together. The other girls all seemed and appeared to be under the age of eighteen and didn’t really speak English. Epstein laughed about the fact they couldn’t really communicate, saying that they are the “easiest” girls to get along with.’

In her deposition, she continued, ‘A group of Russian girls who didn’t speak a word of English turned up with a modelling agent who was a friend of Jeffrey’s. That night there was a dinner and Andrew was there. He said “Hi” to me. Jeffrey directed us with hand gestures because the Russian girls didn’t speak English. We were told to start kissing and touching and to use sex toys on each other. The girls obviously had been trained. Jeffrey and the prince were laughing... and then they undressed and then I performed a sex act on them—Jeffrey first and then Andrew. It was disgusting. There was no pleasure in it.’

Prince Andrew did not testify as he had left the US the previous night and the judge ordered Giuffre’s remarks to be struck from court records. Nevertheless, her allegations under oath hit the news pages.

On the backfoot, Buckingham Palace had issued its first-ever public Epstein-denial in January 2015 and, at a press conference in Davos, Andrew himself said: ‘I think I must, [and] want, for the record, to refer to the events that have taken place in the last few weeks, and I just wish to reiterate and to reaffirm

the statements which have already been made on my behalf by Buckingham Palace.’

Having run this statement for Dispatches through the DecepTech Voice Stress Analysis Machine, a computerised version of the Psychological Stress Evaluation used by more than fifty law enforcement agencies in the US, expert Michael Sylvestre concluded: ‘He’s lying. Andrew knows the statement made by Buckingham Palace was not true.’

A few days after the programme, Giuffre signed a sworn statement saying: ‘I did have sexual contact with him as I have described—under oath. Given what he knows and has seen, I was hoping that he would simply voluntarily tell the truth about everything. I hope my attorneys can interview Prince Andrew under oath about the contacts and that he will tell the truth.’

Dispatches also claimed that medical records from New York Presbyterian Hospital show Giuffre was admitted on 9 July 2001 after three weeks of vaginal bleeding. In response to the 2019 documentary, Buckingham Palace yet again issued a statement defending Prince Andrew which said: ‘It is emphatically denied that the Duke of York had any form of sexual contact or relationship with Virginia Roberts [Giuffre].’

Despite the rebuttals, the documentary prompted calls in the press for the police to investigate her accusations. Giuffre was seventeen when she said she first had sex with Prince Andrew. While that is not underage under English law, it is underage in Florida and the US Virgin Islands, where the age of consent is eighteen.

Nonetheless, the pregnant question for the British police was whether she had been trafficked to the UK for the purposes of sex—a criminal offence under

British law. It was a politically-sensitive offence as it had recently been codified in the Modern Slavery Act, a piece of 'globally leading' trophy legislation sponsored by Prime Minister Theresa May herself.

At the beginning of November it was then revealed that the US TV network ABC had been sitting on an interview with Virginia Giuffre that had not been aired due to pressure from Buckingham Palace.

'I tried for three years to get [the interview] on to no avail and now it's coming out and it's like these "new revelations" and I freaking had all of it,' the host of 20/20 Amy Robach complained. 'First of all, I was told "who's Jeffrey Epstein? No one knows who that is, this is a stupid story."' Then the palace found out that we had her whole allegations about Prince Andrew and threatened us a million different ways. We were so afraid we wouldn't be able to interview Kate and Wills, that also quashed the story.'

Buckingham Palace realised that they looked ragged. It was decided that the way to stop all speculation about the duke's connections to Epstein was for him to go in front of the TV cameras with BBC Newsnight presenter Emily Maitlis and give his testimony on Giuffre's accusations to her. This lost the prince the services of Jason Stein, the spin doctor he hired in September 2019 to restore his reputation. Stein had advised against going on air, favouring instead a drip-drip strategy that included a great deal of charity work and interviews with print outlets to mark the duke's upcoming sixtieth birthday. Courtiers took no notice of this caustic vote of confidence by a media professional and pressed on with preparations for the BBC interview.

Andrew's ex-wife Sarah Ferguson also urged Andrew to go on television. She thought that it would be his chance to address the negative headlines head on

and present his version of events rather than leave the allegations unanswered. Fatefully, Buckingham Palace signed off on the plan and that it was to be held in the Queen's part of the palace lending the prince the gravitas and weight of the British head of state. The Newsnight team would be taken to her private South Drawing Room, through the Queen's Entrance, surrounding the BBC crew and the prince with the paraphernalia and high symbols of Britain's monarch. It would be an unmitigated disaster.

Perhaps the palace thought it could ride out the connection between a prince and a paedophile by merely impressing the people with pomp and circumstance. Like the Vatican, it had a tin-ear record of dealing with sexual scandals. Prince Charles had been a friend of TV personality Jimmy Savile, who was posthumously exposed as a serial predatory paedophile. Savile had been allowed to make unannounced visits to Kensington Palace and had been invited to Charles's fortieth birthday party. Charles had even sent Savile a box of Havana cigars—a gift from Fidel Castro—with a note saying: 'Nobody will ever know what you've done for this country, Jimmy.'

