

Sunday Times bestselling author of *The Mountbattens*

ANDREW LOWNIE

ENTITLED

THE RISE AND FALL
OF THE HOUSE OF YORK



'The most
devastating
royal biography
ever written'
DAILY MAIL

ENTITLED

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OF THE HOUSE OF YORK

ANDREW LOWNIE

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INTRODUCTION

Many would have preferred this book not to have been written, including the Yorks themselves. I originally approached them with a view to letting them help shape the narrative by encouraging their friends and associates to talk to me but they decided not to cooperate. At the same time, they told their contacts not to talk to me and threatening legal letters were sent to my publishers even before publication saying the duchess was monitoring my social media.

For years a curated narrative about the couple has been created, policed by armies of lawyers and PR people and shaped by a symbiotic relationship with the press. The couple's staff have been forced to sign non-disclosure agreements and the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act and the convention that parliamentary questions are not asked about members of the Royal Family have further shielded them from any proper scrutiny.

The Foreign Office told ambassadors not to talk to me and for four years the Information Rights department of the Foreign Office and Freedom of Information section of the Department for Business and Trade deployed every exemption they could to prevent release of documents relating to Prince Andrew's time as special representative for trade and investment, even though he was a taxpayer-funded civil servant.

Some three thousand people were approached researching this book. Fewer than a tenth replied. It is understandable that from loyalty or deference to the Crown many should do so and so I am grateful to those who did talk to me, many of whom had never spoken before. Those almost three hundred people included childhood friends, schoolmates, work colleagues, former staff (in spite of the NDAs), diplomats, charity workers, business associates, journalists who investigated the Yorks but were not

allowed to publish their findings, friends and people who had encountered them in daily life.

My information came not only from a long list of interviews – some on the record but many not – identified using social media, electoral rolls, LinkedIn and *Who's Who*, as well as over sixty years of media coverage, comments to newspapers and closed royal and navy forums. I was also able, having gone to court, to secure closed files from the National Archives as well as consult private diaries and letters.

The result is *Entitled: The Rise and Fall of the House of York*, of how a popular couple fell from grace because of the flaws in their own characters and how they were allowed to leverage their privileged position as royals for personal gain with the connivance of the institution itself.

It is a tale of childhood trauma, infidelity, lust, betrayal, corruption, greed, extravagance, arrogance, entitlement, Establishment cover-up and hubris. Both a black comedy and a tragedy, it shows how a man born into a prominent family with responsibilities as well as privileges, found himself unable to fulfil the basic requirements of an ancient role. And how the jolly young woman who married him succumbed to every possible temptation on offer. It is a story as old as time but played out in our time.

The charismatic and handsome Prince Andrew, who returned from the Falklands in 1982 a war hero, is now, in his mid-sixties, a prisoner in his own house, a scorned figure relieved of royal duties who spends his days playing golf and watching television. The book looks at how he exploited his public position as a taxpayer-funded special representative for trade and investment to develop his own business activities and those of his ex-wife and two daughters and it reveals fresh information about his connections – and those of Sarah Ferguson – with the paedophile and financier Jeffrey Epstein, which began earlier, lasted longer and were more extensive than has hitherto been realised. The book also covers his dealings with Donald Trump, Bill Clinton and Mark Thatcher.

Sarah Ferguson's story is equally complex, marked by ambition, financial recklessness, a tumultuous relationship with the media and constant reinvention. She was initially seen as a breath of fresh air, but her exploitation of her royal status has seen her join her ex-husband as a hugely diminished figure.

Ferguson, from whom he was divorced in 1996 (though she still uses her title), still lives with him. For many years he supported her financially and stood by her publicly. Now those roles have been reversed. The ex-wife has made and lost several fortunes, has been a huge force for good with her charitable endeavours but has also been accused of using them for social networking and to make money for herself. The two have been called ‘the royal odd couple’, as people have struggled to understand how a partnership that lasted only six years before separation should have endured to this day.

This is not just a book about a royal marriage but about the monarchy itself – its current role and its future as it navigates changing expectations and accountability. It shows the relationship with the press, of how rival courts have briefed against each other to secure more favourable media coverage for their members and the ‘horse deals’ done to protect the ‘principals’.

Through the prism of a royal couple, who have both defined and defied the monarchy, *Entitled: The Rise and Fall of the House of York* has, in the words of one commentator, ‘a headline on every page’.

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Given the sensitivities of talking about members of the Royal Family, I am especially grateful to all those who talked to me, often at some detriment to themselves, but who were determined the full story of the Yorks should come out.

My first thanks to previous authors or ghostwriters, including Nicholas Courtney, David Leigh, Ingrid Seward, Allan Starkie with whom I had an amusing lunch in New York, James Steen, Peter Thompson and Christopher Wilson.

I had two enjoyable dinners with John Bryan in Los Angeles and Ian Halperin has been incredibly supportive, sharing his research notes and 2007 interview with Jeffrey Epstein. Phil Dampier provided six crates of news cuttings on the couple going back over sixty years and Philip Armstrong-Dampier the interview transcripts for a documentary he made on the duchess. Clare McHugh made some useful editorial suggestions and Tess Lawrence helped with Australian publicity.

Tom Jackson recollected being a young playmate of Prince Andrew. Rupert Bell, Geoffrey Dean and Frank Egerton remembered Andrew at Heatherdown. Among those with reminiscences of Gordonstoun were William Carrington, Andrew Day, Jamie Hay, Alasdair Macgregor, Peter Neilson, Tim Radford, Damian Wood. Randall Barker and Lynn Nightingale recalled Andrew from Lakefield.

A surprisingly large number of Andrew's former naval colleagues were prepared to talk and I am especially grateful to Ralph Wykes-Sneyd, his commanding officer in the Falklands; Tony Hogg, his naval careers adviser; and Martin Davis, who was responsible for one of his major career reports. Others were Tom Arnall and Ian McAllister (and his wife) who constituted part of Andrew's four-man crew in the Falklands, Roger Caesley, Steve

George, Mike Gretton, John Harvey, Ian Hendry, Steve Jermy, David Lewis, Euan McNair, Martin Manning, Chris Parry and Jon Westbrook.

Duncan Christie-Miller talked about Andrew's earning of his Green Beret and Duncan Falconer collected stories from his former colleagues about Andrew's stint in special forces. Elisabeth Basford passed on memories from her late brother, who served with Andrew, while Vicki Hodge remembered her fling with Andrew in Barbados.

Many others made introductions such as Brian Basham, Simon Brocklebank-Fowler, Tony Byrne, Sebastian Cody, Mo Davies, Gwenan Edwards, Mike Gifford, Melinda Gilbert, Tim Hames, James Hanning, David Hardy of the British Kazakh Society, Gerry Harrison, Camilla Hellman, Sarah Ingham, Denice Lewis, Valbo MacDonald, Jonathan Mantle, David Montgomery, Fred Moss, Şükran Çağlayan Mumcu, Catherine Ostler, Jason Pack, Priscilla Pollara, Craig Rochford, Tony Russell, Lucy Smith-Ryland, Youssef Sawani, Terenia Taras, Roland Thomas, Virginia Urquhart-Stewart and Doug Wight.

Numerous journalists, writers, documentary makers or media lawyers discussed their own researches into the couple, including Maggie Alderson, Peter Allen, Norman Baker, Nina Biddle, Chris Blackhurst, Nigel Blundell, David Burke, James Clench, Michael Cole, Paul Connew, Jamie Crawford, Tom Crone, John Cross, Stephen Dorril, Janice Finch, Daniel Foggo, Wayne Francis, Paul French, David Gardner, Clive Goodman, Tayla Goodman, Caroline Graham, Adam Helliker, Paddy Hill, Margaret Holder, Mark Hollingsworth, Mark Hookham, Patricia Jenkins, Patrick Jephson, Rob Jobson, Jane Kerr, Jason Lewis, Alan Mackie, Henry Macrory, Andrew MacGregor Marshall, Catherine Mayer, Judy McGuire, Henry Mance, Phil Miller, Bill Mostyn, Charlie Rae, Charles Richards, Mary Riddell, Paul Samrai, Henry Singer, Tom Sykes, Michael Thornton, Neville Thurlbeck, Sandra White, Stuart White and Annette Witheridge.

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famous interview. Paul Page and David Seaborn Davies, a former head of royal security, shed light on Andrew's behaviour to his protection officers.

Martin Schreiber recalled his 1984 relationship with the duchess and Charles Weld the renting of Chideock Manor. Michael Dover and John Sargent discussed their experiences of publishing the duchess, and Jane Moore, the Reed lawyer, the alleged plagiarism of *Hector the Helicopter*. Bill Hamilton, Anna Lubenska and Chris Rogers recounted their travels with her, while John Thorne spoke of her work for MacIntyre, Tina Fotherby for Children in Crisis and Jo Drake for breast cancer charities; Baroness Nicholson shed light on her charity work in Romania. Brian Patterson talked about her time promoting Wedgwood and Mike Bevan about the animation of *Fergie's Farm*. Eric Smit and Nina Storms explained the duchess's involvement in World Online. Dr Steven Victor, Ferguson's dermatologist, talked about his treatments.

Among the diplomats who spoke to me were Thorda Abbott-Watt, US ambassador Matthew Bryza, Andrew Caie, Mark Canning, Peter Collecott, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, David Fall, Peter Ford, George Fergusson, Martin Hatfull, Lord Jay, Sir John Jenkins, Stuart Laing, Robin Lamb, Richard Lewington, Graeme Loten, Richard Makepeace, David Moran, Alastair Morgan, Caroline Nestor, Lord Patten, Ian Proud, Lord Ricketts, Antony Stokes and Sir David Warren.

Leslie Abrahams and Lyndsay Henderson conducted research in Azerbaijan and Rowan Kennedy took soundings among his British Council colleagues in Kazakhstan. Businessmen who came across Andrew in Kazakhstan or Azerbaijan include Neil Carmichael, Nick Coleman and Nicholas Pomeroy.

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The first people to read the book were my wife, Angela, and children, Alice and Robert, and I am grateful to them for their valuable contributions. The book is dedicated to them.

Every attempt has been made to clear permission extracts but if some have been missed, I am happy to rectify the situation for the revised paperback. Equally if there are corrections or additions for that I would be grateful to be contacted at andrew@andrewlownie.co.uk.

Prologue

23 JULY 1986

The father of the groom and mother of the bride – lovers twenty years earlier – sat in the third carriage waving to the crowds. Prince Philip and Susan Barrantes, whose former husband was Prince Charles's polo manager, had been part of the same social circle for years. Now they were together publicly celebrating the marriage of Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson.

That morning Andrew had been made Duke of York, the traditional title for the monarch's second son and last held by the Queen's father, and also granted the Scottish and Irish titles Earl of Inverness and Baron Killyleagh. Ferguson, too, had a new coat of arms, with its prophetic motto *Ex Adversis Felicitas Crescit* – Out of Adversity, Happiness Grows.

The red-haired bride looked striking in a wedding dress designed by the couturier Lindka Cierach in ivory duchess satin with heavy beadwork incorporating the Ferguson coat of arms – a honey bee on a thistle – and symbols such as hearts for romance, and anchors and waves representing the groom's naval background, though Cierach had vetoed the bride's desire for decorative teddy bears and helicopters. The seventeen-foot train bore the letters A and S intertwined in silver beads.

Teddy bears were also to be a motif of the wedding gifts, which included a teddy teapot and mugs, pictures of Beatrix Potter animals, ashtrays decorated with butterflies and bugs, matching tankards initialled 'A' and 'S', and a dustbin with 'A' and 'S' and their picture on the front. Ferguson gave her new husband a thirty-inch solid silver helicopter that opened up to reveal valuable miniatures, one of which was a silver teddy bear.

The bride entered Westminster Abbey to a fanfare from the Royal Marines and Edward Elgar's 'Imperial March'. Behind her as pages and bridesmaids came Peter and Zara Phillips, the children of Princess Anne;

Prince William, then aged just four; Sarah's half-brother, Andrew; and a nephew, the boys in seventeenth-century midshipman dress uniforms or sailor suits, the girls in peach dresses.

At the altar waited the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and Andrew, the most handsome of the Queen's children with his toothy smile, in the uniform of a naval lieutenant with his 'supporter', as the Royal Family call the best man, his younger brother, Edward, beside him.

The traditional service followed the liturgy of the 1682 Book of Common Prayer and Ferguson promised in her vows to 'obey' her husband. The hymns included favourites such as 'Come Down, O Love Divine', 'Lead Us, Heavenly Father, Lead Us' and Handel's 'Music for the Royal Fireworks', and Felicity Lott sang Mozart's 'Laudate Dominum' while the new couple signed the register.

Almost two thousand guests had filled the Abbey, among them Nancy Reagan, the racing driver Jackie Stewart, the comedian Billy Connolly and his actress wife Pamela Stephenson, Elton John and his wife Renate, Michael and Shakira Caine, Barry Humphries, the American comedienne Joan Rivers and the actor Anthony Andrews, as well as foreign royals, aristocrats and the great and good. But there were none of Andrew's shipmates from HMS *Brazen*, who were in the Middle East.

Security, which had cost £2 million, was tight: armed detectives dressed as coachmen had ridden on the backs of the carriages, and five miles of Westminster's sewers had been checked. Costs had included £220,000 on flowers, £168,000 on the reception, £20,000 on photographs and a whopping £10,000 on the cake.

When the new couple returned to Buckingham Palace for the balcony appearance, the crowds – estimated to be 250,000 people – could be seen stretching in every direction. A number itself dwarfed by the television audience of five hundred million for the marriage of the monarch's handsome second son, one of the major royal events of the period. 'We want a kiss, we want a kiss,' the crowd chanted. The couple cupped their hands to their ears as if they could not hear and then obliged. The multitude roared.

Next came the wedding lunch of salmon, cold lobster, lamb, strawberries and cream, and the five-tiered 240-pound cake, which Andrew had to cut

with his ceremonial sword. Sarah, however, did not have happy memories of the meal, an early indication that royal protocol was not for her.

It was lavish and proper and dull, that lunch. At one point we raised a glass, yet no one made a toast, for that was not traditional! I felt suddenly washed by regret. All the pomp had been fine, but I wanted to be a regular bride – I wanted Andrew's best man to get up and make a funny speech, and for someone else to say what a jolly good person I was or how badly I'd ridden my ponies.

Just after 4 p.m. the newlyweds left from the Palace forecourt – their horse-drawn landau boasting a large teddy bear and sign saying 'Phone Home' – for Chelsea's Royal Hospital less than two miles away, a helicopter to Heathrow, a flight to the Azores and their honeymoon on board the royal yacht *Britannia*.

The young girl had her prince. The fairy tale had come true.

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I

EARLY LIFE

BABY GRUMPLING

Prince Andrew was born on 19 February 1960 at Buckingham Palace, the first issue to a reigning monarch since Queen Victoria gave birth to Princess Beatrice in 1857. Christened Andrew (after his paternal grandfather Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark) Albert (after his maternal grandfather) Christian Edward (after his two great-great-grandfathers Christian IX of Denmark and Edward VII), he was the first royal to take the surname Mountbatten-Windsor in defiance of a promise by which the Queen had agreed that her descendants would take the name Windsor.

Two months later he was baptised in the Music Room at Buckingham Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, in front of his godparents: the Duke of Gloucester, Princess Alexandra, Lord Elphinstone, the Earl of Euston and Georgina, Lady Kennard. He had been placed under the care of a nanny, Mabel Anderson, known as Mamba, who was helped by an under-nanny, June Waller. Waller wrote to a friend:

The christening went off very well. Andrew was good and didn't cry except for two little squeaks. He christened me before we went. I had him on his pot, not thinking, of course. He misaimed and I went to the royal christening with a damp skirt!! I'm not used to little boys yet!
P.S. – Andrew weighed 11lb 3oz last Monday. He alters every day and smiles beautifully.

Soon after, the Queen presciently wrote to her cousin Lady Mary Cambridge: 'The baby is adorable. All in all, he's going to be terribly spoilt by all of us, I'm sure.'

Andrew, born twelve years after his elder brother Charles and a decade after his sister Anne, became the first child of the Queen's 'second' family, which was to be influential in shaping his character. By then the Queen

found it much easier to combine her royal duties with being a mother, with the result that Andrew was indulged in a way that his elder siblings, away at boarding school, were not, and treated, until the birth of his younger brother Edward in March 1964, like an only child.

The new addition to the Royal Family was not seen in public for the first sixteen months of his life, occasioning a rumour that there might be something wrong with him, but the Queen was resolved to shield her son from public glare. From the start, he was not an easy child and was named 'Baby Grumpling' because of his temper tantrums, mischief and obstinacy. 'He was a very energetic child indeed, one might say a boisterous child,' remembered valet Stephen Barry. 'He was into everything. Always trying to follow us downstairs where he wasn't allowed, tugging at the footmen's tailcoats, climbing to reach anything that had been put out of his reach. He had a very strong personality and he was extremely good-looking even then.'

Having been a rather formal and distant mother to her two older children, the Queen doted on her new son and spent as much time as she could with him, supposedly teaching him the alphabet, how to count and tell the time, and bathing him. On Mabel Anderson's day off she would babysit her two youngest children in the nursery, watching television with them or reading to them.

But the psychologist Oliver James questioned this narrative, arguing that Andrew's parents, with their royal duties, had only limited time for their third born: 'Andrew, hoiked backwards and forwards from the nursery, clearly ended up suffering from what psychologists call anxious attachment, the constant fear that loved ones will be snatched away.' The consequence of all this coming and going might well be an 'avoidant' pattern of attachment – a withdrawal from emotional closeness.

Deprived of boundaries and rarely disciplined, Andrew quickly grew into the classic spoiled brat. Aware of his high rank from an early age, arrogant and overbearing, he would order staff about and according to one member of staff be 'a bloody nuisance'.

Even the Queen described him as 'a bit of a handful' and 'not always a little ray of sunshine about the house'. He was fond of practical jokes, hiding knives and forks when a footman was laying the table, tying the shoelaces of sentries, teasing his grandmother (and reputedly an Anglican

bishop at Balmoral as well) with a whoopee cushion, putting itching powder in his mother's bed, turning the aerial at Buckingham Palace so she could not watch the racing at Sandown and putting washing-up liquid in the Palace pool.

A valuable silver tray was used as a toboggan for sliding down Palace stairs and he would pedal furiously up and down the long red-carpeted corridors on his tricycle. For his sixth birthday he received a miniature Aston Martin, an exact scaled-down version of the one in *Goldfinger* with the numberplate JB007, complete with toy machine guns and smoke system built at a cost of £4,000. No one felt able to discipline him. He quickly learned that he could do what he wanted.

Almost from the beginning, he felt a strong sense of entitlement, one not wholly shared by his siblings, with fawning staff, lavish homes, chauffeured cars, and showed himself to be wilful, exuberant, gregarious, undisciplined and aggressive, and possessed of a limited attention span. Evelyn Muir-Bell, who worked at Windsor between 1973 and 1995, remembered him as the 'most troublesome' royal.

'A TIRESOME LITTLE SHIT'

Tom Jackson attended a 'gym' with the young prince, then about six, in Pavilion Road in Chelsea, run by a Mr Sturgis. Afterwards, the children would go on to play in Cadogan Gardens. 'Prince Andrew was a tiresome little shit, who once informed me when "playing" that he was a "Prince",' said Jackson. 'I immediately informed him that I was actually a "King", which seemed to shut him up.'

Initially Andrew was taught at home by a governess, Katherine Peebles, known as Mispy, who had done likewise for Princess Alexandra and Prince Michael twenty years earlier. Andrew was not a studious child; he was easily bored and difficult to control, in contrast to his bookish younger brother who was quiet and well-behaved. His dance teacher remembered him distracting the other pupils because he was not interested in her class.

Princess Diana, born a few months after Andrew and who knew him from early childhood, later wrote: 'He was very, very noisy and loud ... It occurred to me that there was something troubling him. He wasn't for me.'

Andrew was very happy to sit in front of the television all day watching cartoons and videos because he's not a doer.'

Nothing was too good for the young prince. He had tennis coaching from the former British champion Dan Maskell, cricket lessons from Len Muncer, the head coach at Lord's, and racing driver Graham Hill taught him to drive on the royal estate's private roads. Part of the challenge lay in channelling his natural high spirits and energies, so there was plenty of physical exercise playing football and cricket on the Burton Court fields opposite the Royal Hospital. He became a member of the 1st Marylebone Wolf Club pack which, on the grounds of security, met weekly at Buckingham Palace.

Where Charles was sensitive and thoughtful, Andrew was macho, confident and extroverted, the sort of son Philip had always wanted. His father taught him to swim and later to shoot and sail, and played football with him. At this stage, the relationship between the two elder brothers was close. It was for Andrew and Edward that Charles wrote his book *The Old Man of Lochnagar* and valet Stephen Barry noted how Charles liked to play with his younger brothers when they were small and 'they adored him'.

In September 1968, in order to install some discipline in him, aged eight, Andrew was sent to Heatherdown, a prep school of eighty pupils with strong royal and aristocratic connections. This was probably at the suggestion of the Queen's racing manager and close friend, the 7th Earl of Carnarvon, whose two sons were already at the school.

Prince Edward would follow his older brother there in 1972, as would David Cameron, who started in 1974. Among former pupils were the actor David Niven and the King of Bhutan. It was here that Andrew made a lifelong best friend, Charles Butter, nephew of his godmother Lady Kennard.

Set in thirty acres, near Ascot, Heatherdown was a feeder for Eton, at one time a destination considered for Prince Andrew. The Queen and Prince Philip often appeared at school events in a Rolls-Royce and knew many of the parents socially. A contemporary, Viscount Goschen, remembered it as 'a charming little school' with a miniature steam railway the boys could ride, and spending a lot of time building dens in the woods. On sports days, Goschen recalled 'beetroot-faced colonels' taking part in the fathers' race,

and the three separate lavatories provided: 'one for ladies, one for gentlemen and one for chauffeurs'.

While Andrew was at Heatherdown the *Royal Family* documentary (1969) aired on British television, revealing him to be a lively, cheerful boy, with a touch of the daredevil, but he also began to display the contrary behaviour that would bedevil his life. One moment he would be diligent and polite, the next aggressive and rude. Like his father, he had a short temper, a rather Germanic sense of humour and did not bear fools gladly.

Though the boys were known by their surnames at school, Andrew was always called by his Christian name. During his time at Heatherdown an IRA plot to kidnap him and his second cousin, the Earl of St Andrews, was uncovered, which circumscribed some of his activities. A contemporary, Frank Egerton, remembered boys speculating about whether Andrew's detective, with him at all times, carried a gun. 'He fitted in but one was always aware he was a member of the Royal Family. There was this reserve, one never knew the real Andrew and I don't remember him having close friends,' said Egerton. 'He was impetuous and would often say something without thinking which would get him into trouble.'

Another Heatherdown pupil from that time recollected Andrew as being quite big for his age, and very bumptious, someone who threw his weight around: 'He was cocky and had a high opinion of himself. He wasn't the brightest button and never made it to the top class.'

One episode stands out for several contemporaries. At some point a box of exotic stamps went missing. After a search they were found in Prince Andrew's desk. According to one of his classmates, 'He had crossed out the name of the owner and put his own name on it. When discovered, he simply shrugged it off.'

Andrew was a founding member of the school's scouting group, learned judo and made the first teams for cricket and rugby, but otherwise his time at Heatherdown was not distinguished. Most of his fellow students were headed for English public schools such as Eton and Harrow, but Philip made the family decisions, and he had decided that Andrew would follow him and older brother Charles to Gordonstoun, not least because its remoteness made security easier and it was less than two hours' drive from Balmoral. And so, in the autumn of 1973, Andrew left his friends behind

and headed to the very north of Scotland to start the next stage of his education.

THE FERGUSONS

Sarah Margaret Ferguson was born four months before Andrew, on 15 October 1959. Her family, which descended from King Charles II, had strong aristocratic and military connections. Her paternal grandmother was the granddaughter of the 6th Duke of Buccleuch and every generation of her father's family since the nineteenth century had been commissioned into the Life Guards.

Her father, Ronald Ferguson, born in 1931, had been educated at Eton, which he had left early after failing Trials twice, and joined the Life Guards as a trooper in 1949 before going to Sandhurst. Sarah's mother, born Susan Wright in 1937, was the granddaughter of the 8th Viscount Powerscourt and daughter of a director of a successful engineering company in Lincolnshire. The couple married in January 1956, the year after Susan came out as a debutante, at the fashionable St Margaret's church in the shadow of Westminster Abbey, with a reception at Claridge's for six hundred. They began married life at Lowood House in Ascot, a ten-bedroomed Edwardian mansion set in fourteen acres of garden with a gate lodge, staff cottage, apple orchard and tennis court, employing a cook, gardener, stable boy and after the birth of their first child, Jane Louisa, in August 1957, a nanny.

While still in the army, Ronald started playing polo in 1954 and by 1966 was representing England. He soon found himself in the same team as Prince Philip and acting as honorary unpaid polo manager for Prince Charles, accompanying him on foreign polo tours. The Queen and Philip often came to dinner at Lowood House, previously lived in by King Zog of Albania, and in return the Fergusons were invited to shoot at Sandringham or join the Queen's house party at Royal Ascot.

Like his father before him, Ferguson rose to command the Sovereign's Escort, reputedly being told on one occasion by the Queen to fall back when riding beside her: 'It's me they have come to see, not you.'

Ronald served with the Life Guards in Germany, Cyprus, Egypt and Yemen, and at times would be away for almost a year. Soon Susan,

exasperated by her husband's philandering, which she believed had begun in 1961 and included one of her bridesmaids, was having an affair with his polo teammate – Prince Philip.

By the end of the 1960s, on the death of his father, Ron had left the army and moved the family to Hampshire and the eight-bedroomed Dummer Down Farm, once owned by George IV. Here he ran a mixed arable farm set in 876 acres with stabling for six horses, combining farming with polo and work as consultant for a PR firm, and later running an indoor cricket school.

In 1969 a third child, to have been called Sophie, died shortly after birth when Susan developed pre-eclampsia, with the result that she suffered from postnatal depression. The young Sarah blamed herself:

I remember always believing that that must have been my fault. We had been on holiday in Switzerland and I had gone to the shops and stayed out longer than I should have. Mum had come looking for me, and was so angry when she found me, she slapped me across the bottom. As she did so, she fell on the ice – and then she lost the baby. Not straight away, but in my mind, it was all because I had stayed out late.

Always competitive and inheriting her parents' equestrian skills, Sarah was soon entering competitions around the country, including the All England Schools Championship in 1968, on her horse Spider. She was also a natural skier, having started at the age of four. Her mother remembered her courage on the slopes: 'Sarah was very brave ... it was the same with her riding. She would ride anything and had no fear.'

By the time she was ten, Sarah's bedroom wall was festooned with rosettes from gymkhanas and county shows. Susan, who taught riding to her children's friends, thought her one of the most natural riders she had ever seen: 'When she was little I could put her on anything and say: "Right, go and jump that" and she could. Sarah could make, or somehow will, the horse to do whatever she wanted.'

In 1969 the younger Ferguson started as a weekly boarder at Daneshill, a place of 'metal beds and horsehair mattresses' twenty minutes from Dummer, coming home at weekends. There she acquired her nickname Fergie and made various lifelong friends including Clare Steel, later Wentworth-Stanley, and Charlotte 'Lulu' Blacker.

The summer of 1972 was to mark, in many ways, the end of Sarah's childhood and to shape the rest of her life. The Fergusons took a villa in

Corfu, inviting a polo-playing friend of Ron's, Hector Barrantes, whose wife and unborn child had been killed in a car accident the previous February. The handsome Argentinian beguiled Susan, who was unhappy in her marriage and frustrated at Ron's womanising – he was then having an affair with the twenty-three-year-old daughter of a colonel. Susan and Hector fell in love and shortly afterwards she told her husband she was separating from him.

Susan leaving the family home had a profound effect on Sarah, who blamed herself for the divorce, took to comfort eating and put on weight. Henceforth, she would later claim, she suffered from insecurity, a feeling of worthlessness, a need to please others, and found it hard to establish stable relationships. She also had mixed feelings about her mother abandoning the family to move to London and then Argentina ostensibly because she did not want to disrupt the children's education.

Looking back on the dramatic events of this *coup de foudre*, Sarah remembered:

It was an obsession. She couldn't stop herself. I was angry. I wanted to tell her I loved her and missed her desperately, but I couldn't because I didn't want her to worry about me. She'd just found her love and I didn't want to hurt her because she was so happy, and I'd seen her unhappy, so I just ate my emotions. I ate my feelings – which is why I had weight problems from the age of 12.

The bond between father and daughter, similar in so many ways, was to be complicated, with Sarah continually in search of a secure, father figure. Ron found it hard to cope as a single father, both practically and emotionally. Within a few years, Sarah would acquire a stepmother, Susan Deptford, the twenty-seven-year-old daughter of a Norfolk farmer. But at a formative stage in her life, she had gone from being a girl to a young woman without the support of a mother or a sister, as Jane, aged sixteen, had moved to Australia and married. As she put it: 'I was 14 and it felt like both the females in my life had abandoned me.'

The situation was not helped by Sarah leaving Daneshill in 1972 to join her sister Jane, then already a weekly boarder, at Hurst Lodge in Ascot. 'I didn't like boarding school,' she later remembered. 'I missed my mum. And I needed to be with my ponies. They were consistent and safe, the ponies understood me.'

She coped by becoming the class joker, ensuring she was the centre of attention, but she was floundering. A summer report read: 'Although enthusiastic and anxious to please ... Sarah has not yet learned to channel her energies in the right direction. Both work and behaviour are erratic, and she needs to exercise greater control over both.'

Nonetheless she excelled at tennis and swimming and captained the netball team, and was jointly made head girl with Fenella Horn. A contemporary, Lisa Mulidore, remembered: 'Everyone looked up to Fergie. She was a great source of strength and fun ... we all liked her.'

But she was not academic, and in the summer of 1976, she left Hurst Lodge with two O levels – an A in spoken English and a C in Art, but Ds in English language, English literature and biology (which counted as fails), and she also failed French and geography. She decided on a nine-month course in shorthand, typing and bookkeeping, but first wanted to see a bit of the world, not least visit her mother in Argentina.

This 'gap year' proved an important period: she lost weight, learned some Spanish, reconnected with her mother and met her first boyfriend.

THE SNIGGERER

Prince Andrew arrived at Gordonstoun in the autumn of 1973, one of eighty new boys in a school of just over four hundred which, since the previous year, also included sixty sixth-form girls. Situated in the extreme north-east of Scotland, it had been founded by Kurt Hahn in 1933 on the principle that education should prepare one for life, not just university. The spartan school emphasised service, self-reliance and self-discipline, with all pupils engaging in a form of community service, which included its own coastguard – in which Andrew served – and fire service.

His father had been one of Gordonstoun's first pupils, rising to be Guardian (head boy) and Captain of Cricket, and its philosophy had inspired Philip's founding of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Charles had left just six years earlier, having also been Guardian. Much was expected of Andrew.

The school then was divided, with a third of its students Scottish, a third English and a third international pupils, and a strict hierarchy stretching

from the Royal Family through the aristocracy, landed gentry and military families to the international jet set, nouveau riche and the rest. Among Andrew's fellow pupils were the sons of the actors Sean Connery and Peter Finch; the daughter of the Duke of Kent; several members of the Mountbatten family; Hobart Earle, the Venezuelan-born future conductor; and members of the Niarchos family.

Contemporaries remembered how impressed Andrew appeared to be with extreme wealth. One recollected that the Queen had said he should be treated like everyone else but in reality he couldn't be and didn't want to be. His name was always read out first in roll call, then everyone else alphabetically, but at one point Andrew decided he had no need to attend, in the belief that the rules did not apply to him. 'He was always a stickler for protocol ... he was a pompous git, very aware of his own self-importance and took advantage of his position.'

Another felt he 'didn't know whether he wanted to be a prince or one of the lads'. 'I'm afraid he had a bit of "I am the Prince" about him when he first arrived,' said one friend, 'but he soon had it knocked out of him. You just cannot get away with that here. The ribbings he got were unmerciful.' These included being roughed up so that he had to spend time in the school sanatorium and being tied up in the back of a bus on the way to a cricket match against a neighbouring school at Fort Augustus.

He was quickly nicknamed 'The Sniggerer' or 'The Great I Am', with one contemporary describing him as 'a man with a big bottom who laughed at his own jokes', and another that 'By the time he's finished a joke he's laughing so much you can't understand the punchline.'

According to Lulu Houseman, also a student at Gordonstoun, Andrew didn't shine at anything, and just wanted to have a good time. There was even a story going around the school that he failed some of his O levels 'because he spent all his time reading trashy magazines and comics'. The prince had been put in the top stream but he gradually went down.

One teacher remembered him being a bit of a 'Jack the Lad, very social ... not daft but he did the bare minimum of work, preferring socialising to learning'. Wherever he went, he was accompanied by two detectives – Steve Burgess, an Oxford graduate, and Keith Topliss – who were always catching people smoking. Bored by his duties, Topliss often joined Andrew and one of his friends firing at cans on the clifftop. According to one school

acquaintance, Andrew was neither sporty, naughty nor bright but instead moved from group to group: 'He never quite fitted in anywhere and people didn't feel comfortable with him.'

One of Andrew's closest friends at the school, Tim Radford, arrived the term after him and they shared a two-man study bedroom for a year and a three-man another year: 'He was ... loud ... liked to laugh and he was just one of us,' recalled Radford. 'He was discovering who he was but he did lack judgement. He was an enthusiast, very competitive and always had an eye for the girls. He's a decent guy, just a normal bloke though a bit lazy and ... at one stage had a talking to by Prince Philip.'

Peter Neilson was also in the same house and stayed several weekends at Balmoral, Windsor and Sandringham – he liked the Queen, who he found a dab hand at crosswords and open to argument. Though fond of Andrew, Neilson felt he was not always a good judge of character, especially when people were sucking up to him: 'not streetwise because of his upbringing and too trusting'.

Another roommate, Andrew Day, an Australian exchange student, recalled the prince testing people on the middle names of the Royal Family for fun. Day's first impression of his fellow pupil was not encouraging: 'He rubbed me up the wrong way from day one. When I first arrived at school drenched in snow with a backpack, Andrew opened the door. He looked me up and down and scoffed: "You can't come in here. You haven't got any slippers on."'

Though never as enthusiastic an actor as his two brothers, while at Gordonstoun Andrew appeared in a minor role in a farce, *Simple Spymen*, watched by the Queen and Prince Philip. He would later admit he liked acting because he could become someone else.

In the summer of 1976 he took his O levels but only passed two, so had to repeat fifth form.*

Halfway through his time at Gordonstoun, he had shown himself to be an unremarkable student, more interested in sport and having a good time than his studies or the future, but away from school plans had already been made. It was now that his royal duties began.

'THE ONE WITH THE ROBERT REDFORD LOOKS'

In July that year it had been decided that Andrew should undertake his first foreign tour, attending the Montreal Olympics, where Princess Anne was representing Great Britain in the three-day eventing. Though he was only sixteen, with his easy manner and handsome appearance – his older brother Charles, only half-jokingly, described Andrew as ‘the one with the Robert Redford looks’ – the trip was a great success. One Canadian newspaper described him as ‘six feet of sex appeal’, boosting his already strong confidence. The young prince had even then begun to assume the role of useful poster boy for the monarchy.

Six months later, travelling as Andrew Cambridge, he started a two-term exchange visit at Lakefield College, a Canadian school of 240 pupils, modelled on Gordonstoun lines, with a strong ethos of community service and outdoor activity – the boys camped one night a week. According to protocol, the pupils were told to call him Andrew, the staff ‘Prince Andrew’, the governors ‘Sir’ and the chairman of the governors ‘His Royal Highness’, but to the boys he soon became Andy or ‘Randy Andy’.

Lakefield, founded in 1879, was one of Canada’s oldest private schools and occupied 315 acres on the shore of Katchewanooka Lake. Just as Prince Charles had spent time at school in Australia, the six-month exchange was intended to cement the monarchy’s connection with the country against rising republicanism – in this case from French Canadians.

It was also an opportunity for Andrew to reinvent himself. He threw himself into school activities, from ice hockey and skiing to appearing in several plays, including as Mr Brownlow in *Oliver!*. He also conducted a teenage romance with Sandi Jones, whom he had first met at the Montreal Olympics, and began spending nearly every weekend with her. She recalled: ‘In a way he quite resented being a prince. He hated the fact that he was marked out for attention, that he could never be on his own ... the fact that his royal bodyguard always followed him around got on top of him.’

For Jones it was an important relationship. Interviewed shortly before Andrew’s wedding, which she attended, she said the two of them had been in love: ‘Were we lovers? Use your imagination. We were very, very close. As close as any couple can ever be. I still love him. I’d marry him tomorrow if he asked me.’

The Canadian Olympic figure skater Lynn Nightingale sat next to the prince at a dinner at Rideau Hall, the governor-general's residence. 'He was absolutely charming, quick to laugh and smile,' she recalled. 'He seemed very ordinary, relaxed and warm, a perfect gentleman.'

Andrew spent the spring vacation skiing with the Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau and his children Sacha, Justin and Michel, then sightseeing in Toronto for a few days and finally staying at the farm of his roommate, Peter Lorrigan, in Ontario, helping tap the syrup from the property's maple trees.

He ended his time in Canada by joining a Lakefield party, consisting of the headmaster, another master and four other boys, for a ten-day three-hundred-mile trip by canoe down the Coppermine River to the Arctic Ocean, camping and catching fish. The experience would stay with him and see Andrew retain close links with the school.†

FIRST STEPS

Meanwhile Sarah was one of two hundred girls learning typing, shorthand, bookkeeping and cooking at Queen's Secretarial College in South Kensington. One of her closest friends at the time, Charlotte Eden, the daughter of a former Tory MP, remembered them sitting at the back of the class and giggling. But they knew it was 'important to get some sort of training'.

At the end of the nine-month course, Fergie graduated joint bottom with Eden, having a shorthand of ninety words a minute and a typing speed of thirty-nine. Her report read: 'Bright, bouncy redhead. She's a bit slapdash. But she has initiative and personality which she will use to her advantage when she gets older. Accepts responsibility happily.'

That summer of 1977 Ferguson stayed with her schoolfriend Clare Steel in Nantucket before visiting Australia for a month with her father to see Jane and her husband Alex Makim. The Makims ran an eight-thousand-acre farm of cattle, sheep and cereals, Wilga Warrina at North Star, on the border of Queensland and New South Wales. They lived in an L-shaped wooden house with leaking tin roof surrounded by flat, scrubby bush where summer temperatures regularly hit a hundred degrees. Sarah loved it.

On her return, she started temping at Flatmates Unlimited, a flat-sharing agency on the Old Brompton Road, whose boss Wendy Keith found her 'bubbly, helpful, good with people'. Through her father, she quickly secured a job at Durden-Smith Communications in Knightsbridge, a PR firm led by Neil Durden-Smith, whose clients included BMW, Trusthouse Forte, Guinness, Mappin & Webb. Here she incurred the wrath of Peter Conrad, who was also responsible for organising the annual Berkeley Square Ball, 'by spending a great deal of time on the phone dealing with her social life, fixing up dinners and nights out,' he remembered, but she was also reliable and thrived on responsibility.

Durden-Smith was equally complimentary. 'If I had a knotty problem or a difficult client I would always bring Sarah in,' he said. 'She had that priceless asset of being able to get on with all sorts of people.'

'I saw in her something which a more qualified girl didn't have and I think it was sheer personality ... when we had parties for clients she was always the person who whizzed round all the different rooms introducing people to other people, it didn't matter whether they were seventy or twenty-seven, she was just a natural at it.'

GORDONSTOUN AGAIN

In the autumn of 1977 Andrew went back to Gordonstoun, where he was joined by Prince Edward. Georgina Houseman thought he returned 'more thoughtful, much more considerate and responsible'.

One slightly younger female contemporary has very different memories, describing him as 'a very slimy so-and-so, arrogant, pleased with himself, a bully'. She remembers, as a thirteen-year-old, camping one November in the grounds of Balmoral and Andrew, then eighteen, 'ripping off the flysheets and throwing them into the river for fun'.

She adds: 'He thinks he's funny, handsome and clever and he isn't ... Nobody cared for him though some sixth-form girls hung around him ... He swaggered around but all the cool boys of his age thought he was a wally and tosser.'

It's a view shared by another Gordonstoun contemporary who survived the pervasive bullying at the school by running a protection racket

supplying porn magazines, cigarettes and alcohol, which he kept in the crypt at St Michael's Kirk. Andrew, he said, felt entitled and took himself very seriously. The young prince had 'his groupies' and lots of girls around him, but it wasn't clear how many people, if any, he really trusted. Andrew would throw his weight around and literally often say 'You do know who I am?' Fellow students detected a degree of narcissism: 'He was so full of himself. People were wary of him.'

The prince had earned his nickname 'Randy Andy' thanks to his ever-changing circle of female conquests. His harem would include a champion swimmer, Sue Barnard; Clio Nathaniels, who came from the Bahamas and mysteriously left the school early; and Kirsty Richmond, whose mother was a school nurse, who stayed at Sandringham over New Year and was included in a Balmoral house party one summer.

Perhaps the most important relationship in his final year at Gordonstoun was a long-distance one with an American from a well-known family who was studying her A levels in London. They wrote to each other often and spoke on the phone and she remembered his sense of mischief. Yet he could be guarded: 'He always had this concerned look when out. Then he always drank ginger ale.'

He introduced her to Diana at the Palace and let her swim there, borrowing Princess Anne's costume. He was good at including Diana who was often lonely and bored in the very early days before her wedding. The American sensed that he was naive and mistrusted people in case they took advantage of him. Security was very important to him: 'He was kind, generous and trusting of me and it was a great responsibility to be discreet.'

Andrew took her to Heatherdown but revealed mixed feelings about Gordonstoun. The relationship came to an end when she started art school in September 1980. The prince was keen to continue but she had moved on.

While Charles's career had been planned out for him, Andrew, as the second son, was much freer to follow his own interests – much to the envy of his older brother. Clare College, Cambridge had been mooted as a possible next stage but Andrew was neither sufficiently intelligent nor intellectually curious enough to make this a serious option. His interests lay elsewhere.

At Gordonstoun he joined and was eventually put in charge of the Air Training Corps, learning to glide at fifteen and earning his wings three

years later after a parachute course at RAF Brize Norton. He had decided to join the navy in order to fly. Over three days in December 1978, he undertook a series of interviews and tests at the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre at RAF Biggin Hill and with the Admiralty Interview Board to assess his suitability for a navy career. The following spring holiday he attended the Royal Naval College for pilot training.

That summer, after passing three A levels in history, English and economic and political studies, he was told he had been accepted into the navy. He had not been Guardian at Gordonstoun – that honour went to a woman for the first time, Georgina Houseman – much to Andrew's annoyance, but he had been Head of House and chosen to crew the school's sixty-three-foot yacht *Sea Spirit*. He had also played cricket for the first eleven for three years, captaining it in his final year, and for the hockey first team and the squash and tennis teams. Many of his expectations had been fulfilled.

Andrew remained in touch with the school and later in life was a director of Gordonstoun Schools between 1992 and 1999. A former housemaster recalled him returning one day to visit his old boarding house. The teacher was intrigued because he had heard little about Andrew's time at Gordonstoun, which was hardly ever mentioned, whereas there were many stories about Prince Charles's days at the school: 'All I had heard about Andrew was that he was a bully.'

He took the prince to his old room on the top floor. 'The smell is the same. The smell ... I'll always remember the smell' was all Andrew said. The housemaster and the duke stood together in Andrew's old room, but there was no reminiscing from the duke, or even an acknowledgement of his companion: 'He dismissed me as of no account and I was not expecting this,' recalled the housemaster. 'I said a few things which he chose to ignore. I wondered why he came at all ... There was not a single pleasantry or word of thanks. It was as if he remembered no person or incident, but just a smell.'

DARTMOUTH

In September 1979 Andrew, who had signed up for a twelve-year commission as a Seaman Officer sub-specialising as a pilot, started at Dartmouth Naval College in Devon for seven months of general training, following in his father and older brother's footsteps. This would be followed by ten months of elementary flying tuition with the aim of being qualified to fly helicopters after two years and fixed-wing aircraft after two and a half years.

He had still not managed to win the affection or respect of his colleagues. The wife of one of the instructors recalled: 'Prince Charles is still remembered with tremendous affection, but Andrew isn't popular with either the staff or his fellow cadets. His brother was a great practical joker, but Andrew walks away from anything like that. He never lets you forget who he is.'

Ian Hendry was six weeks ahead of Andrew at Dartmouth and they became friends, helped by shared car journeys back to London and that Hendry treated him as a fellow professional. Andrew later became godfather to one of Hendry's children, never missing a birthday and always giving thoughtful gifts. Hendry found him a bit remote and thought he compensated for shyness by being over-ebullient: 'He was born in the wrong age and would have been happier as an Edwardian gentleman. He puts on his royal hat to protect himself, that's his veneer.'

Hendry cast him as a slightly lonely figure who didn't really know how to make friends: 'He was confused how to behave as he moved between the naval and royal world. Barriers were put up as a coping mechanism and he became bombastic.'

Another cadet who served with the prince and twice got lifts to London in his police escort got to know Andrew slowly because he was such a loner, but also found him a strange mix and someone who did not appear to feel relaxed about his position as prince. Andrew was not naturally good at making friends. He would relax then stiffen up: 'He wasn't a person with whom one could get close.'

At the beginning of 1980, still only nineteen and having recently been made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Andrew joined the aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes* to gain some seagoing experience. In March, as the final part of his Dartmouth training, he was attached to the Royal Marine training wing and took a shortened version of their All Arms

Commando Course. It involved a thirty-mile route march, twelve-mile hike with full pack, nine-mile speed march sleeping rough and six-mile endurance course ending at a rifle range where he had to fire ten rounds within a certain grouping for which he would earn the coveted Green Beret.

A training officer claimed: 'We've put him through hell and he's come through smiling', with commandant Colonel Leslie Hudson saying, 'There's no doubt that with a little more training the Prince would be an extremely good commando officer. He has all the right qualities.'

Many Marines, however, objected to Andrew receiving the Green Beret without doing the full course, but it was felt useful to have a friend at court should the Marines need one. At the beginning of April, together with three hundred other officer cadets, Andrew passed out in front of his mother.

But his instruction continued with a month's aircrew survival training at the Royal Naval Safety Equipment School, near Gosport, learning first aid, aviation medicine and the use of survival equipment. This included a ten-day stint in the New Forest, with only a parachute for shelter, replicating the experience of being shot down behind enemy lines. He learned how to kill, skin and cook a rabbit, live off the wild, and escape, evasion and survival drills. A fellow midshipman recalled: 'Andrew was spared nothing. He had to do everything we did and he proved himself to be quite tough. It was as though he had something to prove – that he could do anything just as well as the next man.'

From there it was on to a five-month course of fixed-wing flying training within the Royal Navy Elementary Flying Training Squadron, based at RAF Leeming in Yorkshire, a management course for junior officers at HMS *Excellent* in Portsmouth, then one on firefighting, nuclear, biological and chemical defence.

In November he moved to the Royal Naval Air Station, at Culdrose in Cornwall, learning to fly the Gazelle helicopter, causing one of his co-workers to complain that he was a bit toffee-nosed and didn't behave like everyone else: 'He wants his own way and when he is around, you have to bow and scrape. Even when he drives round the base in his car, you have to salute that. I mean, fancy saluting a flipping car.'

Euan McNair served with the prince around that time and got to know him playing squash. McNair remembered him as being unworldly and

sheltered, someone who 'didn't know much', and who seemed to get on better with his police protection officer than his naval colleagues.

He wasn't used to dealing with normal people, didn't drink, and didn't trust people because he had been let down in the past. 'Everyone treated him with benign indifference – neither shunned nor sucked up to,' said McNair. They used his name to get into nightclubs but for Andrew it was a solitary life.

One of the problems was that Andrew found it difficult to make the switch from royal to naval officer. He often put his 'Prince's hat on', especially when he wanted to get his own way. 'He didn't shine during training in fixed-wing Bulldog and didn't get on with his instructor,' said Ian Hendry, but at Culdrose he came into his own as a helicopter pilot under an instructor who gave him confidence. This was reflected in his personal relations.

But Andrew, helped uniquely by having his own personal instructor, showed that when he made an effort he could be among the best. On his passing-out parade in April 1981 he was awarded the prize for the course's best pilot, by his father.

On 19 February that year the prince had celebrated his twenty-first birthday by being made a Counsellor of State – something he accepted as his birthright. This was followed in June by a party, shared with Prince Philip's sixtieth, for six hundred guests at Windsor Castle, transformed with the aid of potted palm trees into a tropical paradise. Guests included Lady Diana Spencer, Margaret Thatcher and several of Andrew's former girlfriends, including Carolyn Seaward, Gemma Curry and her cousin Kim Deas, and actress and model Trisha Money. Also there was the daughter of Charles's polo manager, Sarah Ferguson.

Andrew's love life had begun to attract the attention of the media, though the extent of the romances was never entirely clear; it did no harm for the career ambitions of a model or actress to be associated with the Queen's son. Andrew had met the nineteen-year-old Carolyn Seaward, then Miss UK and a former runner-up in the Miss Universe contest – and in 1983 to appear in the Bond film *Octopussy* – while he was at Dartmouth. He had invited her to dinner at Buckingham Palace where, she later revealed, all they did was listen to music and explore the roof, though there were reports of her leaving the Palace early one morning.

Curry's father, an RAF wing commander, had given Andrew flying lessons, and she had accompanied him to events at RAF Leeming and to Princess Margaret's fiftieth birthday at the Ritz in November 1980. The prince had then taken up with her cousin, Kim Deas, a model then living with her boyfriend in St John's Wood, who spoke highly of him: 'People think that because he's so good-looking he's not a nice person. But he's extremely sensitive and kind. He certainly doesn't live up to his nickname of Randy Andy at all. He's simply a good friend.'

Less than a week later Charles announced his engagement to Lady Diana Spencer and in July 1981 they were married in St Paul's Cathedral, with Andrew, as well as Edward, one of Charles's two supporters. Sitting in the front rows with some of Diana's flatmates was Sarah Ferguson.

SETTLING DOWN

In the autumn of 1980, Durden-Smith Communications had been sold so Sarah Ferguson and Charlotte Eden travelled to South America, where Hector Barrantes had bought a thousand-acre plot of land, El Pucara, and come to be regarded as one of the best breeders of polo ponies in Argentina. The two young women stayed until Christmas before exploring South and North America by bus. At Squaw Valley in Nevada they cleaned dormitories at a youth hostel and in the evening waited tables at an apple strudel shop.

On her return Sarah rented a two-bedroomed apartment in Prince of Wales Drive overlooking Battersea Park, belonging to bloodstock dealer Angus Gold. She supported herself with a series of part-time jobs: at a video company arranging shoots and dealing with clients until it went bust; with Durden-Smith, now running a company called Sports Sponsorship International; with her friend Julia Dodd-Noble, who had set up Noble Housecompany which provided office services; with an estate agent; and finally for art dealer William Drummond, who recalled, 'She was a super saleswoman with that knack of remembering clients and their tastes and spotting what might please them.'

She was in a relationship with Kim Smith-Bingham, two years older than her, having met him when he was working as a ranch hand on her mother's ranch after leaving Eton. 'He brought me into a new social set, and I loved

him very much,' she remembered. 'But he was also full of teasing, which I would feign to chuckle off, though I'd be injured to the quick.'

