



'FORENSIC.' DAILY MAIL

THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF THE MASSEUSE  
WHO BROKE THE PERVERTED SEX RING OF  
JEFFREY EPSTEIN AND GHISLAINE MAXWELL

VIRGINIA  
GIUFFRÈ

**NIGEL CAWTHORNE**

ACCLAIMED AUTHOR OF *PRINCE ANDREW*

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*Prince Andrew: Epstein and the Palace*

*Ghislaine Maxwell*



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[rights@gibbonsquare.com](mailto:rights@gibbonsquare.com)

[www.gibbonsquare.com](http://www.gibbonsquare.com)

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VIRGINIA GIUFFRÈ

## INTRODUCTION

Virginia Giuffre's first-ever interview with the press was published on Sunday 27 February 2011 under her maiden name Roberts. Ever since, her name has been inextricably linked to the news connected with the scandals surrounding secretive billionaire playboy Jeffrey Epstein who died in custody in 2019. But, although practically everyone has heard of her name, we know very little about her. Who really is the person who took on her powerful employer and his army of lawyers and vanquished them? This is the first book to try and tell the story of who she was before she met Epstein and became a media sensation.

Hers is a modern David and Goliath tale, casting a young girl rather than a young shepherd. Goliath in this struggle was Jeffrey Epstein (but not only him). He was powerful and friends with Nobel Prize winning scientists, world leaders such as Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Crown Prince MBS, *de facto* leader of Saudi Arabia, film stars such as Kevin Spacey, and other luminaries who jetted around the world in his fleet

of aircraft. Virginia was simply a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who travelled alongside as one of the staff.

Yet that interview made her almost as famous as Epstein's friends. Blond and blue-eyed, in 2011, Virginia sketched a harrowing picture of the depravity that went on in private behind the gilded façade of Epstein's public high-society life. 'Basically, I was training to be a prostitute for him and his friends who shared his interest in young girls', she revealed about her work as a fifteen-year-old masseuse at Epstein's Florida home in Palm Beach. After two years of 'training' in 2000, Epstein asked her to come to Little St James his Caribbean island to make a friend of his 'feel how you make me feel'. From then on, she was employed to do the same with other associates of Epstein's, including men in their 60s, either on Epstein's island or at his ranch in New Mexico.

These were shocking allegations, even if Epstein had already pleaded guilty to two underage sex offences. In March 2005, the mother of a 14-year-old girl had gone to the police in Palm Beach and accused Epstein of sexually assaulting her young daughter. Almost a decade and a half later, it would be revealed that an FBI investigation had uncovered 100s of girls with a similar story. But this remained a secret for a long time. How many victims there had been was not known in 2015, as Epstein had been allowed to strike a plea bargain under Florida law with a jail time of 13 months. In return for pleading guilty to two underage felonies he avoided federal prosecution based on hundreds of allegations by girls similar to Virginia.

In 2015, Virginia dared to go public about Epstein as the first of his victims with her interview. It was her challenge to his attempts to burnish

his tattered reputation by being seen to give money to good causes while carrying on as before in private. Over the years, Epstein had been able to use his seemingly bottomless wealth to fend off the swirl of lawsuits by his victims through paying out vast sums in return for their silence. After Epstein died in 2019, his estate was to pay out another \$121 million to some 150 victims. After his conviction, Epstein was using his money to buy his way back into the world elite.

Virginia, too, had been bound by a non-disclosure agreement in a civil case that she had brought against her former employer. And also by an agreement in another suit she had brought in 2015 against Epstein's former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell, herself a millionaire many times over. But her lawyers had found a way for her to go public despite the wall of legal clauses the lawyers of her onetime bosses had erected around her. The conviction of Ghislaine Maxwell in December 2021 for underage sex trafficking added instant credibility to what she had first said in 2011. Virginia herself did not testify in the Ghislaine Maxwell case, but the evidence on which Maxwell was convicted amply corroborated her statements and showed that Epstein and Maxwell had acted in concert to abuse a raft of underage girls from as early as 1994.