Charles also expressed sympathy for another sexual offender. He allowed Peter Ball, the Bishop of Lewes and Gloucester, to live in a property in Somerset provided by the Duchy of Cornwall despite the prelate's admission that he had sexually abused boys, one as young as twelve. Documents revealed that the police had cooperated with leaders of the Church of England, particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, to 'prevent a scandal', partly because Ball was 'friendly with Prince Charles'.

'I wish I could do more,' Charles wrote to the paedophile in 1995, angry that Ball had not been re-appointed as bishop. 'I feel so desperately strongly about

the monstrous wrongs that have been done to you and the way you've been treated.' Ball was jailed in 2015—the year that Giuffre accused Andrew.

The royal family had sailed through these scandals relatively unscathed. But the Epstein imbroglio was not going to go away. There were at least fifteen lawsuits by victims against Epstein's estate and the FBI were on the track of possible accomplices. There was also Jean-Luc Brunel, the Epstein insider who found models for the billionaire. He seemed to have turned sides and in a pivotal breakthrough provided, in the words of Giuffre's lawyer, 'first-hand accounts of Epstein engaging in sex with minors inside and outside of the US—describing nothing less than an international sex scheme'.

Buckingham Palace and the prince were adamant, however, the allegations were untrue and the palace was preparing to bet The Firm.

## 2

### THE TROUBLE WITH ANDREW

There is a very good reason for a book on the scandal caused by the man behind the princely title and its ramifications for Britain as a nation. Behind the scenes, the duke has not only become one of Britain's most influential royals since Prince Philip's retirement from public life in 2017, but he is also the son whom the nonagenarian monarch considers her 'rock' and 'tower of strength'. These affectionate epithets, the latest in many over the years, transpired in January 2020 when reporters were briefed during the media frenzy surrounding the move of Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to Canada.

Not long before the storm-in-a-teacup crisis surrounding Prince Harry, Andrew himself had been swept up in the much more sordid scandal of his own making. The scandal was further inflamed by the November 2019 TV interview with the duke on BBC Newsnight in Buckingham Palace. The interview had been mooted for six months by palace officials with BBC Newsnight producer Sam McAlister.

In fact, there seemed to be a connection between the two royal crises. The palace had known for months, as well, about the Sussexes' desire to step back from their roles as senior royals were secretly negotiating the implications of such a move with the couple. Was it a coincidence that, shortly after the Newsnight interview spectacularly misfired, the emigration of Harry and Meghan, his wife of African-American descent, to Canada was leaked? It was such big news globally that, if it didn't drown out the prince's TV catastrophe completely, it at least directed a lot of the turbulence around the palace towards a different, much lighter royal subject.

Already on the day of the Newsnight interview there was a report of Prince Harry 'dropping out of the royal family'. Was it an early plant by the palace? Once the top of the royal family had cleared Andrew's interview, courtiers had to have a contingency plan ready in case the prince's reputation would not be burnished the way the royal family hoped it would. While royals themselves were evidently persuaded by Andrew's impending success, opinions were certainly divided among palace staff as to what the net result would be of appearing on the BBC's most famous inquisitorial programme.

Following the green signal for the interview, the Charles-William faction among the royal staff likely saw the Harry-Meghan diversion as a move that would both protect the Queen and the monarchy while saving the prince from himself in case he became the media's sitting duck.

At worst, a plant might nudge the ongoing negotiations with the Sussexes to a conclusion. At best it could result in trimming the expanding monarchy, a longstanding objective among the faction. The news reception would decide the fate of three independently-minded HRHs. One would fall, or not,

depending on his TV performance, and the Sussexes would have to make a decision as to what exactly they wanted—remain or leave. The royal family, bound by family affection, would of course not personally be involved in this part of the palace's job.

The first sign of storm clouds had gathered on the horizon when billionaire Jeffrey Epstein was arrested at a New Jersey airport on federal charges of sex trafficking minors. The federal arrest followed Epstein's guilty plea eleven years earlier in 2008 to a State of Florida charge of soliciting a sixteen-year-old girl and an eighteen-month largely suspended prison sentence.

The prince, notwithstanding Epstein's underage sex charges, was photographed in 2010 with the registered sex offender after his release. This was followed by news in 2011 that his ex-wife had accepted money from the paedophile and the prince resigned thereafter from his official function within the UK government.

On the same day of Epstein's arrest in July 2019, the FBI searched Epstein's Manhattan townhouse. What they found was truly explosive. The agency uncovered photographs of underage girls as well as a fake passport belonging to Epstein, among many other pieces of potential evidence that the billionaire had secreted away at his New York home. In a desperate bid to restore their client's freedom, Epstein's lawyers offered to post bail of 100 million dollars. The request was denied by the presiding federal judge.