She was later to admit that at this time she was not an easy person with whom to have a relationship: 'I was trying too hard. I understood no limits, no boundary between the *me* and the *you*. I would inundate people with my neediness – suffocate them, really. No reasonable man could stand it, and so he would run away, or go chase after someone with more self-respect. I set myself up for rejection and got permanently hurt and stunted.'

When Smith-Bingham, one of the top fifty downhillers in Britain, moved to Verbier to run a ski-wear shop she followed him. It was there she was to meet one of the most influential men in her life.

Among Smith-Bingham's circle in Verbier was Paddy McNally, a former racing driver and journalist on the magazine *Autosport* and later racing manager to Niki Lauda. His wife, Anne, from whom he had separated, had died of cancer in 1980 and he was bringing up their teenage sons, Sean and Rollo, alone.

McNally owned an eight-bedroomed chalet, Les Gais Lutins, more commonly known as 'the Castle', with a London property developer David Elias. Along with a local nightspot, the Farm Club, it was the scene of legendary parties frequented by a fast crowd who included the art dealer Nigel 'the Rat' Pollitzer; the businessman John Bentley, who was dating Sarah's childhood friend Lulu Blacker; and the Marquess of Blandford.

Balding and bespectacled, McNally was not an obvious boyfriend – she called him 'the Toad' – but he was fun, generous, charming, wise and rich. She admitted, 'Paddy was my father figure, twenty-two years older than me', adding, 'He taught me so much about life ... Whenever I wanted advice, I turned to him because he was so worldly wise. He seemed to have seen and done everything.'

It was, however, a volatile relationship and McNally, who had a roving eye, did not always treat her well, teasing her about her weight, openly sleeping with other women and constantly undermining her confidence. On one occasion, she dumped a bucket of iced water over his head after he flirted with an especially attractive visitor. A guest at the chalet remembers Paddy bringing a girl back one night and offering Ferguson the option of the spare room or a threesome.

Sarah put up with it because, as one girlfriend said, ‘Quite frankly she was besotted with him and there was nothing one could say or do to make her see reason.’ ‘She adored Paddy but he didn’t treat her well,’ remembered another friend. Ferguson once confessed: ‘Paddy used to tell me I was fat and ugly and no one was interested in me, and I believed him.’

She was keen to settle down, admitting: ‘I desperately wanted to marry him, though I never dared to broach the subject. Even as he kept saying, “I must do the decent thing”, deep down I knew he didn’t really want to get married. We were at such different times in our lives, but I was afraid to let the relationship go – to be on my own.’

HIS ROYAL HEART-THROB

In September 1981 Andrew was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant and, the following month, joined the frontline 820 Naval Air Squadron based on the aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible* as a pilot on one of its nine Sea King helicopters. Little did he know that within months he would be at war.

On 2 April 1982 the Argentine leader General Galtieri invaded the British sovereign territory of the Falkland Islands. Prime minister Margaret Thatcher vowed that they would be retaken, and on 5 April *Invincible* sailed to the South Atlantic as part of a Task Force of forty ships, with the Queen adamant that her son should be treated no differently from any other serviceman.

‘I will order Prince Andrew into battle just as I would any of my other pilots. He is a co-pilot and with the others, he gets the same work to do – and he gets no quarter from his fellows,’ 820 Squadron’s commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Ralph Wykes-Sneyd, stressed.

I have found him a capable young man and competent in the air. He has been with the Squadron a year (seven months on operational duty) and, of course, he is very special to the public – you are conscious of that fact. But he gets no special treatment here, and I am under no instructions from above to treat him any differently from others under my command.

As a Sea King co-pilot, Andrew, known in the Navy as ‘H’ after ‘HRH’, was expected to engage in anti-submarine warfare, using passive sonobuoys

or active sonar lowered into the water to protect the Task Force. The helicopters could also attack with torpedoes and depth charges; conduct surface surveillance, searching for hostile surface ships; as well as transfer supplies, ammunition, letters and men to other Task Force ships and ashore on the 'milk run'; they evacuated casualties and operated search and rescue.

His best-known role, however, would be to act as a decoy for Exocet missiles, considered state-of-the-art, able to fly at very low levels to evade radar. They were to prove deadly to HMS *Sheffield*, killing twenty servicemen; HMS *Glamorgan*, where fourteen perished; and the Merchant Navy's *Atlantic Conveyor*, in an attack that killed twelve and destroyed the helicopters intended to carry troops across the islands.

Lacking weapons that were sufficiently fast-firing to tackle the incoming sea-skimming missiles at short range, the navy adopted a novel solution. Helicopters were deployed to drop chaff – strips of metal – that confused the radar seeker of an incoming missile into thinking the metal was another target. Ships also fired Chaff C (for confusion) shells from their 4.5-inch guns.

The helicopter would hover in the vicinity of the aircraft carrier to distract and lure the Exocet missile away, a risk compounded by the British Sea Wolf defence missiles in the accompanying Type 22 frigate, known as the goalkeeper, sometimes locking on to the Sea King instead. The prince later remembered almost being killed by a chaff shell fired from a British warship: 'By chance in our general direction and for a moment it was on a steady bearing which meant it was going to hit us ... Thankfully it passed in front of the helicopter, but I don't know how far, but rather further than I had imagined it to have been.'

It was skilled and dangerous work, for even everyday duties, such as transporting goods and people, had their risks, given the atrocious weather conditions and the fact that for over 60 per cent of its time the Sea King operated in the dark. The demanding rotas saw the squadron flying around the clock continuously for weeks on end: four hours in the air and six or seven hours back onboard, as the small group of choppers were sent out on their various duties in a non-stop cycle of eating, sleeping and flying, blurring the line between night and day.

Tom Arnull, who served as winchman and part of the four-man team with Andrew, alongside senior pilot Chris Heweth and Ian McAllister as

observer, remembered them living off tinned meat and vegetables and sometimes being so tired they would fall asleep in the air. He found Andrew willing to muck in – ‘If we were in a rush, he’d help me load the helicopter’ – and, as a rookie sub-lieutenant, prepared to take advice, although the prince was a bit awkward since he had little understanding of their lives and remained very private.

Deputy air engineering officer Steve George, responsible for the upkeep of the aircraft, thought Andrew ‘a competent P2’ (second pilot). The duke’s divisional duties included being mess deck officer and George remembered the prince using his royal status to try and ensure the Fleet Air Arm received the best accommodation on ship. Like others before him, he felt Andrew was a shy person trying to compensate. The prince was a good pilot and officer and good company but also found the squadron ‘uncongenial’.

One of the helicopter pilots who served with Andrew in the Falklands was more critical, judging him self-important, self-opinionated, arrogant and contemptuous.

After the war there would be claims that the second in line to the throne was never put in danger and that his bravery had been exaggerated for propaganda reasons, but this is disputed by Wykes-Sneyd: ‘Outside my squadron, apart from my Captain Jeremy Black, nobody had any influence over the employment of PA during hostilities.’

Admitting that he and Black had developed codes that could be used to avoid calling on the prince if another aircraft was immediately available to take a high-risk task at no notice, Wykes-Sneyd added that protecting the aircraft carrier was far more important than saving a prince and a helicopter. ‘They were as much about covering our backsides in the inevitable official inquiry into the loss of the spare to the throne as anything else.’ Yet with Andrew remaining aboard the carrier, there was of course little chance that he could be captured and paraded through the streets of Buenos Aires as the enemy intended.

Wykes-Sneyd knew that ashore the risk would be higher, but found no reason to include Andrew in the detachment sent to San Carlos on operations west of the Falkland Islands themselves. He denied that Andrew wasn’t allowed ashore during hostilities; rather, he said, there was no requirement for him to go ashore since his duties were with the carrier battle group.

Andrew has since spoken of his terror after flying over the *Atlantic Conveyor*, where he rescued eight crew: 'I saw it being struck by the missile and it was something I'll never forget. It was horrific.'

Wykes-Sneyd felt that such comments went against a soldier's professional ethos. Nevertheless, on a number of occasions inevitably Andrew was exposed to significant risk and danger. Luckily for him, Black and Wykes-Sneyd, he survived them: 'I have no doubt that at the time he, like most of us, wondered whether he would.'

On 14 June the Argentines surrendered and three days later Andrew flew to Stanley with Wykes-Sneyd, and the commanding officer of the Sea Harrier squadron, Sharkey Ward. He was able to fly around some of the islands, joke about bringing his bride on honeymoon and telephone his mother. 'The line was so clear it was like speaking to London from Edinburgh,' he recalled. 'My mother was in – it was about the right time in the evening. She was quite surprised to hear from me.'

The navy were keen to exploit their pin-up royal hero and over the next few days the prince gave a series of newspaper interviews. On 23 August the *Sun* produced a special issue on 'Andrew, the royal helicopter hero'. 'He went away a royal rascal. Randy Andy, the Queen's likeable but lightweight son,' the paper trilled. 'But four months with the Task Force has made a man of the playboy prince.'

Few of *Invincible's* thousand-strong crew had been very impressed with Andrew when he joined the Task Force. 'At first the prince seemed more like a fourteen-year-old than twenty-two. He seemed to have led a very sheltered life,' said a shipmate. 'He would sit clapping TV shows like *The Muppets* and he loved playing foolish pranks.'

But views soon changed, as another shipmate explained: 'I think going to war gave him a tremendous jolt. He flew over the *Sheffield* as it sank and helped rescue the survivors from the *Atlantic Conveyor*. That sort of experience makes anyone grow up quickly. When the chips were down and the going got rough, Andrew proved to be as brave as the next man.'

On 17 September *Invincible*, continuously at sea for a record 166 days, arrived back in Britain surrounded by pleasure cruisers filled with bare-breasted women – a traditional welcome for Task Force ships. Andrew's parents and sister, who had joined the ship, were reunited with him in a private state room before it sailed into Portsmouth as the Royal Marines

band played 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines'.

The prince later admitted of his Falkland service: 'I am not sure if it made me a better person, but those experiences undoubtedly made me view life with more compassion, and a greater understanding of humanity. I can certainly say that I wouldn't be the person I am today without the experience.'

In a defining image, the grinning young naval officer disembarked the ship with a red rose, presented by a young girl, clenched between his teeth. The good-looking son of the sovereign had done his duty bravely and had never been more popular. 'HRH' was now said to stand for 'His Royal Heart-throb'.

STARKERS

Shortly before going to the Falklands, Andrew, who had been dating a ballet dancer, Christina Parker, had met a young dark-haired actress, Katherine 'Koo' Stark. She was four years older than him, the daughter of Wilbur Stark, a successful Hollywood producer, and Kathleen Norris Stark Caruso, an American writer and television presenter. After finishing school, Stark had embarked on an acting career with an uncredited role as a bridesmaid in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and a part, later cut, in *Star Wars*.

When Stark met Andrew on a blind date fixed by his Gordonstoun friend Charlie Young, at the beginning of 1982, she had a small part in a production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at the National Theatre and was living in a flatshare in Belgravia's Chester Square. The dinner date was a great success and he invited her to 'Come to BP tomorrow for lunch', though she later revealed: 'Initially I wondered why he was taking me to a petrol station.'

They had lunch on trays in his apartment at Buckingham Palace. They were both single, carefree, and for Stark it started immediately: 'When Andrew comes into your life there is no room for anyone else. He takes up all the space. He walked into my life and that was it: he was my life. There was no discussion. None was needed. Suddenly I was his girlfriend.'

Using the codename Fiona Campbell, she would stay with Andrew at friends of his, such as the Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe at Floors Castle in the Scottish Borders, or have evenings in at Buckingham Palace with Koo's cockatoo, Candy. In a short space of time, the relationship matured and grounded him – no more food fights covering footmen in mashed potato – driven by a strong emotional bond and shared interests, not least in photography. A Buckingham Palace servant remembered the feeling among the staff, who all 'thought the world of Koo' for her politeness and for treating them as human beings – unlike what was to come.

The relationship continued through to April when Andrew left for the Falklands – he gave her a copy of Rudyard Kipling's poems as a memento – and they corresponded during the conflict. She was waiting for him at Buckingham Palace when he returned in September and joined him soon after at Balmoral for, in her words, 'evenings spent playing parlour games, doing jigsaws and pretending the dog hasn't farted'.

She had brought with her a pair of pink plastic cowboy boots which did not pass muster with the chatelaine. 'When the Queen got to the back door she stopped in her tracks, pointed majestically at a pair of fluorescent boots and demanded: "Whose are those?"' They were quickly replaced by some green wellies from Ballater.

The following month, the couple flew under the alias of Mr and Mrs Cambridge for a holiday at Princess Margaret's house, Les Jolies Eaux, in Mustique, where they were joined by her mother, the publisher John Hatt and a writer friend of Andrew's, Jocelyn Gray, but the holiday was brief. By chance a journalist had been on the same British Airways flight and the couple were soon under siege. Stark likened it to being under house arrest. They couldn't go anywhere without a military level of preparation: 'The paparazzi were flying over low in light aircraft or swimming up to the beach in scuba gear,' she said. 'There was a palpable sense of real physical danger. We didn't know if the people coming at us were carrying a gun or a camera.'

Two photographers were arrested in the grounds of the villa and locked up in the island's only cell – a bare room next to the local church – where they were entertained by a temperance sect singing gospel songs. It was clear this was a serious relationship. According to Koo's mother: 'They

talked about spending the rest of their lives together ... I thought they were going to get married.'

Returning to London, the two continued to meet secretly, aided by friends such as the singer Steve Strange, who was then going out with Francesca 'Chessie' Thyssen, daughter of the German steel tycoon, Baron Heini Thyssen, one of the richest men in the world. They let the new couple rendezvous at their house on Seymour Walk in Chelsea: 'Andrew would call to let us know he was on his way,' said Strange, 'but he would never use his own name. The signal would be something like, "It's the changing of the guard."'

One weekend the couple stayed at the Baron's mansion in Gloucestershire. Andrew – much to his embarrassment, smuggled out of Seymour Walk on the floor of a Transit van – shocked Strange by his behaviour, coming down to breakfast and making jokes about what he and Koo had been doing the previous night: 'He told us he'd banged his head on their four-poster bed while having sex,' recalled Strange. 'He thought this was hilarious. It was real schoolboy humour.'

Stark bought Andrew his first pair of denim jeans, while he gave her a T-shirt emblazoned with 'Here Comes Trouble'. It was to prove prophetic. The story of the prince's affair with the actress was catnip to the press. Her letters to him and a home movie of the two lovers were stolen from her flat.

A twenty-year-old Palace kitchen worker, Kieran Kenny, sold a story to the *Sun* – 'Queen Koo's Romps at the Palace' – suggesting Stark stayed overnight at the Palace so often that it had become 'a second home' to her and occasioning the Queen to seek an injunction preventing the paper from publishing its second instalment 'How Barefoot Di Buttered My Toast'.

Andrew tried to persuade the Queen's press secretary Michael Shea to release a statement asking for the couple to be given privacy, but Shea refused on the grounds that the Palace did not comment on private matters. In revenge Stark sent Shea an enema kit. He thanked her for her 'thoughtful' gift.

The press soon discovered that Stark had appeared nude in several dramas: a 1975 television play, *The Blue Film*, based on a Graham Greene story, with a script written by John Mortimer; the 1975 film *The Adolescents* with Anthony Andrews, in which she becomes the target for a trio of men who take illicit photographs of young girls; the 1977 films

Cruel Passion (sometimes called *Justine*), based on the life of the Marquis de Sade, and *Emily*, which featured her full frontal and in a lesbian shower scene. She had also posed nude for the Japanese photographer Chikako Oyama's 1979 book *Private Viewing* and for the photographer Terry O'Neill. She quickly acquired the nickname 'Starkers'.

Questions were raised in the press and Buckingham Palace about Koo's suitability as a royal bride. As Prince Philip was supposed to have told Prince Harry, 'One steps out with actresses, one doesn't marry them.' The two lovers carried on seeing each other clandestinely, but she felt let down that Andrew accepted the situation instead of fighting for her. She escaped the attention by going on a trip to Australia, Bali and India, though when she returned to London and saw him again, 'By then it was basically over ... It wasn't like a Hollywood movie, with a grand finale. In the end, we just ran out of energy. It had been strangled to death.'

FROG

In March 1983 Andrew's ship HMS *Invincible* docked in Barbados for two weeks of rest and relaxation after exercises in the Caribbean. At one of the cocktail parties aboard, he met a former Page Three model and actress, Vicki Hodge, who was based on the island.

The thirty-six-year-old Hodge, a baronet's daughter, had appeared in several racy films, such as *The Stud* (1974) and *Confessions of a Sex Maniac* (1974). Her former lovers included Rod Stewart, Ringo Starr and the London gangster John Bindon, who had been charged with murder five years earlier, though acquitted on grounds of self-defence. She soon added Andrew to her conquests and sold her story to the tabloids – several times over the next twenty years. Hodge remembered how the prince immediately latched on to her and her two friends, 'launching into a series of jokes, all of them interminable and extremely stupid ... He liked the sound of his own voice and if anyone made a comment, he stopped talking and looked at them until the stage was his again.'

The young naval officer showed the three women his cabin, which Hodge recalled as being 'relatively spartan', with only a teddy bear, which the prince told them was a present from his girlfriend, Koo Stark. 'We asked

what she was like, and Andrew unlocked his briefcase, embossed HRH. It was filled with her letters and photographs of her dressed scantily. Nothing explicit, but near-naked in blue lace underwear.'

They all arranged to meet the next day, and he and three friends were driven in three police cars to the house in which Hodge was staying. The party frolicked in the sea. 'Suddenly, I looked round, and there was Prince Andrew stark naked, with everything on display,' she recalled. 'He wasn't in the least bit shy, because he is a well-built gentleman. (And while he isn't exactly John Bindon in that department, if John was a ten, Andrew was an eight.)' Noticing they were being photographed, she warned Andrew, who simply 'stuck his bottom in the air and yelled: "You can kiss my royal arse!"'

The prince made arrangements to rent a nearby four-bedroom villa, and the festivities continued. He nicknamed Hodge 'Brush-Head' because of her spiky hair, while she recollected: 'The few times we went to official events together he either signed the visitors' book "ET" or "Frog".' She remembered him telling her once, 'I really do wish I wasn't a prince, but a normal person.'

But Hodge's abiding memory was that when making love Andrew would count down from ten, explaining that Koo had taught him to count as a way of stopping himself from climaxing too soon. She found him 'very full of himself, a bit immature but very charming, nice and very sexual. He was a terrible flirt.'

The affair lasted ten days. As they parted, he told her, 'I'll speak to you tonight. I love you.' She never heard from him again. But she had the last word. Interviewed by the *Mirror* a few weeks later, Hodge summed up her latest lover as 'headstrong' and unwilling to heed advice that didn't appeal to him: 'He needs someone with the strength and authority to prevent him from getting into escapades that embarrass him and the rest of his family.'

Already the respect he had gained during the Falklands, only months before, was being lost, and with the birth of Prince William while he was in the Falklands, Andrew had shifted down the royal pecking order. The *People* newspaper noted: 'He's the world's most eligible bachelor. Considering that he's third in line to the throne, he is also one of the silliest – and the Queen's number one headache.'

Reporting on the Hodge story, in the same issue the psychologist George Eddington argued, 'Andrew feels much more free and the rules that apply to Charles don't really apply to him', while astrologer Russell Grant was quoted as saying: 'If he wasn't a member of the Royal Family, his ideal role would be running a beach bar in the sun – with the odd blue movie being shown at the back.'

Andrew's demotion was to prove fateful, as he increasingly sought to establish a defining role for himself. Ralph Wykes-Sneyd believed the episode marked a turning point in the public's perception of the prince. It was the moment when Andrew began to squander the credit the nation had accorded him for his time 'down South'. The squadron had enough numbers to physically shield the prince from the press when he was ashore in Barbados, but he didn't do much to help himself, instead asserting that it was who he was that counted. The commander also recalled the prince's tendency to blame others for incidents that were caused by his own stupidity. It didn't endear him to others.

Another naval colleague who served with Andrew in 820 Squadron felt no one really knew the prince, who kept himself apart: 'He certainly had a strong sense of entitlement and didn't feel he had to earn respect. He expected people to come to him and seemed to have no great interest in other people. He had no great circle of friends and certainly wasn't one of the lads.'

MISSTEPS

In July 1983 Andrew completed his attachment to 820 Squadron and moved to 702 Naval Air Squadron at Portland in Dorset – the prefix 8 signifies a frontline squadron, 7 a training one – to learn how to fly the Lynx helicopter, half the size of the Sea King. As his instructor Lieutenant Andy Symons explained, 'It will be like going from a tank to a sports car when he first jumps into a Lynx.'

Contrary to claims that Andrew received no special privileges, instructions were sent to the engineers servicing the helicopters:

The policy of allowing His Royal Highness to enjoy a normal naval flying career and not to be subject to unnecessary severe constraints is to continue. Lynx aircraft will not be prepared to Gold Seal Standards; however certain additional engineering procedures will be applied in 702 Squadron ... key personnel are to be screened to ensure a level of technical proficiency of at least satisfactory standard and with no ADVERSE PERSONAL QUALITIES.

In spite of the adverse media publicity from his fling with Vicki Hodge, there were plans to increase Andrew's royal duties, with arrangements to open the Mountbatten Centre in Portsmouth, the Falkland Islands section of the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton and the Biggin Hill air show. In February 1984 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and the Queen appointed him one of her personal aides-de-camp. In April, he made his first major official overseas tour representing the Queen at the 150th anniversary celebrations of St Helena.

From there he went on a four-day tour to California to support the British Olympic Association and a trade promotion, 'Britain Salutes Beverly Hills'. A Foreign Office report, copied to Buckingham Palace, concluded the visit had been a considerable success:

In the course of a full and varied programme HRH was able to bring powerful support to the British Trade promotion effort by focussing attention on British consumer goods ... Not since the visit of HM the Queen has a foreign visitor received so much TV coverage ... The overall impression given of a fresh, modern, enquiring and caring personality has a special appeal to Americans who invariably responded positively.

The reality was rather different. A thousand people were kept waiting at an exhibition after Andrew dawdled at an aircraft factory. Touring a Beverly Hills department store, he stopped at the counter selling bespoke British shirts. 'I haven't worn that particular make since I was thirteen,' the prince said – and twenty-five seconds later walked out.

On a visit to Los Angeles, the twenty-four-year-old prince turned a spray gun on a group of reporters and photographers, splattering them with white paint with the words, 'I enjoyed that.' He later apologised, claiming his finger had slipped, but the damage had been done. Ross Benson writing in the *Daily Express* commented: 'It was his opportunity to show he is ready to accept the responsibilities of being a member of the Royal Family. But Prince Andrew blew it; completely and disastrously.' Bill Stout of CBS broadcast that 'It was the most unpleasant royal visit since they burnt the

White House in 1812. Spoiled rich kids are spoiled rich kids whatever title they have.'

The Queen made Andrew pay for the damage caused, which was estimated at between £15,000 and £30,000, and stipulated that in future he was to be accompanied by a PR person as well as an equerry. The City of Los Angeles had the spray gun mounted on a plaque bearing a coat of arms, and presented it to the prince. In December, he was chosen by the *People* as 1984's 'Twit of the Year' on account of the episode.

Journalist Paul Callan, however, felt Andrew's arrogance was simply cover for his shyness but he was able to get away with his behaviour because of his good looks.

Various women continued to be linked to Andrew in the press. In January it had been reported he was dating Bridget Matthey, who shared his love of ballet. The following month it was the actress Katie Rabett, whom he had met at a photographic exhibition and who had hosted the prince's twenty-fourth birthday party at her parents' west London home. That relationship foundered when nude pictures of Rabett, taken a few years earlier, surfaced in a tabloid. Other names mooted included the actresses Catherine Oxenberg, whose mother was a cousin of Prince Philip and who claimed he proposed marriage; Anne Marchant; Finola Hughes; and the model Clare Park.

The prince met many of these girlfriends as a result of his hobby, which had first been encouraged by his relations Lord Snowdon and Lord Lichfield and then nurtured by the photographer Gene Nocon, whose wife, Liz, was to become a confidante. According to Nocon, the prince was 'very serious about his photography. He has an advantage over other kids in that he knows where he's at technically. If a guy can fly a helicopter, he can handle a camera, but he also has an instinctive aesthetic eye.'

Andrew had converted an unused bathroom on the third floor of Buckingham Palace into a darkroom and scattered throughout his apartment were blow-ups in black and white of stark landscapes, bare trees and straggling sheep. Through Koo Stark he had participated in Nocon's 'Personal Points of View' exhibition and in 1985 published a collection of photographs, with proceeds going to charity, which he described in the foreword as 'a small slice of autobiography recording memories and impressions through my eyes and the lens of a camera'.

The largely black-and-white collection included pictures taken from and of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, holidays in Canada and Scotland, royal tours and members of the Royal Family and models, such as Clare Park and Finola Hughes, later best known for the daytime soap *General Hospital*. Asked by David Frost if there was a theme to his work, he paused and said, 'Dare I say it? The theme, in fact, is loneliness.'

In March 1984 the *Sun* suggested various candidates for marriage, arguing that when he settled down it would be with a woman who 'will not have had a string of wildly unsuitable boyfriends'. They included the eighteen-year-old Princess Stephanie of Monaco; seventeen-year-old Princess Alexia of Greece; the seventeen-year-old daughter of the Duke of Buccleuch; the seventeen-year-old Lady Elizabeth Ogilvy, daughter of the Earl of Airlie; the fourteen-year-old twins of Lady Anne Glenconner; the sixteen-year-old India Hicks, granddaughter of Lord Mountbatten; and the eighteen-year-old Henrietta Neville. The pressure was on to find Andrew a wife.

ENTER SARAH FERGUSON

In April 1984, on the recommendation of Paddy McNally, Sarah Ferguson went to work for Richard Burton, a former racing driver who had been badly burned in a pile-up and turned fine art publisher instead. She ran the London office of his firm CK Graphic Arts.† Like others before him, Burton admired her ability to handle people, especially entertain them, which was part of her job. 'It does not require a vast knowledge of art,' he said. 'It's more a matter of common sense, and she has lots of that.'

The relationship with McNally, however, was not going well. He travelled extensively and had no wish to remarry, so Sarah began to flex her independence. At the Arabian Horse Show in Mexico that year, while working on a book on Arabian horses, she met and began an eight-month relationship with the photographer Martin Schreiber, famous for his naked snaps of Madonna. He remembered her ability to handle any situation: 'We could go fishing and talk about worms or go to a black-tie event and not feel out of place ... I found her one of the most unusual women I had ever

met in my life. She was a Land Rover Rolls-Royce – the kind you can take anywhere.’

In May 1985 Andrew joined 815 Naval Air Squadron, taking the Lieutenants’ Staff Course at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and then serving aboard the frigate HMS *Brazen* as her Lynx pilot. The previous August Koo Stark had married the Green Shield stamps heir, Tim Jeffries, which had deeply unsettled him. He admitted to a friend, ‘I am a loner – I really am. Yet when I say that no one believes me. I’d really like to be married but I’ve yet to meet the right girl.’

That was all about to change, after an intervention by Princess Diana, who was in need of an ally at court and had already tried to make Sarah Ferguson one of her ladies-in-waiting. Aware of the problems in the relationship with McNally, Diana suggested Sarah be invited to join the royal house party for Ascot that June. Whether by luck or by design, Andrew, on leave from his duties with *Brazen*’s Lynx, was seated beside her. She was on one of her periodic diets and he goaded her to finish her chocolate profiteroles and he would do the same. He then went back on his word and she playfully whacked him.

When they discovered they had the same childish sense of humour, their mutual attraction increased, but Sarah still had feelings for McNally. She hoped this new love interest might make him jealous, yet a wished-for marriage proposal on a holiday at Villa d’Este on the shores of Lake Como never materialised – it was time to move on.

Shortly afterwards, Andrew left on an official visit to Canada, but on his return he took Sarah to the ballet at Covent Garden, entertained her at Buckingham Palace and sent bouquets of flowers. According to one of her friends, ‘Things got better and better between them as the weeks passed by. There was never any is it on or is it off? It wasn’t complicated because they got on so well together. That was the nice thing about it. A straightforward love story.’

Both were ready to settle down, but there were mixed feelings in the Royal Family. They had known Ferguson all her life as she was part of royal circles and shared their interests in outdoor pursuits, in dogs, horses, even charades. Compared to Diana, she was easy-going and clearly made Andrew happy, but according to a well-connected source:

Fergie couldn't stop talking, and inappropriately. She was all high-jinks and jolly-hockey sticks and practical jokes. Andy loved it, no one else did. I was told that the Queen said to someone after Fergie had left the Presence, 'Does that girl never stop talking!' ... The Duke of Edinburgh just thought she was a girl on the make.

Even Sarah's own family were not sure about the relationship. With characteristic candour, her father stated: 'She's either in love with Andrew or in love with the Royal Family and I think it's the latter.'

There were also concerns that there might be scandals in her private life. A Palace source confided in journalist Stuart White that the worry was 'Fergie had put it about a little, and was a "game girl". That phrase was used to me and didn't have anything to do with liking grouse moors.'

In December Andrew took her to an Elton John concert to make their relationship public, but since she wasn't his usual type, the press didn't even notice. Then, just before Christmas, the story broke in the *Daily Mirror*: 'An attractive redhead is set to join Prince Andrew for Christmas at Windsor Castle. She is Sarah Ferguson, the new love in Andrew's life and one of Princess Diana's best friends.' A friend added, 'No one is expecting any sort of early engagement but this is a romance which should be taken seriously.'

Ferguson spent New Year at Sandringham and Andrew broached marriage. Feeling under pressure from his family to settle down, on the rebound from various failed relationships, driven by a strong physical attraction to Ferguson and loneliness, he felt this was an opportunity he should not lose; but she was worried at the speed of events, as one friend remembered: 'While she was enormously happy, she was petrified about what she was letting herself in for.' The courtship continued into 1986, with Andrew driving up to London from Portland every Friday in his Jaguar to take his new girlfriend out. They spent weekends at the homes of friends, such as Alasdair Hadden-Paton, but reports in the press maintained the prince was still infatuated with Koo Stark and intended to keep seeing her, and there were stories of phone calls to Buckingham Palace from a 'Fiona Campbell'.

In early February HMS *Brazen* docked in London and Sarah made her first public appearance with members of the Royal Family, accompanying Diana to a cocktail party. Learning the ship's shop sold knickers with the

word 'Brazen' embroidered on the front, Diana bought several pairs for herself and Ferguson.

Later that month, with Andrew back at sea, Sarah joined the Prince and Princess of Wales on their annual Klosters skiing trip, impressing Charles enough for him to exhort his wife, 'Why can't you be more like Fergie?'

After *Brazen* docked in Sunderland on a five-day goodwill visit, Sarah travelled up under the name of Miss Anwell to see Andrew again at Floors Castle. Yet that Sunday the *News of the World* ran a story, 'Andy Girl in Cocaine Castle', alleging that drug-taking was prevalent at McNally's chalet in Verbier, which had been christened 'Snow Castle'.

It did not put Andrew off. After a boisterous snowball fight, he proposed. Ferguson was so surprised she offered him the chance to change his mind the next morning, but he only reaffirmed his proposal. Given that they needed permission from the Queen, who would not be back from a tour of Australia and New Zealand for another three weeks, they told no one.

Eventually, on 15 March, Andrew saw the Queen, seeking permission to marry. She already knew what he was going to ask and readily agreed. 'She was overjoyed,' Andrew recalled. 'Very pleased and beyond that what else is there? Just that of a delighted parent.' He had already asked Ron's permission – after meeting the major at the top of the Long Walk at Windsor by the statue of the copper horse and talking 'for about twenty minutes. It was short and sharp.'

Whatever the misgivings among the two families, it was obvious the couple were in love. Astrologer Penny Thornton remembered meeting them at dinner: 'It was a very merry evening ... they couldn't stop touching each other, they giggled with each other, they were clearly absolutely identifiably mad about each other.'

The engagement was announced on 19 March – it had been delayed because of the Budget the previous day – with an official photocall on the Buckingham Palace lawn. Sarah claimed to be attracted by Andrew's 'charm and good looks', he by her 'red hair'. Their banter was a refreshing change from the usual formality of such events and the stilted engagement photocall of Charles and Diana. The public loved her eye-rolling talent for silly faces, sense of humour, irreverence, unpretentious manner, ebullience and the fact that, in contrast to the Princess of Wales, she appeared not to care about her clothes.

The press were enthusiastic about the match, with the *Daily Mail* in its leader writing: ‘If the sailor Prince with the roving eye really is ready to quit roving, then hey ding-a-ding, we say, for how could he do better than the delectable Fergie!’ A *Sunday Times* profile reflected that ‘a few years ago Andrew looked as though he was going to be an embarrassment to the royal family: a loudmouth, whose main role in life was providing models with stories to sell to tabloid newspapers.’ That was no longer the case.

ENGAGED

Instantly Sarah Ferguson’s life changed. A nondescript van turned up at her flat in Lavender Gardens. According to journalist Andrew Morton: ‘For the next couple of hours these courteous but brisk officials – from MI5, the Special Branch, no one to this day knows – went through the house from top to bottom. Anything remotely connected with Sarah was packed away and loaded onto the van.’ Her flatmate Carolyn Cotterell was left with no pictures of Sarah. Amid concern about her links with the fast Verbier set, and that nothing should survive that might prove embarrassing, all traces of Fergie’s previous life were wiped.

She was installed in Andrew’s suite of rooms on the second floor of Buckingham Palace under the supervision of his valet, Michael Perry, and the Queen’s chief maid Caroline Terry. Ferguson remembered:

Andrew’s bedroom and dressing room, an absolute time warp. Dozens of stuffed animals blanketed the bed, while pink teddies hugged each other atop a lamp. Boys’ guns and bachelor bits lay all over ... One teddy bear wore a vest ‘It’s tough being a Prince’.

She now worked from the Palace, shared Andrew’s police protection officer and had a police escort when travelling. Her blue BMW was swapped for a Jaguar XJS leased by the Royal Family and fitted with sophisticated radio equipment. She began to do royal engagements, joining the family for a service of thanksgiving at St George’s Chapel and at the Royal Opera to celebrate the Queen’s birthday, and in May sharing the royal box with the Queen at the Windsor Horse Show.

The couple were invited to stay with Prince Charles at Highgrove, whose housekeeper Wendy Berry remembered one visit in particular that suggested the night before had been riotous: ‘By all the evidence Andrew and Sarah had decided to try out both rooms in the space of a few hours ... Several staff at Buckingham Palace had warned me that I would be changing both beds every day for the length of their visit.’

The morning before they left Sarah approached the housekeeper to ask for some writing paper for her room. ‘I was struck by how pleasant but ordinary she was in the flesh, without any proper makeup on,’ recalled Berry. ‘Dressed in a long skirt and jumper, and with her hair tied into a ponytail, she looked more like a prep school matron than a Duchess in waiting. “I’ve just got to send some letters though – on Highgrove paper,” she giggled. “I promised a friend, who will be so *terribly* impressed.”’

The wedding had been set for 23 July and just over a week before, Andrew held his stag night at Aubrey House in Holland Park, attended by among others Prince Charles, Guy Roxburghe, David Frost, Elton John and Billy Connolly. Sarah, her close friend Julia Dodd-Noble, Princess Diana, Connolly’s wife Pamela Stephenson, and Elton John’s wife Renate, tried to gatecrash the party dressed as policewomen. After failing to do so, they repaired to a nightclub, Annabel’s, where a sports journalist approached the Princess of Wales in the belief she was a kissogram. The women then returned to Buckingham Palace, where with the approval of the royal protection squad, they stopped Andrew’s car and threatened to take him to the station and ‘have his particulars taken down’.

The following week Ronald Ferguson hosted a dinner and dance for eight hundred at Smith’s Lawn, the headquarters of the Guards Polo Club, attended by members of the Royal Family, Nancy Reagan, Elton John, Billy Connolly and Pamela Stephenson, Chris de Burgh and family friends. Suspended around the walls were life belts initialled ‘HMS Andrew’ and ‘HMS Sarah’.

By royal tradition, Sarah spent the night before the wedding with the Queen Mother at Clarence House, where her visitors included the Princess of Wales. Dressed in jeans, Fergie briefly mingled with the crowds who had gathered, until she was recognised and had to depart to go to bed.

* He eventually managed to pass six O levels: English language, English literature, French, history, general science and maths.

† Andrew later served as a Lakefield trustee and honorary chair of its charitable foundation until 2019, and five times joined former classmates for a reunion canoe trip in the Northwest Territories.

‡ She would work there until after the birth of her first child, most notably overseeing the publication of a book on the Impressionists and a history of the Palace of Westminster.

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II

MARRIED LIFE

THE HONEYMOON IS OVER

She was later to describe it as the best day of her life. Her dress with its seventeen-foot train had been widely admired; a huge crowd had gathered at Buckingham Palace to see the handsome new couple embrace on the balcony; and the papers had just as enthusiastically reported the spectacle and solemnity but also the unscripted moments of a family in celebration.

The *Evening Standard* leader that day spoke for many: ‘Miss Sarah Ferguson radiates character; she is ebullient, yet steady, good-humoured and quick-witted, an ornament to the Queen’s family as she would be to any family in the land.’

After the wedding, the couple spent the first five days of their honeymoon on the royal yacht *Britannia* in the Azores before two weeks cruising around Scotland. At a party at Windsor Castle to thank everyone who had helped organise the wedding, Sarah encouraged everyone to jump fully clothed into the swimming pool.

Andrew began a weapons instructor course at Yeovilton, 150 miles from London, and Sarah returned to her job at the art publisher, royal duties and Andrew’s bachelor apartment at Buckingham Palace – she had been refused permission to share naval quarters with her husband on security grounds – forced to store her clothes in freestanding cupboards in the corridors outside their quarters.

For their wedding, the Queen had gifted them a parcel of land on the Sunninghill Estate, adjoining Windsor Great Park. It had personal memories for the monarch because the early nineteenth-century two-storey stucco house, Sunninghill Park, the wartime headquarters of the American Ninth Air Force, had been earmarked as her first married home, but shortly before

her own wedding in 1947 it had been destroyed by fire. The site had been considered as a possible home for Princess Margaret in the 1960s.

Now the Balmoral Estate architect Sir James Dunbar-Nasmith was tasked with building a red brick house to the Yorks' specifications in the five-acre former walled garden. It was to be the first new-build royal residence since Bagshot Park was completed in 1879 for Queen Victoria's third son, the Duke of Connaught. Construction began in 1986 but would not be completed until 1990.

Three afternoons a week the new Duchess of York drove herself to RAF Benson in Oxfordshire, then home of the Queen's Flight, for flying lessons paid for by a family friend, Lord Waterpark. She was determined to understand Andrew's world and to surprise him. After twenty-two days of training, 'Chatterbox One' – the nickname given to her by air traffic controllers – made her first solo flight and in early 1987 the duchess was presented with her wings – the first royal female to hold a private pilot's licence. A few months later she took part in an air display, looping the loop. Part of a struggle against court protocol, flying gave her a sense of freedom, just as skiing had.

What the public did not know was that there were problems in the marriage within weeks of the wedding, given Andrew's absences. 'Friday night he'd come home to our apartment, fresh from the wardroom, tired and grumpy,' she said. 'On Saturday he would get nearly human, but by Sunday lunch he'd get edgy again, because he had to get ready to go to work and he didn't want to go.' She would wave goodbye to her new husband and then sit in her dressing room, stared at by the 'stately oils' of Queen Victoria on the walls, 'and I would break. I would cry softly, resignedly.'

There were faults on both sides. According to one friend of Andrew, the marriage quickly became an arrangement. After the duke was posted to Portland, in an attempt to spend more time together they rented Chideock Manor, a five-bedroom Regency house with a swimming pool set in thirty acres between Bridport and Lyme Regis, which boasted a secret passage to the chalk cliffs a mile away and was supposedly haunted by ghosts from the Civil War, but Sarah also felt lonely there. 'She never felt she could make it her home,' explained a friend. 'It was too remote and inconvenient.'

The arrangement lasted nine months, during which they visited Chideock on only four weekends, despite it being monitored around the clock by

Dorset police. Part of the problem was their finances. Andrew had his naval pay of £17,000 a year, she her £15,000 publishing salary, which were supplemented by a Civil List payment of £50,000, rising to £86,000 in 1988 and £155,000 in 1989. This had to cover an equerry, valet, dresser and private secretary, and they were grateful to eventually be lent King Hussein of Jordan's seven-bedroomed Castlewood House on the edge of Windsor Great Park.

Bored, Sarah started 1987 with three weeks at Sandringham, followed by a fortnight skiing in Klosters, and a ten-day break with Andrew in Barbados paid for by multi-millionaire Robert Sangster.

But that June on BBC 1 a television show aired that was to further undermine the new Duchess of York's popularity. *It's a Royal Knockout* revived a popular game show of the seventies, orchestrated by Prince Edward as part of his fledgling television career, into a medieval-themed celebrity tournament. Filmed in front of a plywood castle at Alton Towers theme park, it pitted teams led by four non-participating royals – Prince Edward, the Duke and Duchess of York and Princess Anne. The celebrity sides, each raising money for charity, took part in a series of obstacle games that involved them dressing as giant vegetables or throwing fake hams at each other, races on oil slicks, jousting and water-bucket drenchings.

It was a gift to satirists. Where else could you see Griff Rhys Jones and Chris de Burgh as Romeos leapfrog across a pond to carry roses up to Anneliese Rice and Jane Seymour playing the part of Juliet; witness Tom Jones throwing foam hams at fellow contestants trying to slide across a greasy pole; or watch celebrities dressed as onions, leeks and potatoes have to evade opposing cooks and discard their vegetables into a giant cauldron?

Courtiers had advised against the extravaganza, and many members of the Royal Family refused to take part. Nonetheless *It's a Royal Knockout* drew a domestic audience of eighteen million viewers, making it the fourth most-watched programme of the year, and it eventually reached four hundred million viewers worldwide and raised over £1.5 million for the respective charities. Now, however, it is largely remembered for a petulant Prince Edward storming out of the press tent after its members showed insufficient enthusiasm for his pet project.

The competition was won by Princess Anne's team, with the Yorks finishing third and fourth. Broadcaster Stuart Hall, who presented the show

and would be imprisoned in 2013 for child sexual abuse, was knocked off his feet when Prince Andrew accidentally set off a cannon early, singeing his eyebrows.

Andrew also tried to push Meat Loaf into a moat after he felt the singer had taken too great an interest in Ferguson. The US rocker, dressed in a fake suit of armour, responded by grabbing the duke, who reportedly moaned: 'You can't touch me. I'm royal.' To be told, 'Well, you try to push me in the moat, Jack, I don't give a s**t who you are, you're goin' in the moat.'

Some called it undignified. Whatever it was, the event marked a sea change in the media coverage and public perception of the Royal Family and, in particular, the Duchess of York, whose lack of decorum made many wonder if perhaps she was too much of a breath of fresh air. At one point she had urged Meat Loaf to 'steal Andrew's panda mascot and stuff it down his trousers', then led her team round the field in a lap of honour: 'She resembled not so much a dignified Duchess as the captain of a girl's hockey team who had just beaten their keenest rivals.'

The programme went out a few days after Ascot, where Sarah had been filmed with Diana poking their mutual friend Lulu Blacker on the bottom with an umbrella. Her exuberance, her social gaffes, her lack of dress sense, her obvious enjoyment of having a good time, her unpretentiousness and good humour which at first had endeared her to the public had become a liability.

'Fergie Makes It 9 Holidays in 9 Months' ran one headline, reporting she had taken ninety-nine days' holiday in the first nine months of 1987. Another criticised the huge security costs incurred so that Andrew could take a picture of Carrickfergus Castle for a forthcoming book – the official reason given for the trip had been to visit a boating marina – claiming that hundreds of policemen were involved in an operation costing tens of thousands of pounds: 'The Duke strolled up, took a few snaps – and went for a VIP lunch.'

The public were prepared to buy into the monarchy when it involved public service but not when it was simply private pleasure paid for by the taxpayer. Ferguson was seen as indiscreet, irresponsible, inappropriate and her growing imperiousness and reluctance to conform earned her enemies among the courtiers. The press criticised her weight, vulgarity and numerous freebie holidays – something she was aware of. Tailor Bryan

Manning remembered her T-shirt when he went to measure the Yorks for their *It's a Royal Knockout* costumes: it said 'Piste Again' across the front.

In July the couple toured Canada, drawing a mixed response. Some commentators liked the lack of formality, enthusiasm and her warmth; others thought her behaviour unsophisticated and vulgar. There were also complaints from Palace staff who found Fergie disorganised and demanding. After an evening out on the town – favourites were Harry's Bar or Annabel's in Mayfair – she would regularly arrive at the Palace late at night with guests and expect staff, working since 6.30 a.m., to rustle up a meal.

Clairvoyant Maureen Conway, meeting Sarah later that year after a gap of twelve months, felt: 'The lovely, carefree, unaffected girl had gone. Now there was a rather grand person – only too aware she was a Duchess.' It was a view shared by Highgrove housekeeper Wendy Berry: 'Marriage brought her attention and a list of privileges that she could never have dreamed of. It was quite to turn her head.'

The transformation had been swift. Yet the unrelenting public glare also took its toll. Sarah took the jeers about her weight to heart and for weeks lived on a diet of ten exotic fruits, such as guava, mango and pineapple, with liberal doses of sliced root ginger in boiling water and a course of homeopathic vitamin pills. She regularly swam in the Buckingham Palace pool and followed the exercise regime devised by Callan Pinckney. The American fitness guru flew over from New York to supervise her royal client, sometimes for up to three hours. 'She was very dedicated to losing weight and worked as hard as anybody I have known,' said Pinckney.

The problems in the marriage were becoming more evident. In September the couple toured Mauritius, staying on for a further week's holiday, the £5,000 bill shared between the island government and a South African hotel group. Yet according to Mike Lawn, a royal photographer, the prince didn't step outside their hotel, the Touessrok, which owned a private island just offshore. He stayed in reading books and watching videos on TV: 'The Duchess came out once – one day when it was raining to go shopping. She looked fed up.'

With Andrew at sea, Sarah fully enjoyed the perks of being a member of the Royal Family. In January 1988 she and three friends spent five days at the Saint Géran Hotel on Mauritius, courtesy of owners Sun International,

one ‘freebie’ or ‘upgrade’ among the many that companies fell over themselves to give royals. Later that month, sponsored by *People* magazine, she flew Concorde to New York to attend a charity gala performance of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical *The Phantom of the Opera*, staying in the \$3,000 Presidential Suite of the Waldorf Towers. The partying continued long into the night ‘to such an extent that the sponsors faced a charge of several thousand dollars for extra catering and room service ... One who scrutinized a breakdown of the wine bill commented: “Well, she certainly knows her vintages.”’

In February she appeared at the ski championships organised by the Combined Services Winter Sports Association, of which she was patron, in Méribel. Though the event lasted just four hours, she arrived days early, staying in a chalet lent by socialite Lorna Cooper-Kay, and insisting the maids call her ‘Ma’am’, curtsy to her at all times and requiring them to spend hours cooking a meal, before deciding to dine out.

The same month the Yorks, accompanied by Ronald Ferguson captaining a Guards polo team, visited California as part of a three-month Celebration of British Arts, which began with the opening of a major retrospective by David Hockney at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Foreign Office sold it as a success, with diplomat Sherard Cowper-Coles writing to David Smallman of the Protocol Department: ‘Their Royal Highnesses’ contribution to the overall success of UK/LA ’88 (which only ended in April) was very considerable ... The result was an upsurge of interest in Britain and things British.’

But the press lambasted the duchess for not behaving with the appropriate dignity. At a dinner in front of celebrities and politicians in Los Angeles, she joked about wearing Marks and Spencer knickers and when Art Torres, a Democratic state senator, who had had too much to drink, shouted, ‘We love you, Fergie’, she replied, with a twinkle in her eye, ‘See you later.’ There were also concerns that she was using such trips to build a list of celebrity chums, separately arranging to meet Jack Nicholson, Anjelica Huston, Michael J. Fox, Roddy McDowall, Emma Samms and Cubby Broccoli.

The following month the pregnant duchess came close to losing both the baby she was carrying and her own life while skiing in Klosters with Charles and Diana. At the last minute, after an avalanche warning, she

decided not to accompany the Prince of Wales and the Queen's former equerry Major Hugh Lindsay skiing off-piste. The two men were caught in an avalanche and the thirty-four-year-old Lindsay, who had recently married and whose wife was also pregnant, was killed.*

A NYMPHET CALLED BABS

Ronald Ferguson had long caused the Royal Family embarrassment. Since the engagement, the major had been organising dinners at a restaurant in Pont Street, as well as polo events and cocktail parties, charging between £1,000 and £5,000 a head, which his daughter and son-in-law then graced.

At the beginning of May, he appeared as an elderly punk with a red and pink Mohican and leather jacket draped in chains at a charity performance of Barry Humphries' show 'Back with a Vengeance', where he was presented with a pair of white Y-fronts.

A week later the *People* newspaper revealed over five pages that the major was a habitué of the Wigmore Club, a West End massage parlour, where he paid for sexual services from a number of women, giving them perfume and bath oil said to be used by the Royal Family. He claimed he only went there for 'straight massages' and was said to be more upset by the suggestion that he had worn a blazer at Claridge's than by the accusation of adultery with a nymphet called Babs.

A few months later Ron lost his job as vice-chairman of the Guards Polo Club, his seat on the committee of the Hurlingham Polo Association, the game's governing body, and Prince Charles dropped him as his personal polo manager after twenty-one years. It was said the *People* had been tipped off about a senior politician using the club and Ferguson was only caught by chance. His daughter appeared unconcerned and is supposed to have told him, 'Hold your head up and be even more arrogant than you normally are.'

In truth, Sarah was finding the growing pressures difficult to cope with herself and was constantly in tears. Her husband had signed on for a further ten years in the navy and in May had joined the destroyer HMS *Edinburgh* as an Officer of the Watch in order to earn his Watchkeeping and Ocean Navigation Certificates. The Queen, sympathetic to her daughter-in-law's unhappiness, arranged for Andrew to take compassionate leave and he

returned from his tour of the Far East and Australia, but spent rather more of it at Balmoral than the couple's new home, Castlewood. Six months pregnant, Sarah now weighed over two hundred pounds, having 'drowned my sorrows in mayonnaise, sausage rolls, and smoked mackerel pate sandwiches from Marks & Spencer's'.

Wendy Berry, the Highgrove housekeeper, had noticed a difference. The 'rather frumpy Sloane' she had first met among the bedsheets had turned into 'a very demanding young madam'. Berry looked at Sarah's brand-new expensive luggage and couldn't help contrasting it with the battered old suitcases she had trailed her belongings in before the marriage. She was 'obviously loving every moment of her newfound importance as a Duchess'.

Taking tea to Sarah one morning, Berry 'asked if she needed anything pressing and the duchess pointed at two bags filled with blouses and maternity clothes. 'All of it, Ma'm?' I responded. "Yes", she said firmly, "all of it."

BABY YORKLET

The couple's first child, Beatrice (after Queen Victoria's youngest daughter) – Andrew's preference had been for Annabel – Elizabeth Mary, was induced on 8 August to fit Andrew's leave from Singapore. In a departure from custom, the baby was born at the private Portland Hospital. A twenty-one-gun salute and special newspaper editions marked the occasion.

Yet the birth did not solve the problems in the marriage, which were stoked by further press disapproval after Sarah, suffering from postnatal depression, joined Andrew on a ten-day tour of Australia for the Bicentennial celebrations the following month, leaving ten-week-old Beatrice with nanny Alison Wardley. As the duchess admitted: 'Most of all, I needed to shore up my marriage. The two years since our wedding had wafted us apart; though I wouldn't dare say as much, I sensed we were in trouble.'