One thing became clear since 2011. Virginia was not afraid to fight her corner. On 2 December 2019 – two weeks after Prince Andrew's disastrous BBC interview on British Newsnight programme to explain why he stayed friends with Epstein subsequent to Epstein's guilty pleas to underage-sex offences – she appeared on British TV for the first time. This was during an hour-long episode of the BBC's Panorama programme called 'The Prince

and the Epstein Scandal'. Two weeks earlier, Andrew had told Newsnight that he did not recall ever meeting Virginia. But Virginia insisted that, not only did he meet her, the prince had sex with her on three occasions – something he vehemently denied. 'He knows what happened, I know what happened and there's only one of us telling the truth,' she said, however.

On 9 August 2021, she went further and filed a civil suit against the prince in New York, claiming that, not only did he have sex with her, but it was non-consensual. Indeed she maintained that billionaire Jeffrey Epstein and his one-time partner Ghislaine Maxwell trafficked her for \$15,000 although she did not claim the prince knew about the payment. What the jury would have made of the evidence presented by both sides, we will never know. The case was settled out of court on 7 March 2022 and the prince making a donation to Virginia's charity in support of victim rights as a pledge to 'demonstrate his regret for his association with [Jeffrey] Epstein'.

Today, Virginia Giuffre has undoubtedly proved to be a formidable adversary to these powerful men and the person who helped stop Epstein's repeat offending in its tracks while being an example to the hundreds of Epstein victims out there that there is justice even if it comes late. Who was she, however, before she shot to fame and how did an abused high-school drop-out outsmart an army of highly-educated professionals who defend billionaires such as Epstein?

## A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD

Virginia Giuffre was born Virginia Louise Roberts in Sacramento, California, on 9 August 1983. She spent her early years on a small ranch on the West Coast. Her parents were Sky and Lynn Roberts. Sky was an engineer – ‘a kind of jack of all trades,’ Virginia recalled, who worked a condos and various apartment blocks in California. Lynn was in banking. Both had been married before and Virginia had two stepbrothers – Daniel, who was two years older, and Sky, who was younger. And both her parents believed in corporal punishment and Virginia was beaten for misbehaviour from a young age.

When she was four, the family moved to Loxahatchee, Florida, where her father got a job as a maintenance man at Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago in nearby West Palm Beach. But Loxahatchee was very much on the wrong side of the tracks. Many local residents lived in trailers in the woods. There were nurseries and horse farms, some with barbed-wire gates and signs that read ‘No Trespassing’, ‘Keep OUT’, or ‘Beware of the Dog’.

It was a very mixed area in other respects, too. The Ku Klux Klan held a cross-burning there in 1980, and there was a fruit stall and a nudist camp. The nearest gas station was five miles away – the nearest grocery store ten.

The Roberts family had a single-storey home on two-acres of land. They kept chickens, goats and horses. Virginia had a horse named Brumby that she rode down the dirt roads and there was a pond where she went swimming. For her, these early years were a happy, carefree, all-American life.

She attended Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School. ‘My mother used to dress me in dresses with my hair in bows,’ she recalled. ‘I look really embarrassing in the school photos.’

But everything changed in her life at the age of seven when she was sexually abused by a close family friend. She has never revealed who the culprit was.

‘It started as a bedtime ritual and then it graduated to cuddles,’ she said. ‘It turned my entire life around. Everything changed. I went from being a very happy child to a completely different person. If you look at my school photographs, you can see the drastic change in my eyes from kindergarten to second grade.’

Virginia was loath to go home at night. As a result, the family broke up temporarily.

‘I began to hang out with older kids. They were all smoking pot, and I fell into this group of misfits,’ she said.

She often ran away, crashing at one friend’s home or another’s.

‘At one point, my parents put alarms on the windows to try to keep me in,’ she said.