Not long after, the first domino stone tumbled. Alex Acosta, one of Donald Trump's cabinet members, had to resign for having engineered Epstein's generous guilty plea in Florida in 2008. The plea had been advocated by Alan Dershowitz and Kenneth Starr on Epstein's behalf in exchange for his

immunity from prosecution in the other cases. Some forty minors had originally come forward to the police, including the fourteen year old who had made the first complaint. The youngest girl was thirteen. Nonetheless Epstein's guilty plea related to one sixteen year old only and he was allowed to leave prison on work release during his sentence. Julie Brown of the *Miami Herald* would later identify up to eighty victims, including twelve-year-old triplets flown in from France, in a 2018 article about Acosta's handling of the Epstein charges.

By this time, the opposing sides of Giuffre's case and that of the other Epstein victims split into a who's who of America's establishment. Giuffre's lead lawyer was David Boies, one of America's most high-profile lawyers. He had fought on Al Gore's side at the Supreme Court in *Bush v Gore* on dangling chads and the presidency, and he had won gay-marriage equality in *US v Windsor*. Alan Dershowitz had defended OJ Simpson and himself was a frequent traveller on Epstein's private plane. In 2020 he and Giuffre still had a mutual defamation suit open against one another according to one of her lawyers. Orbiting the case were US Attorney General William Barr, whose father had given Epstein his first job, and US President Trump, who knew Epstein, Prince Andrew and Ghislaine Maxwell, well.

Fortunately for Epstein's powerful sex friends, the sixty six year old died under mysterious circumstances while in custody. The Trump administration's official investigation into the matter reckoned it was an unlucky confluence of Epstein's suicide by auto-strangulation and prison-regulation 'screw-ups'. Days later the criminal trial was dismissed as a result of Epstein's demise and his victims were denied their day in court.

Apart from the 2009 settlement, the Dershowitz case contained another filing that bore on the prince's arguments. It was a transcript of an 80-minute conversation in 2019 between journalist Sharon Churcher and Dershowitz's New York publisher Tony Lyons. Churcher published the first interview with Giuffre in 2011. It was 'checkbook journalism' Churcher conceded to Lyons (Brettler's submission showed Giuffre was paid \$160,000). About Giuffre's 2009 settlement Churcher stated to the publisher that Giuffre was 'a big spender' and had 'taken half a million, I think it was' from Epstein.

Other circumstantial facts were filtering through. Investigating the prince's itinerary in 2001, the *Daily Mail* discovered that he flew to New York on 9 April for a visit as chairman of a trust relating to the school his father, Prince Charles and he had attended to Britain's consul general whose residence was at 4 East 66th Street, five blocks from Epstein's mansion on 9 East 71st Street. In Andrew's diary, 1:45pm to 6:45pm were set apparently aside for 'private time'. In the end this private time took place between 2:30 to 5:30pm. In addition, it was discovered that a puppeteer called Steve Wright was at a Buckingham Palace reception in 2003 where the prince told him, 'Oh my God, puppets! Spitting Image—do you know that my friend bought my Spitting Image puppet'.

During the BBC interview, Andrew himself recalled about the visit, 'I was staying with the consul general which is further down the street on Fifth so I wasn't... I wasn't staying there. I may have visited but definitely didn't, definitely, definitely no, no, no activity.' The *Daily Mail* found, however, that the prince did spend the night at Epstein's on 11 April, two days later, with his body guard in his 'usual' room. Andrew had flown in at night at his own

expense from his engagement for the school's trust in Boston. By then Epstein's mansion was empty as Epstein, Maxwell and Giuffre had left for St Thomas on Epstein's private plane on that day. In 2001, all this was of course uncontroversial as Epstein would only be convicted in 2008. The prince himself was on his way from Boston to join Fergie and the children in the West Indies.

The real problem remained that, as Andrew made his case in court, it was his mother as Britain's Head of State who got drawn in further and further into the Affair. In 2011, when Churcher published Giuffre's first interview, royal lawyers had first got involved (though it may even have been as early as September 2007 when Sjoberg first published her Spitting Image story with Andrew months after Epstein pleaded guilty to soliciting underage sex in Florida). When the prince lost his role as the UK's Special trade envoy in July 2010 following the first rumblings of the Epstein Affair, the palace had brushed off the fall-out and maintained his role as a senior royal. Andrew received yearly payments from the Privy Purse and the Queen's income from the Duchy of Lancaster and could claim considerable expenses when on official palace duties.

It was hardly surprising the Queen was unwavering in her support for her second son. She knew Andrew held an impossible position, like her younger sister Margaret, and was thwarted in love because of it. When his relationship with his first love Koo Stark fizzled out, he was lost. Having taken up photography because of Stark, he had thrown himself into his new hobby and converted a bathroom on the third floor of Buckingham Palace. Asked whether there was a theme to his work the prince had replied, 'Dare I say it?