Andrew appeared incapable of responding to her needs and changing moods, which were accentuated by appetite suppressants, or of giving her the necessary support against the criticisms of her weight, dress sense and

the number of holidays she took – she had managed to add another with her sister and mother on the exclusive Bedarra Island Resort on the Great Barrier Reef, paid for by Australian Airways. She later told one of her confidants:

I'd write to him almost every day and eagerly await the post for his return letters but they never came ... I was missing him madly and couldn't understand why he couldn't spare the time to let me know what he was up to. I was interested to know how he was getting on and for him to write back and say how much he was missing me. But he never did. It was so depressing.

In an effort to solve her problems, the duchess often sought advice from psychic healers. She had long done this. Now it was Madame Vasso's turn. In mid-February, accompanied by two detectives, Sarah paid a visit to the self-proclaimed healer, sitting for three hours beneath a blue Perspex pyramid and being transported back in time to the Pharaohs. Her police protection officers had advised the duchess not to see the healer, who had appeared in court for assault and to whose house police had been called twenty times to sort out disputes with neighbours, but Fergie went ahead. Vasso began increasingly to be summoned, once finding the couple in the middle of a heated discussion, with Andrew pressing his wife 'if there was anything else she had kept from him' and Sarah assuring 'him that he knew all there was to know'.

Media censure continued after *Hello!* magazine paid £250,000 for a forty-eight-page spread with seventy pictures of the Yorks' domestic life, including photos of Beatrice in the bath. Earning money personally from exploiting a royal position was something new for working royals and deeply frowned on. It was a canny investment for the magazine, which added 150,000 fresh sales to its 300,000-copy circulation, claiming no money had been paid to the couple; instead a donation would be made to 'a charity of their choice'.

The charity turned out to be Susan Barrantes, who was in financial difficulties, and also the need to pay for extra features at Sunninghill, which the Queen was no longer prepared to pay for. As the duchess noted: 'The pool and tennis court were yet to be built – luxuries, granted, but a big house must have its finishing touches if it's not to look half-baked ... By

the time the last worker left, I would draw more than \$500,000 out of my own account to finish Sunninghill.'

It was rumoured the Queen was not happy about her granddaughter being exploited in this way, but a documentary, *Elizabeth R* (1992), filmed shortly afterwards, included the family joking about and the Queen taking Beatrice on a pony ride at Balmoral. As Sarah wryly noted: 'A little daylight was not so terrible, it turned out, when the Queen was adjusting the blinds.'

In December 1988 fashion commentator Richard Blackwell named the duchess as number one on his list of 'Worst Dressed' women, describing her as 'a fashion obscenity who walks like a duck with a bad leg', adding she 'looks as if she makes beds in Ireland or milks cows'.

The following January a tabloid poll rated Sarah, christened 'Duchess Dolittle' after two separate skiing holidays that month, as doing the most damage to the reputation of the Royal Family – followed by Prince Andrew. Earlier that month she had been criticised for turning up at the service for the Clapham rail disaster, in which thirty-four people had been killed, in her soft-top Jaguar XJS.

In February she agreed a £126,000 fee for an exclusive interview with the *Daily Express*, which appeared on the same day that she announced she was pregnant with her second child – a fact she had failed to tell the paper, with the result that it only paid half her fee. It all added to a growing distrust between the media and the Yorks and the shaping of a narrative of them as rogue royals. They had become fair game.

BUDGIE

Sarah's experiences learning to fly had inspired two thirty-two-page children's books – *Budgie: The Little Helicopter* and *Budgie at Bendick's Point* – based on the adventures of a helicopter called Budgie and his friends Pippa, a Piper Warrior plane, and Lionel, a Lynx helicopter. The £85,000 deal was announced by Simon & Schuster in July 1989 and the books were published two months later, supposedly selling over a hundred thousand copies off the back of widespread publicity – but it was not an easy experience. According to someone in publishing, the duchess 'had to be handled with kid gloves all the time', while the Palace Press Office

interfered constantly: 'Everything had to be checked with them. Any change in the text, any bit of publicity we wanted her to do. Everything.'

And the reviewers were not kind, with one newspaper writing, 'Fergie never misses a cliché ... characters are pure stereotype'. Ann Sohn-Rethel, librarian at the Young Book Trust, which administered the then biggest prize in children's literature, the Smarties Awards, was quoted saying, 'I don't think *Budgie* stands anywhere in the field of children's literature. I imagine if they weren't written by her, none of the titles would have been published.'

Parallels were drawn with a very similar book, *Hector the Helicopter* by Arthur W. Baldwin, published in 1964, as both central characters turn from shy helicopters, stuck in hangars, into heroes when they conduct a daring sea rescue. The duchess's publisher, John Sargent, claimed it was 'a 100 per cent coincidence'. Baldwin's publishers, Random House, considered taking legal action.

The Palace, embarrassed by the furore, forbade the duchess from promoting the book in the United States, with the Queen's press secretary Robin Janvrin telling Sargent 'the Duchess of York was the greatest single threat to the monarchy in the current era, and his job was to control that threat' – Sargent reminded him she was contractually bound to do so.

The publisher found the whole experience stressful. 'At one point she told me about her money woes,' he said. 'She asked if we could pay her more upfront.'

When she did travel to New York, staying at the Plaza Athénée, having insisted on a top hotel, she was late for a *Today Show* interview because 'she was having trouble deciding which shoes to wear'. At the end of the trip, Sargent was presented with her hotel bill. 'The room service charge was four times the lodging,' he recalled. 'She had entertained some friends.'

To add to the controversy, Sarah had claimed the proceeds were going to charity – notably in an interview with Sue Lawley's BBC 1 programme *Saturday Matters* – but it emerged that in fact only 10 per cent would. Reputedly the duke's private secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Sean O'Dwyer, asked to be transferred to work for Prince Edward, appalled that a member of the Royal Family should be cashing in on their position for personal gain.

SHAPING THE CAREER

In September 1989 Andrew had returned to Portland as flight commander and pilot on HMS *Campbeltown*. There had long been stories that he was not only being granted special privileges but demanding them. A naval colleague, Gary Clark, felt: 'There's no doubt that Andrew received favouritism. He never mixed with the likes of us. Basically, he could do what he liked.'

Clark also claimed the duke had never once done night watch and had a steward to clean his cabin. 'No one else of his rank had that.'

One former colleague on *Campbeltown* felt that though Andrew was capable of being pleasant and good company, he was also petulant, entitled and extremely arrogant. The duke was 'quite certain' that he was the most important person on the ship and enjoyed throwing his weight around. He had a habit of barging onto the ship's bridge without asking permission, which clearly offended naval etiquette. 'On one occasion he came on to the bridge to berate the officer of the watch about some orders he'd been given while flying, without noticing that the captain, who was responsible for the orders (and was an actual "four-ring" captain) was sitting at the back of the bridge,' said the colleague. 'This then developed into a minor altercation between them and A was ordered off the bridge.'

More embarrassingly, it was claimed by a senior officer that though Andrew's performance in his annual appraisals was below average, he was given glowing reports. In September 1990 he had been given the lowest mark for intelligence – six out of ten, though this was later raised to seven. Eventually he was awarded a total 'score' of 74/100 based on his flying skills and enthusiasm – more than the highest achieved by much more talented officers under exceptional circumstances.

Since 1989 Tony Hogg had acted as his naval appointer, or career manager, working closely with the duke's private secretary, most notably another naval aviator, Captain Neil Blair, to shape the young man's career. Hogg's first impressions were of an 'immature, privileged, entitled, unreliable young man who played fast and loose with his private life and was not always honest'. Andrew seemed to be a playboy trying to find himself, and an average pilot. 'He was only interested in the navy on his

own terms without really understanding or accepting the level of commitment needed to make a successful career.'

Hogg soon, however, became more sympathetic, as he got to know the prince. Although Andrew could be opaque, he felt a sense of compassion for him, detecting his loneliness and insecurity. He was drawn to the wrong sort of friends and had been badly supported by the system around him. He was also the product of a complex parental environment. At the same time the naval appointer needed to set some boundaries.

Hogg put it to his charge: 'Do you want to be a naval officer or a golfer?' Andrew replied the former. Seeing that the duke clearly needed support in order to make a success of his professional life, Hogg agreed a three-way contract between himself, Andrew and his private secretary that the duke would devote 80 per cent of his working days to his naval career; and so the shaping of his professional life began to unfold.

In the summer of 1990 the First Sea Lord, Julian Oswald, invited the Yorks, Hogg and his wife, and Andrew's self-appointed mentor, Rory Maclean, and his wife to lunch at his flat in Admiralty Arch to discuss Andrew's future in the navy. Oswald asked what had been planned. Hogg replied that he thought Andrew would benefit greatly from a year at the Army Staff College. The duchess's response was immediate: 'Which one?' On being told Camberley, near their home in Ascot, she exclaimed, 'Oh no, he's going to be at home', and promptly put her napkin over her head.

Andrew would eventually join the course in 1992, part of which required submission of a major paper, involving original thought and extensive research. Three days before this was due to be handed in, his private secretary, Neil Blair, made contact with another naval officer, a high-flying Oxford graduate, explaining that Andrew had not produced the paper and asking if he would be prepared to help. The officer duly wrote the paper that helped the prince to pass the course.

STEVE WYATT

The Yorks' relationship deteriorated, even as they found out Sarah was expecting their second child. Upset by Andrew's bullying and his recent close relationship with a married woman, Sarah was receptive to falling in

love. The moment would come on an official visit to America, in November 1989, at the British Festival in Houston, where she was introduced to the socialite Lynn Wyatt (her husband, the oil magnate Oscar Wyatt Jr, was known as the 'King of Crude') and her son, Steve Wyatt.

Wyatt's real father, Robert Littman, had been sentenced to six years in jail in 1968 for murdering an eighteen-year-old French student while on an LSD trip – he thought she was a fire-breathing monster – and then disappeared.

Sarah, bored and lonely, was instantly attracted to Wyatt, then in his late thirties, with his thatch of brown hair, soft blue eyes and rich hypnotic voice, and shared interest in alternative medicine. One who was present remembered: 'It was obvious that Sarah was enormously attracted to him ... There was clearly a chemistry between them.'

The next day she flew the two hundred miles to the Wyatts' 16,000-acre ranch near the Rio Grande, taking the controls of the helicopter for part of the journey. 'Did your husband teach you to fly?' Wyatt asked. 'He is too busy these days to teach me anything,' she supposedly replied.

The duchess contacted her friend the clairvoyant Maureen Conway, who now lived in Dallas, asking for advice. Conway warned against the relationship but knew she would be ignored: 'I think that was the moment I first understood how little control she has over her impulses, her blind instincts ... whatever it is that makes her behave the way she behaves. She holds nothing back.'

The duchess returned to New York, via one of the Wyatts' private jets, to continue promoting her *Budgie* books. On the way back to the United Kingdom, she shocked airline baggage handlers with the number of bags which she described as Christmas presents. The fifty-one pieces of excess baggage contained around £33,000 of newly bought clothes and gifts, including six pairs of shoes at £562 each, handbags costing £3,125, six Italian sweaters at £625 each and a £515 teddy bear. 'Not even Joan Collins has this much,' one complained.

The press dubbed the duchess 'Her Royal Excess' amid concerns that she and her husband now required thirteen policemen to provide protection, at a cost of over £1 million a year. That month she agreed to start the second leg of the Whitbread Round the World yacht race in Montevideo, in exchange for eleven first-class tickets, worth £38,000, from the race's sponsor. She

used them to visit her mother and Hector, who were building a polo resort in Argentina.

In December Wyatt called to say he had been invited for a pheasant shoot at Constable Burton Hall in Yorkshire. By chance, Sarah was attending a gala charity performance at the Grand Theatre in Leeds as patron of Opera North on the same day and her return flight on the Royal Flight was cancelled due to fog. Refusing an offer of overnight accommodation in Leeds, she arranged to drive the fifty miles to the sixteenth-century house to see Wyatt. The duchess then drove to London for a lunch appointment, returning on the Queen's Flight to spend a second night at Constable Burton Hall. The relationship that would eventually lead to her divorce had begun.

On 23 March 1990, the couple's second child, Eugenie Victoria Helena – Andrew would have preferred Victoria Eugenie – was born by Caesarean section. The duke had driven himself from Devonport to be present for the birth, but the baby did little to save the marriage. According to a friend, it was the moment the sexual side of their marriage ended. Their mutual attraction had always been physical and without it the relationship crumbled: 'Sarah is a sensual woman who needs to be loved and likes to show affection.'

She was by now deeply involved with Wyatt who provided the emotional security she had been missing. Within six weeks of the birth, and having left behind her newborn daughter, Sarah, Beatrice and nanny Alison Wardley, a friend of Wyatt's, Pricilla Phillips (an actress and later wife of Roger Waters of Pink Floyd) and two police protection officers were enjoying a five-day holiday at the Gazelle d'Or, a luxurious resort of thirty cottages with views of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, having flown there in Oscar Wyatt's private jet.

In July the duchess joined Wyatt at Cap-Ferrat in the South of France, where his mother had rented Somerset Maugham's old villa, La Mauresque, for her sixtieth birthday party. Meanwhile, Andrew had been left at Castlewood to stand in for her at a charity event, the launch of a car rally to Monte Carlo in aid of the Chemical Dependency Centre.

Wyatt had extensive commercial interests in the Middle East and he quickly began to seek Sarah's help. His stepfather was a heavy purchaser of Iraqi crude oil and at the time negotiating for Iraqi investment in his own US-based refineries. To help Wyatt and to the consternation of the Queen's

private secretary Robert Fellowes, Sarah hosted a dinner at Buckingham Palace in August 1990, the month Iraq invaded Kuwait, for Dr Ramzi Salman, head of the Iraqi State Oil Marketing Organisation and one of Saddam Hussein's closest confidants.

Afterwards she dragged Salman and Wyatt, uninvited, to a dinner party hosted by Lord McAlpine at Le Gavroche. As Sarah was about to be seated beside McAlpine, Wyatt was motioned to another table but he grabbed his lover by the hand and pulled her onto his lap, insisting: 'Mah woman and I sit together.' He and his woman then treated the assembled company to what one described subsequently as 'a display of mutual fondling I have never seen before in a three-star restaurant'.

SUNNINGHILL

Earlier that year, in February, Hector Barrantes had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer so Sarah had flown, against the advice of her doctors, to visit him in hospital in New York, returning in July to see him with her daughters. Twenty-four hours after she had said her goodbyes, he died, aged fifty-one.

In October a memorial service was held in Gloucestershire. It was followed by a black-tie jungle-themed party with stuffed tigers peering from hedges and life-sized gorillas in fairy-lit trees, to mark the completion of Sunninghill Park in what came to be called the 'Bunfight at the Yorkie Corral'. Guests included Steve Wyatt and his closest friend John Bryan. After a three-course meal for a hundred, another two hundred guests joined the Yorks for a champagne party, served by waitresses in scanty fake-leopard-skin outfits, and an Elton John cabaret.

Sunninghill had taken four years to build and been a huge expense, but the Yorks now had the home of their dreams, even if their taste was shared by few and the house quickly collected a series of nicknames: Southyork, after Southfork, the Texas oil tycoon's estate in the 1980s soap opera *Dallas*; Dallas Pallas; Tesco Towers; and Happy Eater Hall.

There had also been controversy after it was revealed that Sunninghill had been built in a conservation Green Belt zone, that the plans had been rejected by the county council but then overruled by Bracknell Council and

several residents had been evicted from their homes on security grounds. It further emerged that the couple had tried to get the American farmhouse-style kitchen, which cost £40,000, and bathroom supplied for free.

Surrounded by eight-foot walls, Sunninghill had its own helicopter landing pad, twelve bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, a cinema, pool room and swimming pool, and twenty rooms of staff quarters. One entered by the thirty-five-foot-high stone floor hall, which rose to a glass dome and minstrels gallery through a lobby adorned with a medieval soldier's helmet from Windsor Castle and the head of a North American buffalo – a gift from a royal tour.

The living room with its huge fireplace was decorated with Ferguson tartan drapes, peach-coloured walls, a grand piano covered with silver-framed family photos and sofas scattered with embroidered cushions, bearing the entwined initials A and S, and half a dozen giant stuffed teddy bears. Next door the red and white dining room was furnished with twenty-four Chippendale chairs – sixteen of them made to match the eight originals – and a huge glittering chandelier, which had cost £12,000, and was where the couple regularly hosted weekend dinner parties, waited on by staff in white tie, with four or five courses served off A and S monogrammed plates.

The duchess's study was decorated in pink with a large fireplace and television, the duke's in deep-red wall coverings, with dark oak shelving lined with fake books carved from wood and served by another television. Down a corridor was what was described as 'Aladdin's Cave', which one visitor thought 'looked like a miniature warehouse. It was piled from floor to ceiling with cardboard boxes and ... other shapes wrapped in cellophane stacked against the wall' – the gifts from their trips, some of their two thousand wedding presents, which had included six hundred dinner plates in eight different patterns, twenty-four antique-silver serving dishes at £1,500 to £8,000 each, thirty-six silver and glass condiment sets, a thousand crystal glasses and some three hundred vases costing up to £600 each.

A curved staircase led to the forty-foot by twenty-five-foot master bedroom with four-poster bed and mint-green floral canopy, on which were a further collection of antique teddy bears, and bay windows looking out over the back garden. It had one of the world's largest walk-in wardrobes, measuring a hundred feet by fifty feet, built by Andrew's cousin David

Linley. Next door was a bathroom with giant marble bathtub, which the builders had dubbed HMS *Fergie*.

In one wing was the nursery with twin bedrooms – one with purple wallpaper, the other blue – a children's bathroom and a playroom with a miniature table and chairs and small sofa. A spare room, decorated with ape-covered wallpaper, was called the Monkey Room and the downstairs loo had a musical loo-roll holder that supposedly played the 'Star-Spangled Banner' or 'God Save the Queen'. Guests reported that towels, flannels, hand soaps and even loo paper had been embossed with the initials A & S. Twelve phone lines had been installed, the walls fortified with blast-proof plastic, the bedrooms with panic buttons and there was even a bomb shelter. The annual cost of guarding the house was estimated to be £300,000.

Eight weeks after the Sunninghill party, Steve Wyatt was one of eight hundred guests invited to the 'Dance of the Decades' at Buckingham Palace to mark the Queen Mother's ninetieth birthday, Princess Margaret's sixtieth, Princess Anne's fortieth and Prince Andrew's thirtieth. The Queen asked whether Wyatt was 'quite the sort of person you should be encouraging, dear'. Susan Barrantes was more direct: 'Chill him.'

But Sarah continued the affair.

SEPARATION

Over Christmas 1991 the Yorks were at Balmoral where divorce was discussed. The Queen did not try to dissuade them, but simply expressed her 'disappointment' and suggested they wait six months before making a decision. Such were the concerns at the Palace about Sarah's public reputation that a secret report had been prepared, suggesting she take advice before becoming involved in 'projects of questionable suitability' and criticising the number of holidays, most of them freebies, she had taken – eight in 1990 and seven in 1991.

In mid-January 1992 the duchess, having already been skiing in Klosters, flew to Palm Beach for a fundraising polo match sponsored by Cartier in aid of motor neurone disease. She was accompanied by her father, who was captaining a British team against a local side. She also hoped to see Steve

Wyatt, but he chose not to attend, warned off by his mother and anxious not to displease the Royal Family.

Over the three days they went to a ball and various receptions, including one at the Everglades Club at which £100,000 alone was spent on decorations, including a life-sized papier-mâché giraffe. The flights for the duchess's party, which had also included her bodyguard and her secretary, had cost *Town and Country* magazine over £10,000, for which it had been given exclusive coverage of the parties she attended. Questions were asked about how much the trip actually raised for charity – in fact £15,000 – but it was the discovery of some photographs in a London flat and her response that was to lead to the next crisis in her marriage.

The previous November a window cleaner, Maurice Maple, had found over a hundred photographs on top of a cupboard in Steve Wyatt's old rented flat in Cadogan Square. Maple recognised the Duchess of York in the photos, and through an intermediary showed them to the *Daily Mail's* chief crime reporter, Peter Burden, who, after sitting on them for two months, handed them to the head of the royal protection squad who passed them to the duke's equerry, Captain Alexander Baillie-Hamilton. The intimate photos showed Wyatt on holiday with the duchess in the South of France, including one of a naked Beatrice on his knee.

There is some mystery about the provenance of the pictures. Royal photographer Arthur Edwards has argued that 'Steve Wyatt did not carelessly leave the pictures in his London flat. They were planted there to embarrass the Duchess and damage the Wyatts.' The journalist James Whitaker claimed they had been stolen from Sunninghill and 'Scotland Yard was asked to investigate but mysteriously nothing came of their enquiries.'

Separately, a Mr G had contacted the Confidential desk of the *Today* newspaper, saying for £30,000 he could provide information about the future meetings of Wyatt and the duchess. A reporter on the paper, James Steen, agreed to meet him in the car park at Streatham railway station and remembered: 'He was in his mid-fifties, bespectacled, balding and wearing a mac over his business suit. But it was his companion who caught my eye. She was a very glamorous blonde in her thirties, heavily made-up and wearing a black fur coat.'

Could it be that either the Palace or members of the intelligence services wanted the relationship with Wyatt exposed to embarrass the duchess so that it might be ended? A senior intelligence officer explained: 'MI6 does not spy on members of the Royal Family, but risk assessments are carried out when they travel abroad and discreet surveillance is kept to see they come to no harm.'

Sarah was informed of the pictures as she was about to board her flight back to Britain – she rang Andrew about it from the VIP suite at Miami Airport – but it took a little time for its significance to dawn on her.

After an hour, she regained her spirits, throwing a wet flannel at her father's new partner Lesley Player (who she had made a lady-in-waiting to help facilitate the affair), who was sitting across the aisle. It triggered hilarity and wet towels and tissues went 'whizzing around the cabin' as others joined in the fight.

The duchess started throwing peanuts, followed by sachets of sugar and bread rolls as she pulled faces at other passengers, eventually 'cutting eyeholes in an airsick bag and wearing it on her head while making telephone noises'.

An unperturbed Ron wandered over to the journalists sitting near them: 'My daughter's been working very hard in Florida and is just letting off a bit of steam. I'm very proud of her. She is a real trooper.'

On landing, a police car picked her up at the foot of the aircraft steps and nothing more was said but the Wyatt photographs had been the final straw for the Royal Family. A few days later, on Sunday 26 January, a family summit was convened at Sandringham, with the Queen, Prince Philip, the Queen Mother, Prince Andrew, Prince Charles, Princess Diana and Robert Fellowes, after Sarah had ignored a royal warning to sever contact with Wyatt. Neither Philip nor Charles – never a fan of his younger brother – were sympathetic, the latter because, having initially been supportive of Sarah, he felt she was a bad influence on Diana. Separation and divorce were further discussed, particularly custody of the children, amid concerns she might take them to America.

The assumption was that the duchess was having a nervous breakdown while Sarah herself, according to her friend Madame Vasso, believed 'it was all part of a plot to try to take the children away from her and [she] believed

there were people who wanted to discredit her, to make out that she was mentally unstable and incapable of bringing up the girls’.

Three days later the couple drove to Sandringham to tell the Queen they believed their marriage was over.

JOHN BRYAN

Woodrow Wyatt, after a conversation with a member of the Royal Family, recorded in his diary on 1 February 1992: ‘The Duchess of York is utterly childish and low level, like a barmaid who has got into some money. She is bereft of education and taste. Andrew is furious with all her carryings on with other men and was particularly enraged with all the stuff which came out about her association with Wyatt. They are not speaking to each other at all and ... almost certainly heading for a divorce.’

The marriage had been in difficulty for some time, with Andrew also having affairs. According to his former driver, the duke had slept with ‘more than a dozen women before their first anniversary’.

‘Sarah discovered that Andrew wasn’t coming home on some of his leave,’ said a royal insider. ‘He was going elsewhere – and this just drove her crazy. She didn’t like the fact that she was a shore widow in any event, and to discover that she was shore-widowed intentionally really hurt.’

One source claimed ‘the arguments bordered on domestic violence’. ‘You have to understand what I am dealing with here,’ the duchess told a friend. ‘I’m married to a man who has never been inside a supermarket.’

At the beginning of 1992, Wyatt got the message and returned to the States, ostensibly to make his fortune before he proposed to Sarah. His friend John Bryan saw an opportunity and invited her to dinner at a restaurant, La Tante Claire, intentionally less than a minute from his flat in Cheyne Place. As he reflected after they had slept together that night: ‘Here she was jumping into bed with me ... I couldn’t believe that anyone behaved with such reckless abandon.’

There was, however, method in this madness. According to Bryan’s friend, Allan Starkie, the duchess was playing the men in her life off against each other: ‘Using John’s closeness as a weapon to taunt the still-faithful but exiled Steve Wyatt and showing her still-admiring husband that she was

attractive to jet-setting figures like John and Steve. Over the years, her Machiavellian skills have received little credit, but here they could be seen in their true colours.'

Charming, charismatic, full of self-confidence, Bryan had had a difficult upbringing, which included being thrown out of numerous boarding schools. His mother Linda had been institutionalised because of her over-dependence on Valium, which had convinced her 'that her husband had assassinated President Bush'.

With a BA in economics from the University of Texas and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh, Bryan had arrived in London aged thirty-two in 1987 looking for investment opportunities and, claiming to be friends with Andy Warhol and Mick Jagger, social advancement. He mixed in smart circles, renting an eighteenth-century cottage in Gloucestershire and dating Geraldine Harmsworth, daughter of the media magnate Viscount Rothermere.

He and Sarah had much in common. 'Both came from broken homes, and both had distant fathers and eccentric mothers who emotionally abandoned their children,' wrote Starkie. As Sarah admitted: 'I was needy and full of doubts; he was attentive and breezily self-assured. John had a rare gift of the gab – he was one of those people who could sell snow to the Eskimos.'

Bryan became indispensable. 'He was marvellous with my daughters, and it wasn't long before I thought that none of us could live without him. The more he did, the more he wanted to do. My intensity filled the sails of his self-importance; he played off my hyperactivity.'

Soon Bryan was spending every weekend at Sunninghill, often smuggled in in the boot of a car. He was giving Ferguson the attention she no longer got from Andrew, who had grown cold towards her.

According to friends, Andrew accepted his marriage was over. He increasingly retreated into himself – watching videos or playing golf – to avoid confrontations with his wife. Promoted to Lieutenant-Commander in February, he was now a Grade Two staff officer as part of career plans to take him away from the sea and, thanks to the Queen's intervention, to give him more time at home. 'If Andrew minded, he didn't seem to show it,' said one friend of Sarah's.

Occasionally the anger would flare up. Watching videos late at night, the prince took a call from his wife in America. A member of staff remembered

hearing a loud crash coming from his study: 'The next time we went in, the phone was on the floor.' After Lulu Blacker mentioned Wyatt at a Sunninghill dinner party, a guest revealed, 'He stood up and flung down his plate on the table. China and glass went everywhere. Andrew was so angry he looked like he was going to explode. He walked out of the room, swearing and shouting.'

They were both to blame. The journalist Richard Kay reported: 'Sarah's friends have told me Andrew could be at fault in some respects. He also has acquaintances whose companionship has upset the Duchess.'

Bryan continued to apparently behave as honest broker, acting as friend to the couple who, under pressure from the Royal Family, were being bounced into making a decision on their separation. On Sunday 15 March Sir Matthew Farrer and a team of lawyers representing Andrew spent the day at the couple's house with Sarah's team, Charles Doughty of Withers and John Bryan. According to Bryan: 'Andrew wanted what was best for Sarah ... He was in a sense against the Palace lawyers. Right from the beginning Sarah never made any demands. She said, I'll leave it up to you. You tell me how much I should have for the future of me and my children.'

That decision was to become a ticking time bomb.

THE SPLIT

The story broke in the papers on 18 March. How had the news gone public so quickly without any formal announcement? Suspicion fell immediately on Sarah and through her David McDonough at PR firm Lowe Bell, who was acting for her unofficially.

Announcing the split the following day, the Palace reacted angrily, with the Queen's press secretary Charles Anson telling Paul Reynolds, the BBC's diplomatic correspondent, that: 'The knives are out for Fergie in the Palace. I have rarely heard Palace officials speak in such terms about someone.' No one seemed to notice it was the sixth anniversary of Andrew and Sarah's engagement.

According to Richard Kay, however, the separation had been leaked by Fergie's confidante, Diana, to distract press attention from her own troubles and test the reaction for her own intended divorce. Thus began a press war,

with various camps leaking stories. ‘Two Million to Tell All’, the *Daily Mirror*’s front page proclaimed on 19 March, reporting an offer from an anonymous US publisher to Ferguson for a tell-all memoir, widely regarded to be part of a negotiating strategy over the divorce settlement.

‘The Spoiled Prince’, declared the *Express* headline on 20 March, with Andrew Morton writing the same day in the *Daily Mail* under the strapline, ‘How the Royal Redford became the Duke of Yob’: ‘The disco dancing, Randy Andy public image has really always been a carpet slippers and cocoa man. Stolid, uninspiring but dependable. A man with little ambition or drive but prickly about his position, yet a royal who requires careful and diplomatic handling. While he craved a cosy domestic life, he has always been more comfortable around things than people.’

Eventually, after much negotiation, a financial settlement was hammered out in return for a non-disclosure agreement. The duchess’s bank overdraft of £300,000 would be paid, a house would be found for her and £1.4 million placed in trust for her daughters. She would keep custody of the children but no longer carry out official engagements. All the memorabilia relating to her was removed from the Windsor Castle gift shop.

On 9 April, after taking Beatrice and Eugenie out of school, Sarah bolted. Accompanied by nanny Alison Wardley, her friend Julia Dodd-Noble and Dodd-Noble’s four-year-old daughter, a police protection officer and another detective, she flew to Asia, where she was joined by John Bryan. For the next ten days they holed up in a three-bedroom villa at the Amanpuri Hotel in Phuket, where Bryan, nicknamed ‘Mr Smooth Head’, was confused by staff with Prince Edward and addressed as ‘Your Highness’.

After their presence was revealed by a German film crew making a holiday programme, they took a private jet to Banda in the remote Molucca islands and the Maulana Inn, a pink-and-yellow Dutch colonial residence on the shores of a blue lagoon. The press had lost them, as one memorable headline made clear: ‘Where the Phuket is the Duchess?’

But they had failed to realise that a local volcano had destroyed much of the area, leaving their hotel with no running water and the beach covered in lava. They moved on to Bali and the £400-a-night Amankila Hotel, courtesy of its owner Adrian Zecha, as Sarah decided what to do next amid growing concern about the cost of the protection officers and how the constant travel

through various time zones and upheaval was affecting the princesses. Finally, just over a month after she had run off, the duchess returned to face the music.

The Royal Family had originally suggested she move into a two-room cottage with outside bathroom in the grounds of Sunninghill, but Sarah refused. Instead in May, at a cost of £4,000 a month, she rented Romenda Lodge, backing onto Wentworth golf course, convenient for both Sunninghill and Beatrice's school in Windsor. She immediately installed a marble en suite bathroom for herself and six new telephone lines.

Mock-Tudor in style, the two-storey six-bedroomed house (it had a small attic for the nanny) was reached down a tree-lined drive to a gravelled circle, with a fountain in the middle, and furnished with reproduction antique furniture from Roomservice Designs of Chelsea. Its rear French windows opened onto a 1.3-acre garden, swimming pool, pool house, small wooden children's house and swings.

Sarah's reduced status was quickly evident. The previous Ascot, she had been riding in a carriage with the Queen Mother. Now she watched from the roadside as the Queen passed by. Beatrice cried out: 'Can we come, too?' The Queen just carried on waving.

In June, Sarah, John Bryan, now playing a key role in her business affairs, and a detective flew to Argentina to sort out Susan's financial problems – Hector's death had left her with huge debts – in what Bryan called 'the family disease'. From there they moved on to New York to discuss another book deal with Simon & Schuster and then to Paris for further business meetings.

Bryan continued to insist theirs was 'a professional relationship' even after they were spotted dancing at the Paris Ritz to the romantic ballad 'Lady in Red'. Meanwhile, Andrew spent Father's Day alone at Sunninghill.

The following week Fergie threw a surprise thirty-seventh birthday party for Bryan in Paris, flying in a dozen guests, but she was still in touch with Wyatt. In July, she met the Texan at one of their 'safe houses' in Stratford-upon-Avon to discuss their relationship, later telling Bryan, 'I have finally got him out of my system.' It was a relief to Bryan who told his friend Allan Starkie that Wyatt 'would go out with other women all the time and tell her

how ugly she was and how fat she was and that she should go on a diet. He treated her the way she likes to be treated, which is like shit.’

LE MAS DE PIGEROLLE

On 9 August, the day after a fancy-dress birthday party for Beatrice, Sarah and her party, consisting of the princesses, nanny Sally Hughes, John Bryan and two protection officers, flew by private jet to a tiny airstrip, La Mole, a twenty-five-minute drive west of Saint-Tropez, where they were picked up by two Mercedes that they had hired at £1,500 each for the week. It was the couple’s sixth holiday that year.

They had rented Le Mas de Pigerolle, a pink-stuccoed five-bedroom farmhouse in ten acres of land, four miles from the pretty village of Bormes-les-Mimosa, which Sarah had booked under an assumed name. What they did not know was that, after a tip-off, a French photographer, Daniel Angeli, was staking them out, having crawled through a mile of undergrowth. The duchess returned to Britain, seemingly unaware of the scandal about to be unleashed, and joined Andrew and the rest of the Royal Family at Balmoral.

On Tuesday 18 August, a story appeared in the *Daily Express*, quoting friends of the duchess, claiming there had been ‘a campaign of emotional and financial terrorism’ to discredit her and force her to accept a financial settlement should the couple divorce. The ground was being prepared. On the same day the *Sun*, having failed to secure Angeli’s pictures, ran a spoiler headline: ‘Topless Fergie is Given Toe Job by Pal Johnny’.

That night Bryan’s attempts to seek an injunction against publication failed and the *Daily Mirror*, which had paid £60,000 for the pictures, unleashed £150,000 of advertising on ITV: ‘Pictures that will not amuse the Palace. Pictures that will amaze the world.’

On Thursday 20 August the *Mirror* published them under the headline ‘Fergie’s Stolen Kisses: Truth About the Duchess and the Texas Millionaire’. The fifty-five pictures over nine pages showed a topless Sarah rubbing sun cream on the head of her balding financial adviser, kissing him, lying under him and letting him kiss or lick – the actual activity has since

been disputed – her toes. The newspaper sold an extra three hundred thousand copies and the pictures were syndicated around the world.

It was later discovered that a large trench had been dug within a hundred yards of the villa and the pool. The pictures were close-up and, judging from the various changes of swimsuit, had been taken over several days. Forestry wardens had alerted the royal party to lurking photographers, but it appears no action was taken. A video, later peddled by Dutch filmmaker Joost Kraanen, had also been filmed.

Charlie Smallbone, who had rented the couple his house, learned from neighbours that the photographer had arrived even before the holiday party and wondered if the tip-off had originated with the Palace.

Recollections vary of events at Balmoral after the story landed. Sarah later claimed she sat up all night drinking brandy with Alison Wardley, breakfasted upstairs and let Andrew bring up the papers from breakfast. Royal journalist James Whitaker maintained she entered the breakfast room to find everyone reading the story and fled.

One person, who was present, told the duchess's biographer Chris Hutchins that the Princess Royal 'came close to throttling' Sarah, and at dinner told her what she thought of her: 'There was not one voice raised against Anne. Prince Andrew's anger melted into sadness and he buried himself in the special reports compiled for the Queen, which she did not hesitate to let him read.'

Another version had the duchess summoned at 9.30 a.m. to explain herself to the Queen, who had been shown a press briefing that morning by her deputy press secretary, John Haslam. Sarah had then laid low in a cottage on the estate, spending much of the time on the phone to Diana, who was staying, and Madame Vasso, before catching a commercial flight home on Sunday while the others were at church.

'She acted in the strangest way,' remembered one of the servants present. 'You would have thought she was the person wronged, as if she had every right to go on holiday with another man, kiss and cuddle him, and the only person who had behaved wrongly were the photographer and the editors of the newspapers who had published the pictures.'

How the story leaked out has been the subject of speculation. Susan Barrantes later claimed that their presence had been disclosed by Buckingham Palace, a view shared by her younger daughter. The journalist

and writer Tina Brown suggested it was Diana who tipped off the press about the holiday, because she was the only person who knew about it, apart from police protection officers, on the basis that royal reporter Richard Kay claimed Diana messaged him the night before the photos were published saying, cryptically: ‘The redhead’s in trouble.’

Certainly Angeli had had advance warning. Bryan believed the photographers had ‘actually come to the pool and measured where they would take the photographs from – they’d been there for days, scoping out the location and building a little fort.’

THE PRESS TURNS

Previously the duchess had been seen as greedy and wilful; now she was regarded as a liar who had misrepresented her relationship with her ‘financial adviser’, and an adulteress and unfit mother. The press turned on her, with an *Evening Standard* editorial calling for her banishment from the Royal Family and withdrawal of any public money. In the same paper Henry Porter wrote: ‘Throughout her marriage she has seemed incapable of understanding anything larger than herself – issues and interests beyond the perimeter of her personal gratification have been simply ignored or sniggeringly dismissed as convention.’

The *Daily Star*’s front page roared ‘Kick Her Out’, with a front-page editorial: ‘The British people are now fed up with the frolics of Fergie. It’s one thing to be a troubled wife with marriage problems. It’s another to act like a trollop.’ The *Independent* suggested the Civil List be withdrawn from everybody but the Queen and Prince Charles and the Royal Family should pay tax. Her behaviour was having repercussions for the wider monarchy.

Bryan continued to deny through his lawyer ‘any suggestions that our client has a sexual relationship with the Duchess of York’, but his reputation fared little better, especially after, having failed to prevent publication of the pictures, he then sold a story on how they had been taken and the *Sunday Mirror* later ran a ‘Royal World Exclusive: My Love for Fergie’ based on a phone call to his friend Whitney Tower.

Daytime television suddenly became obsessed with the erogenous zones of feet. Bryan had achieved his dream of fame, and ironically the media

pressure had brought the couple closer together. It was now the two of them *contra mundum*. If anything, it seemed that rather than the Palace most benefiting from the leak, it had been the duchess's lover.

Emboldened by the commercial response to the *Mirror*'s coup, the *Sun* published details of a tape, which it had been sitting on for two years, of Princess Diana talking to 'a man declaring his love for her'. The man turned out to be James Gilbey. Attention switched to the Queen's other daughter-in-law.

A Buckingham Palace plan to brief that the duchess was suffering a nervous breakdown was overruled by the Queen, but Sarah realised something needed to be done. After seeing a doctor, who recommended she join a self-help group, she contacted the Group Analytic Practice in Paddington, which specialised in how childhood trauma determined adult behaviour. She decided to take herself in hand. 'Much like Dorothy in the Land of Oz, and just as Grummy had promised,' she explained, 'I would find myself by serving others.'

She was putting on weight and depressed. Allan Starkie saw her 'wandering aimlessly round Romenda Lodge without makeup ... Her eyes were tired and she looked as though her soul had gone ... a woman no longer quite in control, drinking and smoking too much. At night she would down a handful of sizeable vodkas, then take to the wine. Her cigarette butts littered the house, despite her desperate attempts to give up.'

It was now open season on the duchess, as the *News of the World* published a two-part series, 'Fergie's Sizzling Secrets', based on interviews with friends and staff. It revealed that she called the Queen and Prince Philip Brenda and Stavros, nicknames originally coined by the comedian Harry Enfield and *Private Eye*, and her husband 'old lard farce' or 'that boring old fart'.

And it shed light on her life at Sunninghill, where each evening staff would prepare 'up to 10 different types of pasta for her because, weighed down with the cares of coping with Royal life, she could never make her mind up what she wanted to eat ... Her bills for food alone had escalated to £40,000 a year.'

She entertained up to twenty guests most weekends – 'showing off,' according to one. 'She loved to be the centre of attention and as hostess everyone had to listen to her and do what she said.' In contrast, Andrew

liked a quiet life at home and would spend hours in front of the TV watching golf videos. ‘You’d hardly ever see the Duke except for the occasional meal!’ said a house guest. ‘He obviously hated having any guests at all but it kept her happy.’

‘Over the eight months I was with them, I watched Andrew grow more strained and unhappy – and worse, less confident in himself as the weeks wore him down,’ remembered Ron’s lover Lesley Player, who found him ‘so low that I wanted to reach out and hug and console him’.

He spent the first Father’s Day after the separation alone while his wife and John Bryan, booked by the British embassy under the name Clark, went with Beatrice and Eugenie to Disneyland. On a private visit to the Palm Springs estate of the former US ambassador to the UK, Walter Annenberg, the diplomat’s wife was appalled that the ‘duke holed up in his bedroom for two days apparently watching porn’.

By now Sarah was using a secret code with her closest friends to let them know that her relationship with Andrew was crumbling. Said one: ‘When things were getting very rough she’d say “The ranch is getting closer.” A reference to her mother’s flit to Argentina.’

Amid the various leaks to discredit Sarah in potential divorce proceedings, the family fought back, with Susan Barrantes reflecting on her son-in-law Andrew in an interview to Italian magazine *Gente*: ‘He’s a good-looking boy and has a heart of gold to the point where he would be without any money himself to help someone but he just hasn’t got any character ... – absolutely none. If only he had character, perhaps his marriage would not have broken up.’

She added. ‘Sarah will not accept easily to lose her children and if she does she is prepared to tell stories that are not very pleasant about the English Crown.’

The battle lines were set. Fergie was determined to avoid the fate of her mother and sister Jane who had both lost custody of their children when their marriages broke up. Her trump card was she – or John Bryan – could always sell a kiss-and-tell memoir. The threat was ever present, and the Royal Household knew it always would be.

That October she set off for Germany to research a book on the travels of Queen Victoria – of whom she believed first she and then Beatrice was the reincarnation. With Bryan in hiding, she was accompanied by his business

partner and friend, Allan Starkie, and her dresser, Jane Andrews. Starkie, who had served in military intelligence and worked as a social aide to President Reagan, was to become probably the most important chronicler of the Yorks during the early 1990s, and another of her lovers.

Even with Andrew away on duty on his minesweeper and out of the headlines, the pressure did not let up. That same month another publication – *Sarah's Story: The Duchess Who Defied the Royal House of Windsor*, by two experienced journalists Chris Hutchins and Peter Thompson – brought further embarrassment. Based on interviews with staff members, it provided more insight into daily life at Sunninghill and the requirements of the duchess. Her foibles included demanding that all her knickers, bras and tights be ironed, and she had a particular intolerance for clothes not smelling right despite having been laundered. If they didn't have the right fabric conditioner scent, 'She would order everything to be washed again.' She also insisted that 'two hot water bottles be placed on her side of the king-size bed each night, ordering staff to measure the temperature of the water so it was exactly to her liking'.

She had to have freshly squeezed orange juice on the menu every morning. 'And when she said freshly squeezed orange juice she meant it. The oranges had to be squeezed just as she sat down. She could tell the difference if the juice had been prepared earlier and refused to touch it.'

The book revealed the Yorks spent £300 a week on vegetables at Waitrose, while those growing in the kitchen garden went unused; and the freezer was packed with every variety of ice cream, rarely touched; instead Sarah 'couldn't get enough of – cheap old lemon cream puffs from Budgens'. According to one friend, the staff had to cook the couple's Jack Russell, Bendicks, 'proper dinners, liver or sausages with gravy'. Meanwhile the duke, confined to eating his meals alone in his study when on leave and increasingly worried about the utility bills, would constantly be turning off the lights and heating for his wife to defiantly turn them back on.

THE CHARITY DILEMMA

In November the duchess was ditched as president of Action Research after not a single appearance for the charity in a year. The same month there was further controversy after a trip to Poland, under the cover name Sandra Jones, on behalf of Angels International, when it emerged that ABC Television had paid her business-class fare and for her suite at the Marriott in Warsaw in return for being allowed to film her. Cynics questioned if the charity work was part of a deliberate rebranding to win public sympathy, help in the divorce settlement and compete with Diana, though one national newspaper felt there was ‘no doubting her sincerity’.

After visiting the leukaemia ward at Zabrze Children’s Hospital, she returned deeply affected, determined to help, the beginning of an involvement in a charity which had been set up by Theo Ellert in a region with the highest infant mortality rate in Europe. ‘It was a place of terrible want,’ Sarah later remembered. ‘The young patients had no blankets or sheets, no medicine or bandages, no toys or posters or the least bit of colour in their life. They had nothing – *nothing!* There were two makeshift incubators, and if a third baby needed one, that baby died – end of story.’

But a month before a major fundraising event the organisation withdrew, concerned it ‘might get tarred by working too closely’ with her. In response she set up Children in Crisis with Ellert and over the next three years would raise \$7 million and set up the Mountain Haven Centre, a recuperation facility for children with cancer or chronic respiratory ailments in a mountain village ninety miles south of Kraków.

That Christmas – 1992 – the couple sent out joint Christmas cards and together hosted a Christmas party at Buckingham Palace, but were separated for Christmas Day itself, in a pattern which was to continue for many years – Andrew with the girls at Sandringham and Sarah entertaining guests at Wood Farm on the Sandringham Estate. The duchess then joined the rest of the Royal Family for a Boxing Day lunch at the royal shooting lodge at Flitcham Hill.

In one end-of-year opinion poll she remained the most unpopular member of the Royal Family, while in York the Friargate Museum removed her waxwork from its collection, recycling it as Nell Gwynn.

Having announced their separation, the Yorks perhaps understood that their royal lustre had been tarnished. They carried on as if not much had

changed. By now a stranger in his own house, Andrew went back to sea in April 1993.

Sarah was spending every other weekend in the picturesque fishing port of Kinsale in County Cork, or often up the road in Belgooly, at a stud farm owned by Robert Splaine, one of Ireland's leading international showjumpers, and his wife Eileen. Away from the press, and calling herself Sally Metcalfe, the duchess began to take part in local gymkhanas with a view to qualifying for the Millstreet International Horse Show.

She decided to buy a top-class showjumper called Heather Blaze, aiming to represent Britain at the Olympics, but her hopes were dashed when the horse lost its footing at the water jump at the Dublin Horse Show, fell and shattered its left foreleg. There was nothing that could be done, and Heather Blaze was shot on the spot.

The money for the purchase had come from one of Ferguson's benefactors, Clive Garrad, founder of the Red Devil energy drink company, who was literally supplying her with bags of cash, as her bank Coutts increasingly prevented her from drawing money or paying cheques. He admitted: 'From a kudos point of view, there could not be anything better than being in business with a member of the Royal Family.'

The two also hatched a scheme to buy a villa in the South of France, where she would paint a mural in the foyer, then resell the house, sharing the profits. In July 1994 she accompanied Garrad to see an empty private hospital called the Oaks Nursing Home in Essex, which a company closely associated with him, New Century Care Ltd, then purchased. In December the Colchester Catalyst issued a press release headed: 'Duchess of York Launches New Nursing Home Enterprise', with the boss of New Century, Paul Warren, stating: 'Although the Duchess will have no financial involvement, she plans to be active in what she regards as very much "her charity".'

The reality was slightly different. In return for lending her name to a string of 'Duchess of York Nursing Homes', she would receive £1 per bed per night for each person in the homes. It was calculated that her income from the first year would be £30,000, rising to £200,000 within a few years. She withdrew from the venture a few months before Garrad was declared bankrupt and jailed for two years for VAT fraud.

CHARITABLE INTENTIONS

The duchess had increasingly been looking at charity work to rehabilitate her image and give her a stronger sense of purpose. In June 1993 she was appointed a goodwill ambassador for the UN High Commission for Refugees to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Audrey Hepburn. Lynda Lee-Potter disparaged the appointment as bad for her, calling it an attempt to 'take the quick, easy route to acclaim and popularity and enjoy herself at the same time'. The columnist reminded *Mail* readers of 'the perks, the prestige, the deference' that had come with being a member of the Royal Family and doubted the duchess would ever be able to 'relinquish the trappings'.

The backlash was immediate, as neither the Palace nor Downing Street had been consulted, amid concerns about any embarrassment Sarah might cause. Her forthcoming trip to Croatia was cancelled on security grounds. The duchess saw it differently: 'They had seen how Diana's trip to Zimbabwe had stolen Charles's thunder and propelled her to international superstar status – and effectively out of their control.'

Some saw the same tactics being deployed against Sarah.

Allan Starkie believed travel provided the mental release she sought: 'Getting on a plane and flying away from the source of her problems was by far the most effective way of restoring her equilibrium.'

In October that year, Ferguson, as patron of MacIntyre Care, a charity which helped disabled people lead independent lives, agreed to take part in a trek towards Everest. Travelling with a Harrods hamper to present as a prize, she accompanied seven climbers – six with learning difficulties and one with multiple sclerosis – to climb the 19,000-foot Paldor Peak next to the world's highest mountain.

The following year the climb became an ITV documentary, *An Everest to Climb*, which revealed that Sarah insisted on being called 'Ma'am' and her imperious behaviour with the film crew had earned her the nickname 'Crisp'.

However, MacIntyre's managing director, John Thorne, who accompanied her on the trek, had only praise for her. 'She wanted to be actively involved,' he said. The duchess visited all MacIntyre's projects and

her trip did not come at the cost of the charity. She also stayed in touch with some of the residents: 'She didn't seek publicity from her visits though the charity sometimes did. I regarded her as a friend.'

As a consequence of the trip the York household gained a new addition – her Himalayan sherpa, Pemba Gyalzen, whom she called 'Yeltsin' and brought back to Britain on a six-month visa in February 1994. She bought him a new set of clothes, paid him £100 a week in return for odd jobs such as washing up, cleaning cars and, in spite of his poor English, answering the phone. She even took him to stay at the Carlyle Hotel in New York and he acted as a butler on a holiday in the South of France. Sarah paid for him to have driving and computing lessons to help him find work when he returned to Nepal and he was later quoted as saying, 'Fergie is like my God and mother. She has given me opportunities in life others can only dream about.'

But her good intentions did not lead to a happy outcome. In March 1998 he was traced to a ten-foot square room in Nepal with no running water or bathroom facilities. According to the *Daily Mail*, no one at the duchess's office had had any contact with him for over a year: 'Fergie probably has no inkling of the devastating effect her jolly experiment had on the naïve young man around whom it centred. For Gyalzen is now undoubtedly stuck in a no-man's land between two sharply contrasting existences.'

Gyalzen later worked as a trek leader and his employer Sharu Scott, wife of mountaineer Douglas Scott, explained, 'I honestly think he would have been happier if he had never gone.' Interviewed by the paper he looked away: 'No, I don't want to speak about her.'

The duchess had thrown herself into her charity work but she could not break the cycle of press criticism, amid concerns about the boundaries between her charity work and her commercial activities and lifestyle. 'One week she's created a UN envoy, charged with revealing the plight of refugee children. The next she's flaunting her latest toy, a new £53,000 Jag,' thundered the *Mirror*.

Her charity work did, however, reap some benefits. In February 1994 the *Express* raised more than £500,000 for her charity Children in Crisis and the same month she was in Croatia, on a joint mission between Children in Crisis and the Americares Foundation, working with a UNHCR delegation to bring blankets, baby food and six hundred teddy bears. From there she

flew to the US, combining a visit to a children's shelter and hospital with a champagne reception to meet businessmen contracted to market spin-offs from her children's books at the American International Toy Fair. Eight companies had already been signed up and she was reputed to have brought in £750,000 from merchandising income for the first six months of 1994. These included school bags, Easter eggs, foil balloons, a quartz clock, bath towels, drinks flasks, cutlery sets, bubble bath, baseball caps, chocolate medals, wrapping paper, greetings cards, brooches and socks.