Taking inspiration from the 1980s TV series *MacGyver*, about a young secret agent who used his near-genius intellect to get himself out of life-and-death situations, she tried to short-out the alarm. It didn’t work.

At the age of eleven, Virginia was sent to live with her Aunt Carol in Salinas, California. It did nothing to curb her wild ways. A country girl from an all-white area full of pickup trucks and tractors, she suddenly found herself in an urban middle school that largely catered to Hispanic and African Americans. It was also surrounded by gangs.

‘I did not like the school,’ she said. ‘It got to the point I refused to go because the gang members were threatening me.’

There was one family member Virginia looked up to, though: her feisty grandmother Shelly Louise Walters. She grew up in a suburb of Chicago, and was a Vassar graduate from 1954. Later she served as national secretary for the US Professional Tennis Association.

‘She was a big public figure back then,’ Virginia said. ‘She won tennis tournaments in Florida, a lot of championships. She was the writer of her own destiny, a woman who fought for other women.’

Her grandmother wasn’t exactly a conventional role model or the motherly type and sent her two daughters to live with her parents so she could continue her tennis career. She married five times before moving to Florida in 1976 with her fifth husband, Frank ‘Bucky’ Walters.

‘As a grandmother, she was crazy,’ Virginia said. ‘She woke up with a Bloody Mary in one hand and a cigarette in the other. She had to be fierce

because she was making it in a man's world; she was a pioneer who didn't have time for bullshit.'

Soon Virginia was planning her own destiny. On Easter Sunday, while the family were busy organizing a big party, Virginia showered, dressed, packed up her few belongings and climbed out of the window.

She hitched a ride to San Francisco, heading for the Haight-Ashbury district which, back in the 1960s had been the centre of the hippie counterculture. Virginia had read about it in books. Sadly they were twenty years out of date.

'I wanted to live in a hippie town, free love and all,' she said. 'What I found was a nice, fancy area with uppity people. I thought, 'What did I get myself into? It was cold and I had no money.' So I called my best friend in Florida and she told her father.'

Within twenty-four hours, he was on a plane to California to pick up Virginia and take her back to Florida.

At home that summer, life seemly returned to normal. The family took a cross-country camping trip. But things turned ugly when her father found her with a boy at one of the campgrounds they were staying in.

'My father threatened him with his life,' she said. 'He beat the shit out of me, threw me in the camper, and I kicked him in the groin to get him off me. He kept beating me.' Her parents then placed her in a school for troubled teens.

'It was like a jail for kids. At night, you would go to foster homes. It was easy to break away, but when I was caught, they would put me in a white room with no bed. I'd spend weeks there.'

Again she was not prepared to put up with it.

‘I went from an abusive situation, to being a runaway, to living in foster homes,’ she said.

One day she escaped and hitched a ride to Boynton Beach. She bummed \$20 from a man who took her to the nearest train station where she bought a one-way ticket to Miami.

Living on the streets, she was beaten up and slept with at least two older men in return for food. At the age of thirteen, she was camping out on Miami Beach, ‘hiding from a world full of hurt,’ she said. Watching the sunset, she was in tears as she reflected on the abuse she had encountered as a young teenager.

‘Everyone in my life who was supposed to be there for me had now turned their backs on me’.

## EXPLOITED

After three nights, she felt the pain of hunger in her belly and walked to a nearby bus stop to ask the people there if they could spare some change. No one would help. She sat on the kerb with her head on her knees and wept.

Just then a black stretch limousine drove by and stopped. The back door swung open to reveal a fat, balding man sitting next to a striking, young, drop-dead gorgeous, blonde girl, in a foxy red mini dress looking like a model who had just stepping off the catwalk.

The man asked Virginia: ‘What is such a sweet little girl like you doing sitting alone on the street looking so upset?’

Although she was suspicious, at least these strangers showed some concern. Virginia told them that she was a runaway and she was hungry, hoping that he would give her some money for food. Instead, he invited her into the car so they could talk some more.

She later realized that she should have taken to her heels there and then. It was a trap. But naively she got in.