But there were problems. In May John Bryan was asked to attend a police station to answer allegations of false accounting and deception – he arrived in a chauffeur-driven limousine – and spent several hours being questioned. He was cautioned after admitting dodging up to £500 in airport parking charges at Heathrow in April alone in a car registered to the Yorks' household. His solicitor claimed it had been a 'misunderstanding'.

The scam, which Bryan had proudly boasted about for years, meant he avoided paying for long stays. On return from a trip abroad, he would hire a car and go to the car park and using that ticket drive out the original car, then come back hours later saying he had lost his ticket but produce his hire documents for that day and be let out for the modest daily charge.

In June Sarah was in New York hawking her memoirs around half a dozen publishers – the same month she took legal action against her former butler Tony Blackmore, who had sought to reveal details of the duchess's private life, including her crush on the singer Michael Hutchence. A few months later she and Bryan were trying to sell two ghostwritten novels for \$5 million, hinting at veiled autobiographical elements, but the only offer was \$400,000. Perhaps writing would now be her path to riches.

SCANDAL

In the summer of 1994 Sarah rented Domaine La Fontaine near Cannes for £20,000. Though it was dubbed self-catering, she was accompanied by a butler, two housekeepers, a dresser, general assistant, nanny and her Sherpa friend Yeltsin. Two Scotland Yard protection officers were there to protect the daughters. Her assistants Christine Gallagher and Jane Ambler flew in and out. She partied with Pamela Stephenson and Billy Connolly, Andrew

and Madeleine Lloyd Webber, the Edge from U2, journalists Nicholas Lloyd and Eve Pollard, Sir David Frost, Roger Moore, pop star Belinda Carlisle and Robert Splaine, at an estimated cost of over £100,000.

A truck from England had brought sunloungers and swimming pool toys for the children and five extra telephone lines were installed, one at the pool. There was a daily delivery of wine, including Laurent-Perrier rosé champagne and her favourite Puligny-Montrachet at £60 a bottle, often opened and then not drunk.

While she was there, the duchess received a call from Romenda Lodge that the electricity company were threatening to cut her off over an unpaid bill for £1,400. She had refused to sign the cheque before her departure, complaining: 'I don't want to sign any cheques, I'm not interested.'

Even so, she talked to friends of buying the £1.7 million villa she was renting, while also sending two members of staff to see if they could find a better bargain, explaining to her daughters this would be their new home in the holidays.

This private excess cut against the concerted efforts over the past year to improve her public image, not least to work her passage back into the Royal Family, to secure the links which in the end gave her everything. She had taken on her old boss, Neil Durden-Smith, who had been put on the board of Children in Crisis and had, according to one paper, 'discreetly been arranging Fergie's public relations, fixing private drinks in Knightsbridge hotels for the editors of national newspapers with the Duchess, at which wide-eyed she begs for more understanding', and also organising 'safe' TV interviews.

It was Durden-Smith who set up the charity golf match at Wentworth in which the duke and duchess both appeared to be rekindling their relationship. He admitted, 'Let's put it this way, Sarah and I are very close. We talk about a lot of things. I am always close at hand if ever she needs me.'

But there were always scandals which threatened her attempts to rehabilitate her reputation. In the summer Theo Ellert had been manoeuvred out of Children in Crisis, with Fergie not supporting her friend. Ellert took her revenge a few months later. At the end of January 1995 the *Sunday Mirror* ran a front-page story 'Andy's a Flop in Bed', which led to law firm Mishcon de Reya seeking an order against Ellert, who had sold the piece

through the publicist Max Clifford. She was quoted saying of the duchess: 'I think she felt she could never go to bed with him again, that their sex life had not been good from the beginning and couldn't be saved now.' Bryan, it was claimed, was much better in bed.

The state of the Yorks' marriage continued to confuse the media, with reports in the press of the duchess telling dinner guests the couple still had sex. 'He's like a machine, not very imaginative but very, very thorough.'

And there continued to be disapproval of Sarah's mixing of her charitable and business interests. In October 1994 she made a three-day trip to Kenya seeing sick children, on behalf of MacIntyre Care, with the sponsors laying on a private plane, a Land Rover and the £300-a-night Presidential Suite of the Mount Kenya Safari Club in a country where many people's wages were £20 a week. In between her charitable work, she took time off to go on safari and play with turtles on a beach.

The same month on a six-day charity visit to America, she kept up promotion for *Budgie* and attempted to interest the Hollywood studio Columbia TriStar in adapting *Heather Blaze*, her story of talking horses. In November she was in Australia playing off media outlets for the best-remunerated interviews and reportedly in talks to make a guest appearance on *Baywatch* with Richard Branson. The following month it was reported a plan for her to star in her own half-hour weekly show – *Fergie's Gems* – about exotic jewellery had been shelved.

She expensed huge outlays on fortune-tellers, gifts and staff as she considered various money-making options. There were plans to develop a television series, initially called *The Patch* and then *Sunnydale Tales*, based on a group of vegetables living on the same patch of land but from different ethnic and social groups, through the animation company Storm Group. Children's cartoon creator Geoffrey Hanson wrote to her that her idea appeared to be based on his own creation, *The Buddies*, which he had discussed with Storm Group. His scripts were written by Brian Trueman, who had adapted the *Budgie* stories for television. He received no reply.

Speaking to the National Press Club in Washington in December 1994, the duchess claimed to be short of money:

I'm a separated mother of two, largely responsible for the finances of my family. I live in a rented house which is being whipped from under my feet. It really bugs me when I read that I'm

a millionairess through my Budgie books. It's rubbish.

Three days later the *Sunday Express* under the headline 'Is the Duchess of York as Poor as She Claims?' pointed out that a paper by City analysts Shaw and Co. estimated her future earnings from *Budgie* over the next five years would be £2.8 million from merchandising alone. Some fifty-eight companies had licensed rights, attracted by its royal connections – emblazoned across all *Budgie* products was 'HRH The Duchess of York'. Her private secretary also admitted that no percentage was now going to charities as previously promised.

There was further controversy that same month when, during a three-day visit to Portugal promoting Aids awareness, she became the first member of the Royal Family to admit to having had an Aids test: 'I underwent two tests, one before getting married and one for a life assurance application 18 months ago.'

The press also seized on the fact that she had originally told the journalist that she had had another test when she decided to start a family, which raised eyebrows, given she was apparently in a monogamous marriage. She later claimed she had been misquoted. The newspaper, the Lisbon daily *Diario de Noticias*, stood by the story, claiming to have taped the interview.

One newspaper asked, 'Was the need to be HIV tested driven by her own past or his?', resurrecting stories about her husband's colourful love life and rumours that he was bisexual. Rumours had circulated for years, with variations on Sarah finding her husband in a compromising position with another man. One national newspaper and ITN had investigated it for six months, finding no evidence to support the claims, though that did not prevent various scandal sheets running stories including one from a maid, who had worked at Buckingham Palace for eleven years, in which Sarah had returned one night to find 'the prince sprawled on a large couch with one of his navy friends. The prince was wearing his underpants and a shirt. His companion was wearing nothing but socks.' An argument had ensued, with Sarah telling her husband: 'Make up your mind! It's me or your bloody boyfriends, but you can't have both.'

Eventually Buckingham Palace put out a statement emphatically denying that the prince, who had become increasingly reclusive, had Aids, and he joked he must be the only person to have put on weight with the disease.

TURNOVER

At the beginning of 1995 stories about the duchess's debts began to appear in the press, some suspected to divert attention from Sarah Bradford's biography of the Queen which had just been published. An increasing financial concern was that she had been forced to leave Romenda Lodge, where she had lived for the previous two and a half years, after its owner decided to sell, and take on a more expensive rent.

The duchess's new home, Kingsbourne, was an eight-bedroom house set in twelve acres on the Wentworth Estate, with an all-weather tennis court, outdoor swimming pool, two-bedroom guest cottage and chauffeur's flat with a gypsy caravan in the garden for the children. She moved in in January 1995 and it was to be her home for the next two years.

At the same time the princesses moved from Upton House School in Windsor to Coworth Park near Chobham, which meant the fifteen-strong protection squad for them had to be expanded by another five officers, costing £1 million and putting pressure on Surrey Police's budget.

Seven members of Ferguson's staff had left the previous year, including several cooks, her butler, nanny and accountant. The *Sun* reported that 'at Fergie's office in Plantation Wharf, Battersea, South West London, at least five secretaries have left in the past two years'.

A source told the paper: 'Fergie can make you feel a million dollars one minute then trample you into the dirt the next. Even if you have your own family to look after, they take second place when it comes to the Duchess.' For some staff it came down to a choice between their own families and Sarah, with inevitable consequences: 'If you don't choose her then all hell lets loose,' said the source. 'It is all about power, dominance and the manipulation of people. She knows she does it and that is literally how she gets her kicks. When you are in favour there is nothing she won't do for you – send you presents on your birthday, flowers, say nice things about you. But suddenly it will all change.'

In May, appearing in *Hello!* for the tenth time – recent articles had covered skiing holidays, Beatrice's sports day, the Kenya trip, a polo match and her involvement with the *Young Victoria* film (for which she had been

paid £50,000) – she explained that she was in such financial straits she would have to concentrate on earning money rather than her charity work.

The cover piece with thirty photos provided a tour of Kingsbourne, from the black-tiled bathroom with matching candelabra to four-foot imitation toadstool in the garden. It also included pictures of her dressed for the office, an image of the professional she wanted to portray. But, perhaps inadvertently, it drew attention to both her extravagant lifestyle and her debts. Various papers pointed out that in spite of pleading poverty she still employed a butler, chauffeur, cook and secretary, and spent £16,000 annually on phone bills.

Her expenses included not only the £6,000 monthly rent for Kingsbourne, but a staff bill of £32,000 a month. The previous week she had spent £25,000 on frocks, shoes and handbags by Danish designer Isabell Kristensen, and £3,000 on a champagne tea party for the 150 builders and removal men who had helped her move.

HUMANITARIAN OR SLOPE RANGER?

In the summer of 1995 the duchess flew to Romania, under the auspices of the charity Scottish European Aid, accompanied by a photographer. At an orphanage she found a ward ‘filled with children, ranging from small toddlers to teenagers. Many of them were roped down in sheetless beds – a measure to prevent them from scratching and biting one another.’ She spent a night on the streets of Bucharest, joining a dozen orphaned teenagers, who had made their home in a large rubbish pile by the train station. But the photographs raised only \$13,000 and the trip had cost \$11,000, so she donated \$25,000 from her own account to pay for industrial washers and dryers.

A *World in Action* film claimed money earmarked for Romanian orphans had been eaten up by Sarah’s generous expenses and that she had personally pocketed £7,000 for an article in *Hello!* on the trip to an orphanage in Moldova and the adult psychiatric hospital it helped run in Podriga. According to David Taylor, former director of the Princess Margarita of Romania Trust, the charity had received only £300. Mike Cunningham of Scottish European Aid, however, felt the duchess had ‘come up trumps’ and

that as a direct result of the trip, she had personally arranged £11,000 in donations to the charity.

In June the duchess was in Poland raising money for Children in Crisis and the Mountain Haven Centre for young cancer victims. There was, however, growing press comment on her holidays, with five in seven months – three skiing trips to Switzerland, which led to her being dubbed ‘The Slope Ranger’, visits to Bermuda and California, and ten days, part of it with Princess Diana, at Paddy McNally’s villa in the South of France. According to one holidaymaker who met her: ‘It was just non-stop partying. She kept wanting to organise outings, throw parties, stay up all night. She organised one bash and spent hours telling dirty jokes. It was most uncomfortable.’

In August Andrew and Sarah holidayed in southern Spain in what was to become an annual tradition. The party, which included two nannies and three bodyguards, travelled by private jet, staying for the first week at a five-bedroomed villa, where the Yorks shared a bedroom, set in twelve acres by the Valderrama golf club and where Andrew was able to play golf all day.

They spent the second week in Cazalla de la Sierra, a small village north of Seville, where Sarah met a man giving painting lessons at a converted seventeenth-century olive mill. Attracted by his good looks, she asked him to give her lessons. The new man, known as ‘Gypsy’, was Paul Gaisford, aged fifty-four, with a taste for French designer jackets and a string of broken marriages and relationships behind him. He was to become her new obsession.

Gaisford had been educated at Camberwell School of Art and the Slade under Frank Auerbach, and had spent much of the 1980s living a semi-nomadic existence in a caravan on Dartmoor. His pictures, often of gypsy caravans or small boys with horses, had become fashionable, with clients including actor Tony Curtis and the widow of Richard Burton.

Sarah took him up, convinced his talents should be better known, saying: ‘His work is so good that people have got to see him ... You can’t talk about Paul’s work in generalised terms as it is so diversified but I like his use of light, his sense of magic. I see huge depth and inspiration.’

She arranged a newspaper interview, was photographed with him in a caravan, and organised an exhibition of his paintings at Kensington Palace

and the Roy Miles Gallery, with some of the profits going to Children in Crisis. It raised some £73,000, but it is unclear how much went to Gaisford and how much to Children in Crisis, which was forced to settle the caterer's £3,000 bill after Sarah failed to pay it herself and a solicitor's letter was sent. 'The Duchess is obviously in a complete muddle but she and her office have ignored letters and calls,' the company's managing director, William Weber, said. 'I feel the whole matter was dishonourably handled.'

Even though Gaisford had a girlfriend, the duchess called him ten times a day, convincing herself she was playing hard to get. She sent her chauffeur on daily trips from Ascot to the painter's home in Gloucestershire with extravagant presents, including a £1,500 Mont Blanc pen, £4,000 gold cufflinks and a £150 belt with silver buckle.

She turned up at one of his parties with six bottles of vintage wine, six of Moët & Chandon champagne and a case of Beck's, and once spent a tearful eighteen hours at his cottage. Gaisford was not interested but, according to a friend of Sarah, she 'did not appear to be embarrassed in any way by being rejected by Paul. It just makes her keener to get her way eventually.'

Allan Starkie had noticed the duchess's tendency towards obsession on a trip to New York, during which she had asked her staff to find out if John Kennedy Jnr was in town. Discovering that he was, she invited him for drinks or dinner at the Carlyle Hotel where she was staying and he accepted.

On being told by Starkie that Kennedy had a girlfriend, the actress Daryl Hannah, the duchess replied, 'That's not going to bother me!' But it bothered Hannah and Kennedy cancelled, claiming a prior engagement. Staff were then ordered to spy on his apartment all night to check that he had told the truth.

The duchess was not to be discouraged, especially after she discovered that Princess Diana was also attracted to him. Learning that Diana had met Kennedy for thirty minutes at Christmas 1995 at a New York hotel, she was furious: 'He's mine! Why can't she just leave him alone?'

She gave Kennedy a codename, 'Number Nine' – Steve Wyatt was 'Number One' – and spent hours scouring magazines for articles about him, cutting out pictures of him in his swimming trunks and talking to her friends about whether he would like different aspects of her personality.†

One of her closest confidants revealed: ‘She’ll suddenly turn around and ask, “Do you think Ken will mind that I don’t like such and such a thing?” It’s incredibly real to her, like a schoolgirl crush. She spends hours talking about him ... The fact that she’s never even met him doesn’t seem to matter at all. She is utterly and totally convinced she will.’

After she learned of Starkie’s failed suicide attempt, Sarah asked him, should he try again to kill himself, for a final service for her: ‘When you’re dead, would you find JFK and explain to him that I am destined to marry John-John and become the First Lady of the United States?’

The debate about whether the separated royal couple would get back together continued to intrigue the press. But according to friends, though they had discussed starting afresh and Andrew had ended a recent relationship, Sarah had backed off: ‘She realised it wouldn’t work. Sure, she loved Andrew – still does – but not in the way he would like. There is no physical side to their relationship. And uppermost in her mind was the prospect of the Palace getting their hands on her again.’

That same week the *News of the World* had run a story on Bryan, who had boasted to reporters, posing as wealthy Middle Eastern businessmen, that he could supply them with drugs and girls, that he himself regularly used escorts, but that Sarah was ‘the best I have ever had ... she’s unbelievable in bed. The first time, you just can’t believe it ... it’s unimaginable. You know what they say about red-heads, well she’s on fire in bed!’

Bryan continued to be a worry to the Yorks and the Royal Household. The *People* newspaper had taped him offering to go through Andrew’s address book ‘in a bid to slur the duke with having an affair with a society beauty’. Bryan had insisted: ‘I want twenty [thousand pounds] for this one because I am going to have to go through HIS personal address book ... I want it on goddam publication, baby ... You must NEVER reveal the source. I am really taking a f**** big risk.’

Andrew’s most recent relationship had been with the Hon. Caroline ‘Cazzy’ Neville, the second of the 10th Lord Braybrooke’s eight daughters, who had met him through her flatmate Heather ‘Hetty’ Hoffmann – whom Bryan had alleged was Andrew’s girlfriend. As loans officer for the Royal Art Collection, Neville had advised the duke on paintings for Sunninghill and they had been together when fire broke out at Windsor Castle in

November 1992. According to a friend, 'They became very friendly after being thrown together by the fire. It united them in adversity.'

At the beginning of December, Sarah flew to New York accompanied by a new benefactor, Ray Chambers, an American tycoon worth \$600 million, a noted philanthropist – he was known as St Ray – and friend of George Harrison, with whom he had toured India in the early 1990s. Though Chambers was married with three children, Ferguson developed something of an obsession with him, driving two hours out of New York to arrive uninvited at his firm's Christmas party, even though they had arranged to meet at the Carlyle Hotel, where he kept a permanent suite, the next day.

Chambers put together a consortium, including ex-Treasury secretary William Simon, which settled her debts in return for a cut of her *Budgie* income. The decision put her on a collision course with Bryan, who was claiming 10 per cent of the £3 million initial deal. It would eventually threaten the monarchy itself.

SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

By November 1995, by her own admission, Sarah needed bank approval to pay even modest cheques and her debts exceeded \$5 million. But, even then, according to a member of her staff, she always believed there would be 'a deal around the corner' that would solve all her problems and she had 'ways and means of getting around her financial restrictions'. For example, Mohamed Al-Fayed, owner of Harrods, never pressed her to settle her account at the store, a practice she exploited elsewhere. A former employee confided: 'These accounts just never get paid, somehow. The shops don't complain because of who she is ... or they never used to.'

In mid-January Palace officials revealed the Queen had already met Sarah's debts on 'several' occasions – involving six-figure cash sums, including one very large amount in April 1994 when Coutts had demanded she pay £500,000 within fourteen days. The Palace released a statement: 'The Duchess's financial affairs are no longer Her Majesty's concern. These are matters which the Duchess of York must discuss and resolve with her bankers and other financial advisers ... The Duchess's business ventures are conducted quite separately from any Royal duties.'

Lily Mahtani, a friend who in August 1994 had lent her £100,000 to pay for the holiday in the South of France, was forced to threaten to sue the duchess at the High Court after she only paid back £5,000, claiming she had understood the rest to be a gift. Room Service sent Sarah a solicitor's letter as the £150 a week for renting furniture at Kingsbourne had not been paid for weeks and previous letters had been ignored. The package over three years had cost the duchess £21,000, more than double what it would have cost to buy the furniture.

It was believed she had £750 interest accruing each day and that she owed her hairdresser £40 for hair done the previous autumn. The *Sun* set up a 'Save A Squander' fund for her, the soft-porn Fantasy channel offered her £1 million to present a weekly show and the porn magazine *Hustler* offered her £3 million to pose nude.

She claimed her debts were not as large as they had been portrayed and that she was planning to save £72,000 a year by moving to a Victorian outhouse at Sunninghill, which was being converted into a four-bedroom house. The plan was vetoed by Prince Philip, who was determined his daughter-in-law should live quite separately from his son.

Stories of her extravagance abounded. It was said she spent £14,000 in one month with a particular London wine merchant. It was reported that she had given dozens of £300 keyrings from a top London jeweller to charity workers who helped Children in Crisis with fundraising, each with her personal crest. Her income was estimated as a £15,000 personal allowance from Andrew, £100,000 from the interest on the £2 million settlement, £100,000 of gifts from friends and family, £100,000 earnings from *Budgie*, making £315,000, but with outgoings of £72,000 rent on Kingsbourne, £384,000 on staff wages and £80,000 on clothing and gifts.

Over the previous year Sarah had travelled to Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Poland and made four trips to America, each time staying at the luxury Carlyle Hotel, where the cheapest suite was £330 a night. She was the Royal Family's most frequent flyer, covering 204,990 miles (eight circumnavigations of the globe) in the year to July 1995. On a three-day visit to New York, she had one car to take her to the airport and another for her ten suitcases, all tissue-lined, with more outfits than she could hope to wear. Her assistant Christine Gallagher had once been sent on Concorde, at a cost of £5,000, to bring her some paperwork.

THOMAS MUSTER

With Andrew at sea for long stretches at a time, the Yorks went long periods without speaking, often with literal oceans between them. In January 1996 Sarah flew to Qatar for the Mobile Tennis Open and an opportunity to raise money for Children in Crisis, staying in the two-floored Head of State suite costing £2,650 a night, with everything paid by the Emir, Hamad bin Al Thani.

At a gala dinner marking the end of the tournament, she met Thomas Muster, a handsome Austrian tennis player, then ranked third in the world, and invited him to her hotel where they drank champagne until the early hours. In a departure from her scheduled programme, she cancelled her tickets to Britain – missing her daughters' return to school – and followed him to Melbourne, where he was preparing for the forthcoming Australian Open, checking into the same hotel. She claimed the trip was a shopping expedition.

In February Muster flew to Britain to keep a date with the duchess – his mother said he was 'smitten' – and the tennis player broke off his engagement to his fiancée, Mariella Theiner. The following month Sarah flew to Miami to watch him play. According to Jeanie Madison, with whom Muster was also having an affair at the time, the duchess bombarded him with suggestive phone messages and sent him a signed photo captioned 'Just love the service.' She claimed the two met regularly. He would book himself into hotels under the name Kenneth Dean, with Sarah arriving in blonde wig and dark glasses. He called her his Princess of Passion; she called him Herman after the TV monster Herman Munster.

Also known as Raging Bull, Muster boasted of bedding a thousand women. Madison claimed, 'I hear she drops the kids off with nannies while they go and bop until they drop.' He was invited to stay at Kingsbourne for Wimbledon but declined. Muster's mother, Inge, claimed, 'This Fergie has turned his head so he thinks of nothing else. Why should someone from the British Royal Family want to chase all round the world with our son? Thomas has been bewitched by her and the chance to hobnob with royalty.'

The tennis player denied any romance: 'Sarah's very nice but, as far as being my girlfriend is concerned, that's ridiculous. She isn't even my type. I

see her as a friend and not even a very close one – that takes years. We’ve only met a few times, so I don’t know her well. To say we’re having a relationship is making elephants out of mice.’

Supposedly the relationship cooled after Muster claimed the duchess was using him for her own publicity purposes. His father was quoted as saying, ‘It’s difficult to get rid of people like Sarah Ferguson. We wish him luck.’

All the while, press reports put her debts at over £1 million.

ON MANOEUVRES

John Bryan was himself in financial difficulties, with unpaid bills from British Telecom, American Express Europe and a firm of London solicitors, and facing fraud charges over the £10 million collapse of a construction company, Oceonics Deutschland. Arguing that he was entitled to a share of the *Budgie* deal, which he had negotiated and the rights to which Sarah had now passed to Ray Chambers, he was threatening to sell the story of his four-year relationship with her.

The duchess was equally determined to enforce a gagging order that banned him from disclosing ‘any incident, conversation or other information whatsoever concerning HRH or any member of the royal family or any other person connected with HRH by birth, marriage or otherwise’.

On 11 February 1996 the *Sunday Mirror* ran a front-page story, ‘Fergie Sex Snaps Sensation’, reporting that Bryan was touting ‘explicit photographs’ of her as well as a memoir. He needed to be paid off. A Buckingham Palace insider was clear. ‘Because she was so indiscreet, Bryan knows every bit of tittle-tattle which could cause maximum embarrassment to the Queen.’

Sarah, herself on manoeuvres, had arranged to have lunch the next day with agent Marvin Josephson, who had acted for among others Margaret Thatcher, Henry Kissinger and Arnold Schwarzenegger, to discuss selling her memoirs. The Palace, tipped off about the meeting, reminded her of her obligations under the divorce settlement. The meeting was postponed.

The games of memoir poker continued to be played through the media, with a front-page story later that month that Bryan was finalising a £6

million kiss-and-tell book about Sarah. In response she flew to Paris in an attempt to stop the negotiations. A few days later the *Sunday Times* reported Bryan as saying he ‘absolutely and positively’ was not planning to betray the duchess by writing a multi-million-pound kiss-and-tell. ‘I don’t know how to make it any more categorical and black and white.’

The three-week *News of the World* serial of his book would begin eight weeks later.

On 28 April 1996 the newspaper’s front page ran: ‘World Exclusive: John Bryan Tells All. I Had Sex with Fergie as She Spoke to Andy on Phone’. The tabloid devoted six pages to how she had spoken to Andrew and Steve Wyatt while making love to Bryan; how her daughters would ‘run into Fergie and Bryan’s bedroom to play with Mummy and her friend on the bed’; how she spent thirty hours a week consulting psychics, including speculation over when the Queen Mother would die; how when told that Prince Charles, who had escaped death in an avalanche, would die in a second one, she excitedly rang Diana; how she played Bryan along for four years, using the excuse that Charles might renounce the throne and Andrew become regent.

He revealed her £860,000 annual expenditure, which included £300,000 on staff, £150,000 on gifts, £50,000 on flowers, £50,000 on parties and £150,000 on travel; how she spent £100,000 on clothes, £25,000 in an hour’s spending spree in Bloomingdales; and how her father had been caught by his second wife entertaining two women in a room at Claridge’s a week before Sarah’s engagement, in what he described as ‘a business meeting’.

And Bryan described how the two had fallen out when he wanted a cut of *Budgie*’s profits in return for his work exploiting the rights. ‘She screamed at his partner Allan Starkie: Why should I give him anything? *Budgie* is all mine – it’s my third baby.’

Despite the fact that Bryan had posed for photographs and quotes had been attributed to him, including lots of detail only he could have known, the paper claimed he had not been paid and that most of the money had gone to Starkie. Bryan did, however, admit that some of his legal bills were paid. His lawyer, Achim Groepper, suggested Sarah may also have been paid, refusing to rule out the possibility that the duchess herself might be in

line for a windfall from the book. 'I don't want to answer that,' he said. 'We have had conversations with her.'

The articles, for which Bryan and Starkie had received £100,000 to be shared equally, were based on four hours of audio that Bryan had recorded, as well as 250 pages of 'letters, documents and personal observations' that Starkie had collected. Journalist Clive Goodman, who was involved in the deal, confirmed, 'Bryan was, of course, involved deeply in this all the way through from caviar to nuts. He had copy approval and I had to read him every line.'

The newspapers started looking into the finances of the duchess's American charity Chances for Children. It had been set up in November 1994 'to restore dignity, to provide hope and reduce suffering', but there were also suspicions that it gave the duchess a high profile and instant access to an elite social circle and thus was an ideal platform from which to launch a business plan of her own. As a non-profit-making organisation, the charity did not have to pay property or sales taxes, did not pay federal income tax and its office on Sixth Avenue was provided rent-free by *US News & World Report*, the weekly owned by Mortimer Zuckerman, a powerful contact of Sarah's. There were concerns the charity was also being used as the US branch of her private office, with staff required to locate her favourite perfume and fix meetings with fortune-tellers, diet doctors, hair stylists and manicurists.

One investigation found that less than half of the £110,000 donated to the charity had gone to sick children. Tax records showed that over a six-month period wages and expenses came to £58,500, with only £40,000 of charitable donations. None of the reputed £60,000 raised at a £600-a-plate cocktails and dinner in Connecticut on the duchess's previous trip to America had found its way to the Oklahoma Children's Hospital, though it was paid later. As the piece appeared, she was on holiday in the Bahamas with her daughters.

Promises made to charities were not always honoured. The Sarah Ferguson Foundation had claimed to help the Littlest Lamb orphanage with a 'substantial donation' to build a kids' home in Cairo but when approached its director, Mira Riad, revealed: 'She has never paid us. She said she was going to pay us some money a while ago but we have not received any. She

hasn't attended any of our events and I can't remember when I last spoke to her.'

At the time the error was pointed out, the claim was removed from the SFF website and replaced with a pledge to make a donation as soon as possible. When approached in 2024, Riad said, 'To the best of my knowledge, the donation from the duchess was not received.'

In March 1996 the Emir of Qatar invited Sarah to return for the annual Festival of the Horse and ride in the International Qatar Horse Marathon, a punishing twenty-six-mile race over sand in hundred-degree heat, with a \$100,000 prize fund. She was to be sponsored by an oil company, giving any prize money to Children in Crisis. Her father would act as equine consultant. She was also accompanied by her 'personal journalists' Albert Zarka and Princess Marie-Esméralda, half-sister of the king of Belgium, her PR representative Kate Waddington and her housekeeper Sally Fish, though her £2,650-a-night suite already came with the services of a housekeeper.

Sarah finished twenty-fifth out of twenty-seven entrants, arriving ninety minutes after the winner (though still an hour quicker than the previous year's celebrity rider Patrick Swayze). Nonetheless, she collected \$6,000 for her charity and the team from *Hello!* got its exclusive story, photographers having been banned from taking her picture. The spread duly appeared in the magazine, earning the duchess £70,000 from the sale of the photographs. She had been given a complete makeover, with freckles removed and a flawless white complexion and kohl-rimmed eyes, in what one paper described as looking like 'an extra from the Night of the Living Dead'.

* Sarah had long been convinced by her psychics that Charles would die in a skiing accident and Andrew be made regent until Prince William was eighteen. The accident only confirmed her faith in them.

† Prince Andrew was 'Two', John Bryan 'Three', an unidentified Arab billionaire 'Four', Paul Gaisford 'Five', Thomas 'Raging Bull' Muster 'Six', Robert Splaine 'Seven' and Ray Chambers 'Eight'.

III

DIVORCE

RUPTURE

Through all of this – the affairs, the extravagance, the waste, the press attention, the globe-hopping, the selfishness – the Yorks had contrived to remain married. Now the dam broke, the strain of it all too much for the Royal Family. On 17 March 1996 Andrew was told to divorce the woman he still loved. The Queen had ‘finally lost patience with the Duchess’, according to a Palace insider, the public humiliation of her son capped by Sarah’s behaviour with Bryan: ‘It all had to end.’

Andrew was torn, believing their relationship could still be saved, but many felt Sarah was using him. ‘She’s very manipulative and can twist him any way she wants,’ said one official figure close to them both, putting it down to his naivety rather than stupidity. ‘So many people have urged him to put his foot down but instead of doing something he just gets angry that the matter is even being raised.’

The well-informed journalist Anthony Holden revealed: ‘Dull. Thick. Couch potato. Pro-am golf and Stallone videos, yawn, yawn. This is the message now coming from Sarah’s camp about the man she once adored ... Fergie thought she was marrying Warren Beatty but found herself hitched to Mr Blobby with all the conversational sparkle of Nigel Mansell.’

The announcement of the divorce came on 16 April while Sarah and the princesses were on a week’s holiday at Paddy McNally’s chalet in Verbier and Andrew was at Portland. She passed off the stipulation that she would lose her title of Her Royal Highness, a particular blow, as something she had chosen to do herself, but according to Madame Vasso: ‘I also knew that the claim that Sarah had *chosen* to drop the title “Her Royal Highness” had to be untrue. Whenever we spoke she had always stressed how important

being an HRH was to her, not least because she felt it gave her the respect she believed was her due as a member of the Royal Family.'

The press took the opportunity to reflect on the marriage, which had somehow lasted ten years. The *Mirror* produced a special eight-page supplement, 'Worst Wife of Windsor', arguing that it might have all been quite different if she had been able to combine the fun with hard work and duty. Instead the paper characterised Fergie's brief career as Her Royal Highness The Duchess of York as 'a vulgar extended holiday – the embarrassments endless, each one more cringe-worthy than the last ... During 1987 she carried out only 55 public engagements compared to the Princess Royal's 429.'

Sarah's financial position became ever more desperate, made worse by the decision of the Manhattan company that had marketed her *Budgie* products in shops and put the character on Fox Television to file for bankruptcy protection in a legal ploy in a dispute over millions of pounds in royalties. She was owed about \$4.6 million. Fox Children's TV Network dropped *Budgie* from its 162 stations and Bloomingdales stopped selling it.

Compounding this, the Motor Neurone Disease Association secretly decided not to re-elect her when her term as president ended in September. According to a charity insider: 'The big companies which people like us have to rely on for support simply won't touch her. They don't want to be associated with someone with such a bad press ... The truth is that there is no longer any feelgood factor in being connected to the Duchess of York.'

She had also gained a reputation for cancelling trips for her causes at the last minute, in the previous year and a half having mysteriously pulled out of visits to Chernobyl, Bulgaria and India – despite weeks of preparation. Her PR, Kate Waddington, was deputed to ring journalists to insist that it was the duchess's own decision to stand down and Sarah herself later claimed: 'Given my other commitments, I wanted to move on to a job with less administration attached, perhaps to establish a new research committee. I stepped down as part of a normal, planned rotation.'

Dominic Prince, who helped set up the MNDA and sat on the corporate advisory council, recalled her unreliability but perhaps pinpointed why some organisations were prepared to stick with the duchess: 'She also got people like Robert Stigwood, the extremely wealthy Hollywood producer, to cough up a good deal of much-needed loot. I sat there and watched her

do it ... She promised that her then estranged husband would attend a golf tournament and got pledges on the spot from big hitters who make up the council.' The year before, Sarah had been responsible for raising £200,000 of the £2 million plus of income for the MNDA, said Prince, whose organisation had an annual income of just £2,000 when it started.

THE END OF THE ROAD

In November 1994 Prince Andrew had completed his first naval command: eighteen months on HMS *Cottesmore*, a sixty-metre minesweeper, part of the Tupperware Fleet, built of glass-reinforced plastic to be totally anti-magnetic. Having been based at Rosyth in Scotland on fishery protection duties, it had allowed him to spend many weekends at Balmoral.

Shortly before he left the ship for a couple of months' break, he appeared on a television programme filmed in his cabin, which was filled with pictures of Sarah and by his children. 'I want to go home and be with my family as much as I possibly can,' he confessed, 'but the ship, while I am commanding, has to come first to a certain extent.' He added: 'I do not believe I have been given this command because I was the Duke of York but I have been given it because, I hope, I am a professional capable of doing it.'

Andrew spent the next few months holidaying and on royal duties,* first flying with his PPO, Steve Burgess, to stay with Kyffin Simpson, a millionaire car dealer and golfing partner, in Barbados at Crane House, which Simpson had purchased in the Yorks' name on the understanding that they could use it whenever they wanted.

When Andrew returned to RNAS Portland (HMS Osprey), in February 1995 he did so as the senior pilot of 815 Naval Air Squadron, the only frontline squadron in the Royal Navy which operated the Lynx and the largest squadron in the Fleet Air Arm, with 42 helicopters, 96 officers and 420 sailors.

As second-in-command and Squadron Executive Officer, he was responsible for the unit's day-to-day function and collectively for the operational capability of its headquarters. His boss Martin Davis found him to be a competent and skilful pilot who 'once he put on his flying suit was

focused and professional'. However, the duke 'was not a natural at attending to his management and organising duties' and was easily distracted by events going on in his life. With his focus frequently on other matters, squadron members often had to seek guidance and direction elsewhere: 'He appeared to find great solace in the cockpit where he knew precisely his role and was free from his "other world".'

At 815 NAS Andrew also worked in maritime counter-terrorism and special operations, particularly charged with protecting oil rigs, dealing with narcotics in the Caribbean and ferrying around special forces. On one occasion, flying some snipers back from a shooting range over Norfolk, he had surprised his passengers by making an unexpected landing on the lawns of a stately home and suggesting they stop for a cup of tea. In the hallway they were met by an elderly lady. The Queen paused to consider their sniper's rifles. 'You can put those in there if you like,' she said, pointing to an umbrella stand.

Responsibility for Andrew's annual confidential report, known as an S206, lay jointly with the squadron's commanding officer and the captain of RNAS Portland. They sought guidance up the chain of command since Andrew was at a critical point in his career – this was likely to be his final flying appointment and a move into general service awaited. The appeal went all the way to the First Sea Lord, Admiral Jock Slater, who advised them to 'treat him as any other naval officer in a similar position'. Be accurate but fair might have summed it up.

Perhaps ill-advised by the Palace, Andrew had not been relieved of royal duties while appointed to Osprey. Rather than focus on the job in hand, he appeared content to juggle commitments. He allowed his royal duties to creep up, often using them as an excuse to play golf. His staff in London repeatedly 'filled' his diary and he was reluctant to move away from that responsibility. In the end it had to be removed from him in an attempt to provide focus on his naval career; however, the seesawing relationship with his wife remained a constant distraction during his time in 815 NAS.

Davis felt he clearly possessed the character and skills to engage and entertain since he did that as part of his royal role, but the duke was unable to bring that into his relations with sailors and junior officers. He tried too hard to be the senior pilot instead of bringing his own character and personality to the role. Davis had many conversations with him about

presenting himself as the person he was rather than what he thought he should be.

Davis felt Andrew's final S206 from the squadron, and his role as Executive Officer, perhaps provided the first accurate and true report he had received in the navy.

The report laid bare his shortcomings in leadership and rather disorganised management skills. He remained a competent pilot throughout. It is unlikely that this one report alone halted his career pathway as regular reporting builds a picture, but it was a watershed moment which required a rethink of his next and subsequent roles.

But the appraisal effectively did kill his career. From now on jobs would be found for him but he was going nowhere. Shortly after the final S206 was submitted and doubt was being raised about Andrew's next appointment, Prince Philip paid an informal visit to the squadron, to seek background to his son's pending change of direction.

The obvious next step would have been command of a frigate, having been a warfare officer or first lieutenant, but the feeling was that Andrew had neither the abilities nor the desire to take this path. In early 1996 he had been tipped as second-in-command of the warship HMS *Cumberland*, commanded by his brother-in-law, Captain Tim Laurence, but the expected move never happened.

At the end of July that year it was announced that Andrew, who had considered resigning in 1988 to save his marriage, would leave the navy in 1999 after twenty years. He had been passed over for promotion to commander three times and had been told by Jock Slater that he had no future in the Senior Service. His Falklands commanding officer, Ralph Wykes-Sneyd, felt the Royal Navy found itself in a difficult position: 'It was quite clear to all that, were he not a royal, his performance and potential did not warrant him being promoted to commander. Effectively his career was over; he was unsuited to be the second-in-command, let alone command a frigate or destroyer.'

Part of the problem, it was claimed, was Andrew's lack of a university degree, that he had no aptitude for maths, that his royal duties had interfered with his career progression and that the navy had lost 30 per cent of its manpower in the previous six years, further reducing opportunities for

promotion. A Buckingham Palace insider explained: 'Technology in the Navy is getting ever more complicated ... You have to be able to understand very sophisticated equipment ... but this is all a bit beyond him.'

However, one of the duke's superior officers has questioned this: 'I never detected that any lack of maths skills was causing concern in my time with him and the Sea King Mark 5 was a pretty sophisticated aircraft ... (the) problem ... was lack of application in keeping himself up to speed with his professional skills and knowledge as well as lack of attention to fulfilling his duties properly.'

It appeared that Andrew had reached the summit of his naval career and he could progress no further. Any further appointments would simply be a matter of finding him a role until he was retired. As an MOD official put it, 'Andrew is a good, solid officer but, in reality, he is no more than that.'

CRACKING UP

Sarah continued to flex her financial independence. In June 1996 it was announced she had joined the books of New York's Next Management and would be charging about £25,000 a time to promote products at corporate events. The same month Simon & Schuster announced it had bought a memoir – the reputed advance varied from £800,000 to £1.5 million – with editor-in-chief Michael Korda proclaiming: 'We are delighted to have this unique opportunity of publishing a book in which the Duchess of York describes herself and her experiences as they were, rather than as they have been portrayed.'

It was revealed that she had also told the publishers, 'See me right and I'll get you Di as well', and they had offered her another £1 million if she could persuade Diana into doing a book. A Simon & Schuster executive claimed: 'The Di idea just grew out of the discussion. We explained we would expect Fergie to deliver an account of her close friendship with Diana. She then said maybe she could get Diana to write her own story for us.'

Sarah had been paid £50,000 for two days' work promoting Rupert Murdoch's Foxtel cable network and there were reports she was in

discussions to teach Americans proper etiquette such as 'how to use the correct cutlery and how to make polite conversation with a royal'.

She signed with *Paris Match*, a magazine she had sued four years earlier for publishing the toe-sucking photos, to interview six celebrities at £10,000 per article, and with Olympus to advertise a new camera for \$32,000. It was announced Revlon would pay her £1 million to launch the Duchess range of perfumes, though the deal was subsequently cancelled.

The autobiography was only the first part of the plan. As part of a strategy masterminded by some American tycoons, Sarah was now being promoted as a shrewd businesswoman, author and chat-show host. They wanted her on Oprah Winfrey, David Letterman and Diane Sawyer, all aimed at exposure, which would generate lucrative endorsement and merchandising spin-offs.

Howard Rubinstein, her PR adviser, threw a lavish party for her to meet New York's movers and shakers, including Al Lippert, founder of Weight Watchers. It was an introduction which was to transform her life.

She also had help developing her business activities from the Hong Kong businessman David Tang. In September 1996 she flew, travelling as the Countess of Inverness, to Hong Kong and then for a picnic on the Great Wall of China for the opening of his China Club in Beijing (annual membership £12,865). Among the sixty-eight people also flown in were the actors Michael Caine and Kevin Costner. The American movie star became the subject of her next obsession.

After she had plagued him with raunchy phone calls, he reputedly told friends, 'She's a woman crying out for love.' It was also reported that she had called the *New York Times* to deny that she was suicidal, and a royal aide was quoted saying: 'We have gone beyond chronicling the number of the Duchess's indiscretions. We are into a situation where we must monitor her moods carefully. She is very disturbed and we are under instructions to keep an eye on her.'

Allan Starkie remembered Sarah once telling him, deciding whether to stay or leave Andrew, 'If it weren't for the children, the only answer would be to kill myself': 'She said this not in a mood of depression, as she had many times in the past, but rather as if she had suddenly come to a clear and logical conclusion. It was a sentiment she was to repeat to me many times.'

The duchess continued to live beyond her means, employing a staff of seventeen that included a cook, driver, maid, butler, dresser, nanny, three secretaries, a personal assistant, lady-in-waiting, accountant and accountant's assistant, two gardeners, flower arranger and dog walker. An accountant brought in to cut costs asked one member of staff what he did, and received the reply: 'I pick up the dog shit.' 'And you?' he asked, pointing to the person beside him. 'I help him.'

The duchess remained in denial about her debts. According to a friend: 'I have heard her throw an absolute screaming fit when one of her staff showed her a letter from the bank. She just doesn't want to know.' The tantrums kept staff turnover high. 'Car journeys are the worst,' said one aide. 'She will sit on the phone screaming at employees and reduce everyone to wrecks. Then she will wonder why we are so unhappy.'

A friend expressed concern about Sarah's behaviour at social functions, which could often be a performance, and inappropriate, but masked deeper insecurities: 'She assumes, quite wrongly, that she has to sing for her supper ... She tells dirty jokes. I have seen her among a group of people she had never met before doing the fake orgasm sketch from *When Harry Met Sally*. The following morning she will ring around seeking reassurance that she had not made an ass of herself.'

The *Sun* ran a telephone poll: 'Would you rather date Fergie or a goat?' Seven to one voted for the goat.

A PUBLICATION WAR

Madame Vasso was first to publish on the Yorks. The opening serial extract of the healer's memoir, which Sarah had tried to stop, appeared on 30 September 1996 and focused on her sex life: 'Fergie: I Taught Prudish Andy How to Make Love'. It was just one of numerous revelations from Vasso's book and the four-day serial was accompanied by a transcript of Sarah's taped conversations with the healer in which she discussed her love life, financial woes and her father – 'the madman' – who was himself revealed to have debts of £774,000 and who had also decided to jump on the publicity bandwagon and give an interview to another paper about his daughter.

John Bryan's friend Allan Starkie had also written a memoir, scheduled to come out at the same time as Sarah's own, *My Story*, which she had been planning ever since her separation. Starkie's book threatened to derail her own book and was potentially even more damaging than Vasso's as he knew her intimately. She had initially attempted to injunct it but did not have the required £500,000 to put into court and had also come under pressure from the Queen, who did not want her to be open to cross-examination in the witness box. Her legal efforts cost her £200,000 and the publisher Michael O'Mara threatened to countersue for £2 million for loss of profits, saying she was using 'the English courts to keep the truth from the British people. She is publishing her own version of events, as vetted by the Palace, in a few weeks. She, and perhaps the Palace as well, have an interest in keeping the truth from the public.'

With so many revelations elsewhere, and after she had demanded a further £100,000 for an exclusive interview to run with the extracts of her own book, *OK!* magazine pulled out of a £500,000 serialisation deal.

At the beginning of November, Starkie's *Fergie: Her Secret Life* began a six-day serialisation in the *Daily Mail*, for which the paper had paid £170,000. It appeared simultaneously with the serialisation of *My Story*, now in *Hello!*. In his book Starkie, who had signed a confidentiality agreement with the duchess, described the rough sex she enjoyed with Bryan, which once left her bleeding, how the Texan had slapped her across her face after she ordered him to treat her like a tart and the growing tension with Bryan as she delayed divorcing Andrew.

'And yet John still had some bizarre magical hold on her ... After an attractive woman showed interest in Bryan ... Sarah asked him to marry her. Starkie rang to congratulate her. There was a silence, then 'What are you talking about?' When pressed, she paused, 'Yes, I said something. Yes I did say something, but I wasn't serious.'

That same month *My Story* was published in the United States with a first printing of four hundred thousand copies and interviews with Oprah Winfrey, Rosie O'Donnell, David Letterman, Larry King and ABC's Diane Sawyer. Sarah told Sawyer that during her marriage she watched videos while Andrew had it away with 'twenty-seven concubines'.

At the same time, Delacorte Press published two new books from the duchess aimed at seven- to eleven-year-olds – *The Royal Switch* and *Bright*

Lights, featuring two lookalike eleven-year-old girls, Princess Amanda of Britain and Emily Chornak of Brooklyn Heights, which she dedicated to 'my best friends', her daughters Beatrice and Eugenie.

It was a slick publicity campaign, for which she was coached by a series of advisers, but the *Mail* was quick to challenge many of her public statements. The paper identified a number of claims she had made which it said were not true. After she said she was 'gullible and naive' when she got married, it pointed out that she had lived with a much older man from the age of twenty-three. And rather than her being a good mother, Starkie's book had revealed her lack of 'emotional continuity' and her children 'starved of attention'.

She twice refused to answer questions on whether she had been unfaithful, denied that she had contemplated suicide and claimed to be best buddies with Diana when they had in fact been competitive and jealous of each other.

Promoting the book, Sarah told Sky News, who had put her up at the Berkeley Hotel, she would not do the interview unless paid £20,000. The broadcaster responded by saying her blackmail attempt would be the lead item on the news if she refused. She agreed to do the interview but was not forthcoming.

A BBC interview by Ruby Wax, watched by twelve million people, lampooned her as they toured Kingsbourne together, both indulging in psychobabble, highlighting the yellow labels identifying the drawers for various colours of T-shirts and a cushion that read, 'Anyone can be a Mother. It takes someone special to be a Mummy.' After the duchess's dalmatian ate Wax's bagel, the comedienne was heard to exclaim, 'Oh my gard! Even your animals have no self-control.'

Sarah's continued use of HRH caused controversy, as she claimed it had not been formally withdrawn. Royal lawyers quickly pointed out that she had been stripped of the title months before through an announcement in the *London Gazette*.

Buckingham Palace appeared outwardly relaxed by some of her disclosures, which included her belief that she was being bugged by the intelligence services and that the Palace had leaked her South of France holiday to the paparazzi to 'send a warning to Diana'. But there was

concern, the *Sunday Times* reported, that she ‘may reach in her locker for one last bomb’.

The British embassy in Washington was asked to monitor her public utterances and the Queen took legal advice about the options to control the duchess, including removing custody of her daughters and cutting her maintenance payments. The broadsheet opined: ‘It remains to be seen whether any amount of strenuous soul-baring will seriously alter the British public’s perception of the duchess as a wilful, spoilt and stupid young woman who has caused the royal family unforgiveable grief.’

Writing in the same paper, psychiatrist Anthony Clare took a longer view. He felt Sarah was ‘psychologically adrift’, and suggested the departure of her mother during her childhood had led her to don a devil-may-care mask: ‘She attracted and became attracted to a circle of similar on-the-make, ambitious, insecure losers – histrionic con-men, greedy women, quick-fix merchants and meretricious phonies.’ She might not possess true strength of character but even the psychiatrist could not deny her talent for survival.

Her US trip, however, appeared to have been a commercial success. It was reported that she had signed a ‘£3 million Hollywood deal for her own series of shows, based on Anneka Rice’s TV hit *Challenge Anneka*’. In the show, *Special Adventures with the Duchess*, she would become a gondolier, trek through deserts, climb glaciers and perform dangerous stunts alongside celebrity guests. It would air the following year as *Adventures with the Dutchess* (*sic*).

Thanks to her performance promoting her memoir, which reached number three in the US charts, there were suggestions she could be offered a US talk show contract five days a week, worth £12 million per annum, but the idea came to nothing. Market research showed that many Americans found her accent hard to understand and showbiz stars, among them Madonna, Steven Spielberg, Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, were reluctant to be interviewed.

Sarah’s meeting with the founder of Weight Watchers earlier in the year had, however, borne fruit. She was now a size ten, and it was announced she would become the public face of the slimming organisation, of which she had been a member aged nineteen, in a deal worth £500,000 over three years. One of the terms stipulated that she must stay under ten stone.

Andrew had also managed to lose weight, dropping from fifteen to thirteen and a half stone in two weeks on a crash diet of six hundred calories a day, consisting of stewed prunes for breakfast, raw vegetables for lunch and soup for supper. He was now dating a twenty-nine-year-old BBC researcher, Henriette Peace, a former model and a close friend of Cazzy Neville, whom he had met briefly when she worked at Buckingham Palace in 1987. After they met again at a London party thrown by a mutual friend, there was ‘instant chemistry’, according to one guest. A navy friend of the duke said he had ‘really fallen head over heels for her ... I have never seen him so happy.’

The duke had been desperately trying to keep it a secret but, according to the source, his friends all knew, as did the London social set. The couple realised it was going to come out but were trying to keep everything under wraps as long as possible. Andrew had not taken her to any restaurants or parties, instead resorting to ‘cloak-and-dagger stuff’, meeting up with her when he could.

Yet it didn’t last. After six months the relationship with Peace would come to an end, in the summer of 1997, after she felt continually sidelined in favour of his ex-wife – Andrew had chosen to go to Tuscany with his family rather than take Peace to Barbados.

PAYING THE DEBTS

In January 1997 Sarah had become the first royal to endorse a product on television when she advertised Ocean Spray cranberry drink for a fee of \$500,000. It took over a hundred takes to create the two thirty-second shots. The following month, for £100,000, she accepted an invitation from an Austrian building magnate, Richard Lugner, to open a shopping precinct in Vienna, do a book signing and, like Joan Collins, Sophia Loren and Raquel Welch before her, accompany him to the Vienna Opera Ball, the highlight of the nation’s social calendar.

Addressed variously as Your Highness, Lady Ferguson, Lady Sarah and Princess, she was first escorted through the shopping centre by fake guardsmen, while an oompah band played the national anthem. Lugner’s thirty-one-year-old wife, dressed in leather trousers, then presented Sarah

with a pillowcase with her face emblazoned on it. The pitch line for the pillow was that you too could sleep with the duchess.

By February, it appeared she had paid off her debts – though she still had a £1.6 million tax bill to clear – helped by the advance on her memoirs, the Weight Watchers income, the advertisement, the six interviews with *Paris Match* and £300,000 for two children's books.

She had now moved from Kingsbourne back to Sunninghill, which was empty during the week while Andrew worked at the Ministry of Defence in London, ostensibly to save rent but, it was also suspected, to frustrate the duke's love life and as a negotiating position in the divorce. The Queen and Prince Philip were supposedly furious, aware that Andrew could not move on in his life if she remained living with him. They offered to find more money to allow her to rent elsewhere, but for once Andrew stood up to his parents, with both of whom he had generally good relations though his father thought he was not always sufficiently dedicated to his royal duties.

The arrangement suited the couple. She saved money and enjoyed a royal lifestyle; he saw more of his children in a securely protected property, and it ensured she did not indulge in some of the business activities that caused the Royal Family so much embarrassment.

But the agreement did not stop Sarah from her money-making. In April she began writing a column for the *New York Times* syndication section, which was sold to seventy-five US papers and syndicated worldwide, helped by Jeff Coplon, who had ghosted her memoir, for which each was paid £5,000 an article. The same month *OK!* magazine paid her £200,000 for an interview in which she said she was 'trying to leave the "Duchess of York" behind and develop Sarah's potential'.

In May she undertook a ten-day American lecture tour, garnering another £200,000. She met the golfer Tiger Woods, taking a 1,500-mile flight to see him and inviting him to join her at McNally's villa that summer. Piers Morgan noted in his diary a dinner with Sarah at the private London club Mosimann's the following month: 'She got more hilariously indiscreet as the evening wore on. I asked how her love life was going, and she squealed with laughter. "I'm in love," she said excitedly. "'Blimey," I replied, "Who's the lucky guy?" "Well, he's more of a boy really, and he doesn't know yet – it's Tiger Woods! ... He's so gorgeous," she cooed. "Do you think I stand a chance with him?"'

When Morgan suggested Woods might not have much room in his schedule for dating royals, Fergie roared again: 'Well. I am going to follow him around the course for a bit and see how I get on.' Morgan concluded, 'Poor old Tiger isn't going to know what's hit him.'

DIANA

On 31 August 1997, after being pursued by paparazzi through Paris, Princess Diana was killed when the car she was in ploughed into a pillar in an underpass in the French capital. The two women, once close, had not spoken for months, after Sarah had written about her sister-in-law, against Diana's wishes, in her memoir and made a joke about catching a verruca from one of Diana's shoes. The two were fourth cousins and had known each other since they were teenagers – their mothers had been at school together – and had the shared experience of their mothers being denied custody of their children.

Sarah and Diana had bonded over their frustration with royal bureaucracy, New Age interests, husbands they felt did not sufficiently appreciate them and children born only a few years apart. They also shared an irreverent sense of humour, deep insecurities and a desire to be the centre of attention. Diana was regularly at one of Sarah's homes, at one point every Sunday, sharing the problems in their marriages, tactics against the Royal Household and family, and plotting their escape. Diana described them as the 'terrible twins', Sarah as 'the Wicked Wives of Windsor'. Symbolically, she gifted Diana *The Great Escape* film.

But there had also been an element of jealousy and competitiveness. Sarah called Diana Blondie, Little Miss Perfect or Miss Goody Two Shoes. Diana called her Dutch. Sarah felt the Princess of Wales, more popular and more stylish, was able to get away with behaviour she could not. Diana envied Ferguson's more relaxed and closer relationship with the Queen and initially with the rest of the Royal Family thanks to her equine interests and talents and love of country pursuits. Both had enjoyed press attention and vied with each other for column inches in the media and would even brief against each other. For most of the almost five years he knew the duchess, Allan Starkie felt them to be in competition: 'They were fighting an

ongoing battle through use of their charities and using the press as a weapon. They would look like actresses on opening night at their reviews of their latest charity trips and compare them and whine if the other one got better views.'

David Leigh, who ghosted the Madame Vasso memoir, remembered them falling out over Sarah promoting an Aids charity, a cause close to Diana's heart. Despite Fergie's attempt to apologise, they didn't speak for weeks.

Ultimately, as the duchess's behaviour increasingly alienated her from the Royal Family and the public, and Diana had become more independent and confident, the Princess of Wales was careful to distance herself from her old friend, while still using her, as she put it, as the 'canary down the mineshaft' to test her own tentative attempts to leave an unhappy marriage.

According to Diana's private secretary Patrick Jephson, she let the axe fall on the relationship once she realised Sarah 'no longer had special access to the Queen' or any useful Windsor family intelligence to relay. It was 'a friendship that had outlived its usefulness'.

In spite of Sarah's later claims, the friendship was never repaired. After Diana's death, her former friend wrote what was described as a 'long, rambling and very emotional' letter to Charles, which found its way to the *Sun* newspaper. The inference was that this was simply another attempt to ingratiate herself back into the Royal Family.

The day after the letter was made public, the William Hickey gossip column revealed that Sarah had met *Hello!* director Eduardo Sánchez Junco to discuss 'how she might fill the yawning gap left by the death of the Princess, who sold more copies than anyone else'. 'She basically agreed to give *Hello!* everything about her for a monthly retainer,' said a source. The deal was thought to be worth £100,000 a month.

RELATIONSHIPS

Just before Christmas 1997 Sarah hired the divorce lawyer Anthony Julius who had secured a £17 million settlement for Diana, determined to improve the settlement that Bryan had negotiated.†

She had now begun a relationship with an Italian count, Gaddo della Gherardesca, ten years older than her, to whom she had been introduced by

David Tang the previous August. By the autumn of 1998, she was flying every weekend to Italy and she was so well known at his estate that she quickly became known as the Duchess of Castagneto.

In September della Gherardesca's ex-wife told a newspaper that the couple were engaged and she had 'absolutely no objection to their affair. I do not know when the wedding is, but I am certain I will be invited.' Finally, the following month, Sarah confirmed the press reports, 'Yes of course, he's my boyfriend and we are very close.'

She seemed able to attract, but also to spend, money in a way that mortals struggled to understand. As part of her relationship with Weight Watchers, in January 1997 she had published *Dining with the Duchess: Making Everyday Meals a Special Occasion*, a cookery book only on sale in America, for which she was paid £300,000 and which was to reach number eight in the bestseller list. Thanks largely to her, Weight Watchers' membership had risen by 80 per cent.

In May she had a cameo role in the series finale of sitcom *Friends*, watched by twenty million Americans and seven million in the UK, giving her appearance fee to charity. The same month it was reported she had been lined up to host a lifestyle show on Sky One in a £200,000 deal; in July she was paid £60,000 to interview Michael Douglas about his sex addiction for *Hello!*; and in August that she had been signed up for £50,000 to host a Sky TV studio-based series *Surviving Life* with the upfront fee going to charity, though it was not revealed that the backend payments would go to her.

The relationship with della Gherardesca was deepening. On 8 September Sarah flew to Italy to attend a ball with him, returning the next day to go to the wedding of her butler Ian Lowe to Claire Comper, a member of the royal protection squad. She had only just returned to Italy when tragedy struck.

On 19 September 1998 Susan Barrantes was returning to her ranch at Tres Lomas, four hundred miles south-west of Buenos Aires, with her twenty-five-year-old nephew Raphael. She was almost home and was, as often, driving at over a hundred miles per hour. Tired, she ploughed into a delivery truck. Raphael suffered minor injuries, the driver of the truck a broken ankle, but Barrantes, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was decapitated.

Sarah flew to Argentina, where she found a stack of unpaid bills and the electricity, gas, telephone and hot water turned off.

After Hector's death, Susan had struggled to deal with the debts he had left. As wilful as her daughter, she had ignored advice to sell her mares at a good price, thinking she could do better. The following year she had had to sell them for half the price. An attempt to break into the equine artificial insemination business had also failed.

She had launched a television production company, opened an office in Buenos Aires, taken out a £50,000 mortgage on a small apartment and borrowed £250,000 to buy an editing console, making programmes on polo and showjumping, but her business had gone bankrupt. She had persuaded Prince Charles to contribute the foreword for a glossy coffee table book about polo but that too failed.

Sarah had made monthly financial contributions, and she and Bryan had earlier tried to help, but Susan had reached a point where she had sold off most of the acreage at El Pucara and could no longer pay the ranch hands. Yet she had remained optimistic, making plans for an upmarket adventure travel business to the Andes. Her daughters were now left to sort out her affairs.

Sarah's relationship with her mother had been complex. In her first volume of autobiography, published two years earlier, she had described Susan as 'simply the most brilliant, zestful person I have ever met' who organised the family's ski trips and Christmases and 'the most elaborate, colourful birthday parties'. Casting her mother as 'the type your friends would praise as "super cool"', Sarah wrote: 'Mum just made everything happen.'

For public consumption, she professed to be happy for her mother after Susan found love with Hector Barrantes, writing that as a child:

I never felt anger toward Mum. I never stopped loving her. Abandonment is relative, and I would not risk losing what claims I had left. I could still cruise around with Mum to polo and smile at the sloe-eyed Argentine men and stay with her and Hector on some weekends. Though I wasn't sure she was definitely with *me*, because Hector came first, and you wouldn't want to be in the way.

But, according to Madame Vasso, Sarah was angry with her mother for starting a new life in South America without her. 'I could never leave my

girls ... they're far too precious to me. I really don't know how she could have gone off like that. I can't imagine being so far away from my babies and not being able to see them for months on end.' Asked by Gyles Brandreth for Mother's Day in 2001 if she missed her mother, she simply replied, 'I think of her every day.'

Surviving Life, a series of ten one-hour programmes on topics ranging from weight loss to murder, began transmission on Sky in October 1998, but despite being the first chat show to be presented by a royal, pulled in a disappointing twelve thousand viewers – similar morning shows might expect a million. There would be no second series but NBC's *Today* breakfast show recruited her at £400,000 a year as a roving reporter to carry out interviews with ordinary people and in April 1999 it was reported that Sarah had been given a two-year contract worth £1 million to promote another of Irish businessman Tony O'Reilly's companies, Waterford Wedgwood, in America. This required the duchess to appear at up to twenty-five events at department stores, attend a trade fair in Frankfurt twice a year and promote a 'Sarah' range named after the wife of founder Josiah Wedgwood. A spokesman said, 'We are going to try to position her as a spokesman, presenting Wedgwood as essential, something English and yet something more contemporary.'

Brian Patterson, Wedgwood's chief executive from 1995 to 2001, remembered how O'Reilly had hired the duchess, without making any provision in the budget, feeling that she represented British heritage and would, in particular, appeal to the company's American and Japanese customers. 'She was brilliant at working a room, fresh, chic and wasn't stuffy. She was royalty but different and they loved it.' The company quickly rose from being the sixth most popular china producer in America to the second.

It seemed, after her recent setbacks, her fortunes were on the up.

PALACE CONTROL

Andrew was also in the news. In October 1998, days after he met the Queen's new head of communications, Simon Lewis, to discuss his public

image, he cheerfully told the *Sun* on an official visit to Malta that courtiers had constantly lied to the public and press for twenty years.

The difficulty now is trying to convince you, the Press, that what you are being told is the truth. You cannot believe you are being told the truth because for the last twenty years you probably haven't been. It's like the Russians.

The initial reaction from Buckingham Palace was that the Royal Family were 'now getting it right'. They then persuaded the Press Association not to run the story. After Andrew had accepted an invitation to discuss his comments on David Frost's *Breakfast with Frost*, Prince Charles had intervened and his brother's appearance was cancelled. The Palace quickly put out a statement: 'Further to certain articles that have appeared in this morning's Press, the Duke of York wishes to make clear that the inference that Palace officials had lied to the media in the past is incorrect.'

In fact, Andrew had been right. According to journalist James Whitaker: 'For even longer than two decades I have been on the end of half-truths, distortion and carefully constructed denials', citing as examples reporting on Diana's anorexia and the marriage difficulties of Princess Anne, Charles and Margaret.

The duchess had now broadened her activities into music management, her management company signing up the four-piece rock band Reflector, promising to turn them into the new Oasis under producer George Martin and with a slot at a Children in Crisis charity event.

The introduction had come through Katie Walker, a self-styled healer who believed in a past life that she had been Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II. Catherine's best friend had been the then Duchess of York and this had created a karmic bond between the present duchess and the healer, with whom she had become sufficiently friendly for the two of them to go on holiday together.

The duchess's accountant, Jeremy Scott, had been organising a portfolio of businesses for Sarah, through her new company, Fireside Communications, and the lead singer Gareth Nugent and his band members were signed up as Sarah wanted to produce his song 'Our World' using her music contacts, such as Elton John and Robert Stigwood.

Feeling that little was happening in terms of representation, the band arranged a meeting with Scott to discuss the future. When they arrived, they found two burly men blocking the exit and the band were not allowed to leave until they had signed NDAs. It appeared the instructions had come from the Palace.

TURNING FORTY

In October 1999 Sarah turned forty, but the two days of celebrations she had planned were cancelled after the death of her old flatmate and close friend Carolyn Cotterell, a mother of three, aged forty-three, after an eighteen-month battle against skin cancer. Cotterell was Beatrice's godmother and Sarah was godmother to her friend's eldest child – a very attentive and generous one, according to friends. The birthday was spent not in celebration but in tears at the funeral of the woman she described as her 'guardian angel'.

The birthday more publicly was marked by a profile in *The Times* by Ginny Dougary, illustrated by the duchess photographed in a sheet by Terry O'Neill. Dougary found her 'extremely personable and genuinely curious about people', judging her to be 'utterly without guile or artifice and not calculating enough, if anything, for her own good ... She is clearly a loving mother and a loyal friend, even to those who, one might think, don't deserve it.'

The interview was, however, to prove controversial for several reasons. The duchess claimed that for the seven years after Beatrice's birth she had had 'a huge mental breakdown from postnatal depression'. With a characteristic lack of self-awareness, she also maintained the couple had 'got divorced because I had to go out to work, and Andrew and I believed that it wasn't right for me to be commercial while I was still in the Royal Family'. She hinted she would like to try for a third child, had not ruled out remarrying Andrew and reflected on her relationship with the Royal Family: 'The Duke of Edinburgh does not need me. The Prince of Wales does not need me. They think I'm pointless, therefore why should they make the effort?'

The birthday was a moment for assessment by the press. Lynda Lee-Potter, never previously a fan, wrote: 'She's a woman of excess who has repaid her gigantic debts but continues to be generous to a fault ... She still says daft things, but I feel a kind of irritated affection tinged with respect for her. She's never complained and, in the end, she's achieved a dignity of her own.'

But the more cynical, especially at Buckingham Palace, felt the duchess was simply mounting a PR campaign to win acceptance for the idea of remarriage, which only the Queen could authorise, or at least readmittance to the bosom of the Royal Family and with it the status that underpinned her business success. Just hours after telling one newspaper, 'I'm proud of the fact that I married him and I love him very much', Sarah and her daughters had jetted off to her lover della Gherardesca in Italy for a birthday celebration.

Among those most opposed in the Royal Family to remarriage were Prince Charles, Princess Margaret, Prince Edward (who had not invited Sarah to his wedding in spite of her daughters being bridesmaids) and Prince Philip, who accused her of 'living in the land of Nod' and 'a squalid public relations exercise'.

But there were suspicions that neither Andrew nor Sarah really wanted to remarry. The journalist Toby Young noticed that while in Britain the couple presented the image that she 'had never stopped loving the Duke of York, nor had he stopped loving her'; in America, 'away from the paparazzi and the carefully choreographed publicity pictures, Andrew's appetite for a pretty, available, single girl – no secret when he was a young, unattached bachelor – emerges once again'.

Young's assessment was perspicacious. In June 1999, during a five-hour flight from Los Angeles to Hawaii for a dedication ceremony for the new Gemini astronomical telescope, the duke had met a glamorous forty-year-old Californian socialite, Melissa Lincoln, and they exchanged numbers. On arrival, he rang her five times and she invited him to have dinner at her £3,500-a-night bungalow at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel.

Her multi-millionaire husband J.D. Lincoln, already suspecting her of having an affair, had tasked a private detective to tail her and planted a camera in a bush outside her bungalow. When she was caught on film dining with a strange man, he was surprised to find it was not prime suspect

Kevin Costner, whom he had believed was having an affair with his wife, but Prince Andrew, there with five detectives. ‘I set a trap for a fox and caught a bear,’ he admitted.

A spokesman for the duke stressed, ‘There was no suggestion of romantic involvement at this dinner’, but it raised questions about the quality of Andrew’s security that the five detectives had not noticed the private investigator hiding in the bushes.

When Christy Turlington dropped out of a dinner for Andrew, organised by Lynn Rothschild, in October 1999, Rothschild invited in her place Alexandra Styron. The daughter of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist William Styron, author of *Sophie’s Choice*, the thirty-three-year-old – who had found another date fixed by Rothschild a few weeks earlier, Kevin Costner, a ‘dope’ – was taken with Andrew. After dinner they went on to a nightclub, where she ‘let it be known the evening did not end without a kiss’.

* He also appears to have been in Azerbaijan.

† In February 1999 she would give up, having run up a £70,000 bill.

IV

EPSTEIN

ENTER JEFFREY EPSTEIN

On the morning of 9 February 1999 a small group gathered at Teterboro Airport, just outside New York, ready to catch a Gulfstream jet to Saint Thomas, second largest of the US Virgin Islands.

One of the three waiting passengers was the glamorous socialite Ghislaine Maxwell, who had fled to New York in 1991 from the UK on a hundred-thousand-dollar annual allowance to support her father Robert Maxwell's business activities. Shortly afterwards, the media baron with longstanding connections to British, Russian and Israeli intelligence had met a sudden and mysterious death whether from suicide, an accident or as his youngest daughter believed, murder. Her personal assistant, Emmy Taylor, waited with her. The third and final member of the group was Prince Andrew.

He claimed he had met Ghislaine while she was at Oxford in the 1980s but it is far more likely he had been introduced to her through his ex-wife – both women were well-known on the New York social circuit. Andrew and Ghislaine were good friends – and over the years had been occasional lovers – and through her, the prince had come into the ambit of her boyfriend Jeffrey Epstein.

Epstein was seven years older than Andrew and had made a fortune from his own money-management firm, J Epstein & Company, handling \$15 billion on behalf of a group of secretive clients, as financial adviser to the billionaire Leslie Wexner, chairman of the lingerie firm Victoria's Secret, and, as he described himself, 'a financial bounty hunter'. Epstein had also been involved in a Ponzi scheme soliciting over \$500 million in investments which he had then spent on himself.

The lantern-jawed New Yorker had stood by Ghislaine after the death of her father, and the subsequent discoveries of Robert Maxwell's crimes, and, according to bank records, over the period 1999–2007 would give her more than \$30 million to restore her to the lifestyle to which she had become accustomed. In return, the well-connected Oxford graduate played a crucial role in Epstein's complicated but lucrative business and personal life, introducing him to influential contacts and organising a steady stream of young girls to be supplied to the very same men who would then be blackmailed, as well as satisfying his own demanding sexual needs.

It has been suggested the connections go further back and that Robert Maxwell, before his death, entrusted Epstein with up to \$20 million to hide from creditors. There were also longstanding connections between Maxwell and Donald Trump – they had both bid for the *New York Post* and often met socially.

A product of working-class Coney Island, Epstein owned houses all over the world including a fifty-thousand-square-foot townhouse – the largest in Manhattan – valued at \$77 million, an eight-thousand-acre ranch in New Mexico and a home in Palm Beach, two miles from Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate. It was, however, to his seventy-two-acre private island, sometimes known as Little St Jeff's, replete with helipad, lagoon and villa served by a staff of seventy, which he had bought the year before for \$7.95 million, that the party was now heading by helicopter.

The trip was not and never has been listed on any of Andrew's official schedules because he was not there on official business. His visit was purely for pleasure. Over the years the extent of that pleasure would become clear.

Andrew returned three days later accompanied by one of the women provided by Epstein for the enjoyment of his guests, Anna Malova, appointed Miss Russia the previous year in order to compete in the 1998 Miss Universe competition, and a close friend of Donald Trump.

The Duke of York claims to have only met Epstein earlier that year though it is unlikely that such a close relationship could have been nurtured in a matter of weeks. The truth is Andrew and his ex-wife had known the financier for almost a decade by then. According to Andrew's private secretary, Alastair Watson, the two men had met in 'the early 1990s'. The flight logs of Epstein's plane alone, known as the Lolita Express because it

flew so many young girls, reveal the duchess travelled on it with Epstein the previous April. Whatever the exact dates of their first meeting, Jeffrey Epstein and Andrew had by then become business contacts and friends, united by a shared interest in money and sex.

In April 1999, Epstein threw Andrew a dinner at his Manhattan townhouse and the following month, according to Miles and Cathy Alexander, a South African couple hired to manage Epstein's Caribbean property, the duke came to the private island 'via helicopter with his bodyguard and a woman in her thirties, who said she was a brain surgeon': 'She was tall, bleached blonde and had big boobs. They shared a room and spent most of their time on windsurfing, sailing or doing other water sports. One day he came back into the house in great mirth, claiming his guest had stepped on a sea urchin and he urinated on her foot as a remedy. "The royal member has done its duty," he chuckled.'

In July, Andrew invited Epstein and Ghislaine to visit Balmoral for an overnight stay at the seven-bedroom Craigowan Lodge on the estate. They arrived accompanied by two friends, Fiona Folley and Erig Taylor. One, a model in her twenties, related how on the first night Andrew provided a tour of the estate. 'He was really nice,' she said. 'He was very polite.'

The next day they had a picnic in the grounds of the castle, then just before dinner, which was to be fillet of beef, the duke 'apparently became incandescent with rage, screaming: "Who was the ***** idiot who cut the meat up?"', sending the cook into the pantry in tears. Other staff, 'accustomed to the duke's tantrums on virtually a daily basis, covertly exchanged knowing glances'.

By the time the meat had been barbecued, the duke was all smiles and full of compliments for the cook on her Victoria sponge, which was his way of apologising: 'That's what he always does. Explode one minute and then try to take it back the next.'

Andrew's friendship with Epstein continued, with invitations to Windsor and a shooting weekend at Sandringham in January 2000. The following month the prince, introducing himself to guests as Andrew York, was photographed with Ghislaine and Epstein at a party at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago country club in Palm Beach. There he took a fancy to two twenty-something guests, Gwendolyn Beck and Christina Drangsholt. Beck managed about \$65 million of Epstein's investment funds for Morgan

Stanley, and had already met the duke the previous year, and brought along her friend Drangsholt, who ran a mail order business that specialised in selling testosterone – the hormone that enhances the male sex drive – which she advertised as ‘Get more bang for your buck’.

The next day, after a round of golf with Trump, Andrew joined the two women at the pool. They had a wonderful time, according to Drangsholt, who later distributed pictures of herself with the prince to social and business contacts, calling him ‘charming’ and ‘very attentive’ but insisting they were all just good friends.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRINCE

In December 2019, Donald Trump, interviewed on television, would deny knowing Andrew, in spite of extensive photographic records of their public meetings going back twenty years, including the visit to Trump’s Palm Beach home in February 2000. In October 2000 both of them had attended Heidi Klum’s Halloween costume party, at which Trump was quoted as saying of Andrew, ‘He’s not pretentious ... He’s a lot of fun to be with.’

In a 2015 interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity, Trump would be asked what he thought of former president Bill Clinton. He replied: ‘Nice guy, got a lot of problems coming up in my opinion, with the famous island with Jeffrey Epstein.’ When a Bloomberg reporter asked Mr Trump what ‘problems’ he thought Mr Clinton would face, he replied: ‘I don’t know, but that island was really a cesspool, there’s no question about it, just ask Prince Andrew, he’ll tell you about it, the island was an absolute cesspool.’

He was talking about Little Saint James, which Andrew had first visited back in 1999.

One of Palm Beach’s wealthiest residents, who knew both Epstein and Trump, related how the future president had tried to distance himself from Jeffrey Epstein ‘by claiming he wasn’t close to him. It’s the furthest thing from the truth.’ The witness recalled attending several functions at which both men were present, including one in 2002 ‘when they were sitting at the same table and talking to each other most of the time’.

The source also claimed the two men were involved in several business deals.

‘Terrific guy,’ Trump told *New York Magazine*. ‘He’s a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.’

During 2000, Ghislaine Maxwell and Epstein invited Prince Andrew, by now enjoying his status as a divorced man, to a number of social events in New York, including a party hosted by designer Ralph Lauren and a £630-a-head charity concert in aid of the American Friends of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The duke continued to spend time with Epstein and Ghislaine, often staying at the millionaire’s homes in New York or Florida. The Duchess of York frequently stayed there too.*

That summer a British couple, staying with Ghislaine, met Andrew at a party at Epstein’s house where guests, including a two-time Oscar-winning actress, played games of virtual tennis on the huge movie screen in the basement. The next night they ate at a neighbourhood restaurant and were told Andrew would be joining them. As one recollected: ‘I remember seeing him sitting at a table at the far end with these three young [not underage] blonde girls when we walked in. He immediately got up, I imagined to join us, but instead he said goodbye and left with them in tow. It was all very strange.’

Ivan Novikov, Jeffrey Epstein’s personal driver, remembered: ‘Whenever Andrew was in town I’d be picking up young girls who were essentially prostitutes.’ He continued: ‘One time I drove Prince Andrew and two young girls around age eighteen to the Gansevoort Hotel in the Meatpacking District. Both girls were doing lines of cocaine. Prince Andrew was making out with one of them.’

Epstein’s housekeeper, Debra Gale, alleged Andrew’s interest in young women: ‘One night he took a Swedish girl to his bedroom. They spent the entire night together and most of the next day.’ Pressed further, Gale added: ‘When the girls would leave Andrew’s bedroom I’d give them an envelope Mr Epstein left with anywhere from one to 25 thousand dollars in it. Sending on the girl and the situation.’

‘WE ARE JUST FRIENDS’

Andrew's friends had taken pity on him ostensibly spending his weekday evenings watching videos in his Buckingham Palace apartment.

His new social life was orchestrated by the identical Wigram twins Camilla and Lucy, both of whom were friends with Andrew's former girlfriend, Cazzy Neville, who also began to introduce him to eligible women. Another key matchmaker, Mala Lindsay, hosted a series of parties for the duke in her luxurious apartment in Chelsea Harbour, where, it was said, 'the Concorde crowd meets the Inverness sleeper set'.

A friend of Sarah's explained, 'Andrew is a strange guy. He likes to have his women on a plate, the shorter the skirt and the slimmer the figure the better – and Mala's great gift is that she is a superb matchmaker.' As a result Andrew was chosen as number one on *Tatler's* 'Most Invited Party List' in July 2000. 'He loved being top of the Tatler list and couldn't stop talking about it,' a friend said. 'He was boasting about it, even.'

Whatever his public statements, Andrew was now emotionally free of Sarah – much to her distress. A lapel badge given to him at the Staffordshire factory making Massey Ferguson tractors, which he had had pinned to his office door at the Palace and said 'I love my Fergie', was removed.

For years the duchess had put a brake on his romantic life. According to one friend, 'If he did meet a girl, Sarah would always find fault with her and put him off.' Now that they had been divorced for four years, he felt free to play the field.

He had met his next girlfriend, Audrey Raimbault, at the Ryder Cup in Massachusetts in September 1999 – the following month she was to be listed several times on the *Lolita Express*. Raimbault was sixteen years his junior and an actress – she had been the body double for Judith Godrèche in the 1998 film *The Man in the Iron Mask* – and film school graduate. She also spoke French, English and Spanish, dividing her time between an apartment in Paris and her parents' chateau near Monte Carlo. Like Andrew, she played off a handicap of eight, and for the previous five years had been working for a firm called PromoGolf. She became a regular visitor to Buckingham Palace and Windsor, though when pressed about the nature of their relationship replied, 'We are just friends.'

A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

For his fortieth birthday on 19 February, the prince, with his ex-wife and daughters, enjoyed a ride on the London Eye. For security reasons, the royal party had their own capsule and members of the public were not allowed on until forty-five minutes after their arrival at eleven that morning, with the result that some people had to wait for up to two hours. ‘You lot are nothing but freeloaders,’ screamed one man as the Yorks emerged from a Jag and stepped straight into one of the pods.

That evening the family held a £30,000 birthday party for the prince at Sunninghill. Sarah Ferguson had organised a thirty-minute video tribute based on the television programme *This is Your Life*, featuring among others Elton John, and, in honour of Andrew’s Royal Navy service, staff had laid out the canapes around models of ships and helicopters, and a fleet of tiny wooden yachts on each table. The senior royals – the Queen, Prince Philip, Princess Anne, Prince Charles and Prince Edward – did not attend, amid continuing concerns that Sarah had been leaking stories about them to the press. The relationship since the divorce had grown even frostier.

Andrew’s dignified silence over his wife’s behaviour had won him public sympathy and Palace recognition that he might spearhead a campaign to restore the monarchy’s tarnished image after the continuing revelations of Charles’s affair with Camilla Parker-Bowles. In mid-March he set off on a ten-day tour of the Caribbean.

At Easter, he flew with his ex-wife and children to stay in the Bahamas with Irish businessman Tony O’Reilly and visited – but not, as is often claimed, stayed with – fashion tycoon Peter Nygård’s property, which featured smoke-breathing snake sculptures, a fifty-foot faux Mayan temple and nude statues based on Nygård’s past girlfriends.

Andrew had resumed his on-off affair with Ghislaine Maxwell. In May they were spotted holding hands at Nello’s restaurant in Madison Avenue before flying to Miami, with model Naomi Campbell and Alexia Wallaert, a Parisian art dealer, on the Lolita Express. The following month Ghislaine and Epstein were pictured with Andrew at Royal Ascot and they were among the eight hundred guests at the black-tie ‘Dance of the Decades’ marking Andrew’s fortieth birthday, Princess Anne’s fiftieth, Princess Margaret’s seventieth and the Queen Mother’s hundredth.

The relationship with Ghislaine was also good business. According to one of her friends, Cynthia Matthews, they did foreign deals together,

including a hugely lucrative tobacco deal in Malawi: 'I told her she was crazy to get involved in it ... She didn't seem to care. And she admitted to me that Prince Andrew helped broker the deal.'

Matthews said Ghislaine also told her about 'a luxury vehicle deal she had going with Prince Andrew in Thailand. She said Andrew loved Thailand and spent a lot of time there.'

The June issue of *Tatler* carried a twelve-page interview with the duke by the editor, Geordie Greig, on the £250 million fundraising campaign for the NSPCC, in which Andrew confided, amid rumours that he had raised the issue over lunch with Tony Blair: 'I don't rule remarriage out and I certainly don't rule it in', adding that he knew his reputation was that of a 'cack-handed, blonde-dating oaf'.

In reaction, bookies slashed the odds on remarriage from 33-1 to 3-1 and a *Daily Mirror* poll showed that nearly 90 per cent of its readers wanted the couple to remarry, but a friend of the duchess said: 'There is not a chance of her putting her head back in to that lion's cage.'

Greig found the prince: 'Open, warm and has a surprising moral strength. He is different from the caricature we apply to him ... a strong-minded and unconventional young man. Articulate and forceful ... There's certainly no trace of hauteur, remoteness or even noblesse oblige.'

Della Gherardesca also rubbished claims that Andrew and Sarah might remarry, saying that his three-year relationship with the duchess, who he called 'the Red Thunderbolt', was as strong as ever and explaining she had just thrown him a fiftieth birthday party. In August, they were pictured embracing as they cruised on his yacht off the coast of Sardinia.

The press had, however, wondered over the previous three years how serious the relationship was and whether, like many of the duchess's apparent romantic relationships, it was not simply a business arrangement, after it had been uncovered that he had paid her £25,000 a time to take part in various publicity stunts, including promoting Livorno's new docks.

That July, after the Queen had overruled objections from courtiers, Andrew staged a charity tennis match in the grounds of Buckingham Palace for the NSPCC. Guests, paying £2,500 a head and entertained by Art Garfunkel, watched John McEnroe beat Björn Borg. The match was broadcast live on BBC 2 and raised over £1 million worldwide.

Journalist Richard Kay revealed that the duke had also dined every night of the last week of July with Caroline Stanbury, a goddaughter of Susan Ferguson. Part of the Vestey dynasty, one of the richest families in Britain, Stanbury had previously been linked with footballer Ryan Giggs, Prince Albert of Monaco and actors Sylvester Stallone and Hugh Grant.

According to friends, Andrew was ‘besotted’ with the PR girl, sixteen years his junior. She claimed to be only a friend, but the interviewer for *You Magazine* suggested, ‘The sideways glance to her publicist suggests a rehearsed response.’ In a familiar pattern, the two were keen to keep their relationship secret. After they were spotted leaving the nightclub Chinawhite: ‘They split up moments before walking out into a barrage of flashlights with a perspiring Prince, in open-necked shirt and jeans, leading the way.’

Andrew had become a regular at Chinawhite on Wednesday nights and was often to be seen dining at Nobu, the Met Bar and Momo. A particular favourite was the Rock nightclub on Embankment, whose owner Piers Adams remembered the duke as ‘a very enthusiastic patron ... He really goes for it. Sometimes I’ll look across the room and catch him doing this really intense, hands-in-the-air raver’s dance.’

Journalist Peter Jukes recalled Andrew at Chinawhite dressed in a blazer with gold buttons – slightly incongruous clothing for such a hip joint – and being deputed by the management to take care of him, not least by buying him drinks. Jukes found it hard to make conversation with the duke and was relieved when Andrew was distracted by the American socialites Nicky and Paris Hilton. The prince spent the rest of the evening dad-dancing with the nineteen- and seventeen-year olds. Jukes noted he sweated profusely.

A MURDER CLOSE TO HOME

At the beginning of October, returning to Sunninghill after taking her daughters to the cinema, the duchess rammed the gates when they didn’t open in time, causing thousands of pounds of damage. She claimed to be stressed – perhaps for good reason. Days before, she had received a call that her former dresser, Jane Andrews, was on the run from the police and had

been arrested, having tried to take her own life, and charged with killing her boyfriend with a cricket bat.

Andrews had worked as Sarah's personal assistant from 1988 to 1997, where her tasks included shopping for the duchess's clothes, as well as persuading top stores such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols to offer discounts and lend outfits. In 1989, aged twenty-two, she had married the divorced Christopher Dunn-Butler, twenty years older than her, who had briefly acted as Ferguson's accountant, but he divorced her after five years for adultery. The assistant had become a close confidante of the duchess and, as an assistant accountant, privy to many of her financial affairs, until sacked – some said on cost-cutting grounds, others because Sarah suspected her of trying to be romantically involved with della Gherardesca. She had even begun to imitate Ferguson, adopting the same persona, dress and speech patterns as her employer, and reputedly seducing Allan Starkie, one of the duchess's former lovers. The joiner's daughter from Cleethorpes had become so grand that Sarah had taken to calling her Lady Jane.

After Andrews was let go, the duchess had helped her find a job with Theo Fennell, but neither it nor a PR post at Claridge's had lasted. In 1998 she met a businessman from a wealthy family, Tom Cressman, and moved in with him. Two years later, on holiday in the South of France, the two got into an argument, during which Andrews stabbed him in the chest with a kitchen knife, beat him over the head with a cricket bat and fled.

After she was jailed for life, it emerged that royal aides believed Andrews had 'fleeced' the duchess of £10,000. Questions were asked how, despite her modest salary, she had managed to buy a flat facing Battersea Park and keep £50,000 in her bank account. It has been alleged she stole an even larger sum of money from the duchess, but this has never been proved legally.

FOREIGN ANTICS

In October 2000 Andrew was in New York attending a dinner hosted by the consul-general, Thomas Harris. Afterwards he went on to model Heidi Klum's annual Halloween Party at the Hudson nightclub: theme that year 'Hookers and Pimps', led by Klum dressed in a black PVC catsuit, a spiked

dog collar and wrist restraints, and Ghislaine Maxwell as a prostitute in midriff-baring gold trousers and blonde wig.

A few days later the duke headed to Los Angeles. At a dinner thrown for him in a local restaurant, he met a former *Playboy* model and actress, Denise Martell. Discovering she had a sweet tooth, Andrew ordered the desert trolley and fed her a chocolate-coated strawberry. 'I took the entire strawberry in my mouth in one gulp,' she later remembered. 'It was very suggestive. He loved it. By this time he was holding hands with me under the table.'

Andrew invited her to his hotel, where they chatted in the bar until 2.15 a.m., before he walked her to her car and they kissed. He gave her his number on a piece of paper emblazoned with the motto 'His Gloriousness' and they agreed to meet the next night at his £580-a-night suite at the Bel-Air Hotel. 'I absolutely wanted to make love to him,' she remembered. 'We stayed on the couch heavy petting. I was lying back in his arms.' The evening ended inconclusively after Andrew fell asleep.

Martell joined him in his room for a third night, after he had presented an award to Steven Spielberg at a BAFTA gala, bringing with her some melon-flavoured candles because she thought it had been too bright the night before. He stripped to his boxer shorts and she lay beside him. Again he fell asleep and she let herself out. Martell was shocked by the poor security. 'He gave his mobile number to me on the first night after I'd only known him a few hours. There was never any security there. I was very surprised.'

She went on to have a five-year relationship with the prince until 2005, and made him godfather of her son born in 2008. Martell claimed she didn't mind about Andrew's other women. She and the duke remain in touch to this day.

Andrew chose to go on to Jeffrey Epstein's eight-thousand-acre ranch in New Mexico. According to his PPO, who kept a daily diary, the prince stayed in a three-bedroom building near the ranch entrance.

Zorro Ranch's former housekeeper, Deirdre Stratton, claims that over his three-day stay Andrew spent time with a young, beautiful neurosurgeon who kept him company. The neurosurgeon was Dr Melanie Walker whom Epstein had met while on a visit to New York after she graduated from the University of Texas. He had told her he could get her an audition to model for Victoria's Secret, an offer she turned down, but he had paid for her

medical training and on graduation she had become the part-time science adviser for his foundation, before working in China with the World Health Organization. A former worker at the ranch thought her ‘incredibly charming ... one of the most intelligent figures I ever met in Jeffrey’s world’. She seemed to click with the duke: ‘She knew him better than anyone in that circle. They spent a lot of time together and were inseparable.’

Walker later met Steven Sinofsky, a senior executive at Microsoft, and in 2006 she joined the Gates Foundation. It was Walker who reputedly introduced Jeffrey Epstein to Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates with whom he was to become involved in several charitable ventures. She later became a professor of neurological surgery at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Walker had been one of the guests at Andrew’s fortieth birthday party the previous June. Interviewed in 2003, she claimed: ‘I’ve known Andrew almost five years. He is a good friend but that’s all it is ... I probably see him for dinner at least once a year ... He has a reputation as a womanising sort of guy. But he’s not ... He calls me Mel and addresses me “Hey dork” or “smarty pants” ... We speak mostly about science and medicine.’

In December 2000, Epstein, Ghislaine, Tom Pritzker,[†] a woman called Kelly Spamm and an unnamed ‘female’ landed at RAF Marham for a two-day shooting party at Sandringham – Epstein in L.L.Bean hunting boots and thousand-dollar leather parka – where Andrew threw a surprise thirty-ninth birthday party for Ghislaine.

The arrangement to allow the plane to land at the base was described as ‘unusual’ by civil aviation sources, as Marham is the RAF’s biggest frontline base and home to four Tornado squadrons. The Ministry of Defence insisted, however, that Epstein had been given no special treatment, and that civil aircraft were ‘routinely’ allowed to land there.

On Boxing Day Andrew boarded another plane, having accepted an invitation to stay at the Amanpuri Resort in Phuket, the most expensive and exclusive hotel in Asia, where he was photographed on a yacht surrounded by topless women and having a water fight with the socialite Normandie Keith. The cuttings were faxed to Sarah, who was skiing in Verbier. There were reports he had wandered around the go-go bars in the red-light district

and attended a party thrown by Japanese fashion guru Kenzo Takada at which most of the guests wore G-strings – Andrew wore a towelling toga.

Andrew was drifting. A royal source let it be known that the duke was ‘not the most intelligent of men’ and was easily led: ‘There is the spectre of drugs hanging over almost everyone he’s now associating with and almost everywhere he goes and it is really not something a man of his position – and a father of two young daughters – should be getting involved in.’

Under the headline ‘Topless Beauties and Exotic Party Animals ... Welcome to Andy’s Troubling New Realm’, the *Daily Express* called for the prince to be given a proper role. Having spent most of his life in institutions of some kind, from school to the navy, he lacked the ability to manage his own life. Without the discipline of a timetable or a set of orders, he appeared rudderless. ‘The solution lies in finding him something to do and that function has to be found immediately,’ opined the tabloid.

Andrew’s new lifestyle could be traced back to his closer relationship with Ghislaine Maxwell. Over the previous year he had been on eight different breaks with her, with Jeffrey Epstein joining them on five of them.

It was Ghislaine who had introduced Andrew to many of those women, with whom he had had brief flings, but she had also drawn him further into Epstein’s net. A friend of Andrew’s, close to his ex-wife, could see exactly what was happening: ‘Ghislaine is manipulating him and he’s too naive to realise it. She’s his social fixer and he’s going along with it – why? Because I think Epstein’s fantastically impressed by it all. It’s all very premeditated.’

The friend called Andrew a poor judge of character, easily impressed, and characterised him as going from being a couch potato to ‘man about town, with nothing better to do than go from one holiday to the next ... Ghislaine absolutely indulges him in whatever he wants to do next.’

When the duchess was working in America, Andrew stayed up at Buckingham Palace in the week ‘so he could go out to clubs’, not even returning to look after the children while their mother was away, according to the friend. ‘He’s spiralling out of control. He’s even started dressing like a 25-year-old in jeans and blazer ... He’s started having a girl massage him and manicure his toes. He even travels abroad with his own massage mattress. Please!’

In a few short months Andrew Duke of York had embarked on a heady lifestyle in which he appeared to be rediscovering his youth, hooked by the

wealth and reach of new friends and the doors they could open. It was to be a dangerous combination.

RECOLLECTIONS MAY VARY

In March 2001, Jeffrey Epstein paid for a six-week trip for one of the girls who worked for him. Virginia Roberts, subsequently Giuffre, born in August 1983, was seventeen. At the age of fourteen, she had briefly lived on the streets and been taken up by a sixty-five-year-old sex trafficker, Ron Eppinger, with whom she had lived for six months – he later pleaded guilty to alien smuggling for prostitution, interstate travel for prostitution and money laundering.

Reunited with her father, who worked as a maintenance manager at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort, Roberts had found work there as a spa attendant. In mid-2000 she met Ghislaine Maxwell at the club, and the socialite offered her a job, supposedly as a travelling masseuse for Jeffrey Epstein, but which would turn out to be her providing sexual services for his associates.

In advance of the trip that she was about to take, Andrew picked out Virginia Roberts from several pictures emailed to him by Ghislaine, as if ordering from a catalogue. The trip took in Paris, Spain and Tangier before arriving in London on 9 March. According to Roberts, she stayed at Maxwell's house in Kinnerton Street in Belgravia:

Where, on their first morning, a 'chirpy' Maxwell allegedly jumped on her bed and said, 'Get up, sleepyhead, you've got a big day. We've got to go shopping. You need a dress, as you're going to dance with a prince tonight.'

She was told to 'be "smiley" and "bubbly" because he was the Queen's son'. After a shopping spree at Burberry, they returned to Maxwell's home, where Virginia showered and dressed before joining her hosts at around 4 p.m.

When I went downstairs, Ghislaine and Jeffrey were in the lounge. There was a knock at the door. Ghislaine led Andrew in, and we kissed each other on the cheek. Ghislaine served tea from

a porcelain pot and biscuits. She knew Sarah Ferguson, and they talked fondly about Andrew's daughters.

The four of them went to dinner, then to the private nightclub Tramp, where, Virginia said, Andrew danced with her. 'Prince Andrew was like, "Let's dance together", and I was like, "OK", and he was a hideous dancer,' she claimed in an interview with NBC News in 2019. 'He was sweating profusely all over me.'

After an hour and a half at Tramp, they returned to Maxwell's home. 'All of us went upstairs, and I asked Jeffrey to snap a picture of me with the prince,' Roberts said. 'I wanted something to show my mom.'

The picture, which was to remain unknown for a decade, would prove Andrew's downfall.

* The duchess stayed three times in the year to April 2000.

† Then chairman of Hyatt Hotels, who Virginia Giuffre later claimed she was forced to have sex with.

V

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES

INTO THE WIDE WORLD

In April 2001 Andrew left his role in the Directorate of Naval Operations, a job that had been created for him so that he could be promoted and that then ceased to exist. He had moved to the Ministry of Defence at the beginning of 1997 as a Staff Officer in the Directorate with specific responsibility for frigate and destroyer aviation, the operational effectiveness of ships' helicopter flights – the Lynx helicopters on the backs of frigates and destroyers – procurement and possible naval roles for airships. He had also taken his turn as a duty officer as part of the MOD's crisis management organisation.

In April 1998 Andrew had also finally been promoted to Commander, and at the end of the month had taken up an appointment within the MOD's Naval Staff, with responsibility for naval diplomacy with the rest of the world. It was a job where being a member of the Royal Family was seen as an asset, and had been created for him.

Despite his original plan to leave the Directorate of Naval Operations in 1999 on completion of his twenty years, he had signed up for another possible fourteen, with his pay rising by £9,000 to £45,000 a year. It was said Charles had 'talked' to a few admirals, who now realised the benefits to the Royal Navy of retaining a member of the Royal Family. There was also a suspicion the Royal Family had been only too happy to keep Andrew within the structure and discipline of the Royal Navy.

There had been complaints from fellow officers that he had been promoted on the Special List rather than the normal twice-yearly promotion lists and had been given preferential treatment. A colleague said of his promotion: 'It seems there is one rule for the Prince and one for the rest of

us. Everyone knows that he only got this job because it is a swan-about and will enable him to travel the world, shaking hands and playing golf.'

The feeling was that Andrew wasn't up to being made a commander at sea with his own ship, so instead of him leaving the navy, he had been found a 'cushy desk job' that didn't involve too much work.

As if to prove the point, on his second day in post the new commander was playing eighteen holes at Royal Blackheath Golf Club in an inter-forces tournament.

Andrew's eventual leaving was marked by an interview with the MOD's in-house journal *Focus*, in which he claimed to be working fourteen-hour days.

It became very evident in the summer of last year that I was doing too much ... I was feeling tired! No, no, no, it was just doing little things, you're not always on peak performance. But that's the way the cookie crumbles and you just get on with it.

'It is fair to say that the duke's talk of exhausting fourteen-hour days has caused a fair degree of mirth here,' said one former colleague, with another adding: 'He always leaves here with the rest of us at six.'

His spokesman and the MOD defended Andrew's claim, suggesting in different statements that it only referred to days when he was doing royal duties and when he had commanded HMS *Cottesmore*. One newspaper helpfully pointed out that in the previous month he had had a fortnight in the Bahamas with his ex-wife and daughters, a weekend in Portugal golfing, three days in Spain at a charity golf match, with expenses covered by British businessman Martyn Abib, and three days in New York with Ghislaine Maxwell. He had then decided to stay on in Miami at Jeffrey Epstein's beach house rather than return for Eugenie's twelfth birthday party at Disneyland Paris.

His retirement was marked by an article looking at the business interests of royals in the wake of a sting operation by the *News of the World* on the then Countess of Wessex. The *Guardian* noted, 'He is known for his enjoyment of leisure pursuits, and officials believe there must be strict rules to limit his foreign trips to business interests. "It would be a disaster again if he combined business and pleasure," one royal source said.'

On 10 April 2001, sixty-five MPs signed a motion calling on the Royal Family to set up a register of royal interests, setting out their business affairs for public inspection. It had the support of Chris Smith, the culture secretary, who said: 'The necessity of all of us, be we MPs or indeed, members of the Royal Family, to operate at all times with the highest degree of probity, is something that we all need to bear in mind.'

Though the Palace did conduct a review of royal business interests, with a view to setting out rules, not least for Prince Andrew, no register was ever set up.

In September 2001 Andrew officially took up his new role as special representative for international trade and investment, succeeding the Duke of Kent, who had held the post since 1976. The role, for which he had been preparing with a familiarisation and orientation programme since April, was unpaid, but he received a stipend of £249,000 a year from his mother, as well as his naval pension, and he was entitled to claim expenses.

It was felt a senior royal could be useful in promoting British trade interests abroad, especially in countries with respect for monarchies, such as the Middle East. Andrew would be directed by ministers working in conjunction with the board.

An assistant private secretary with trade experience was seconded from the Foreign Office to support him. Initially this was Stephen Harrison, appointed for a period of thirty months, but it was twice extended at Andrew's request, so that Harrison served from May 2001 to May 2005, when he was made deputy ambassador in Bahrain. Harrison was succeeded by Robin Ord-Smith.

The appointment came with the support of the Queen and the endorsement of the former trade secretary, Peter Mandelson, whom the duke had first got to know working for the NSPCC campaign and as a friend of Evelyn de Rothschild and Lynn Forester – the men had been the two witnesses at the Rothschild marriage in November 2000.

Senior Foreign Office sources declared that Prince Andrew would be kept on a tight rein to ensure he had no opportunity to let his personal interests interfere with his official duties as the figurehead of the export industry: 'There is no way that we will let British trade policy be determined by the location of the world's best golf courses.'

It was also claimed that Prince Charles was trying to block Andrew's new role as 'a disaster waiting to happen' on the grounds that his brother simply couldn't be trusted not to disgrace himself. A Palace source said that the Prince of Wales was extremely concerned about Andrew's playboy image: 'He thinks he won't be able to resist the temptation of mixing business with pleasure. This is a high-profile appointment which demands tact and discretion.'

To help Andrew promote a more serious image, Lynn Rothschild in May had arranged a dinner party to introduce him to New York society. Among those invited to the Atlas Restaurant overlooking Central Park were the TV interviewer Barbara Walters, journalist Tina Brown, columnist Liz Smith and Howard Stringer, chairman of Sony, as well as cosmetics king Leonard Lauder and media baron Mort Zuckerman.

There was a secondary reason, as a friend of the duchess claimed: 'Fergie and a lot of other people who love Andrew believe that his friendship with Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein (her former lover) has become really dangerous. They're using him just for his name and access and he is so innocent and naïve that he doesn't realise they have ulterior motives.'

'One has to think that this is all great promotion for Ghislaine and Epstein, who's a real wheeler-dealer,' said a friend of Sarah. 'A lot of the time when Andrew is photographed, Ghislaine is right there in the same frame. There is going to be a very determined effort to break the hold that Ghislaine and her set have over him and to make it known that he is a serious person.'

Part of those plans included Andrew being given use of the Rothschilds' New York apartment, rather than staying with Epstein, and the duchess authorising her PR team to brief the press about Maxwell's increasing hold on her ex-husband, jealous that she had lost her influence over Andrew. Sarah, who had leveraged the improvement of her image in the US to secure a better image in the UK, was very much behind the rebranding exercise, amid growing concern about the company her ex-husband was keeping and how it was impacting her own reputation – and money-making opportunities – in America.

The dinner party was judged a success, with Liz Smith praising Andrew in her column as being very friendly and amusing and movie-star attractive: 'I think that he is going to become very well-liked.' She remarked on the

incredible recovery he was making, considering him well on the way to rehabilitating himself, 'like Fergie, as a solid citizen'.

‘THERE MUST BE SOMEONE OUT THERE WHO’S NUTS!’

At the beginning of 2002 the duchess published *Energy Breakthrough*, a motivational weight-loss book. She was again a size ten, having lost twenty-two pounds over the previous five months through a rigorous exercise regime, which included forty-five minutes of power-cycling daily, working out in the gym four times a week, Pilates and yoga. Again she played the chat-show circuit, promoting Chances for Children, repeating how she had been abandoned as a child by her mother and how, as a result, taken to comfort eating. Asked by Larry King – who addressed her as ‘Your Highness’ – whether there was a man in her life, she replied, ‘Well, I’ll just say that I am very happy.’

In the autumn of 2001 she had ended the relationship with della Gherardesca, though they continued to work together developing a 360-hectare Tuscan property, a former pig farm, which they planned to turn into a holistic health spa, organic farm and winery.

There was indeed a man in her life. In November she had begun dating Rupert Beckwith-Smith, the brother of her old flatmate, Carolyn Beckwith-Smith, later Cotterell, after they grew close fundraising for cancer charities in Carolyn’s name – others say they met again at a bonfire party or mutual friend’s wedding.

A racing driver, who dabbled in Ferraris and property, he had been a contemporary of Andrew at Heatherdown. The relationship was very much on-off, partly because he shied away from the limelight and still had feelings for a former girlfriend, and partly because the duchess was commuting extensively between Britain and the United States.

Asked in an interview if she would go out with George Clooney, she replied, ‘Are pork chops greasy?’ Told she could have three days with him, she suggested they might go to Costa Rica. ‘We’d have good dinners, we’d

take walks along the beach.’ She then paused, worried ‘he might become bored with me after five minutes. But then I could go scuba diving.’

As Sarah, a woman who needed love and attention, told a newspaper shortly afterwards: ‘It would be nice to have someone who loved me so much it didn’t matter. There must be someone out there who’s nuts!’

Meanwhile, Ryan Parry, a journalist who had secured a job as a footman at the Palace, revealed in a series of articles that ‘Prince Andrew had lately been entertaining a succession of young women in his bijou apartment at Buckingham Palace.’ New relationships had included Emma Gibbs, an Australian who worked in public relations, ex-*Vogue Living* journalist Nicci Brown, whom he had courted in Australia, and American news anchor and actress, Cynthia Gouw.

At the beginning of 2002, he had met a twenty-five-year-old Lebanese PR woman, Christina Keserwan, in Morocco. A keen horsewoman, she had a key role in the racehorse breeding team of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, son of the UAE’s president. They met several times, including for ‘a secret night of passion at Buckingham Palace’ and at Sunninghill, when she was in London in April, May and July, and he joined her at two cocktail parties at the Farnborough Air Show.

The relationship continued through the autumn, with Andrew seeing her six times over ten days in September, sending a car and driver to her hotel so she could ‘discreetly join him for candlelit dinners at Buckingham Palace without arousing suspicion’. Asked about the relationship, she replied, ‘He is a friend and we have met on a few occasions. It’s just a friendship, a normal friendship, not a love friendship. I don’t want to say anymore.’

In December 2001 Andrew had invited the actress and model Lisa B, to Sandringham. A Palace spokesman denied any romance, but a few weeks later the duke was spotted arriving and leaving by a fire escape to avoid notice after dining with her at Mayfair’s La Cave. A half-Puerto-Rican, quarter-Irish and quarter-Italian model and actress ten years younger than the duke, she had been born Lisa Barbuscia in a tough area of Brooklyn – her brother had been jailed for armed robbery. She was as well known for her former boyfriends, who supposedly included Mick Jagger and Bruce Willis, as for her appearances in *Bridget Jones’s Diary* and *Highlander Endgame*. Before Lisa B, in November the prince had met the twenty-eight-year-old businesswoman Amanda Staveley, while visiting the Cambridge

business park, and this was to be a much more substantial relationship, which would lead to him proposing marriage. Thirteen years younger than Andrew, the daughter of a Yorkshire landowner, she had briefly read languages at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. Always entrepreneurial, she left after a year, set up a private equity firm, PCP Capital Partners, and made her first million by the age of twenty-four.

Andrew clocked her immediately, took her number and invited her to Buckingham Palace. But she was then involved with someone else and, though she and Andrew had a few dates, the relationship would only really take off in 2003. Both proved useful to each other in terms of swapping business contacts.

Staveley insisted he was quite different from the image presented by the press, which, she said, didn't give him credit for what he did, working on behalf of small companies and businesses all over the world. He called her 'darling', she called him 'babe' and was sufficiently enamoured to take golf lessons. Both sets of parents were keen on the match and she took soundings about what her new life might mean, including with journalist Richard Kay, 'but to become the Duchess of York she'd have had to put herself in the background and give up her career, and she didn't want to do that'.

HIS BUFFOON HIGHNESS

At the beginning of October, Andrew made one of his first trips as special representative. Accompanied by his equerry Robert Olney, assistant private secretary Stephen Harrison, two protection officers, lady clerk and valet, he spent two days in Bahrain, working closely with the ambassador, Peter Ford, and his deputy Simon Wilson.

The latter had first met the duke in 1993, when he was posted to Lisbon and Andrew had visited as captain of HMS *Cottesmore*. Wilson recalled the duke's reaction to his wife who bore a faint resemblance to Sarah Ferguson: his wife soon became 'the butt of a number of schoolboy jokes by the prince', who even suggested she had 'touched him up' under the table. 'This was our first introduction to his boorish behaviour,' said the diplomat.

Top of the agenda for the visit was the sale of British-made Hawk aircraft, but to everyone's astonishment Andrew ignored his official brief and suggested to the king, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, that it made better financial sense to lease them. The Bahrain government did subsequently buy the aircraft four years later, but not thanks to this trip. Wilson recalled the duke being known among the British diplomatic - community in the Gulf as 'HBH: His Buffoon Highness'. The nickname 'stemmed from his childish obsession with doing exactly the opposite of what had been agreed in pre-visit meetings with his staff. He frequently refused to follow his brief – we wondered if he had actually read it – and appeared to regard himself as an expert in every matter.'

Despite 'copious' meetings in advance of any visit, including briefings by senior officials from the Department of Trade and Industry, 'the Prince usually ignored all advice and plunged straight in'.

Andrew's arrival in the Gulf was such that it became part of the folklore of the diplomatic service 'because of the reams of instructions about his likes and dislikes – ranging from demands that the drinking water should be served at room temperature to detailed food preferences'. Wilson also recalled the duke deciding at the last moment not to speak to the British business community as planned: 'He didn't give a reason. Instead, he patted the British ambassador on the head twice and announced to everyone present that this was the chap – not him – whose job it was to promote UK business.'

Andrew also used the opportunity of the visit to hawk his own house around during meetings with Gulf royals. Said Wilson, 'His private secretary had sounded people out about it in advance on a recce visit. When I queried the ethics of this, his assistant private secretary told me that the head of the Foreign Office had personally authorised this exceptional lobbying.'

NEW BEGINNINGS

At the beginning of November the trial of Princess Diana's butler Paul Burrell collapsed. He had been accused of selling some of her belongings, but it turned out the Queen had given permission for him to do so. There

were also allegations of a homosexual rape by a senior royal aide. Sarah had been due to appear on Michael Parkinson's chat show, but postponed her appearance – some said on the orders of the Palace.

The first of three books she published in 2003 came out in January. *What I Know Now: Simple Lessons Learned the Hard Way*, written again with Jeff Coplon, was published by Simon & Schuster. Aged forty-three, the duchess had chosen to reflect on her life, having 'reached some perspective on those twists and turns'. She talked about paring away 'the false and inessential – my penchant for overdoing, my need to be accepted, my impulse for the rash and brash. I'm getting to the nub of me and I like what I'm finding there.'

She also brought out the first in a four-part children's series called *Little Red*, the adventures of a red-haired rag doll based on a doll found in the remains of the World Trade Center.* After a spokesman for the American charity 9/11 Widows said it was 'in bad taste to profit from the events of September 11 in any way', Sarah's representative Gerry Casanova claimed she would be splitting the profits – estimated to be up to £1 million – with the illustrator. 'I don't know whether they have worked out what the charity portion will be – if there is one', he said. 'It may not really earn very much.' Proceeds ostensibly went to Chances for Children.

There was also a book of photographs, *Moments: Reflections in Words and Pictures*, a mixture of family snaps and pictures taken on her travels, accompanied by lines of poetry from famous writers, with an introduction by photographer Herb Ritts and monies going to Children in Crisis.

Tied into the publication of *What I Know Now*, Sarah was profiled in *You Magazine* the following month, trailed as 'one of the most remarkable comeback stories of our time', having lost nearly four stone through dieting and working off her debt. She talked about her childhood, having carried everything on her shoulders until she was forty – 'the loss of the baby and the breakdown of my mother and father's marriage'. She said she had used food and her sense of humour to mask the pain: 'I really believed that if I didn't behave and perform, then it would get worse.'

She said that going through the Weight Watchers therapy had helped: 'For almost 30 years, I had seen myself as a freak, the completely dreadful freak who let down the monarchy, who was always being too spontaneous,

never thinking, always making mistakes. I could see the way I was, but I had never understood it.'

She also came to understand and forgive her mother. Speaking to *Woman's Day* magazine the same month, the duchess said: 'There will definitely be another baby for me. If I don't meet someone before menopause, I will adopt.'

If it was a time for new beginnings, it was also marked by a passing of the old. On 16 March 2003, Ronald Ferguson died of skin and prostate cancer at the age of seventy-one. Sarah heard the news in Bangkok en route to Australia to give a Weight Watchers speech.

Her relationship with her father – he called her GB or Ginger Bush, she knew him as Dads – had been complex. It was Ron who had struggled to bring up two young girls when their mother suddenly left, which had created a strong bond, but he had also proved to be an embarrassment. His autobiography in 1994 left her, as she later wrote, with little sense of irony or self-awareness: 'Feeling totally forlorn, irretrievably alone. It wasn't the content of what Dads had written. It was the fact that he had traded upon our relationship for a few thousand pounds, without so much as consulting with me. He had taken my most cherished possession, my privacy, and auctioned it off, as though it were his seigniorial right.'

AIR MILES ANDY

Meanwhile Andrew's liberal use of jets continued to attract criticism and overshadow his role as special representative.

At the beginning of May 2003, he had used a six-seater Queen's Flight aircraft at a cost of £4,352 to fly to the Royal & Ancient Golf Club in St Andrews, when a commercial flight would have cost a tenth of the expense. The British Aerospace 146 had waited on the runway at RAF Leuchars for eleven hours while he enjoyed lunch and eight holes on the Old Course, before rounding the day off with a black-tie dinner.†

In June he chartered a helicopter at a cost of £2,939 for a fifty-six-mile journey to Oxford, which would have taken seventy-five minutes by car. The annual royal accounts showed his eight-day trip to Uruguay, Chile and the Falkland Islands, during which he had detoured to Brazil to stay with

business partner Johan Eliasch, which was not on the itinerary, had cost the taxpayer £130,211 – more than any of the engagements carried out by more senior royals.

In February the following year he chartered a helicopter to fly the eighty-six miles to an engagement in Kent at a cost of £3,321 and the next month spent £3,662 on a helicopter from Ascot for a single event at the Small Arms School Corps in Warminster – a simple seventy-eight-mile drive down the M4.

In June 2004 Andrew was several hours late hosting a royal garden party at Hillsborough Castle, after playing golf at the Royal Belfast Club, before going on to a golf dinner at the Royal & Ancient, where he had recently been made Captain, instead of joining events to mark the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day. Ian Davidson, a member of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, was incensed: ‘Everyone understands that there will be circumstances where flights are better for security reasons or speed, but royal engagements should not be tacked on as an afterthought to golf trips.’

A week’s visit to the Caribbean for the celebrations marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the independence of St Lucia in a jet from the Queen’s Flight had cost £107,239, plus £17,288 in scheduled air fares and another £90,001 for an RAF BAe to shuttle him between islands. In April, though he was only taking five people, Andrew had chartered a twelve-seater plane for an eleven-day business trip to the United States at a cost of just under £100,000, compared to £3,000 for scheduled flights for the party.

In January 2005 the National Audit Office investigated forty-one of the duke’s journeys over the previous twelve months, noting he had run up a £325,000 bill hiring helicopters and planes. It included a £3,000 bill for a helicopter to a business lunch with the Omani-British Friendship Association in Oxford fifty miles away, when the train would have cost under £100, and chartering a helicopter at a cost of £681 to take him thirty-five miles to visit a baby lotion firm, when the train would have been £17.

Some £32,000 was spent on three trips to golfing events to St Andrews. In one case he spent £4,645 to take an RAF jet to the R&A, instead of a £254 commercial flight, so that he could finish eighteen holes and, according to his aides, rush back to London. His next official engagement was not for another four days.

Comptroller and Auditor General Sir John Bourn, who headed the inquiry, was told by royal aides that the prince was reluctant to go by rail because the service was too ‘unreliable’, though other royals regularly used trains. The *Daily Mail* argued that, while politicians also abused the use of private jets – Tony Blair had recently used an RAF jet to take his family and retinue on a private visit to Egypt at a cost of £100,000 – Andrew’s behaviour was bringing the monarchy into disrepute. The paper suggested he was ‘a small bomb threatening to detonate in the bosom of the Royal Family’.

When the *Mail on Sunday* contacted UK Trade & Investment, in an attempt to investigate the costs of the duke’s travel, the government department refused to respond on the grounds that it did not keep a central list of his visits. The paper applied for the details under Freedom of Information. After four weeks – during which the request was passed between the Department of Trade and Industry, the Cabinet Office and Buckingham Palace, and caused ‘a hell of a fuss’, according to one civil servant – officials responded by saying the details were already available on the website, www.royal.gov.uk. The paper found only thirty-two of Andrew’s trips listed out of a total of 267 trade-related engagements he made in 2004.

At the end of March that year, the duke was in Saudia Arabia in his role as special representative, but stayed on for the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix, where he was joined by family members. A few days later he visited the Masters golf tournament in Georgia, paid for by the sport’s ruling body. In April he undertook a five-day trip to China, the first senior member of the Royal Family since the Queen to visit since 1986, mainly at the request of British oil and gas companies, but also to see the £170 million circuit being built in Shanghai for China’s first Grand Prix.

Formula One races already took place in Malaysia, Japan and Singapore but F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone had been keen to include China – ‘The potential revenues were massive,’ said China expert Paul French. ‘Nobody in China had ever heard of Ecclestone, there was no motor racing culture’, so for that reason Prince Andrew had to be ‘Ecclestone’s point man ... Andrew was really the deal closer – there had been talks about a Chinese GP since 1999, but Ecclestone could never quite close the deal. Andrew helped with that.’

One diplomat, involved with organising the visit, remembered how other members of the Royal Family travelled relatively simply but Andrew, with a large retinue, insisted on staying in the Presidential Suite of a five-star hotel. 'He was very self-important and conscious of his status and insisted on holding each day in his suite a lavish and unnecessary planning breakfast yet he did not seem to have been briefed or have any interest in being briefed.'

The visit had been imposed on the embassy and the diplomat felt that everyone was simply going through the motions – UKTI sending him out, the embassy hosting him and Andrew appearing. 'He showed no interest in his role nor in the country and his reputation preceded him. No one wanted to meet him but by dint of calling in favours something was arranged but it was awkward.'

At one event the duke picked an inoffensive British businessman, barging into his personal space and quizzing him aggressively. After the poor man had mentioned 'leadership training', Andrew had stiffened with anger, suggesting that leadership could not be taught – the inference being one was either a natural leader, like him, or not.

The writer Catherine Mayer accompanied the duke to China, the only journalist on the trip, and she got to know him well. She did not take him seriously and openly mocked him, accusing him of living on 'Planet Windsor' and suffering from a lack of self-awareness and emotional intelligence: 'I felt sorry for him. He's of low intelligence and the reason he was the favourite of the Queen was because he was her most vulnerable child.'

Though the duke often ignored his briefs, she conceded, 'he certainly opened doors and was prepared to do the boring stuff', but she tired of the practical jokes, the 'childlike behaviour like Lord of the Flies', and how proud he was of 'weird things', telling her, refreshed from a night in first class, that he could sleep anywhere. At one point Andrew made a revealing admission, saying to Mayer: 'I wish I could have been a plumber because I can fix things.'

Graham Cowperthwaite, then a director of one of the companies Andrew visited on the Russian island of Sakhalin, however, found him affable and interested in technology and his appearance helped, garnering Cowperthwaite's respect for his promotion of the oil industry.

But the duke's poor publicity began to have an impact on his public appointments. There had been speculation he would be appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a ceremonial post going back to the twelfth century, which had been held by the Queen Mother from 1978 to 2002. It went to a former Admiral of the Fleet, Michael Boyce, instead. At the beginning of 2004 Andrew was axed as chairman of the NSPCC's fundraising campaign Full Stop, and shifted to simply being a royal patron.

Part of the problem was the difficulty in drawing a direct correlation between Andrew's interventions as special representative and securing a contract. His press spokespeople were also keen to stress that 190 of the 200 engagements he had undertaken for UKTI in the previous year had been in Britain and that often, through necessity, networking took place on golf courses.

Amanda Thirsk, a Cambridge law graduate and former banker, was brought in to the duke's private office to keep an eye on expenditure. She was to prove one of his most influential supporters, but also to help destroy his public reputation.

‘IS THAT A SURFBOARD YOU’VE PACKED?’

In 2002 Andrew had met Louise MacBain at an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in London and soon became a regular nocturnal visitor to her Holland Park home, in a relationship that was to last several years.

Divorced from a Canadian millionaire, John MacBain, who had made his money setting up *Auto Trader*, she had established herself on the British art scene as an equal in wealth and influence to Charles Saatchi. Worth an estimated £250 million and named as the twenty-fifth richest woman in the world by the *Sunday Times*, she had been chief executive of Phillips de Pury, a London auction house owned by her then boyfriend, Simon de Pury.

In spring 2004 Andrew invited her to a gala dinner at Kensington Palace. Guests were instructed to arrive at seven o'clock but she didn't get there until three hours later. According to a friend, MacBain 'went ballistic', demanding to be driven straight through security. However, as she made her entrance she discovered that in her absence someone else had been seated next to Andrew. MacBain told the woman to move.

Andrew did not appear to mind. As one of his closest aides explained: 'He's always gone for dominant, controlling women. It stems from his upbringing. His life has always been full of strong, mother figures: his grandmother, his mother, his nannies ... And Louise is a very glamorous, strong, woman.'

In June the duke flew to the States for various official engagements, before flying in MacBain's private jet to her home, La Dune, on Long Island, just fifteen minutes from the US Open golf tournament in Shinnecock Hills, which was the public purpose of his visit. She was struck by one particular piece of luggage that, she assumed, confirmed her royal lover's sporting prowess. 'Is that a surfboard you've packed?' she asked. 'No,' came the embarrassed response, 'it's an ironing board. We never know what circumstances we'll find when we travel. We have to be prepared for every eventuality.'

In anticipation of his arrival, MacBain had replanted the trees lining her sweeping drive, had all the exterior woodwork on the house and pool areas freshly painted and, in an attempt to bond with her lover, had taken golf lessons. She told a close friend that 'being with him would change her life and her children's lives'.

She provided him with massages from her resident masseur and a daily Pilates session with a personal instructor. They watched *The Lord of the Rings* in the mansion's private cinema, took walks along the beach and one night toasted marshmallows in the moonlight after a groundsman had set up a bonfire on the sand. By the end of that week she was head over heels in love and introducing Andrew to friends as her 'boyfriend', but in October 2005, after one final night of passion at her home in Holland Park, he ended their affair. Only his silence in the months that followed made her realise her dream was over.

ROYAL LODGE

In March 2002 the Queen Mother, previously the Duchess of York, had died aged 101. Her home since 1936 had been Royal Lodge, part of the Crown Estate, and a new occupant was sought. Despite already having Sunninghill,

Andrew became the new tenant. Some said Prince Edward had had his eyes on it.

Originally it had been thought the duke inherited the mansion from his grandmother, but it emerged that he bought it – the full price for the seventy-five-year lease remains secret, but Land Registry documents include a ‘premium payment’ by him of £1 million – with no other bidders sought, and on a peppercorn rent in return for restoring the Lodge. With the property valued at £20 million, the estimated market rent would be £260,000 a year.

Labour MP Ian Davidson described the sale as ‘extremely dubious’ and called for an inquiry. ‘We can’t have any suggestion of members of the Royal Family engaging in the property equivalent of insider trading if that means the taxpayer losing money,’ he said. A National Audit Office report admitted, ‘The Crown Estate could have offered up the lease option to the wider market but did not because of the sensitive location and security concerns.’

Though there had been a house on the site of Royal Lodge since the seventeenth century – George IV had used it as a hunting lodge – the current Grade II listed building dates mostly from the 1840s. Set in almost a hundred acres of grounds in Windsor Great Park and about three miles from Windsor Castle, it has thirty rooms, including seven bedrooms and a salon measuring forty-eight feet by thirty.

The building had hardly been touched since the 1930s so a three-year major renovation began which had cost Andrew up to £7.5 million and required him to take out a mortgage against Sunninghill. The house was painted white from pink, and a swimming pool, driving range and golf course added. There were further delays when it was discovered that several of the builders had criminal records and half of the twenty-eight-strong workforce had to be replaced. Andrew eventually moved in to the house in March 2005.

Also moving in was the Duchess of York, for whom her ex-husband had provided a luxurious four-bedroom apartment, and from where she continues to run her office in the billiards room. ‘You couldn’t shift her with dynamite,’ said one family friend. ‘Each time she says she’s gone, she’s back almost immediately.’

PAOLO LIUZZO

In July 2005, while enjoying their annual two-week stay at Paddy McNally's villa in the South of France, the duchess and her family were joined by twenty-three-year-old Paolo Liuzzo, her teenage daughter Beatrice's new boyfriend, whom she had met a fortnight before. Liuzzo had a chequered past, having been charged with manslaughter after killing another student in a fight. Driving from Geneva, he brought with him some friends who proceeded to have a good time – Liuzzo spent thirty thousand euros one evening entertaining the party at Club 55 in Saint-Tropez.

The duchess then invited him to join her and her two daughters a month later – taking a holiday at Richard Branson's safari ranch in South Africa in between – at Round Hill, an exclusive resort of villas, in Jamaica. Liuzzo later sold an account of his two trips to a newspaper, claiming the duchess had encouraged his relationship with Beatrice and exposed her daughter to people who took drugs, including cannabis, much to the Queen's concern.

It was perhaps a topic of conversation at Balmoral later that month when Sarah was invited – for the first time since her divorce – to join the Royal Family on their Scottish holiday, partly so she could join in celebrations for Beatrice's seventeenth birthday and partly to keep her onside – a long-term strategy.

The visit was not an unqualified success. According to a highly placed source, 'The Queen was driven to distraction by her daughter-in-law continually spouting "New Age" mumbo jumbo.'

From Balmoral it was off to Sotogrande to stay at 'a luxurious holiday and sports complex – where in return for very little (a visit to a polo match perhaps?) she is given use of a rather grand villa for herself, her children and her entourage.'

Beatrice's new boyfriend Liuzzo was proving to be trouble. In November 2005, a property developer friend of the duchess had lent him her seven-floor mansion awaiting refurbishment in Eaton Square to hold raves for some four hundred people, charging £25 a head. The owner had to spend £7,000 cleaning the house afterwards.

But Sarah stayed loyal to her daughter's boyfriend, calling herself his 'second mother' and accompanying the young couple as they drank and

partied. The Royal Family were less supportive. In May 2006, on the orders of the Queen, Beatrice ended the relationship.

Liuzzo revealed that every New Year Andrew had gone through a ten-day cleansing process during which he was massaged with oils to detoxify him; that one of Andrew's lovers, a Norwegian, was once challenged as an intruder in the grounds of Buckingham Palace; that another lover was a half-Thai model; that Andrew's solution to the squirrel problem at Royal Lodge had been to ask his PPOs to shoot them; and that Bea had told him: 'Daddy loves Mummy more than Mummy loves Daddy. But Mummy lives for her title and she loses her title if Daddy remarries.'

Liuzzo admitted that for the ten months he dated Beatrice, he and the duke talked mostly about 'golf and helicopters ... The other topic he talked about was Bea's driving lessons. One evening he got out a manual and was telling her how to enter and yield at roundabouts. It went on for a bloody hour.' Liuzzo also said the duchess authorised him to use the Yorks' business-class-only airway, EOS, which had just launched and gave them free flights, telling him when he needed a flight, 'Talk to my assistant and they'll sort it out.'

Liuzzo lent Andrew \$10,000 – Liuzzo claimed the full debt was never settled – to pay for removal men to move one of the duke's girlfriends, Angie Everhart, out of the New York apartment she shared with her then fiancée. Afterwards, Liuzzo said, he 'was asked to kneel in the drawing room of their Windsor mansion for a mock knighting ceremony'. Impersonating the queen, the Duchess of York handed him a new nickname: 'Sir Fixit'.

Everhart, born in 1969, had made her acting debut with Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Last Action Hero* in 1993 and gone on to star in a number of films, many more sexually explicit than anything Koo Stark had ever appeared in. In February 2000 she had been the cover nude in *Playboy*, and had been linked with a number of high-profile figures. In December 1996, she married George Hamilton's son, Ashley, divorcing him four months later. It was George Hamilton who had fixed up the initial meeting with Andrew, telling his daughter-in-law, 'He likes redheads, and he has a wish list of girls he'd like to meet while he's in town – and you're on it.'

They met the next day and it was a success. She described him as 'lovely', finding it charming that he had never had to put away his own

groceries. The relationship, which probably began in 2003, has supposedly continued to this day, with claims that they speak weekly, if not daily, though its precise nature is unclear. 'Just because I've been linked romantically with him in the past it doesn't mean I am still going to bed with him,' she maintained. 'Whether I am or not is nobody's business but ours.'

A KNIGHT OF THE GARTER

Even though he had left the navy, Andrew continued to receive honorary appointments. In February 2004 he had been made an honorary captain and in 2006 was appointed commodore-in-chief of the Fleet Air Arm. In June of that year he and Prince Edward were made Knights of the Garter, with the duchess, at her first official royal appearance in fourteen years, and their daughters in attendance.

That month he was asked to represent the British monarchy at King Bhumibol's diamond jubilee celebrations in Bangkok. Andrew had fixed a holiday in Vietnam prior to the engagement, so requested a private jet to bring his entourage. The party established themselves at the Grand Hyatt Erawan, where Andrew's room service demands soon came to the attention of Andrew MacGregor Marshall, Reuters' Thailand correspondent who had friends and connections in the hotel:

During his short stay, more than forty women were brought to his room. Often, as soon as one left, another would arrive. Hotel staff were amazed – they are used to foreigners bringing girls to their room, but more than ten a day were going to Andrew's room. And this was all juggled amid official engagements.

Marshall added, explaining their provenance, 'The stories simply came up in conversation because they were genuinely amazed by it.' While Andrew was there, a son of Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa of Bahrain was also in Bangkok for the event, staying at the Oriental Hotel: 'Once each heard they were both in town, the two princes began sending their favourite girls to each other, as a friendly gesture.'

Ian Proud, serving in the embassy at the time, hosted Andrew on four occasions – twice on official business and twice private visits – and got to know him well. He thought Thai hospitality staff were unlikely to have been amazed when it came to stories of bacchanalian exploits: ‘Royals putting it about, given Thailand’s feudal, stratified society and history of polygamy or polyamorous men, suggests that this would have been seen as entirely commonplace and as to be expected ... Indeed, they might have been surprised had he been otherwise.’

Proud remembers on the first official visit in early 2005, after the Indian Ocean tsunami, Andrew being introduced to the political section. The duke showed no interest in the male diplomats nor the three older Thai female members of staff, preferring to focus on Lois Abbott, an attractive blonde in her thirties. One of her colleagues had just been recalled, having been arrested on a plane, high on a mix of whisky and anti-depressants, abusing passengers. Andrew was thrilled by the story. ‘I once knew a Royal Navy officer who was court-martialled for grabbing Margaret Thatcher’s arse,’ he said.

Proud had heard stories about Andrew belittling staff by making jokes and pulling pranks, including ‘ordering that a junior diplomat’s place setting and chair be removed at a Residence dinner ... when that officer briefly stepped out of the room’. He concluded that it was a coping mechanism because the duke did not have anything interesting to offer to a conversation. The jokes and general narcissism were a protective layer Andrew hid behind; they stopped him being exposed as ‘a bit thick and boring’ during more open-ended conversation. ‘I heard of him once boring guests virtually to tears with a serious tale about the failings of the traffic light system in Westminster,’ said Proud.

On his second visit Andrew refused an invitation to stay at the Residence in favour of the Presidential Suite at the Hyatt (‘This required a bit of negotiation as other royal parties also wanted to book it’), not least because Spasso, the dance club in the basement, was one of the duke’s favourite pick-up joints.

Proud recalls Andrew also having ‘a favoured companion, a high-society Thai lady who was in another relationship’ and that she accompanied the duke to his next destination, Chiang Mai. They went together in the ceremonial cavalcade to Bangkok airport and also returned together from

the city of Chiang Mai. It caused embarrassment because she stayed in his official car when he went back to the Hyatt to collect his team before leaving Thailand: ‘After he had gone up to his room, the lady waited in the reception area for a short while until her boyfriend came to collect her.’

The lover was Sonia Couling, a half-Thai model, actress and television personality who later produced and hosted *Thailand’s Next Top Model*. Born in 1974, she had gone to school in England before studying German at University College London and business at the European Business School. In 1999 she had been voted Thailand’s sexiest woman by *FHM* – second in Asia – and three years later won Best Actress in a Lead Role at the TV Gold Awards (the Thai television awards) for her appearance in the series *Maya*. Andrew returned privately twice more to see Couling.

Andrew’s driver would often gossip about his important guest, revealing it was not just women who would be invited to party with the duke. He also had a thing for effeminate young men in their twenties.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

The duchess’s increasingly bizarre behaviour was also beginning to attract attention. At a charity party thrown by the Beckhams, rumoured to have cost £500,000, a guest reported that she ‘certainly seemed to be, shall we say, refreshed. She was hurling herself around the dance floor, trying to dance like Beyoncé Knowles. Bea was rolling her eyes with embarrassment.’

The duchess then tried to chat up David Beckham, before latching on to a good-looking security guard, who ran off pretty quickly. ‘I felt so sorry for Bea having to watch all this. It was like she was the mature one and Sarah was the teenager.’ The duchess had then approached Victoria Beckham, asking: ‘You must tell me your diet secrets. I need to lose some weight.’

Sarah had recently undergone work with a New York-based celebrity dermatologist, ‘Dr Lookgood’, who offered non-surgical treatments, including Botox, collagen, skin-smoothing lasers and, at £300, a ‘bio-nutritive’ luxury cream, at his ‘rejuvenation center’ on Madison Avenue. There was also speculation she had opted for a mini face-lift after the crow’s feet around her eyes disappeared and her lips looked plumper. She

had also undergone teeth-whitening; been treated by celebrity cosmetic surgeon Dr Jean-Louis Sebagh, whose clients included Madonna, Elle Macpherson and actress Meg Ryan; and consulted the ‘Testosterone Queen’, Dr Cecilia Tregear, whose speciality was making women feel and look younger.

Much of this was in preparation for Beatrice’s eighteenth birthday party – a lavish costume ball at Windsor Castle for five hundred, with dinner for 250 earlier – reputed to have cost £400,000. The theme was ‘1888’ to mark the fact that Beatrice had been born a century later. She wore a £10,000 dress that had been designed by Marchesa, the New York fashion house established by Georgina Chapman, wife of Harvey Weinstein.

Weinstein was one of the guests – who were entertained by tarot card readers, contortionists and later by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – alongside Jeffrey Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell, Demi Moore, Kelly and Jack Osbourne, Pixie Geldof, Tania Bryer, David and Carina Frost. The Queen, Prince Charles, Camilla and Princes William and Harry did not attend. Andrew spent much of the evening with Angie Everhart.

The duchess was also promoting her own collection of fake diamond jewellery, with the proceeds going to the Sarah Ferguson Foundation for Children, and she was working with Todd Morley, a millionaire Wall Street banker, on a joint venture called Hartmoor, which she described as ‘a global inspirational lifestyle and wellness company’ that pulled together her intellectual property rights for books, film rights and other branded products.

Morley, the founder of the asset management company Guggenheim Capital, quickly raised \$5 million for her various business ventures, including a children’s TV show. He began to advise her on her personal financial affairs and was made president of the Sarah Ferguson Foundation. She and her daughters bonded with Morley, his wife and three children and the two families spent much time together at his homes on Long Island and Saint-Tropez, but rumours soon began to circulate that they were having an affair – it was said started by Sarah, jealous of Andrew’s relationship with Everhart.

Sarah had launched her own brand of luxury household goods in America. Her ‘Duchess Originals’ – a play on Prince Charles’s Duchy Originals – included teaspoons and bed linen. She was on the books of

Twenty-First Century Speakers, charging \$55,000 a speech, plus first-class expenses for two. There was talk she might compete in *Dancing with the Stars*, the American version of *Strictly Come Dancing*, with her star turn the tango. A senior TV industry executive said that success could make her a household name in the US.

In April 2007 Fergie was paid \$500,000 to give five talks – written for her by one of Bill Clinton’s former speechwriters – on how she had turned her life around by tile manufacturer Porcelanosa, which had hired the *Queen Mary 2* for a six-day crossing from Southampton to New York. It also covered the cost of her entourage, which included a hairdresser, personal trainer, make-up artist, two assistants, a ghostwriter, four staff from Hartmoor and a male business friend. Her financial woes seemed behind her.

BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE

In March 2007 the duke accompanied his friend Johan Eliasch on a private visit to Guyana. Eliasch was a former CEO of sports brand Head and Conservative Party deputy treasurer who was looking into the viability of an eco-tourism venture, as well as possibilities to gain a foothold in the sporting goods markets in Brazil, South America and the Caribbean. The previous year he had bought four hundred thousand acres in the heart of the Amazon rainforest from a logging company in Brazil. Why the United Kingdom’s special representative for international trade and investment was accompanying him is not clear, but from Guyana the duke went on to Brazil, on behalf of UKTI, touring various energy installations and meeting the president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

In São Paulo he opened the Prince Andrew Theatre, a new state-of-the-art building that housed the office of the Cultura Inglesa, the British Consulate-General and the British Council, as well as a library, exhibition galleries, a restaurant and theatre. Norinka Ford, wife of the president of the Cultura Inglesa-São Paulo, remembered the occasion, as Andrew was ushered into the theatre, taking a seat in the front row beside her. If she was expecting HRH to initiate a conversation, she was to be mistaken: ‘Prince Andrew sat

stony-faced and did not address me or the person on his left,' she said. 'We sat in silence.'

They watched a band play Beatles songs, but when it came time for Andrew to make a speech, 'He was very scathing about the Brazilian band, saying they should stick to playing Brazilian music.' After the unveiling of the plaque, they went to a reception, where a group of eminent Brazilians were to be presented to the duke, among them many well-known TV personalities.

As he was being ushered towards the selected group, Andrew stopped to chat to a few people en route, however before Ford was able to introduce him to the VIPs, the duke decided he had had enough. He turned on his heel and headed for the exit – with the British ambassador and the rest of his entourage running after him trying to call the cars and outriders and alert security.

Norinka was left with the task of soothing the disappointed and some very angry celebrities. 'This is obviously just a tiny incident,' she recalled, 'but I always thought that it gave an insight into the kind of person he was. If something was boring, or did not interest him, he would brush it aside without a thought as to how it may have upset people.'

Andrew's travel arrangements continued to generate bad publicity, after he hired a helicopter costing £6,000 to attend the Farnborough Air Show, seventeen miles away, when a car could have travelled there in thirty minutes. In February 2007 it was revealed he had used the Queen's Flight, costing the taxpayer £4,000, to drop him off en route to London on his way back from a conference on renewable energy in Rome to go skiing in Verbier. A Buckingham Palace spokesman insisted the Geneva detour 'fell within the official Royal travel guidelines'. It was later reported that he had made a donation to a 'green company' to cover his carbon footprint, but when pressed his spokesman admitted it was just £30.

Stung by the criticisms of his expenses, the duke told the *Independent*, 'In terms of the return on investment to the UK, bearing in mind I am part of a number of people, I would suggest that £500,000 is cheap at the price.'

Press briefings from his office claimed that of his 446 royal engagements in 2006, 293 were business-related and that companies were keen to use him. Various CEOs were trooped out to support his work. Peter Barlow, finance director of International Power, a FTSE Top 100 firm worth £6.5

billion, felt the prince had exceeded his expectations, and was impressed by his involvement in trying to help clinch a £1.5 billion contract with the Philippines. Though the deal was ultimately won by a Japanese firm, 'the Prince did everything in his powers to help through his contacts'.

'He has helped us win half a billion pounds of business in the last few years,' said Paul Lester, chief executive of engineering and services firm VT Group. Most of that came in orders for naval ships. 'I don't like to use the word but this is what he is: he's a supersalesman. He is a team player. Was it single-handed? Absolutely not? Does he make a difference? Absolutely.'

The CNN journalist Richard Quest, who accompanied Andrew on a trip to Kazakhstan, was equally impressed, having followed him from breakfast through to a delegation dinner in the evening. Andrew was able to 'get you access you don't get with an ordinary person. He met the president; we saw business leaders, oil fields; we went to a hospital that the British Council had been helping.'

While the duke wasn't 'a philosopher like his brother', his twenty years in the Royal Navy made him uniquely qualified for the task, said Quest.

Rolls-Royce executive Sir John Rose felt the duke had 'a real grasp of the importance and potential of engineering, helped enormously by the fact that he knows Rolls-Royce first hand from his service in the Royal Navy as a pilot who flew Rolls-Royce-powered helicopters.'

Asked in 2024 if he still stood by those comments, Rose, now retired, replied, 'No comment.'

THE DUKE OF HAZARDS

The net was closing in on Jeffrey Epstein. In March 2005 a woman had contacted Palm Beach Police claiming her fourteen-year-old stepdaughter had been taken to Epstein's mansion where she had been paid \$300 to undress and give the financier a massage. A FBI investigation was mounted which revealed, after interviewing several girls, a search of the house and its rubbish bins, evidence that forty teenage girls, as young as fourteen, had regularly been brought to the villa, many flown in from abroad, to give Epstein and his guests sexual massages.

Fourteen months later Palm Beach Police recommended that Epstein be charged with four counts of unlawful sex with minors and one count of sexual abuse and in July 2006 he was arrested and charged but only on the lesser offence of procuring a minor for prostitution and solicitation of a prostitute. Defended by a team of lawyers, including Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, Epstein was found guilty solely on the second charge.

In June 2007 the FBI investigation 'Operation Leap Year' produced a fifty-three-page indictment but Epstein's lawyers negotiated immunity from the charges on the grounds of Epstein's claimed intelligence links. It was against this background that examination of the relationship between the financier and the Duke of York began to appear in the press. On 1 June 2007, the *Evening Standard* published an article, 'The Duke of Hazards', outlining how Andrew had stayed with Jeffrey Epstein and in turn invited him to Windsor Castle and Sandringham, and how, according to Florida police, the stairs to Epstein's bedroom were lined with photographs of naked girls and two cameras had been found hidden in clocks.

In September it was reported that Epstein, having pleaded guilty to soliciting underage girls for sex, was likely to spend fifteen months behind bars. The *Mail on Sunday* carried the story of Johanna Sjoberg, who had been recruited six years previously as an occasional home help for Epstein but, after he had paid her college fees, made the down payment on her house and funded her to train as a hairdresser and masseuse, had been induced to perform various sexual services for him.

She recounted being introduced to Andrew at Epstein's seven-storey Manhattan townhouse at Easter 2001. Ghislaine Maxwell had produced a latex puppet of Andrew from a television programme, *Spitting Image*. They had posed for a picture with Virginia Roberts: 'Andrew sat on another chair. I sat on his lap – and he put his hand on my breast. Ghislaine put the puppet's hand on Virginia's breast, then Andrew put his hand on mine. It was a great joke. Everyone laughed.'

Sjoberg soon realised the circles within which Epstein moved. 'I would be massaging him and he'd be on the phone and then hang up and say, "oh that was Cate Blanchett", or "I was on a plane with Clinton." Clinton is definitely a friend of his.'

THE SUNNINGHILL SALE

In September 2007 Sunninghill, which the Queen had given as a wedding gift to her son and had been on the market for five years, was sold to Unity Assets Corporation, based in the British Virgin Islands. The sale was negotiated by a wealthy Kazakh businessman, Kenes Rakishev, and Imangali Tasmagambetov, Rakishev's father-in-law and mayor of Astana.

The buyer, it emerged three years later, was actually Timur Kulibayev, a billionaire oil and gas tycoon and son-in-law of the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, whom Andrew knew well from his countless official and private visits to the country, most recently in May when he had gone goose-shooting with Nazarbayev.

On that occasion the UK's trade envoy had been seen at a bar called Soho in Almaty with senior executives of KazMunaiGas, the state oil and gas company, of which Kulibayev had been a vice-president. According to a witness, Andrew spent most of the evening talking to a 'striking, Russian-looking woman with long black hair. He was totally engrossed. I was surprised to see him there, as Soho can be very sleazy at night.'

The intermediary for the sale had been Goga Ashkenazi whose son, born in 2007, had been fathered by Kulibayev. In June, days after the exchange of contracts for the property, she had been Andrew's guest at Ascot and was introduced to the Queen. There was some surprise that Kulibayev had paid £3 million more than the £12 million asking price, though there had been no other bids, and there were suspicions that there might be more behind the transaction. Buckingham Palace was quick to put out a statement:

The sale of Sunninghill Park was a straight commercial transaction between the Trust which owned the house and the Trust which bought it. There were no sordid deals and absolutely no arrangement from the Duke of York to benefit otherwise or to commit to any other commercial arrangement. Any suggestion otherwise is completely false. We can't be clearer that there is absolutely no impropriety and to suggest the duke has personally benefited from his public work in Kazakhstan is utterly untrue.

In 2009 Nazarbayev's son-in-law, Rakhat Aliyev, once deputy foreign minister and security chief but who had fallen out with the president, published a book, *The Godfather-in-law: The Real Documentation*, claiming the house deal had been a sweetener for Andrew. According to

Aliyev, who mysteriously died six years later in an Austrian prison awaiting trial on charges of murder: 'Prince Andrew was not hired. But on a case-by-case basis, when something is wrong, when it is necessary to get some information, or any other business of the presidents in the UK, Prince Andrew could be asked to do something or to clarify something or to know something.'

A few years later there were threats to call Andrew to give evidence in a court case, after claims that the house had been bought with laundered money. In 2010 it emerged that Kulibayev had been advised by a surveyor, Mark Cohen, that the 'tired and outdated' home lacked the 'Wow Factor' and was worth only about £8 million on the open market and as little as £6.4 million at auction. Mr Kulibayev has consistently denied accusations he laundered money and rebutted claims he paid over the asking price for Sunninghill Park.

The following year, it was alleged that Andrew had used a complicated tax avoidance scheme to avoid paying 40 per cent capital gains tax, thereby saving himself up to £7 million. Though gifted by the Queen, the lease was in her name and Andrew had never, contrary to royal briefings, personally owned the property. Royal advisers had paid just over £12,000 to buy the freehold of the property from the Crown Estate, which had owned it for the benefit of the nation. The sale was signed off by the Queen's personal lawyer, Mark Bridges, and Sir Alan Reid, Keeper of the Queen's Privy Purse, acting as trustees for a trust set up in 2000 called 'The Sunninghill Park Settlement'. The beneficiaries of the trust remain secret. The question was who now owned it.‡

'THIS TIME WE AIM TO WIN!'

At the beginning of 2008 Andrew visited Egypt and the United Arab Emirates as trade envoy. He took Beatrice, then on her gap year, paying her first-class fare but with her security bill, estimated at £40,000, covered by the taxpayer. An eight-day visit in March to the Middle East concluded with two days in Bahrain watching the Grand Prix. Later that month he was in India for six days at a cost of £20,500.

In May, Richard Alderman, the head of the Serious Fraud Office, was summoned to Buckingham Palace for a briefing on its investigation into bribery allegations surrounding various British Aerospace defence contracts. The case-handlers, according to one source, ‘thought the request was well out of order’. The investigations had been suspended after complaints by the Saudi royals and claims by Tony Blair, then prime minister, that it jeopardised crucial intelligence-sharing arrangements.

A few weeks later discussions that Andrew, again accompanied by Beatrice, had held with major British investors in Kyrgyzstan were made public when the *Guardian* published a leaked diplomatic cable from the US ambassador who was present. The talks covered the investment climate for Western firms in the country, the problems of corruption and Russian and Chinese influence in the region. The ambassador, Tatiana Gfoeller, reported to Washington how the duke had ‘railed at British anticorruption investigators, who had had the “idiocy” of almost scuttling the al-Yamama deal with Saudi Arabia’. She remembered thinking Andrew was rather disarming, if naive, to speak so openly to businessmen and diplomats he did not know well.

Among the duke’s candid comments were his belief that this was a reincarnation of the nineteenth-century ‘Great Game’, which he claimed of Britain that ‘this time we aim to win!’ Gfoeller’s report described the duke’s reaction to a comment from a British businessman that despite the ‘overwhelming might of the American economy compared to ours’ American and British investment in Kyrgyzstan was broadly similar. ‘No surprise there,’ snapped the duke. ‘The Americans don’t understand geography. Never have. In the UK, we have the best geography teachers in the world!’

The business secretary, Vince Cable, said Andrew’s remarks were ‘not helpful’ and there were calls from anti-corruption campaigners for him to resign. But the duke’s approach had its supporters, especially when the al-Yamamah contracts were worth £43 billion to Britain over twenty years. The financial journalist Martin Vander Weyer thought him more charismatic than Charles, and able to make off-the-cuff jokes, which might not all work but that made him ‘a crowd-pleaser, and, in a quite theatrical way, a pro. He knows he’s there to perform.’

SECRET MISSIONS

In March 2008 a television programme, *The Duchess in Hull*, aired on British TV. Five million viewers watched the duchess live among a family of six in Hull and advise them how to live more healthily on a budget of £80 a week. Sam Brick, the producer, who later quit over her concerns about the programme, remembered Sarah's initial nerves: 'She said, "I won't have to eat what they eat, will I?"' The duchess also wanted the recipes for the programme to be cooked either by her personal cook or the London restaurant Cipriani. In the end celebrity chef Jean-Christophe Novelli produced them.

Brick found the experience strange and sad, saying of Sarah: 'She's desperate to be a success and to be taken seriously – but her world is completely bizarre ... You have to actually experience it to really know what it's like.'

While the duchess did succeed in changing the family's eating habits, with patriarch Mick Sargerson saying he had lost a stone and had 'a son who now power-walks to school and another who eats carrots', that son had also seen the way charity was being used to enhance Ferguson's image. He claimed it was 'just a publicity stunt'.

Shortly afterwards the duchess approached the supermarket Asda with a view to marketing her own range of healthy eating products.

Accompanied by documentary maker Chris Rogers, in September she journeyed to Turkey to highlight conditions inside its state-run institutions for unwanted and disabled children. She had contacted Rogers a few months earlier, moved by his investigations as an ITN correspondent and keen to use her profile to highlight the situation in Turkey's institutions for special-needs children, which Mental Disability Rights International had recently described as 'tantamount to torture'.

Eugenie, now eighteen, joined the party. They visited the Zeytinburnu Rehabilitation Centre, an orphanage in Istanbul, where young children were kept in straitjackets and tied by hands or ankles to the cribs' metal bars. Next, the Saray Institution, for seven hundred children in the suburbs of Ankara. Refused official access, the duchess went disguised in dark glasses and wig, while Rogers relied on the fake ID of an aid worker. The sight that

greeted them was horrific: children ‘dressed in bedclothes and rags’ – and everywhere showing ‘signs of distress, with many exhibiting the awful violent rocking of the institutionalised’.

When they visited the adults, many were ‘tied to benches like dogs’ or corralled by ‘tight nooses around their hands that pinned their arms behind their backs’. The stench was unbearable. From there they travelled to Romania, where UNICEF estimated that each year ten thousand babies were dumped in Romanian hospitals. This time Beatrice joined them. That November ITV showed a *Tonight Special: Duchess and Daughters: Their Secret Mission*, which was watched by over six million people in the UK and many more when it was subsequently broadcast around the world. It caused a diplomatic row, with Turkish officials accusing the duchess of a ‘smearing campaign’ against the country and claiming she did not have a permit to film and was in breach of its strict press laws. Turkey sought to extradite her and she faced the possibility of a prison sentence of up to twenty-two years. A leaked cable from the US embassy in Ankara suggested the then foreign secretary, David Miliband, had tried to heal the rift by inviting his Turkish counterpart to his constituency home, saying the duchess could not ‘be controlled’.

There were further controversies. In the programme the duchess had pledged money to build a clinic to help poor women in a town called Tinca, but a newspaper investigation months later revealed that no funds had been forthcoming from her foundation. Her spokeswoman stated: ‘The Sarah Ferguson Foundation has, as pledged, secured a donation of £278,620 from a philanthropist and this is in the process of being transferred from the Canadian authorities to Romania.’

She would not identify the philanthropist or specify when the funds would be transferred. There were also suggestions the programme had been staged and complaints had been made by the Romanian official responsible for vulnerable children to the television standards watchdog Ofcom. A year later the charity had still not received all the promised monies.

The duchess’s charitable activities had already come under scrutiny the previous month, when, surrounded by wealthy businessmen and celebrities, she launched a £1.1 billion property development in Dubai. Behind the scheme were two companies, but a charity had also been created bearing her name, with the aim of raising £500,000 for disadvantaged children in

the United Arab Emirates by auctioning off one of the suites in the luxury residential complex. In a press release the duchess announced: ‘The plight of children is an issue close to my heart. This is a springboard for launching Sarah Selects [the charity] globally, helping children’s causes all over the world.’

For fronting the charity – the first choice Hilary Swank had pulled out – she had been paid a five-figure sum and expenses, which included her flight and a two-night stay in a luxury five-star hotel. It later emerged that the charity, which she had only agreed to front the night before it launched, was not registered and no money was given to any cause in its name.

TAREK KAITUNI

Andrew’s penchant for keeping the company of foreign billionaires, whose business activities were not always transparent, and who might use him as a ‘trophy asset’ to impress others, was of increasing concern. In November 2008 the duke had taken a four-day holiday in Tunisia paid for by Tarek Kaituni, a convicted Libyan gun smuggler, whom Andrew had first met in 2005. The party, which included several women, bodyguards and assistants, went on to visit Colonel Gaddafi in Libya. Kaituni was seen paying bills for the group at two hotels. Challenged about the trip, the duke’s spokesman said he would be reimbursing Kaituni for the private element of the visit.

It was the second time Andrew had flown to North Africa to meet Kaituni – in August he had stayed for a private holiday at his villa in Sidi Bou Said near Tunis – and Gaddafi within the previous three months and the third visit to Gaddafi in seven months. None of them had been arranged by UK Trade & Investment, though the duke was always accompanied by protection officers paid for by the taxpayer. Rumours circulated that he had been involved in negotiations for the release of the Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset al-Megrahi.

Through Goga Ashkenazi, Andrew had also become friendly with the thirty-five-year-old second son of the dictator, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, who acted as his father’s ‘fixer’ and whom Andrew was to meet three times between August 2008 and March 2009. In that month, Andrew returned to Libya, a country with huge gas and oil fields, on a week’s private visit,

travelling with only his bodyguard, ostensibly as a tourist looking at archaeological treasures – not a subject in which he'd previously shown great interest.

'If Andrew happens to get on with people on his official visits, it's only natural that he'll go back to see them at his own expense,' claimed a friend. 'This does not mean he is feathering his own nest. He is not abusing his position as a special representative of the Government. Whatever people may think, there are no side deals.'

ILHAM ALIYEV

In June 2009 it was revealed that Andrew had spent £60,000 of public money to charter a fifteen-seater private jet for a three-day visit to Azerbaijan to attend the Caspian Oil and Gas Exhibition – his sixth visit in five years – accompanied by a bodyguard and two officials. A business-class ticket direct from London to Baku would have been £1,300.

This came amid continuing concerns that Andrew was becoming too close to Azerbaijan's authoritarian and corrupt president, Ilham Aliyev. A source said the president and Andrew were close friends, with 'common interests and a shared sense of humour' – even that the duke was 'always laughing at Ilham's jokes which are usually about women'.

Through Aliyev, Andrew had met one of the country's leading oligarchs, Jahangir Askerov, who ran Azerbaijan Airlines. There were rumours that Askerov was trying to gain a foothold in Britain and that Andrew had been advising him. He was to become a key business contact for the duke.

Though BP was the largest foreign investor in Azerbaijan's oil industry and Andrew had had a series of meetings to promote British trade, one of the country's leading independent journalists, Ibrahim Bayandurlu, spoke for many when he said: 'We just do not understand exactly what it is Andrew does, or why he needs to come here so often.'

It is difficult to establish the complete story of Andrew's activities in the Central Asian republic as people are scared to talk because of his connections to its powerful elite, but Andrew had been coming to Azerbaijan long before he was appointed special representative. His two

most active periods in the country were between 1994 and 1996 on leaves from the Royal Navy and beginning in 2008 until 2014.

During the first period he worked closely with Mark Thatcher, son of the former prime minister, and the two were often seen together at a Portuguese restaurant in Baku that was primarily patronised by expatriates and known to have the most extensive wine cellar in the city.

The duke also often attended quasi-official networking events in the Azerbaijani capital, such as the monthly British embassy drinks reception, hosted for members of the British Business Group at the Hyatt Regency, which also housed the embassy.

Both men leased apartments in Baku, fully refurbished under contracts awarded to the local branch of the Scottish firm Morrison Construction, and at the time were involved in two projects. The first was an attempt to purchase cheap aviation fuel from AZAL, the Azerbaijan Airlines company, for a Houston firm, Ameristar. The second involved supplying paper to print the new Azerbaijan passport through a subsidiary of printer De La Rue. When the consignment arrived in Baku, the grade and quality was wrong and the paper had to be scrapped.

Later Andrew played a prominent role in a 2011 deal by the Baku Taxi Company to introduce a thousand London-style taxis as part of a £16 million agreement with Manganese Bronze, a subsidiary of the London Taxi Company (LTI Limited).

Andrew's lavish travel expenditure continued, even though the purpose of many of his trips was not always clear. On the evening of 14 November 2009, he arrived at Riyadh International Airport, on a visit later not included in a list produced by the government of the duke's overseas trade envoy trips undertaken 'in agreement with and in support of government objectives'.

It subsequently emerged that an earlier visit to Saudi Arabia in September had been paid for by his friend from Gordonstoun, Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Through his energy company, Masdar, Al Nahyan owned 20 per cent of the planned £3 billion London Array wind farm in the Thames Estuary, which would earn the Royal Family a fortune, as the Crown Estate was paid rental for the undersea cables taking power from the wind farms to the mainland. Andrew attended the celebration dinner in a London restaurant when Masdar won the contract.

It is estimated that offshore windfarms could net the royals up to £37.5 million a year on top of earnings from the rest of the Estate's £6 billion property portfolio.

THE DUCHESS ON THE ESTATE

On 18 August 2009 Sarah fronted a sequel to *The Duchess in Hull*. *The Duchess on the Estate*, for which she was paid £20,000 by ITV, followed her as she spent ten days on a crime-ridden housing estate in Manchester. The programme was panned by both critics and residents, who accused her of patronising them – she had suggested anti-social behaviour could be curbed by planting tulips and a cup of tea – and of using other people's misery to slake her thirst for publicity.

In the course of the show she played pool and drank cider with the locals, at one point telling the camera: 'You've got to live de life.' She later added: 'I could sleep anywhere: a park bench, a bedsit, a B&B', before disclosing that during the filming she had stayed at the All Seasons Guest House, a Victorian house set in lovely gardens.

After a barrage of criticism from BBC Radio 5 Live listeners – one of the complaints levelled against her had been the £300,000 of taxpayers' money spent doing up one of her daughters' apartments at St James's Palace – she claimed she wanted to 'go and live in a hole' and would 'never make another documentary' in the UK.

Sarah responded by going with Andrew to a £38 million estate set in 350 acres near Sotogrande, which, according to local rumour, had been lent rent-free for a month in exchange for helping to find a buyer from among her rich friends. It was their first holiday together without their daughters, who were at Richard Branson's home on Necker Island in the Caribbean, but it did not reflect them getting back together romantically, even if immediately after the divorce Andrew had carried a torch for her. 'I think that if his father had not been so set against it, he would have remarried her at one stage,' said a source. They also claimed Andrew was enjoying life too much to be tied down but that he was 'extraordinarily attached' to Sarah: 'She makes him feel guilty for the break-up of the marriage. She says that it is his fault that she strayed when they were married – that it was

because he neglected her. And he feels terribly guilty because there is a bit of truth in it. Maybe that's her hold over him and why he is always there to pick her up when she falls.'

The duchess continued to write and endorse everything from jewellery and linen to fragrances, cutlery and perfumed candles. One plan was to sell copies of items from her family estate in Powerscourt on television, having been in discussions with bosses at the shopping channel QVC. In September 2009 she announced she had signed a deal with Handmade Films – started by former Beatle George Harrison – to realise big-screen versions of five of her *Little Red* series of children's books. It was also revealed she was in talks with Tommy Hilfiger to promote some of his clothes, that St Martin's Press would be publishing her first novel and that she wanted to write a book about a forgetful elephant.

THE YORKS AT FIFTY

Sarah Ferguson's fiftieth birthday in October 2009 – she celebrated with a dinner at the Lanesborough Hotel for a dozen guests, including new best friends Lisa Marie and Priscilla Presley, Prince Andrew and her two daughters – was a time for personal reflection but also public projection.

To mark the occasion, she spoke to *Hello!* – for which she was paid £50,000 – admitting she was in debt by £600,000, after the end in 2008 of her Weight Watchers contract, which had eventually been worth about £2 million a year, and the collapse of her US-based lifestyle business Hartmoor.

The duchess was advised to file for bankruptcy, but instead took out a personal loan from the Royal Bank of Scotland to repay creditors some £750,000. Extricating herself cost her \$1 million in legal fees.

The Sarah Ferguson Foundation, described as the philanthropic arm of Hartmoor, had been launched at a lavish fundraising dinner in 2007, with tables costing \$25,000. The charity had been incorporated in Delaware, known as a tax shelter, and it was disclosed had paid only \$737.38 in taxes.

The last tax returns to be filed showed that the foundation had income of \$508,620, but had given grants of just \$22,600, including \$10,000 to Pride 'n Purpose, the charitable arm of Ulusaba, a private South African game

reserve owned by Sir Richard Branson and where the duchess and her daughters had holidayed. Her spokeswoman said that grants of more than \$400,000 had later been made, including to a children's home in Kenya. After the charity failed to pay its taxes, its status was downgraded to 'ceased good standing'.

Andrew's fiftieth birthday, which he spent skiing with his ex-wife and daughters in Verbier, was marked by his promotion to Rear Admiral and several profiles. Asked in one interview about his plans to celebrate, he replied, 'Nothing big.' The celebrations turned out to be an official reception at Buckingham Palace for two hundred guests involved with his charities and regiments, and performances by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and English National Ballet. It was followed the next night by a party at St James's Palace, organised by his daughters.

A home video of his life was played and he was presented with two large leatherbound and hand-engraved photo albums and a silver ornament of Bendicks, his Jack Russell, who had recently been put down. Andrew paid tribute in his speech to his 'three children, one being Sarah'. Celebrations continued at the nightclub Annabel's and guests were given miniature photo albums with pictures of Andrew to take home.

Sarah gave him a miniature portrait of their daughters in pastel, for which the artist Basia Hamiton had charged her £7,000, placed in a double-fronted silver travelling case so that Andrew could take it with him when going abroad. In spite of 'gentle' reminders from the artist for more than a year, and threats of legal action from the luxury gift firm TJK London, the bill for both picture and £4,000 case, which had Sarah's crest and the initial S engraved on the front, had not been paid by the time the story hit the press.

This was not the first time the duchess had been sued for failing to settle her bills. In April 2009 a law firm lodged a claim for an unpaid bill of £1,750 at Northampton County Court. Two months later a small firm of accountants in Harpenden, M.J. Brooks, put in a claim for £18,132 at the Central London County Court, and the duchess finally settled an outstanding £2,117 bill for prints with Shades, a family-run photographic business in Woking, after it had gone to Guildford County Court the previous September.

In September 2009 it was reported she owed several thousand pounds to a Malibu-based 'spirit guide', known as Anamika, who lived on a ten-acre

estate called the Sakkara Temple of Awakening. The following month it was claimed she owed £17,000 to Richard Owen for two months' work in February and March to help build her 'Brand Fergie'. Eventually all the bills were settled.

In April 2010 it emerged that the duchess was being sued by Mayfair solicitors Davenport Lyons for £200,000 for work they had done on a deal to turn her children's books into an animated television series and to create and protect a trademark under which she planned to market a range of 'lifestyle' goods on QVC. Reminders and a request to discuss a 'credible payment plan' for the eight unpaid invoices from April to July 2009 had been ignored. In October 2009 the duchess had agreed to pay £30,000, with a further £50,000 to come, but no payment materialised.

It was, however, a sting operation filmed by the *News of the World* that was to bring about one of the biggest crises of her life.

* Ferguson had narrowly missed being killed after arriving late for a meeting at her office in one of the towers.

† Aides insisted that the last flight of the day, at 8 p.m., would not have allowed him to stay for dinner, and because he was flying to Canada the following day, he could not stay overnight.

‡ If it was Andrew then he should have paid capital gains tax.

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VI

TRAPPED

THE STING

It had not been the first attempt to entrap the duchess. Rumours had long been circulating in Fleet Street about her introduction services. The *News of World* had only begun investigating the duchess after learning about Sarah ‘cashing in on knowing Andrew by setting up deals with foreign businessmen,’ it said. It claimed to have ‘details of two tycoons she boasted she had introduced to Prince Andrew’.

The paper said the duchess had tried to ‘lure’ a businessman into a scheme to ‘make money from Andrew’s unpaid role as the Government UK Special Representative for International Trade and Investment’: ‘She told him she could fix up meetings between him and Prince Andrew in Kazakhstan and Abu Dhabi,’ said the paper’s source. ‘As long as Sarah thinks you are rich she will be all over you like a rash.’

The newspaper set up a sting.

On 13 May Sarah, accompanied by two assistants, met the businessman/reporter at New York’s Mark Hotel, where she explained about Andrew’s role:

You see if I can get Billy [the code name she used for the Duke] to introduce quite good business things to XXXX, then XXXX gives me a lick of the spoon and that saves my bacon.

After the meeting she rang the reporter/businessman. ‘I spoke to Billy and Billy is happy to meet with him but (he) has to know for Billy to meet with him ... he has to give me £500,000.’

She suggested a meeting with Andrew at Royal Lodge, before inviting the businessman to join her, her daughter Beatrice and Elton John at her

table at the Butterfly Ball in Battersea, suggesting he bring some friends. 'It's Thursday night and we need, well our table's like, we're eight seats short. We need some sort of fat cats around.'

The next meeting with the reporter/businessman took place at Mosimann's Club in Belgravia on 18 May where, after her aides had left, over a £95 bottle of burgundy, she got down to business: 'I never talk money ever, but since we've got business hats on I'm going to.' Demanding £500,000 be wired to her HSBC bank account, she told the reporter: 'That opens up everything you would ever wish for. I can open any door you want, and I will for you. Look after me and he'll look after you ... you'll get it back tenfold.'

She told the businessman how through his role as special representative Andrew 'meets the most amazing people. And he just throws them my way', specifying Kazakhstan and Abu Dhabi. The reason, she explained, was she had received nothing in the divorce settlement:

I have the biggest heart and the biggest of everything. But I have zero money. I have nothing ... At the moment, my children pay for me. They have a trust fund from Andrew and they pay for me ... I've changed millions of children's lives but they (the royals) still leave me with nothing.

She then went with the businessman to his purported flat in Mayfair to collect the money, boasting: 'I'm a complete aristocrat. Love that don't you? I love it. It's tremendously fabulous. But I've never admitted that to anyone by the way!'

She left the flat with a \$40,000 down payment in a computer bag to pay her 'celebrity assistant', Johnny O'Sullivan, who had worked for her for the last fourteen years, ostensibly 'for his college tuition and room and board'.

She also insisted on a 1 per cent commission on any deals struck through her royal connections to go to a charity set up to build schools in Asia.

Shortly afterwards she and Beatrice flew to the Cannes Film Festival for various events. While dancing to 'I Gotta Feeling' by the Black Eyed Peas at Naomi Campbell's fortieth birthday party in Cap d'Antibes on Saturday 22 May she received a call from her publicist announcing that the next day's *News of the World's* front-page story was 'Fergie "Sells" Andy for £500k'.

The story ran over four pages and was accompanied by a video of her meeting the undercover reporter, Mazher Mahmood, known as ‘the Fake Sheik’, with the duchess filmed smoking and drinking and shaking on the deal, saying:

Five hundred thousand pounds when you can to me ... opens doors ... But then that opens up everything that ever you, you would ever wish ... and as Andrew said, listen, if he’s going to be kind enough to want to play then Andrew will play ... He never does accept a penny for anything. He does not and will not and he is completely whiter than white.

The Duke of York ‘categorically’ denied having any knowledge of the meeting, although the duchess had claimed she had already told him in advance about it, and it was he who had suggested the figure she should demand. Buckingham Palace refused to comment but the duchess immediately issued a statement:

I very deeply regret the situation and the embarrassment caused. It is true that my financial situation is under stress. However, that is no excuse for a serious lapse in judgment and I am very sorry that this has happened. I can confirm that The Duke of York was not aware or involved in any of the discussions that occurred. I am sincerely sorry for my actions.

The following year in her autobiography *Finding Sarah* she had changed her tune, writing:

Under no circumstances did I offer to broker an introduction to my former husband, as it has been claimed ... the British press and international media spun the truth into a web of lies ... The tape was purposely cut to look like I was brokering a personal introduction. Which, as I have said, I did not do.

Buckingham Palace had also now put out a statement:

The Duke of York categorically denies any knowledge of any meeting or conversation between the Duchess of York and the *News of the World* journalist. Since 2001 he has carried out his role of Special Representative with complete and absolute propriety and integrity.

Apart from the fact that Sarah had told Mahmood that it was Andrew who had suggested she ask for £500,000, it is difficult to believe her ex-husband was not aware of what she was doing, not least because she boasted to the reporter that she called Andrew ‘five times a day’. It’s a point the journalist

Tina Brown made. She highlighted the fact that the duke and duchess were best friends, which made it so unlikely that he would not know anything about Fergie's plan, or 'propensity ... to sell access to him, however ineptly on this occasion she carried it out (and however theatrically she protests on tape that he never ever, ever takes a penny). How likely is it, really, that she could introduce some oddball businessman to him and he not suspect her of collecting a rake-off?'

The intermediary who had set up the meeting between Sarah and the *News of the World* was Azra Scagliarini, a clairvoyant and 'spiritual adviser' to the duchess since 1998 who was also consulted by the duke. Andrew subsequently claimed he had 'never met or heard of' her, with a Buckingham Palace spokesman saying: 'The position of the Duke of York is categorically clear. He has not met Azra Scagliarini and she is not a friend of his. The Duke of York takes very seriously any suggestion that he has lied in this matter.'

The paper later unearthed a note from Andrew thanking Scagliarini for her 'help and friendship' and it was revealed she had organised Beatrice's fourteenth birthday party.

GREEDY AND NEEDY

From France, the duchess flew to Los Angeles to accept a Variety Club award honouring her work for children's charities, before going on to promote her Helping Hand series of books at BookExpo America – sales were certainly helped by the scandal – defiantly proclaiming: 'The bottom line is I am a foghorn for silent whispers. I am a children's book author. I am Sarah Ferguson. I am a mum and I am very proud of that.'

The truth was rather different. A friend admitted, 'She's jet-lagged, confused, in a very fragile state and hasn't a clue where she goes from here. She really is at her lowest ebb.'

The episode had put paid to all her work in trying to restore her reputation since her divorce. Her friend and long-term PR spokeswoman, Kate Waddington, resigned, though Bell Pottinger were happy to step into the breach pro bono. It had also jeopardised Ferguson's earning capacity – a

talk in Virginia for which she was to be paid £37,000 was cancelled. ITV axed plans for a third series with the duchess looking at her daily life.

And it was so foolish – Prince Edward’s wife had been caught on tape by Mahmood nine years earlier bragging that her PR business benefited from her royal connections – but in the eyes of many, Sarah had been an accident waiting to happen. As one friend asked to sum her up said: ‘In a word, “greedy”. If you want two words, “greedy” and “needy”. She lost the plot a long time ago.’

Princess Margaret had once written to the duchess:

You have done more to bring shame on the Royal Family than could ever have been imagined. Not once have you hung your head in embarrassment, even for a minute. Clearly you have never considered the damage you are doing us all. How *dare* you discredit us?

What was to be done with the duchess? One suggested solution was for her to be exiled to her mother’s ranch in Argentina. Almost two decades on from Princess Margaret’s comments, she continued to pose a problem for the House of Windsor. But, as the journalist Christopher Wilson put it, Fergie knew where the bodies were buried. He speculated that further revelations were ‘yet to surface regarding [Andrew’s] so-called “bachelor” lifestyle’. The duchess possessed ‘many other secrets which would not benefit the House of Windsor by the retelling’.

It was this power that had allowed her to remain firmly within the embrace of the Royal Family.

Andrew’s own activities now came under much more rigorous scrutiny. Why so many private visits to Kazakhstan? Did the gift of a £1 million home in Abu Dhabi really square with his activities promoting British trade? Had the purchase of Sunninghill Park for an inflated price by a foreign buyer placed him under any form of obligation?

Questions from the media to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and to UK Trade & Investment were, according to one paper, met ‘with evasion, buck-passing, and at times, barely-veiled panic’. When asked if any of the Whitehall departments with responsibility for the duke had investigated his ex-wife’s claims that she could secure access to Britain’s special representative in

return for cash, UKTI refused to reply and then said it was a matter for Buckingham Palace.

Questions began to be asked about the appointment after UKTI claimed, '[His] role is independent of UK Trade & Investment and is neither a paid position nor a formal UKTI Board appointment.' This rather contradicted the statement on Andrew's appointment, 'HRH will undertake activities in support of BTI's trade and investment objectives, which are set by Ministers with the support of the Board. The Board will therefore maintain a close interest in HRH's activities.'

It appeared the duke's office was staffed by royal employees, with a single Foreign Office official as a representative of the government. His visits were cleared by the Royal Visits Committee, but no one would say who sat on the committee or the criteria that determined where Andrew was sent.

His 'expenses' were covered by UKTI, but other government departments picked up travel, staffing, security and other bills. The reticence of Whitehall to explain what the duke actually did worried Christopher Wilson, who criticised the lack of transparency about the nature of Andrew's job and the 'seemingly blithe disregard for revealing the facts': 'One person involved in the sting, which revealed Fergie's attempts to make money out of introductions to her husband, says he believes that it has happened before.'

The scandal provided new opportunities for the duchess, not least to plead the paucity of her divorce settlement which, she claimed, had led to her financial difficulties. There were discussions about going on Donald Trump's *The Apprentice* and she appeared in confessional mode on *Oprah* referring to herself in the third person and saying she needed the money for a 'friend in need', but as one friend claimed: 'I think she secretly loves the attention. You see her leaving her hotel with a big smile. She hasn't had this much publicity since she was married to Prince Andrew.'

Her claims that she had been given only £15,000 in the divorce settlement angered courtiers, who pointed out that she had received a settlement of £3 million, which had included £500,000 to buy a house, a £1.4 million trust fund for her daughters, £350,000 in cash – half of which was used to pay Susan Barrantes' debts – and a monthly allowance that was

half Andrew's naval pay. According to one official, 'She was treated extremely generously and she has now behaved appallingly.'

But the Royal Family found themselves between a rock and a hard place, which the duchess knew. As one source suggested: 'Their theory is that it is better to keep Sarah close than let her loose to do even more damage. At the end of the day, she is still Bea and Eugenie's mother, they can't just abandon her.'

THE DEBTS MOUNT UP

There were more humiliations to come, with revelations in the papers that Sarah had some two hundred debtors and her debts ranged from £2 million to £4 million. An aide had run up £8,000 on his credit card on her behalf. She owed £5,000 to a London-based complementary medicine practitioner and £65,000 to a personal trainer, whom she kept on permanent standby but had used twice in the previous year. She had run up a bill of £51,000 at Selfridges, making purchases through her old schoolfriend Pandora Delevingne, the store's senior personal shopper. The previous Christmas two members of staff had spent nearly a day in the VIP section choosing hundreds of expensive items for a Christmas party and according to one source, 'Someone was dispatched every three or four days to pick up tights, face creams and expensive hair products.'

A newsagent had refused to supply her after an unpaid bill of £500. Other creditors included a local butcher, dry cleaner and car hire firm. The BP card that was used at local petrol stations was eventually confiscated because of unpaid arrears. She had racked up a £6,500 bill using the Queen's special mail service, on 'an almost daily basis' sending out hundreds of letters, photographs and gifts, which included silver letter openers, money clips and cufflinks.

Part of the problem was the sheer wastage. In May 2009 she had signed a year's lease on a £3 million house on the Wentworth Estate at £8,000 a month. After the owners decided to move back sooner than expected but hold her to six months' payment, she resolved not to move in, staying with Andrew at Royal Lodge. The result was £50,000 on a house she never lived in.

At this point the duke and his deputy private secretary, Amanda Thirsk, stepped in and assessed the duchess's overheads. Twelve staff were made redundant, some of whom hadn't been paid for up to six months. They included Colin Tebbutt, her driver for ten years who had previously driven for Princess Diana; her longstanding dresser Jackie McLeod, who had previously worked for the Kents; Sally Fish, her right-hand woman for fifteen years; and assistants Helen Jones, Amanda Lewis and Zenouska Mowatt, granddaughter of Princess Alexandra and classmate of Princess Eugenie. Many received only the statutory minimum redundancy pay and were asked to work out their notice for free. Andrew, or more likely his mother, paid off many of the debts. Creditors of Hartmoor were paid 25 per cent of the money they were owed.

Two hire cars were returned, attempts were made to sell the duchess's Mini Cooper S and a valuation was sought on a £130,000 Bentley Continental Flying Spur, which had been lent to her. Sarah's reaction to crisis, as so often, was to go on holiday. First stop Sotogrande, then to a £1,500-a-night five-star Portuguese luxury spa resort, where she signed up for an eight-day £3,000 weight loss and anti-ageing programme, which included her own personal trainer and face mesotherapy involving various extracts being injected into the skin.

There was three weeks on a billionaire's ranch in Connecticut and two weeks at a house lent by a friend in Montecito, before going on to stay with Lisa Marie Presley in Hawaii. From there to Malaga then to stay with Richard Branson on Necker for his sixtieth birthday party. In August she returned to Sotogrande for three weeks, before her eighth foreign jaunt of the summer, joining 180 guests at the seventy-fifth birthday party of hotel magnate Sol Kerzner at the exclusive Hotel Cala di Volpe in Sardinia.

A sacked staff member revealed the greed and wastefulness that contributed to the duchess's financial downfall: 'Every night she demands a whole side of beef, a leg of lamb and a chicken, which are laid out on the dining room table like a medieval banquet. It's a feast that would make Henry VIII proud. But often there is just her and her girls Bea and Eugenie and most of it is wasted. There is no attempt to keep it to have cold the next day. It just sits there all night and the next day it's thrown away.'

Sometimes the meals would go virtually untouched while the duchess and her daughters munched away at large bags of Kettle crisps.

On holiday in Sotogrande, it was reported that she gave orders that a breakfast table was to be laid out for her at three different locations each morning so that she could have a choice. She also required daily deliveries of ice cubes. She had them poured into her bath each afternoon so she could immerse herself for a few minutes because she believed the practice ‘helped her metabolism’.

During one holiday in Spain, she woke at 2 p.m. and ordered a lavish party for later that day. A guest said: ‘She demanded the best DJ in the country and 1,000 candles to light the garden. Then she became fixated with getting a suckling pig.’

Sarah would regularly miss flights that were not refundable. According to one source: ‘She thought nothing of arriving at an airport with 25 cases and paying between £800 and £4,000 in excess baggage. At least five of those cases were packed with toiletries and make up. Another one would be used solely for clothes hangers.’

Personal trainers, hairdressers and Pilates instructors were paid hundreds of pounds an hour to wait for her to emerge for the day in the late afternoon. Her butler had to get in at 4.30 a.m. to put watercress on ice.

‘She would just breeze out of the Four Seasons and the Palace in New York as if she was too important to pay,’ said one source. ‘There would often be large room service bills but she got away with it more often than not.’

A bodice-ripper, *Hartmoor*, commissioned by US publisher St Martin’s Press five years previously and co-written with novelist Laura Van Wormer, was turned down because it did not have enough sex and she faced paying back the £50,000 signature advance. She started working with a new collaborator on another version, featuring a fiery redhead called Sarah, and now titled *Wingfield*.

Meanwhile Bell Pottinger were fielding £50,000 worth of interview requests from TV, radio, newspapers and magazines and an offer from an Australian home security firm to advertise the risks of letting your guard down. A venture capitalist, Jon Moulton, a former insolvency specialist at Coopers & Lybrand, agreed to help her sort out her financial affairs. She preferred, however, to rely on psychic Mia Dolan who told her that she would quickly overcome her money worries. She was right. On 13 August

Ferguson wrote in her diary: 'Phew ... we signed with OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network) last night. A whole new start ...'

BREAKING UP WITH JEFFREY

In August 2010, Epstein finished his sentence for procuring a child for prostitution. A secret plea bargain, on the grounds of his intelligence links, had saved him from more serious charges and allowed him to serve his term in a private wing of the Palm Beach County Stockade under a work-release programme, permitting him to go to his office each day, taken by his personal driver, and only sleep at the jail. The Sheriff's Office received \$128,000 from Epstein's non-profit foundation to cover extra expenses. For the year to August 2010, he had been on probation, enabling him to fly to his residences in New York, the US Virgin Islands and for the purposes of 'exercise' to walk around Palm Beach. Numerous young girls were abused during this period.

At the beginning of December Andrew was back in New York staying at Epstein's townhouse. The literary agent John Brockman, also visiting, noticed 'a British guy in a suit with suspenders, getting foot massages from two young well-dressed Russian women ... I realized that the recipient of Irina's foot massage was his Royal Highness, Prince Andrew, the Duke of York.'

Also visiting was seventeen-year-old Caroline Kaufman, who had come for a 'modelling interview' and claims she was introduced to Andrew. In 2020 she would file a legal claim that she had been taken to the massage room and had been raped by Epstein. Kaufman's lawyer Spencer Kuvin pressed Andrew to volunteer a statement. The prince refused.

On 2 December, Epstein gave a dinner party for fifteen people in honour of the prince. Guests included the journalist and presenter Katie Couric, who brought along the American comedienne and actress Chelsea Handler; the talk show host Charlie Rose; the former White House communications director George Stephanopoulos; and the film director Woody Allen with his wife Soon-Yi Previn. Tables were set up in a square in the living room, with guests eating lasagne out of shallow bowls. Couric remembers Epstein,

‘in jeans ripped at the knee, velvet loafers, and an air of studied insouciance’, nursing a drink and holding court in front of a huge fireplace.

Andrew always maintained the visit was to break off his personal and business relationship with Epstein, because ‘at the time I felt it was the honourable and right thing to do and I admit fully that my judgement was probably coloured by my tendency to be too honourable but that’s just the way it is’. However, one of the duke’s former girlfriends said the real reason had been to make sure Epstein ‘didn’t have any dirt on him’. He was reassured that no recordings existed.

It transpired that on the first day Andrew was trying to obtain \$200 million funding for a mysterious oil company, Aria Petroleum. Epstein forwarded the request to his private banker Jes Staley at JP Morgan, adding that Andrew wanted to represent the interests of an organisation he called ‘casanov’, thought to refer to JP Morgan Cazenove, in China.

All seemed to be going smoothly, but the greatest crisis of his life was about to break.

On 20 February 2011 the *News of the World* published a front-page article, ‘Prince Andy and the Paedo’, with a picture of Andrew, taken the previous December, strolling in Central Park with Jeffrey Epstein. The photographer Joe Donnelly, who had been staking out Epstein’s mansion at 9 East 71st Street with freelance reporter Annette Witheridge and various of the paper’s journalists, had finally struck lucky at lunchtime on 4 December, when Andrew and Epstein, with their protection officers, emerged through the front door to go for a walk in Central Park. ‘There was a cluster of police protection officers with Andrew and Epstein and – I assume possibly Epstein bodyguards,’ said Witheridge. ‘They formed a sort of triangle behind them as they walked.’

The question is why, knowing the press were camped outside, did Epstein expose his guest to the media. ‘We weren’t hiding; you couldn’t hide out there,’ Witheridge said. ‘So, yes, I’m sure we were used.’

Was it some sort of insurance policy by Epstein to show the world that Andrew was still under his control? What was the purpose of the visit? Andrew’s later claims that it was to end the relationship sounded hollow – that could have been done without meeting and certainly without staying several days. It appears one reason for the encounter was to persuade Epstein to pay off some of Sarah’s debts, which had been under discussion

for nine months, and she admitted to receiving a first instalment of £15,000. The money was used to pay one of many debtors, her former assistant Johnny O'Sullivan, who was claiming £78,000 in unpaid wages. A mutual friend of Andrew and Epstein has, however, claimed, 'I think that Sarah has actually received hundreds of thousands of dollars' from Epstein. Ferguson denies this.

The duchess, who is known to have first visited Epstein with her daughters in 1998 and often stayed with him, admitted to a 'gigantic error of judgement' by accepting the money.

I abhor paedophilia and any sexual abuse of children ... I am just so contrite I cannot say. Whenever I can, I will repay the money and will have nothing ever to do with Jeffrey Epstein ever again.

GREEKS BEARING GIFTS

For Andrew, further damaging revelations were to come. In February 2011 Sian James, the assistant editor at the *Mail on Sunday*, contacted the duke's press secretary, Ed Perkins, claiming the paper had a photo of the prince with Virginia Roberts, who claimed she had slept with Andrew. Perkins assembled a crisis team of senior Palace officials and lawyers. The Queen summoned her second son to a meeting.

'The duke assured his mother that he had no sexual relationship with Virginia Roberts or any of Jeffrey Epstein's girls,' a source said. 'The duke talked to the lawyers on the phone, and, with the approval of the duke and his office, the lawyers drew up a legal document that was meant as a shot across the bow of the press in Britain.'

Buckingham Palace lawyers issued a defamation warning. To mark his fifty-first birthday, and a day after the Epstein scandal broke, the Queen gave her own response to the controversy. She made Andrew Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George.

On 28 February there were calls from MPs, including Chris Bryant, to remove Andrew from his role as special representative because of his alleged links to the Libyan regime. At the same time, Stephen Day, a former British ambassador to Tunisia, wrote to the foreign secretary, William

Hague, asking for Andrew to be sacked because his hobnobbing with ‘dodgy’ Arab businessmen was doing ‘serious damage to the royal family and to Britain’s political, diplomatic and commercial interests’.

The letter, leaked to the *Daily Telegraph*, highlighted Andrew’s lunch at Buckingham Palace with Sakher El Materi, convicted of corruption in absentia by a Tunisian court in 2011, son-in-law of the Tunisian dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, and various private visits. Day copied the letter to three government departments: ‘The message being spread around the world is that Britain is so desperate for business, so incapable of competing openly, that it needs a back-door approach and is content to work closely with dodgy fixers and politicians.’

The wife of a head of state explained confidentially that Andrew’s reputation on the international circuit was such that her husband was afraid of being photographed with him. ‘No one wants that association now,’ she said. ‘This is what everyone’s talking about.’

There was further pressure after it became known that the Libyan businessman Tarek Kaituni, a guest at Princess Beatrice’s twenty-first birthday party, at which he had given her an £18,000 diamond necklace, had boasted that he could ‘influence’ the senior royal to support certain commercial projects. According to Kaituni’s girlfriend, Muna Hamrouni, Andrew had himself tried to broker a consultancy job for Kaituni with a British water treatment company, Biwater.

Andrew’s friendship with Azerbaijan president Ilham Aliyev, whose regime was accused of torturing protesters, rigging elections and throwing political opponents in jail, came under renewed scrutiny, especially after local media suggested the duke had his own business interests in the country, including a golf complex on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

A former diplomat says that the sale of Sunninghill was ‘on the agenda’ during meetings with members of one of the ruling royal families in the Gulf. Andrew had then tried to set up a meeting between Timur Kulibayev, the purchaser of Sunninghill, and Rory Tapner, the chief executive of Coutts and head of Royal Bank of Scotland’s wealth management division. Andrew had emailed a fixer for Kulibayev, Kenes Rakishev:

If possible, I would like to have the CEO of RBS Wealth, Rory Tapner, and John Hourican, CEO Global Markets, come to Kaz [Kazakhstan] to see TK [Kulibayev] with a view to discuss Wealth

Management and GBM [Global Banking Markets]. Otherwise it could be arranged in London at TK's [Kulibayev's] convenience when or if he comes here next.

When approached, Buckingham Palace replied that Prince Andrew, who 'works to encourage economic growth in the United Kingdom', was only trying to help Coutts make contact with overseas markets. A source at the bank refuted this: 'This was not, to put it mildly, a meeting that we would have been keen to take. Kazakh oligarchs are the sort of people we generally don't touch with a bargepole.'

The *Sunday Times* reported 'the wife of an international politician was recently "disgusted" at offerings to him from the Abu Dhabi royal family. "Jewels, diamond watches and things ... Even Princess Beatrice, who was there with him, got jewellery worth several thousand pounds." The palace said it had no knowledge of these gifts.'

At the beginning of March 2011, Sir Ivor Roberts, a former ambassador to Italy, Yugoslavia and Ireland, revealed that he had been forced to send in officials to clear up after Prince Andrew managed to offend key people brought to see him. 'He has that rather unfortunate manner of being brusque to the point of rudeness,' said Roberts. 'If the net result is negative, you wonder whether he should be in that position.'

Officials were beginning to agree and Sir Jon Cunliffe, the prime minister's adviser on overseas business and Europe, now met with the prince to assess his future as part of the six-month 'tasking review'.

In April, in a fightback, twenty prominent businessmen signed a letter in the *Daily Telegraph* praising Andrew's work as trade envoy. Organised by a well-respected City figure, Ronel Lehmann, they included Stuart Gulliver, chief executive of HSBC; Lord Levene, the chairman of Lloyd's of London; and Johan Eliasch; but, according to the paper, 'Several "endorsements" from executives circulated by UKTI were up to four years old and some of the companies involved said they were unhappy that their names had been used.'

It was not enough to save Andrew.

GIUFFRE SPEAKS OUT

The picture of Andrew with Jeffrey Epstein in Central Park had been noticed in Australia. On 1 March, the *Mail on Sunday* published an article outlining Virginia Roberts's claims after journalist Sharon Churcher, long on the trail, had flown to Australia to interview her over the course of a week. It also carried a picture of Andrew with his arms around the teenager, taken at Ghislaine Maxwell's London home on the night they first met in March 2001. Michael Thomas, a photographer who had accompanied Churcher, remembered how Giuffre had produced a collection of pictures taken on her travels with Epstein but that one stood out: 'It was a normal print as you would have gotten back from the photo developers back in the days of negatives. I photographed the photograph on a table and then sent my copy to the Picture Desk. Virginia kept the original.'

Now twenty-seven, Giuffre claimed Epstein had groomed her as a prostitute and farmed her out to his influential friends including Prince Andrew, with whom she had slept three times. On the first occasion in London in March 2001, Ghislaine had taken her shopping for a bag, a couple of dresses, a pair of embroidered jeans and a pink singlet, perfume and make-up before returning to Maxwell's house in Kinnerton Street in Belgravia, where Andrew arrived for tea at four that afternoon. 'Then Ghislaine asked Andrew how old he thought I was and he guessed 17 and they all laughed. Ghislaine made a joke that I was getting too old for Jeffrey.'

After dinner and dancing in Tramp nightclub, they returned to Maxwell's mews house, where she and the prince took a bath together. 'He started licking my toes, between my toes, the arches of my feet. And then we went into the bedroom and he proceeded to make love to me, so to speak.' 'In the morning, Ghislaine said, "You did well. He had fun." We flew straight back to the States.' Flight logs confirm the tycoon's jet, with Virginia Giuffre as a passenger, had flown to Paris on 6 March 2001, continuing to Granada, Tangier and London, before returning to New York. For her services, Virginia had been paid \$15,000.

She then met Andrew a second time at Easter 2001 in the library of Epstein's New York home. She recounted how 'Ghislaine had just given him a present, a big toy that was his Spitting Image puppet. He was smiling ear-to-ear. He looked like a kid whose parents were taking him to Disney World.'

The official record of royal engagements from the time shows that the duke flew to New York on 9 April, catching a morning flight from Heathrow, which would have landed about lunchtime. It lists no engagements for the rest of the day. Flight records suggest Ms Roberts arrived in New York the same day. The duke then had a full day of events in the city on 10 April, before flying to Boston in the evening and returning to New York on the afternoon of 11 April. Andrew's aides flew back to London, leaving him in North America. His next official engagement came eight days later in South Korea on 19 April. The third and last occasion Virginia Giuffre claimed she was abused was on Epstein's island Little Saint James later that month.

After Epstein suggested she carry a baby for him, Virginia fled to Australia where she married, had three children and tried to put her experiences with him behind her. In 2008 the FBI contacted her after finding pictures of her at Epstein's Palm Beach house. She settled her case with the financier, but had now come forward after the Central Park pictures appeared. Andrew refused to comment on the story.

Papers were calling for Andrew to relinquish his role as special representative. Under the title 'Our Less-Than-Grand Old Duke of York', Jenny McCartney argued in the *Daily Telegraph* that 'Prince Andrew should be stripped of his role as UK special envoy for trade before he stains the Royal family's reputation further.'

Max Hastings in the *Daily Mail*, under the title 'How very different it might have been had someone spanked Andrew's bottom when he was young', wrote: 'He aspires to a first-class standard of living on an economy income: he never takes a car if a helicopter is quicker – even to the golf course. He chooses the company of crooks and tyrants who will entertain him in palaces rather than that of honest men who might expect him to carry his own bags upstairs.'

Hastings felt that there needed to be less deference and highlighted the royals' sense of their own status, which kept them at a distance from the rest of the population: 'Their belief that the rules and conventions that constrain the rest of us simply do not apply to them is bred in the bone.' Hastings, like other commentators, called for Andrew to go. The duke had 'exploited his royal privileges' and blundered around abroad for long enough, 'because nobody has stopped him'.

The former director of the Confederation of British Industry, Digby Jones, who had been brought in as a mentor for the duke, also accepted that it was the right time for Andrew to go. 'He hasn't helped himself by putting himself in positions which, frankly, he shouldn't. In my view, ten years is enough.'

Meanwhile Andrew's ex-wife continued to support him: 'The duke is a man who does not know how to tell an untruth or behave dishonourably. There have been errors of judgement but nothing substantive has been done wrong by him ever.' It was the intervention of Christopher Geidt, the Queen's private secretary, which would finally bring Andrew's trade envoy years to an end in July 2011, something for which the duke would subsequently enact his own revenge.

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Andrew's reputation as special representative is mixed. One of the problems was that his role and the governance of it were never particularly clear. He was supposedly to support UK Trade & Investment's objectives, which were set by ministers with the support of the board, but he did not always follow his tasked activities, nor were people sure who should control and discipline him. The various heads of UKTI – Sir David Wright, Sir Stephen Brown and Sir Andrew Cahn – ostensibly were his line managers, but ambassadors were reluctant to complain to them.

Lord Jay, a former head of the Foreign Office, said that when complaints were made to him they were passed to Buckingham Palace officials. Another senior diplomat confirmed that he forwarded complaints to Geidt. He was aware of Andrew's reputation for being time-consuming and status-conscious. The duke also had a low boredom threshold and harsh manner. 'There were concerns about who he was seeing,' said the diplomat, 'and that he had a freelance business career with a parallel agenda fixing meetings with people who were not part of his mission.'

After initial complaints from embassies in the Middle East and Chile, the Queen's then private secretary Robin Janvrin had raised the matter with the Queen and Andrew was given a warning, but it was clearly not heeded.

Chris Bryant as minister for Europe, covering Russia and the Caucasus as well as all consular activities, had extensive dealings with the duke. 'His trips as the special representative for UK Trade and Investment were legendary – but not for the right reasons,' said Bryant. 'The charge sheet against Andrew is very long and it is undermining the valuable, diligent work of the rest of the Royal Family.'

Bryant said he tried to raise concerns about Andrew with Number 10, but when he started asking questions about the prince's suitability for the post, in particular his relationships in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, there was 'a real chill in the air. The kind of chill that only a diplomat frightened of a row can engender.' Bryant thought Foreign Office staff were embarrassed by the duke – a couple of senior staff even told him so – but Downing Street resisted anything that 'might possibly be interpreted as an attack on a member of the Royal Family. So the matter was quietly dropped.'

Andrew's visits were a complicated matter. Trips were discussed by the Royal Visits Committee, a Cabinet Office committee chaired by the Foreign Office's permanent under secretary and comprising officials from the Royal Household, the Cabinet Office, Number 10 and the Department of Trade and Industry. Sometimes embassies bid for him, sometimes UKTI determined where Andrew should go, but increasingly it appears the duke, with his own agenda in mind, decided which countries he should visit.

According to one official at the New York consulate, Andrew often just arrived in the city without having been asked by them: 'We would have to find things for him to do, but really he came as an excuse to network. He was certainly there more than we wanted him to be.' The duke would often commandeer the consulate car, having shaken off his PPOs, to visit his 'friends':

It was rumoured he shared one mistress with Bill Clinton. He always wanted Epstein at events and preferred receptions to dinners so he could slip away early. If it had to be a dinner then he wanted an early one. Andrew revelled in high society and for him it was all about the money. He did the minimum required to fulfil his role.

The official also said Andrew's ex-wife would regularly turn up, though uninvited, and a place would have to be found for her at an event: 'It was clear they operated together and she was all about making connections

through her ex-husband's role. She was using events for him as networking opportunities.'

At a lunch at the US headquarters of HSBC arranged for the prince to meet senior business executives, Andrew took exception to being introduced as representing UKTI. He loudly interrupted, banged his knife on the table and yelled at his private secretary, 'Why can you never get people to get this right. They [that is, the staff at UK Trade & Investment] all work for me. I don't work for them.'

He then proceeded to lecture a senior executive of CBRE, the world's largest real estate firm, about US property issues and complain of how he was treated by the British government. As he left the room, the CEO of a major international search firm commented, 'That was why we threw the tea in the harbour.'

UK Trade & Investment had originally felt Andrew had been foisted on them, but they eventually began to work better together after Alastair Watson, the duke's private secretary, had suggested a three-year strategy and they began to make better use of him. Watson set up opportunities for business or embassies to follow up, especially in India, the Far East and China, and in emerging markets, but inevitably much of the duke's time was spent in the Middle East.

As a spokesman said: 'Middle East potentates like meeting princes. He comes in as the son of the Queen and that opens doors that otherwise would remain closed. He can raise problems with a crown prince and four or five weeks later we discover that the difficulties have been overcome and the contract can be signed.' They didn't send him to developed countries like France and Sweden, because there a member of the Royal Family would make little difference, but in developing countries, or the Far East: 'a prince can get in because of who he is'.

Robin Lamb, who was ambassador in Bahrain, found Andrew's visits valuable because of the opportunity for the duke to deliver important messages about the bilateral business relationship at the highest level and the rare access it gave Lamb to the king of Bahrain.

He recognised the close relationship between the senior Bahraini royals and the Royal Family: 'But the confidence in his status which allowed him to speak as an equal to the King and the princes could sometimes be a

challenge. There were occasions when his sense of entitlement could lead him to say or do something insensitive or unhelpful.'

However, Peter Ford, another ambassador to Bahrain, 'never saw evidence that visits led to any contracts. Indeed, visits took us away from our normal business.'

A former ambassador in the Middle East agreed, feeling that drumming up business was a matter for the ambassador or minister not for a member of the Royal Family. 'I found him weird,' said the ambassador. 'He invaded one's personal space, would rant and was unable to read a room. He behaved like a teenager, boasting he could connect easily to Bill Gates.'

Alastair Morgan had first met Prince Andrew when he was acting chief executive of the Invest in Britain Bureau – which subsequently became Invest.UK within UK Trade & Investment between 1999 and 2001. He had been director of investment at the British embassy in Tokyo and encountered Andrew, accompanied by David Stern, a German investor, in October 2011 while at the British embassy in Beijing. He found there was a cachet in Andrew's visits. 'He was available in a way that was useful with the benefit of a follow-up reception at Buckingham Palace,' said Morgan, who also felt the duke wanted to learn, asked intelligent questions about inward investment and to start with made a good impression.

Since the duke operated above government he could do things that ministers could not and he provided continuity that an elected politician did not. Nonetheless, Andrew could be petulant and wanted to be his own boss: 'I remember once at the embassy in Tokyo he threw a collection of business cards he had been given into the air, saying: "What am I meant to do with these?"'

An ambassador who worked extensively in HR management and recruitment thought Andrew remarkably unsuited for the role he was put in and without the skills for the job.

Sir David Warren, a former ambassador to Japan who had also been the UKTI director in charge of industrial sectors and then overseas markets, felt that Andrew could be an asset, but that he did not always behave in a conventional way. Warren remembered the duke arranging to meet John Browne, head of BP, without Foreign Office officials being present, to discuss oil and gas in Angola when, because of the sensitivities and wider context, such a discussion might have been better structured through the

Foreign Office. On another occasion Andrew's chiding of the local business community was interpreted as bullying and the embassy had to soothe ruffled feathers.

Lord Levene, a former chairman of Lloyd's, who met him a dozen times, also had a mixed view of Andrew. He found the duke willing to help, with a good knowledge of the insurance business, and prepared to work hard to promote companies. However Andrew would be nice to anyone important and turn on the charm when he wanted but ignore anyone who was of no use to him: 'He was good company, but very rude to people who didn't deserve his attention,' said Levene.

Martin Hatfull, a former ambassador to Indonesia and minister in Japan, felt that in those countries Andrew had a limited impact. The Japanese didn't fully understand his role: 'They couldn't get their head around the idea of a member of the Royal Family involved in a commercial role.' The duke also resisted anyone guiding him round the guests at a reception. He felt he should meet who he wanted. His personal style was abrupt and direct, which was difficult for the Japanese to deal with.

Though the embassy was trying to develop financial services in Indonesia, Hatfull remembered, 'We hadn't bid for the visit and we sensed that he wanted to come rather than his visit had been requested.'

Chris Huhne, who was energy secretary between May 2010 and February 2012, found himself invited by Andrew to tea at Buckingham Palace. 'He was looking for work and, knowing of his reputation, I did not want to give him ministerial cover for his activities,' said Huhne. However, Christopher Garnett, who ran Euromoney's conference business for many years had a much more positive experience with Andrew who was involved with conferences in Cairo and London, finding him 'well-informed and interested'. The duke made introductions in Abu Dhabi through the crown prince which raised £300,000 in sponsorship and Garnett remembered a conference in March 2006 where Andrew stayed all day and gave a speech from notes he had prepared in the course of the day which was fluent and coherent. It was clear he had taken everything in.

While some diplomats said he was good in receptions, talking to everyone and on top of his brief, many others had an entirely different experience, saying that Andrew only did what he wanted to do, often

bypassing carefully arranged VIP reception lines to talk to attractive women, ignoring the programme or leaving early.

One ambassador in South-East Asia had initially welcomed the prince's visit, feeling there were major opportunities for trade and investment and that a senior royal could make a difference at the top level. He was impressed by Andrew's charisma and energy, but felt the duke didn't relate well to less senior contacts or staff. 'He didn't seem to understand the responsibilities or accountability that came with his status, or think through the consequences of what he said for those with less privilege,' said the ambassador. Although as a senior royal, Andrew was a high-rank asset, he was also a liability who had to be managed, self-centred and showed little interest in the problems of others.

Many speak of how Andrew's staff often requested that attractive women be invited to events, with a private secretary specifying, 'He likes blondes', to which one consul replied, 'I'm a diplomat, not a pimp.'

It was rumoured Andrew brought women with him and that he liked to stay in hotels rather than the Residence as it gave him more independence in whom he saw, whether women or businessmen. Stories are told of escorts, masquerading as professional women, being provided that he could pick up.

The consul, who met Andrew several times, remembered during one visit: 'He made a bloody nuisance of himself. He sat there for two hours and said nothing. Part of the deal for coming out was to talk to British businessmen, but at the last minute he said he couldn't make the meeting, despite the trouble we had setting it up. Instead, he played golf.'

Another ambassador felt he was very contrary, changing arrangements long in the planning and that he always believed he knew best. 'The diplomats were doing their best to promote British interests and it was frustrating that he was not always supporting them in that common end.'

One ambassador's wife was upset after the prince criticised the way she had decorated the Residence; another chased him after he left without thanking her for his stay. In Brunei he kept both the ambassador and sultan's sister, Princess Masna, who had been deputed to look after him, waiting an hour without offering explanation or apology.

Many talk of eccentricities, such as bringing his own Weetabix and a crested teapot, as well as being demanding. One embassy instruction was to

not ask any questions about the Royal Family or talk to him about golf. Arriving just before midnight at one guest house, Andrew asked one ambassador to arrange him a massage. On another occasion he requested a Discovery rather than the embassy car and then complained about the car throughout his stay. On a visit to Johannesburg he expressed a wish to meet Nelson Mandela, but no commercial flight would allow his protection officer to carry a weapon, so two private jets had to be hired at great expense.

On another occasion his private jet had to make two journeys from Singapore to Brunei, to the inconvenience of the crew rota, because he had so much luggage. In Oman he upset the sultan by requesting money from him, a diplomatic *faux pas* which caused some ructions in British–Omani relations and Qaboos bin Said Al Said refused to have anything further to do with him.

One former ambassador in Central Asia found Andrew’s behaviour odd and him ‘arrogant, cantankerous, shouty and with a tendency to bad-mouth diplomats, saying they were up themselves’. On one car journey the duke screamed when he discovered his investments had gone up and talked about them for some time. On another visit, after taking exception to something, Andrew kicked a wall, but clearly did not think his behaviour at all strange.

A sense of his time as special representative can be seen in a 2013 BBC 2 satirical drama, *Ambassadors*, starring David Mitchell and Robert Webb as two hapless British diplomats in the fictitious republic of Tazbekistan and, in particular, the second episode ‘The Prince’s Trousers’ centred round a visit by Prince Mark of Bath played by Tom Hollander. The series, based on two hundred pages of research from interviews with diplomats, ran for three episodes until, reputedly, the victim of internal BBC rivalries.

FINDING SARAH

The commission – worth \$300,000 – for a six-part series, *Finding Sarah*, subtitled ‘Going on a journey to find myself again’, made for the Oprah Winfrey Network, with a tie-in book (ghosted by Maggie Greenwood-Robinson), had, with £1.5 million provided by Andrew, allowed Sarah to pay off her debts.

The series, in which she is hypnotised, visits a horse whisperer and a shaman in the Arizona desert, walks around a garden blindfolded trying to find a 'path for life', treks twenty-six miles through Canada's Arctic region, and has sessions with a financial adviser and life coach, was transmitted in June 2011.

In the first programme with psychotherapist Dr Phil McGraw, she blamed herself for the break-up of her parents' marriage, admitting, 'I've humiliated myself so often, so publicly, I can't forgive myself.' More controversially Sarah claimed she had suffered cruel abuse from her mother. 'When she used to hit me because I didn't sit on my potty or wouldn't eat, a little vein would come up on the centre of my head near my red hair.' It was this vein that her mother called the 'sign of the devil' as she tried to beat it out of her.

These comments completely contradicted what Sarah had written in her first memoir, *My Story*, published in 1996, that her mother was 'simply the most brilliant, zestful person I have ever met'. Her sister Jane immediately refuted the claim, saying she had no recollection of abuse by her mother and had happy memories of growing up, but a friend of the duchess agreed: 'Susan, although very charming and very beautiful, was also immensely selfish, eccentric and rather childish. Batty, but not intentionally cruel.'

The exercise was also, as she admitted, to 'rebuild the brand Sarah', but the *New York Times* reviewing the series was not convinced, pointing out that the duchess was never prepared to take responsibility for her actions. The sting operation was explained by phrases such as 'self-sabotage' and 'people-pleasing addiction', the huge debts because of her 'overgenerous nature'. It accused her of trying 'to cash in on her pariah status', suggesting 'the series provides an invaluable lesson in celebrity self-help'.

The *Daily Mail* went to town on the claims that she had made on television and in the book in an article, 'The Duchess of Delusion: How Fergie's shamelessly self-serving book is as airbrushed as the cover'. It mocked her claim that she 'loved being a princess' and was 'very good at it', not least because she was only ever a duchess, and it criticised her for denials that she had sold access to Andrew. 'To her, the crisis simply opened up a business opportunity, one that she is now exploiting to the full.'

Other media were similarly not taken in. When Michael Usher, interviewing her on Australia's *60 Minutes*, played a video of the Fake Sheik sting, Sarah walked out and demanded the segment be cut. They then

promoted the duchess's performance with her snapping and glaring at Usher, rolling her eyes and demanding 'delete that bit' as 'the weirdest interview you'll ever see'. Usher described her as icier than 'the wilds of the Arctic'.

MY ROLE CONTINUES APACE

Andrew had learned of his sacking as trade envoy while on a twelve-day canoe trip in Canada with ten former schoolmates from Lakefield, but, in fact, it remained business as usual. He wrote on his website:

As the evolution of my role continues apace ... I have decided that the label I gave myself when I began this role of Special Representative has served its purpose and it is no longer necessary to the work that I do today and, more importantly, in the future.

It was now decided that Andrew would focus on training, apprenticeships and trade, science and engineering in Britain. Minister for Universities between 2010 and 2014, David Willetts was impressed in his dealings with Andrew who was useful when the Royal Institution had financial problems and by hosting a dinner at Buckingham Palace for the European Science programme. 'He was conscientious, genuinely interested in science and technology and good at asking questions. I found him approachable and a force for good.'

As part of his role as the member of the Royal Family responsible for science, in May 2013 the duke was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. However the election was controversial as he received only 147 votes out of 1,300 with 1,128 fellows abstaining – the ballot paper only allowed members to choose 'yes'. David Colquhoun, a fellow and professor of pharmacology at University College London, spoke for many: 'The Royal Society was founded to advocate the idea that science is what matters, not deference to authority. The exception seems to be deference to royal blood, but it is taking deference too far to elect Prince Andrew.'

In spite of his standing down as special representative, little appeared to change. At the end of August 2011, Jeffrey Epstein wrote to JP Morgan

suggesting Andrew could be a possible investment partner because ‘he is now allowed to make money’.

The next month, after a holiday off Corsica on the yacht of Saudi billionaire Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel, Andrew travelled with trade minister Lord Green to Saudi Arabia on a three-day trade mission by private jet. Among those who entertained him were senior figures in the Saudi Binladin Group, the construction firm run by the family of Osama bin Laden. He was accompanied by a new appointment, Laura Hutchings, a former director of the Conservative Middle East Council.

Buckingham Palace refused to say how much the jet had cost – it is estimated £150,000, compared with business-class returns of £4,000 – who was in his party or whether Andrew stayed on after the official engagements were completed.

Days after he returned, he and two aides, Amanda Thirsk and Richard Sykes, flew to Singapore, Britain’s nineteenth largest market for exports, with taxpayers covering the travel costs and UKTI paying for his accommodation, expenses and in-country travel. Records showed that Andrew had visited Singapore, renowned for its tropical climate, golf courses and restaurants, every year since at least 2007.

Later in October the duke hired a sixteen-seater plane for his third foreign trip in just over a month – this time to the Far East for two weeks – charging the government the cost of a business-class ticket. Buckingham Palace declined to say if he had been lent the plane by a wealthy friend. His private secretary and equerry travelled to China on commercial flights at taxpayers’ expense before, one newspaper noted, ‘joining him on the private jet for the rest of the trip, suggesting that he may be travelling with unidentified private companions’.

In November Andrew was in Qatar, again accompanied by Hutchings and Sykes, who was now described as a diplomat, where he met four Qatari royals and attended a reception given by Shell, which owned large gas fields in the country. From there he had further meetings in the UAE before taking a five-day holiday in Abu Dhabi as a guest of its royal family. His office refused to explain a mysterious gap of four days for a private trip between leaving Britain by private jet and arriving in Qatar, but the suspicion was that he had been in Azerbaijan.

In January 2012 Andrew was at the World Economic Forum in Davos, even though the prime minister David Cameron and his chancellor George Osborne were there representing British interests. The duke hired an eight-bedroom ski chalet with its own sauna, chef and chauffeur, at a cost of £13,000 for a week, charging the two days of the forum to the government before staying on for a holiday.

Sir David Wright, a former ambassador to Japan, had first come across the prince when Wright was chief executive of British Trade International and then as a senior adviser to Barclays. He remembers Andrew being effective in the early days: 'He very much did what people wanted him to do. He was very enthusiastic, keen to have good relations with the business communities and gave lots of dinners. Later at Barclays we arranged events we knew he'd attend, such as golf competitions.'

But as time went on, Andrew became a problem, insisting that 'more and more of his personal chums be invited to events at Davos'. For Wright, it became more about the duke's own interests rather than Barclays', 'an opportunity to exploit the job for his own benefit'. When the former ambassador told him so, it 'did not go down well'.

Chris Bryant, the former Europe minister, became increasingly critical of the duke. 'The government needs to come clean about this,' he stated, after it was revealed that over the previous six months Andrew had had meetings with fifteen ministers from foreign governments in Qatar, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, had taken part in five dinners and lunches abroad in aid of British trade, and the duke's meetings with the Azerbaijan leader Aliyev had not been announced in the Court Circular.

Despite criticism of Andrew the previous year, when the government had 'let it be known they were dispensing with the Duke of York's services', now it was 'business as usual', said Bryant. 'There should be no secrecy about whether the British taxpayer is paying for the duke's travel. If he is going to shake hands with the king of Bahrain, we need to know what is going on. People will continue to ask whose interests he is really representing.'

In July 2012 the Annual Report into Royal Public Finances for the previous tax year was released. It showed Andrew had clocked up £378,000 on flights, including, after he had stepped down as special representative, £81,000 in September on a private jet to Saudi Arabia and £72,250 on a

private jet to the Far East in October. The same month, July, he had flown by private helicopter to attend a dinner at Lancaster University and to meet injured soldiers at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham – neither previously scheduled – before staying two days to watch the Open golf. His £100,000 Range Rover with personalised number plates had been driven up and back so he could use it when he was away. He returned by helicopter at a total cost of £3,000.

In September 2013 Andrew paid a three-day visit to Indonesia in recognition of the fact that Britain needed to develop stronger trade links. The ambassador, Mark Canning, remembered him listening carefully, and doing ‘what one hoped he would do’; the visit was a success.

But a coarse joke about peeing himself, after spilling water down his front, shocked his audience at one important lecture and he proved to be a demanding guest, requesting to stay at a local hotel, instead of within the embassy compound, causing extra security headaches for his close protection team.

Andrew also produced a separate list of businessmen that he wished to see, some of whom were regarded as unsavoury characters and were excluded.

There were also pompous instructions about his likes and dislikes, and he arrived with his usual massage table. His locally booked masseuse subsequently lost her job after a journalist booked her to discover whether the prince had asked for any ‘tricks’. One member of staff later remembered how his attention during meetings would wander if a pretty girl walked by. Embassy staff were relieved to see him leave for eight days of ‘private time’ after behaviour that was described as ‘graceless’ and ‘self-entitled’.

At the end of October that year Andrew hosted a dinner for JP Morgan at Buckingham Palace as part of an initiative to ‘engage’ with international chief executives about what Britain had to offer. The hundred guests, among them the bank’s CEO Jamie Dimon, former prime minister Tony Blair, Indian industrialist Ratan Tata, governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney and the former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, enjoyed a fine dinner and performances by the Royal Philharmonic and the English National Ballet. But concerns were raised about security considerations, the commercial use of Buckingham Palace and the Royal Family becoming too close to the business community.

According to the *Financial Times*: ‘One senior participant said the bank paid nothing for the evening but the Palace said the bank paid an undisclosed fee for food, drink and the venue. The bank said it also made charitable donations to the orchestra and ballet company.’

It turned out that Buckingham Palace had been charging £8 million a year for dinners, dances and fashion shows, often attended by members of the Royal Family, and that Andrew had been hosting dinners or lunches at the Palace for representatives from the financial sector, including JP Morgan and Barclays, every few months for the previous five years. He had also hosted a dinner at Windsor for more than three hundred internet tycoons, artists and musicians in the summer of 2013. St James’s Palace had been rented out at £30,000 a day during the London Olympics. These contacts would prove to be useful for the prince’s own private business activities.

The exploitation of the royal role for his own purposes had long worried an official with English National Ballet. She said Andrew had been foisted on them after Diana’s death, even though his main interest was in the dancers rather than ballet itself, and he proved to be more a hindrance than help. He went to a few functions but acted so boorishly and disinterested that they rarely used him. When he did attend, he insisted on choosing who would sit with him in the royal box. ‘The names were not given to ENB,’ said the official. ‘It was suspected they consisted of mistresses, one a yoga teacher, and various businessmen. The chairman was allowed in at the interval for a drink.’

At one event focused on outreach with local authority schools, it was planned to invite some of the children to the royal box. One of Andrew’s daughters objected and requested that she only be joined by ‘the sort of people who shop at John Lewis’.

The official was also perturbed after attempts were made to persuade ENB to use a software program for bidding in auctions developed by Eugenie’s company Paddle8, even though the charity already had a better system and was in the middle of a three-year contract. Andrew’s enforcer Amanda Thirsk conveyed his displeasure, hinting that the prince might be less prepared to be involved with English National Ballet in future.

This was a huge relief as he was seen as toxic. We tried to avoid asking him as he was too much hard work. Unfortunately there is no way of getting rid of a royal patron. We were pleased when

he stepped down. The whole relationship was about what he could get out of it rather than what he might be able to do for us.

A similar situation of confusing his royal role with his own private interests occurred after Andrew offered to act as patron of a London Business School if Eugenie would be accepted for an MBA course for free. The offer was declined.

DIGNITY, HONESTY, LOYALTY, TRANQUILLITY AND ROYALTY

Meanwhile his ex-wife, who had just been made a global ambassador for the Not for Sale Fund, which campaigned against human trafficking, was spending nineteen days at an exclusive health resort in Thailand, the Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary and Holistic Spa, guest of its owners Karina and John Stewart. Detox breaks at the five-star retreat cost around £300 a night.

It was her third freebie there that year, having visited in January and then again in April, paid for by Oprah Winfrey, when Prince William had married Kate Middleton and she had not been invited to the wedding. The duchess devoted thirty-five pages to the Stewarts and their ‘magical’ retreat in *Finding Sarah* and was interviewed at the resort for her television series.

She had teamed up with a fragrance candle tycoon to market a series of tea-scented candles – dignity, honesty, loyalty, tranquillity and royalty – each embossed with a regal ‘S’ and a superimposed crown and with all profits going to her charitable foundation. She had also become involved with a ‘playground for the rich’ on one of the last undeveloped stretches of Brazilian coast, against opposition from environmentalists, who pointed out that it was a protected UNESCO reserve, home to an endangered species, the hawksbill turtle, and a rare lizard, the Natal pygmy gecko. The 3,500-acre site was to include a soccer academy headed by David Beckham, with eight football pitches and a ten-thousand-seater stadium, and the duchess was advising on a polo centre and hoped to set up a foundation to help local schools.

The project was being developed by Torben Frantzen and his brother Geir, with whom the duchess was now both romantically and professionally involved. She had first met the Findus frozen foods tycoon, eight years her junior, in 2006 through Torben and accompanied him to the Brazilian Grand Prix in October that year. In the years since Sarah had stayed with Geir at his mansion in Brazil and at Neverland, the brothers' remote Norwegian country house, as well as on Lofoten, a remote archipelago in northern Norway.

Norwegian royal reporter Kjell Arne Totland claimed the duchess had told him their relationship was 'spiritual' rather than sexual, but royal watchers noticed that Sarah no longer wore the ruby and diamond engagement ring given to her by Andrew.

In October 2014 the duchess celebrated her fifty-fifth birthday and the twenty-first anniversary of Children in Crisis with a star-studded party in the state apartments at Windsor. It was a mark of how she was being brought back within royal circles and another step in an attempt to rebuild her commercial career.

She had also lost a considerable amount of weight. Between early October and early December the previous year, she had booked herself a seven-bedroom chalet costing £17,000 a week – paid by the accompanying US documentary crew – as she embarked on a diet and fitness regime with a private chef and her trainer since 1989, Josh Salzmann.

In eight weeks she managed to lose three stone on a special diet of venison for breakfast, half a dozen small meals a day, giving up sugar, alcohol and gluten, plenty of rest and four-hour Nordic walks. She supposedly also wrote ten thousand Christmas cards by hand. She celebrated her achievement with an interview in *Hello!* promising to disclose 'how she beat her demons' and 'her special bond with Prince Andrew'.

Sarah was revitalised by her weight loss, which she also put down to the Fusion Xcelerator, a £65 food blender which she had been promoting under the website duchessdiscoveries.com on an American shopping channel.

It showed how self-disciplined she could be but was also the next stage of resurrecting her commercial appeal. Since the publication of her second volume of memoirs, she had kept a low profile and focused on her charity

work. The rebranding was supported by an invitation to stay at Balmoral in the summer of 2014.

She had completed a children's book, *Fergie's Farm*, based on her childhood at Dummer Down, had now filed trademarks enabling her to endorse products, including heated hairbrushes, and was renting an apartment from a friend in Eaton Square, Belgravia. It looked like she was back in business.

Andrew, meanwhile, continued to maintain close contact with the president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. In November 2014 he made a private four-day visit to Baku, his twelfth meeting with the dictator. Details of the trip only emerged after a British government source tipped off the pressure group Platform, which campaigns against social and environmental abuses associated with the energy industry. The trip was also condemned by groups concerned by the country's poor human rights record.

The same month Andrew was in Saudi Arabia – cost to taxpayer £43,000 – where liberal blogger Raif Badawi had had his sentence increased from six hundred to a thousand lashes and a leading Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr had just been sentenced to death. Accompanied by Beatrice, Andrew stayed on for private time, including watching the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

It also emerged that many of his 'official' trips were not recorded in the Court Circular, after a trip to Bahrain in April 2014 was revealed only after a list of royal gifts was published. Many trips included several days without any official engagements, suggesting he was adding golf breaks or private meetings to official visits funded by the taxpayer. The Labour MP Paul Flynn was concerned that: 'He is accountable to nobody and if he is doing this using public funds there should be more information about what he is doing and what successes he is delivering. His role is very ill-defined.'

Little did Andrew realise that these criticisms were the least of his problems.

INCRIMINATING DEPOSITIONS

At the end of December 2014, two lawyers, Bradley Edwards and Paul Cassell, filed court papers in Florida alleging that Andrew was one of several prominent figures, including 'a former Prime Minister', to have

participated in sexual activities with a minor, later identified as Virginia Giuffre. Giuffre had sworn an affidavit that she had had sex with Andrew in London, New York and on Little Saint James:

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 18 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 18 and didn't really 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.

The depositions, from a 2015 defamation lawsuit filed by Virginia Giuffre, also revealed that, after Epstein had been arrested in 2008, Prince Andrew had lobbied on his behalf to avoid prosecution and to obtain a lesser sentence, and that Epstein had cleared Sarah Ferguson's debts.

Andrew cut short the family skiing holiday at his £22,000-a-week chalet in Verbier to hold talks with the monarch, senior aides and his legal team. Initially Buckingham Palace refused to respond to the allegations but, after various press articles, put out a statement:

This relates to long-running and ongoing civil proceedings in the United States to which the Duke of York is not a party. As such we would not comment in detail. However, for the avoidance of doubt, any suggestion of impropriety with underage minors is categorically untrue.

This was followed by an even stronger denial: 'It is emphatically denied that the Duke of York had any form of sexual contact or relationship with Virginia Roberts ... Any claim to the contrary is false and without foundation.'

Court papers revealed that Nadia Marcinkova, when asked by a lawyer for Virginia Giuffre, 'Have you ever been made to perform sexually on Prince Andrew?', replied, 'Fifth.'^{*} Sarah Kellen, Epstein's executive assistant, whose legal fees were also said to have been paid by Epstein, was asked: 'Would you agree with me that Prince Andrew and Jeffrey Epstein used to share under-age girls for sexual relations?' She replied: 'On the instruction of my lawyer, I must invoke my Fifth Amendment privilege.' According to court filings, Miss Kellen was threatened by Epstein to prevent her co-operating.

Epstein himself refused to answer questions such as ‘Did you provide any under-aged girls for sex to Prince Andrew?’ Adriana Ross, a former model who worked as Epstein’s diary organiser, refused to answer the question ‘Has Prince Andrew ever been involved with under-age minor females to your knowledge?’

On 3 January 2015, the *Daily Mirror*’s headline was ‘Prince Andrew may have been secretly filmed with underage girl he is alleged to have abused’. The same day he emailed Ghislaine Maxwell: ‘Let me know when we can talk. Got some specific questions to ask you about Virginia Roberts.’

On 6 January, the *Daily Mail* led with: ‘Ten questions Buckingham Palace MUST answer over Prince Andrew’s “under-age sex slave” scandal’. These were put to Andrew’s office. There was no answer. Requests from Virginia Giuffre’s lawyers for a statement from Andrew about the allegations, under oath, were ignored. His ex-wife continued to insist he was ‘the best man in the world’.

Also in January *Private Eye* reported that three officials had ‘put their concerns in writing to the Queen, arguing that in any other profession someone accused of such misdemeanours would be suspended from duty pending an investigation and the royals should follow suit ... Her three correspondents have received curt, typed acknowledgements signed by her secretary.’

The release of the flight logs of Epstein’s jet, including the names of the passengers for each flight, backed up Giuffre’s claims. It showed how Epstein flew to Nassau to meet Sarah Ferguson and her daughters as far back as 1998 and recorded flights of the duke in February 1999 to Little Saint James and in May 2000 to Palm Beach. A March 2002 flight from Luton to JFK included Naomi Campbell and Bill Clinton.

According to one US article, based on ninety-three pages of leaked police files, FBI agents had seized more than four hours of footage captured by cameras hidden in guest rooms. The secret recordings in the various Epstein properties had one purpose, as Virginia Giuffre explained in her affidavit:

Epstein required me to describe the sexual events that I had with these men, presumably so that he could potentially blackmail them. Epstein specifically told me that the reason for him doing this was so that they would ‘owe’ him, they would ‘be in his pocket’ and he would ‘have something on them’. I understood him to mean that when someone was in his pocket, they owed

him favours. I also understood that Epstein thought he could get leniency if he was ever caught doing anything illegal, or more so that he could escape trouble altogether.

Giuffre's deposition also made allegations against international model scout Jean-Luc Brunel, who supplied many of the girls to Epstein and whom she claimed she was forced to watch engage in 'sexual acts with dozens of underage girls'.

Brunel had introduced Prince Andrew to Alana, a Ukrainian model, in 2004 when she was nineteen. She felt Andrew 'looks at women as just being his mission to conquer. Once he succeeds, he always moves on to the next step. He lives a hedonistic, nihilistic lifestyle with a mission only to please himself.'

In 2020 Brunel would be arrested by French police and charged with the rape of minors. Among those the French investigators wished to interview was Prince Andrew. While awaiting trial, Brunel was found hanging in his cell. It was Andrew's sixty-second birthday.

The Palace tried to fight back in a PR campaign that involved favourite royal lawyers Harbottle & Lewis and brought out various girlfriends to come to Andrew's defence. Koo Stark broke a thirty-two-year silence to give details of her relationship with Andrew, telling a newspaper: 'I've only known him to be honourable and honest, with Christian values.'

Respite came in April 2015 when US district judge Kenneth Marra ruled that the 'sex allegations made against Andrew in court papers filed in Florida must be struck from the public record'. Giuffre had been silenced, but it was not to last.

FIXER

In May 2016 the *Daily Mail* published an article that again raised questions about the dividing line between Andrew's role as special representative and his own private business interests, alleging that in April 2011 the duke had acted as a fixer for a foreign consortium in Kazakhstan in return for £3.83 million in commission.

Using his status and his relationship with Kenes Rakishev, who had brokered the sale of Sunninghill, Andrew had acted as a fixer in a £385

million investment in Kazakhstan on behalf of EYDAP, Greece's largest water firm, and a Swiss finance house, Aras Capital from Zurich. They had wanted to build water and sewage networks in two of Kazakhstan's largest cities and had enlisted Andrew's help. Through Rakishev, meetings had been arranged with the mayors of Astana and Almaty, along with representatives of local water authorities.

The prince's spokesman, David Pogson, initially denied the duke's involvement with the two companies: 'His Royal Highness works to promote economic growth and skilled jobs creation in the United Kingdom and has not acted on behalf of any international company.'

After the newspaper showed Pogson a copy of an email dated 14 April 2011, which Andrew had personally sent to Rakishev on behalf of both EYDAP and Aras, Buckingham Palace first claimed it was a forgery and then tried through Harbottle & Lewis to halt publication of the article on privacy grounds. The Palace finally issued a statement: 'Claims that the Duke of York acted as a so-called fixer for an international consortium and stood to benefit from a potential contract in Kazakhstan are untrue, defamatory and a breach of the Editor's Code of Conduct.'

There clearly was a public interest in the story and concerns were raised why the former special representative should be helping foreign firms when public money had been spent – £10 million alone for his police protection officers – so that the prince could promote British companies.

The email that Andrew had sent Rakishev had begun, 'We would like to discuss the potential of supporting ... the Water Company' – the 'we' suggesting he was part of the business plan. It was sent not from an official UK government email account but a private one hosted by Unitech, a small computing firm in Buckinghamshire that has a royal warrant. He continued to push the deal along.

In the end the agreement fell through in late 2011 after Kazakh police opened fire on a group of striking oil workers in the city of Zhanaozen, killing fourteen, and EYDAP pulled out, but, as a result of the introductions, Rakishev and Andrea Bubb of Aras Capital began to discuss 'mining opportunities', involving a gold mine called Taldybulak and a zinc firm called Shalkiya Zinc, and EYDAP's Mr Bardis and Rakishev set up a deal for investment in a Greek tobacco company. A source at Aras Capital

stated, 'Our feeling was that if it went ahead, a fair commission for the Prince would be 1 per cent, or around five million euros.'

The *Mail* wondered that if the prince could earn £4 million for sending a few emails 'doesn't it seem entirely possible he has been doing the same kind of thing with other firms and in other countries?' That one percentage point seemed to be the going rate. It was what his ex-wife had suggested for access to Andrew when caught in her sting by the Fake Sheik.

Kazakhstan was a magnet at the time not just for commercial activity but, as a recently independent Russian territory, a base for intelligence operations.

One Kazakh businessman encountered Andrew several times, both on private visits and on official visits as special representative, while working in Kazakhstan and was not impressed. He found the duke arrogant and stupid, feeling Andrew was simply there to have a good time and achieved little to promote trade. 'He can't hold a conversation because he has no depth and won't listen. He was much more interested in making suggestive comments to attractive women than talking business. Everyone knew he was a joke.'

The businessman noted the close relationship with the president and his son-in-law Timur, who would often invite Andrew to private houses or the VIP sections of nightclubs where girls would be provided for him. On one occasion, Andrew disappeared into a back room with two members of the Russian/Ukrainian girl group Nu Virgos otherwise known as VIA Gra.

On another, girls were refused entry to Andrew's hotel and had to be infiltrated up the fire escape. The businessman has no doubt that Andrew would have been photographed on these escapades, with the material kept as kompromat.

Veronica Abitova, a model and medical student in Kazakhstan, interviewed by journalist Ian Halperin, admitted to having been part of a ring of women Nazarbayev supplied to various dignitaries. She knew women who were provided for the Duke of York:

Prince Andrew loved Astana because he could do whatever he wanted without media scrutiny. He also did a lot of business deals with Nazarbayev, mainly in the oil and gas industry. He made a fortune. And the best part was that he didn't have to invest a penny. Nazarbayev loved the prestige of including the Prince in major business deals because it looked very good for him. It was win-win for both parties.

According to Richard Orange, the *Daily Telegraph*'s correspondent in Kazakhstan, in 2010 Andrew had set up a Kazakhstan 'student', then in her late twenties, in a smart apartment in Mayfair. Her TEFL teacher confirmed the duke 'visited once a month, and kept other girls in similar situations', adding, 'The student in question absolutely refused to talk to any journalists.' She later married a wealthy Italian 'client'.

New disclosures now came to light surrounding the 2007 sale of Sunninghill Park, allowed to sit empty by its new owners, decaying for eight years, until it was razed to the ground in 2015. At one point Bracknell Forest Borough Council had considered seizing it under the 2004 Housing Act to use as a shelter for the homeless.

Emails obtained under Freedom of Information legislation showed that, contrary to claims of an arm's length arrangement, Andrew was far more involved in the sale than previously admitted. His aide, Amanda Thirsk, had discussed interior design and security arrangements with purchaser Timur Kulibayev and she had tried to arrange for him to lease two fields next to the house from the Crown Estate for a 'peppercorn rent' of £200 per acre. Leaked emails also revealed she had arranged for the oligarch's representatives to meet Crown Estate officials to discuss buying multi-million-pound properties near Kensington Palace, shortly before the sale of Sunninghill was finalised.

Buckingham Palace repeated its statement that the sale of Sunninghill Park was 'a straight commercial transaction between the trust which owned the house and the trust which bought it. There were no side deals and absolutely no arrangement from the Duke of York to benefit otherwise or to commit to any other commercial arrangement.'

A source close to Andrew told Halperin that after questions were asked, 'The Queen called the right people and was able to put out the fire.'

HOUSE OF FERGUSON

The duchess continued to set up new companies, more recently under the name Margaret – her middle name – York. One partnership, to be called 'The Duchess Collection', was established with an expensive tonic water brand, Double Dutch – its cans sold for ten times the price of own-brand

tonics – to tap the duchess’s 11,300 followers on Instagram and 96,000 followers on Twitter.

In September 2015 she had embarked on a two-day cruise entitled ‘Fergie’s Flying Culinary Circus’ from Oslo to Kiel, having linked up with the company Colour Line for an ‘Afternoon Tea’ range of teas, jams, biscuits, cakes, plates and candles, styled as the ‘nearest thing to Royal products’.

The US publisher Abrams had announced publication of a 128-page book, *Tea and Gratitude*, which over twelve chapters would teach readers how to ‘set the perfect table, throw a tea party, brew and serve the perfect cup of tea’. The publishers were promising her trademark ‘whimsy’ with a flavour of the Mad Hatter’s Tea Party from Lewis Carroll’s novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

In return for a six-figure fee, Sarah was also promoting hair straighteners on QVC, boasting that they came in ‘royal purple’. She was now handled by talent agency Kruger Cowne, and had signed up to a corporate speakers’ agency in Canada, where her services were being offered at \$20,000 a time to talk about ‘her personal journey to fulfilment’. Princess Beatrice was also in talks with US speaking agencies.

It was all beginning to pay dividends. In July 2015 Sarah had moved some of her furniture, including a steel drum, to the chalet in Verbier as part of a move to Switzerland for tax reasons, though she kept a London room and a room at Royal Lodge. She told the Swiss newspaper *Le Nouvelliste*, ‘I have begun the process of officially becoming a resident of Valais.’

The leak of 1.5 million files from a Panama-based law firm, Mossack Fonseca, in April 2016 demonstrated her own financial wealth had become so convoluted that at one point she herself did not know who managed her assets. Her solicitors, Clintons, had had to contact the Panama firm to discover ‘who the directors of the company are and who the beneficial owners of the company are’. It turned out that Essar Company Inc., itself managed through a trust services company in Geneva which had been set up in the British Virgin Islands in May 2000, owned the trademarks to the *Little Red* children’s books. Her spokesman insisted she always disclosed all sources of income in her tax returns.

In November 2016 it was revealed that Sarah had launched a £25 million – later increased to £40 million – lawsuit against the publishers of the *News*

of the World after Mazher Mahmood had been charged with perverting the course of justice in a collapsed drugs trial. She claimed she had been tricked and had lost £510,000 each year from lost speaking engagements and media articles.

Her spokesman insisted the legal action was not ‘opportunistic’. Lawyers for the newspaper defended the claim, accusing her of ‘dishonesty’ and describing her case as ‘defective and embarrassing’.

The writ showed that in the year before the cash-for-access scandal she had made £750,000 from speaking engagements, even though she was supposedly on the brink of bankruptcy. In the year after the article appeared, her earnings had dropped to £54,000. She also claimed that investors in two television animation projects, *Fergie’s Farm* and *Tea for Ruby*, which would have earned her £22 million, had been scared off. Among the other ventures which had failed as a result of her loss of reputation were a lifestyle brand called House of Ferguson and a series of ‘higher end’ books entitled *Madame Pantaloon*.

Her legal submission argued ‘the Duchess was working to assist ... Graham King on raising funds for new projects of \$125,000,000 [£90.2 million]. The commission that would have been payable on funds raised was ... £4,373,250.’

A source close to King, who had produced Martin Scorsese’s *The Departed* and *Hugo*, described the claim as ‘exaggerated’.

Her other alleged losses included £8,645,000 that she would have earned as a celebrity endorser of vitamins, dietary supplements and personal care products for US company Windmill Health Products, and £4.8 million for personal appearances.

In the immediate aftermath of the sting, Sarah had explained her actions by saying she was drunk, was trying to help a friend and in debt; now, in an article from 2011 which *Harper’s Bazaar* had republished, she claimed it had been a misunderstanding: ‘I didn’t do that, selling access.’ The story now was that the Indian mogul had wanted to start a business and she had said, ‘If you’re going to invest in my business, with that comes my family, because we’re all a team together.’

In April 2019 the duchess would abandon her claim against the paper, having spent £504,546 in legal fees.

In July 2017 there was fresh media censure after David and Victoria Beckham shared a princess-themed sixth birthday party, held for their daughter Harper, with their 38.5 million followers on Instagram, revealing that it had been at Buckingham Palace. One of the pictures showed Harper with Princess Eugenie. The Yorks, both of whom attended, claimed it was a private event for a family friend, but critics pointed out that the Palace, currently being refurbished with £370 million of public money, was not a playground for the privileged few but a building paid for by the British taxpayer and access to it should not depend on wealth or connections. A 'private' event should not then have been advertised to millions.

Dickie Arbiter, the Queen's former assistant press secretary, was angered: 'What is Eugenie having a party there for? What is Sarah York doing, having organised it – allegedly? None of them has got a right to be there. Is it being opened up as a theme park? It devalues what the place is all about.'

The Beckhams were not the only celebrities to have been given access. In November it was revealed the actor Kevin Spacey, facing allegations of sexual assault, had been photographed sitting on the 1953 coronation throne, in breach of protocol, while on a private tour of Buckingham Palace given by Prince Andrew.

In spite of these gaffes, Sarah had worked her way back into royal approval, a mark of how she was able to play her husband. The rehabilitation had been encouraged by Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, who had known Susan Barrantes, and whose brother, Mark Shand, had worked with Sarah at his wildlife charity, The Elephant Family.

The duchess featured in the Court Circular after she attended an event in January 2016 as Prince Andrew's official representative. She had been invited to Balmoral, had accompanied Andrew to the Royal Enclosure during Ascot in 2015, and even been given permission to host an event for Children in Crisis at Windsor Castle.

According to one well-placed source: 'She pulls his strings. Andrew pulls the Queen's strings. That's why she's at Balmoral ... For someone who can be so bonkers in her personal life, she's extraordinarily shrewd when it comes to managing her relationship with the Queen.' They continued: 'Her influence on the Duke of York is not necessarily in the Royals' best interests. I wonder why the Queen seems unable to see this.'

PITCH@PALACE

His role as special representative having come to an end, Andrew had set up a new organisation, Pitch@Palace, to provide a forum for entrepreneurs to be brought together with investors, ‘a cross between the *Dragons’ Den* host Evan Davis and Claudia Winkleman from *Strictly Come Dancing*’.

It was funded by sponsors such as the accountancy giant KPMG, Cisco, Barclays, AstraZeneca and Standard Chartered Bank, and launched at Buckingham Palace, with later functions at St James’s Palace. It soon went international, with versions in Africa, China, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Latin America and Singapore, and successes included an HIV self-test kit; Stasher, a platform to let travellers find a place to store their bags without checking into a hotel; By Miles, an arrangement to charge car insurance by the number of miles driven; SafeToNet, software on a child’s phone to stop them sexting; and Magic Pony Technology, an AI start-up that Twitter bought for \$150 million.

Roddy Cameron was one of those chosen to pitch: ‘It certainly gave me a chance, not least to get high-quality mentoring, and people began to take me seriously.’ That it took place at St James’s gave it ‘extra sizzle’. Cameron used it as an opportunity to ‘network, to meet service providers such as lawyers and accountants. It was a real enabler and took the barriers down. It was like a micro MBA.’

Quintus Liu set up a digital medical platform to connect pharmacy websites, with the result that medicines could be delivered to patients within the hour. ‘It inspired me more than anything else, opened my eyes to opportunities out there and allowed me to meet investors,’ he said.

Michael Rolph, co-founder of Yoyo Wallet, won Pitch in 2014 and as a result secured an introduction to Caffè Nero’s founder Gerry Ford. This led to the Yoyo Wallet handling the coffee chain’s payments and loyalty scheme. He described Pitch as a ‘wholly positive experience’ with every event ‘well attended by a Who’s Who of industry’. Rolph had multiple interactions with Prince Andrew: ‘He would remember from one conversation to the next one about the firm. He was a force for good.’

The venture capitalist Bill Lia invested through Pitch. While he thought Andrew ‘wanted to be smarter than he really was’, he found the duke’s aide

Amanda Thirsk ‘went the extra mile, was caring ... and very capable’. The problem he felt was that Andrew didn’t always take her advice.

The duke also became involved with the Royal Academy of Engineering Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, which saw such shortlisted pitches as a non-invasive diagnostic kit to detect malaria; Science Set, a mini science lab containing all the materials needed to carry out experiments in the school syllabus; BioSure, an HIV self-test; ColdHubs, a solar-powered walk-in cold room that extended the shelf life of perishable food tenfold; and GoodBox, contactless terminals making it easier to donate to charity, which was taken up by the Natural History Museum, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Save the Children.

He also launched a scheme, the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA), to encourage children to learn digital skills and set up online businesses in partnership with the Nominet Trust, modelled on the Duke of Edinburgh awards, with prizes of up to £20,000 for the best ideas for new digital companies.

The duke gave an interview to John Arlidge in the *Sunday Times* to promote his initiatives, describing himself as ‘an ideas factory’, adding: ‘Prince Albert was the entrepreneur-in-residence at Buckingham Palace. He was doing it in the Industrial Revolution. I am doing it in the digital revolution.’

It turned into a public relations disaster, however, after he refused to pose for pictures in the Palace’s Chinese Dining Room despite a recce and some meticulous negotiation over two days between HRH, his staff and the magazine. As Arlidge put it, ‘I’m left thinking that if I can fly 10,500 miles to Sydney to see him in action with Pitch@Palace, the least he can do is walk a few feet into the hall of his own home for a picture.’ Arlidge later recollected: ‘He was, without question, the most arrogant and thoughtless public figure I have ever interviewed. Everything he should have done, he didn’t do, and everything he shouldn’t have done, he did do.’

Arlidge had originally intended to escalate his questions in terms of difficulty, but realised that even the easy ones were difficult for Andrew. The journalist abandoned a plan to pose ‘a series of increasingly simple questions in the hope that he would just keep talking absolute crap, and revealing himself to be incompetent, useless, ill-prepared and thoughtless’.

Arlidge warned the Buckingham Palace press office the article might be critical. ‘We work with what we have,’ they replied.

A HUMAN LABRADOR

Along with Ivana Trump, Sarah had become the European and American spokesperson for dietician Gianluca Mech, whose ketogenic approach to weight loss allowed practitioners to eat pasta and pizza and whose thousand-dollar meal kits promised a loss of twenty pounds in forty-five days. The ‘very clever’ timing of the announcement with the marriage of Princess Eugenie to her long-term boyfriend Jack Brooksbank was, according to the managing director of the agency promoting Mech, ‘an easy way for the brand to get a huge amount of free coverage from the partnership’.

On 12 October 2018, Princess Eugenie, dressed in a low-backed dress to show off the scar from her scoliosis operation, married at St George’s Chapel in Windsor.[†] It was the first time Ferguson had appeared at a public family gathering for twenty-seven years. Prince Philip, who had not been in the same room as his daughter-in-law for twenty years, sat beside her in the formal pictures. The security costs to the taxpayer for the wedding, attended by 850 guests, were estimated to be £2 million.

Sarah Vine, writing in the *Daily Mail*, admitted a different view of the duchess, who had set up a stall next to the main wedding marquee promoting her range of teas: ‘The woman is utterly incorrigible. And yet. There is something about her indefatigable, indestructible nature that I can’t help but admire. Something in her propensity for pratfalls of her own making that makes her so much more human than other royals.’ Vine likened her to ‘a human Labrador: clumsy, over-excitable, greedy, prone to causing breakages with her constantly wagging tail – but ultimately impossible to remain angry with for all that long’.

Another journalist, Frances Hardy, spent two days with the duchess for a wide-ranging interview, which covered her relationship with Andrew – ‘We’re the happiest divorced couple in the world. We’re divorced to each other, not from each other’ – her relationships with her parents, children, members of the Royal Family and her charity work. Hardy felt the

duchess's compassion, empathy and her love for children to be genuine. This ability to empathise with the young and disadvantaged came, Hardy argued, from Sarah's own unhappy childhood and reluctance to become an adult, as the duchess freely admitted: 'But the key to me is that I look at life with a child's sense of excitement and joy.' Asked about becoming a grandmother, she exclaimed, 'I tell you, they'll be older than me at age three! I'll have more fun making the Barbie kit houses than the grandchildren will.'

TROUBLES MULTIPLY

On 6 July 2019, Jeffrey Epstein was arrested on charges of sex trafficking. An offer of \$100 million bail was refused and he was sent to the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan. A few days earlier the papers in Virginia Giuffre's 2015 defamation case against Ghislaine Maxwell had been unsealed, revealing the allegation that Johanna Sjoberg's breast had been groped by Prince Andrew and, with claims all denied, that Giuffre had been forced by Epstein to have sex with former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, billionaire Glenn Dubin and former Democratic Senate majority leader George Mitchell.

On 9 August a further two thousand pages of documents were opened. The next day, at 6.25 a.m., Epstein was found on his knees in his cell with a sheet tied around his neck and the top bunk. He was rushed to hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 7.36 a.m. His cellmate had been moved out the previous day, which was unusual for someone on suicide watch; the CCTV was not working; and both his guards had fallen asleep at exactly the same time and for the same three hours, meaning that six mandatory visual checks had not been made. He had been taken straight to New York-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital, violating the protocol that any suicide should be treated as if it were a crime scene, and the body was not photographed as it was found. Epstein's death must have come as a relief to many important figures whose secrets he held.

The next day the Queen, in a show of solidarity, sat Andrew beside her as she was driven to church. Andrew left Balmoral early by private jet for a

villa in Sotogrande, loaned him by a Spanish businessman, hoping that would be the end of the matter – but it wasn't.

On 18 August the *Mail on Sunday* published a video, made by Mazher Mahmood, showing Andrew affectionately saying goodbye to a female visitor at the door of Epstein's New York mansion the day before he was pictured walking with the sex offender in Central Park in December 2010. Two days later it was revealed to be Katherine, the twenty-nine-year-old daughter of Paul Keating, prime minister of Australia from 1991 to 1996. Keating, who at the time was in a relationship with billionaire Las Vegas hotel owner André Balazs, a friend of Ghislaine Maxwell, said she had just met Andrew for a cup of tea. In spite of being contacted by multiple news agencies numerous times since the video was made public, she has refused to comment further.

The next day the *Daily Mail* published an article triangulating Andrew's movements with Epstein's flight logs and Virginia Giuffre's claims. It supported her statements that the two of them had been in London in March 2001 and the following month in New York and the Caribbean. Buckingham Palace refused to answer any of the questions put to it by the paper, including whether Andrew had met Giuffre in April 2001. Bradley Edwards, Giuffre's lawyer, called on him to come forward as a material witness.

Amid continuing media speculation, Andrew issued another statement:

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.

The Buckingham Palace statement continued:

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 same day, the *Mail* detailed how Epstein and the prince had 'partied together at least 20 times – even after the financier was convicted', in New

York, Palm Beach, Little Saint James, Thailand, Buckingham Palace, Balmoral, Sandringham and Windsor Castle.

The journalist Elizabeth Day, then a feature writer on a Sunday newspaper, recalled being approached by a member of Andrew's staff keen to rebrand him after he had been nicknamed 'Air Miles Andy' while he was still trade envoy. Waiting to see the duke for the interview, she had noticed the oversized teddy bear stuffed into a seat outside his office and asked the prince about it. In response, he 'sniggered' and told her that it had been a wedding present from his ex-wife, which he still found very funny: 'It seemed rather strange to me that a grown man should be so amused by the presence of a stuffed toy,' said Day, 'but I suppose the English upper classes have a long history with teddy bears used as transitional objects to express emotions they might feel uncomfortable with.'

Finding him defensive and somewhat sulky, Day asked if he could imagine life if he had not been born into the Royal Family. 'How on earth would I know?' the duke responded, as if he had been asked something absurd. Looking back, in the light of Virginia Giuffre's claims, Day concluded that it was totally beyond him to understand 'what life might be like for someone else; for someone less privileged, less fortunate, more vulnerable ... I can imagine him, this man with his teddy bear and his arrested development, being as self-centred as a child and not giving any thought as to the impact his behaviour might have on anyone else. I can imagine him, too, being baffled and semi-outraged that he is now being asked to account for his actions.'

'Friends' of the duke now briefed the media that the picture with Virginia Giuffre didn't 'look right', claiming their heights did not match and his fingers were chubbier. In her court depositions Giuffre had stated that the two of them had taken a bath together. Andrew's defenders later claimed the bath was too small for them to have shared easily.

But the story refused to die. On 24 August it was reported that Andrew could be summoned to Paris as a witness to help French prosecutors investigating allegations of rape and sexual abuse by Epstein. On 27 August, Virginia Giuffre held a press conference. Asked about Prince Andrew, she answered, 'He knows exactly what he's done and I hope he comes clean about it.' She repeated her claims the following month in an interview with NBC News. At the end of August, Fox News ran a video of

the 2005 police raid on Epstein's Palm Beach home showing massage tables and pictures of naked young women.

Giuffre, with four other alleged Epstein victims, including a British former model, Anouska De Georgiou, who had been at school with Kate Middleton, appeared on television and repeated her claims that she had once had sex with the prince in a bathroom, he had 'licked' her toes and feet, and that he had said 'thank you' afterwards.

In September the *Sunday Times* reported that 'British intelligence chiefs were concerned that Russia may have obtained kompromat, compromising material, on Prince Andrew over the Jeffrey Epstein scandal.' According to the paper, John Mark Dougan, a former deputy in the Palm Beach County sheriff's office, had fled to Russia with copies of files on Andrew, and was in touch with Pavel Borodin, a senior Russian official and mentor of Vladimir Putin.

Asked what might be in the files, Dougan claimed:

Lots of videos, but I wasn't going to sit around and watch them. Also lots of scanned documents. Law enforcement has had it for many years. They had it when Epstein was first arrested in 2006. And the FBI had it when they seized my computers in 2016. And I know they had these materials, because they were the ones that alerted MI6 in 2019 that I had a duplicate and had a compromising video of Andrew. So far as the future goes, it's in their court. We are not law enforcement so we have no power in this matter.

A well-respected PR expert, Jason Stein – he had previously worked as a special adviser to Amber Rudd as work and pensions minister and later was special adviser to Liz Truss as prime minister – was brought in to handle Andrew's communications strategy and several official engagements were cancelled, including any events in the United States.

An indication of Andrew's state of mind came with a newspaper story at the beginning of September of an altercation – some reports said physical as well as verbal – with the respected Master of the Household, Vice-Admiral Sir Anthony Johnstone-Burt, and a former navy pilot contemporary of Andrew's, over a booking for a Pitch@Palace event.

Criticisms had continued of the duke's Pitch@Palace activities. In May 2019 he had taken a private jet to Canada for a Pitch event, though numerous commercial flights were available. Buckingham Palace claimed the costs had been met privately but would not say by whom. Another trip,

on which Andrew was accompanied by his ex-wife, daughter Beatrice and her then boyfriend Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi, to Bahrain, as guests of the crown prince, was timed to coincide with the Grand Prix.

Rich Wilson, the founder of various digital companies, wrote an article arguing, 'Pitch@Palace appears to have been a vehicle for Prince Andrew to enrich himself at the cost of the hardworking entrepreneurs he claimed to be helping.' Wilson divulged that he had been invited to a Pitch event but on the condition he fill in an application. Reading the small print, he saw that Pitch@Palace was asking for a 2 per cent commission 'if you raised investment at any point for up to three years after the pitch event'.

He was shocked: 'It's a massive red card ... There is literally no reason to pay to pitch to investors, it's simply predatory on the part of the organisers and anyone operating in this way should be named and shamed for it.'

This money was to be funnelled from the charity, Pitch@Palace CIC (community interest company), which had sponsored and benefited from events at Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace, graced by the Queen and various military bands, into Andrew's private limited company, Pitch@Palace Global Ltd.

The second company, of which the Prince was the 'ultimate controlling party', had eight directors. It had £300,000 in the bank and was entitled to pay dividends to its shareholders. It was also registered at Buckingham Palace, which, according to royal protocol, must never be used for commercial purposes. It appeared that, for the prince, business as well as charity began at home.

For the year ending 31 March 2019, Pitch@Palace Global posted a profit of £576,000, with an increase in assets from £943,731 in 2018 to £3,125,398, indicating turnover – 'amounts received in sponsorship or donation income' – for the business exceeding £2.2 million. Accounts up to March 2020 showed assets of £1,495,737 and profits of £1.2 million. But that posed a question: where had the profits come from?

THE PRINCE AND THE PAEDOPHILE

That October Channel 4 aired a documentary, *The Prince and the Paedophile*, which revealed that Jeffrey Epstein had sixteen phone numbers

for Prince Andrew in his infamous address book, including a line to the duke's computer modem, and eighteen for his ex-wife.

At the end of the month, Dr Michael Baden, a former New York City medical examiner who during a five-decade medical career had worked on high-profile cases, including those of O.J. Simpson, President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King and record producer Phil Spector, gave an interview on American television. He had been hired by Jeffrey Epstein's brother to conduct an autopsy after the family were not given a copy of the official report though required to by law.

Baden noted that the sixty-six-year-old Epstein had two fractures on the left and right sides of his larynx, specifically the thyroid cartilage or Adam's apple, as well as one fracture on the left hyoid bone above the Adam's apple. 'Those three fractures are extremely unusual in suicidal hangings and could occur much more commonly in homicidal strangulation,' he concluded.

There were also haemorrhages in Epstein's eyes that were common in homicidal strangulation and uncommon, though not unheard of, in suicidal hangings.

Spencer Kuvin, who represented many of the victims, also had doubts about the suicide verdict: 'I can't tell you he definitely didn't commit suicide, but it looks suspicious. He believed he was going to get out of jail because what he did [in his mind] was perfectly legal, perfectly fine ... So why would he kill himself if he didn't feel he'd done anything wrong, especially before he's convicted.'

At the beginning of November, an insider at ABC News leaked a hot mic interview with Amy Robach, *Good Morning America's* co-host and Breaking News anchor at ABC, recorded three months earlier. The segment, passed to the investigative website Project Veritas, showed Robach venting her frustration to an off-camera producer about an interview she and a colleague Jim Hill had conducted with Virginia Giuffre in 2015, which was then squashed by the network.

I've had this interview with Virginia Roberts [now Virginia Giuffre] [alleged Epstein victim]. We would not put it on the air. Um, first of all, I was told, Who's Jeffrey Epstein? No one knows who that is. This is a stupid story. [Virginia] told me everything. She had pictures, she had everything. She was in hiding for 12 years, we convinced her to come out. We convinced her to talk to us. It was unbelievable what we had. Clinton. We had everything. I tried for three years

to get it on to no avail. The Palace found out that we had her whole allegations about Prince Andrew and threatened us a million different ways.

One pressure point was to deny the channel any future interviews with the present Prince and Princess of Wales. As a result of the story being suppressed, Epstein and his associates had been able to groom, traffic and abuse young girls for another three years.

Robach went on to state that she believed Epstein had been killed in prison:

So do I think he was killed? 100 per cent Yes, I do ... He made his whole living blackmailing people ... Yup, there were a lot of men in those planes. A lot of men who visited that island, a lot of powerful men who came into that apartment.

* The Fifth Amendment is the right to remain silent for fear of incriminating oneself.

† The guests included Naomi Campbell, Demi Moore, Ellie Goulding, Cara Delevingne, Liv Tyler, Ricky Martin, Pixie Geldof, Robbie Williams, Tracey Emin, Stephen Fry, Kate Moss, James Blunt, Jack Whitehall, David Tang, Nick Candy, Jamie Redknapp, Richard Branson, various Qatari rulers, Tarek Kaituni, David Rowland (in the front row) and the Chinese internet tycoon Richard Liu.

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VII

THE FIGHTBACK

‘THAT WENT PRETTY WELL’

Prince Andrew’s office had been lobbied by news organisations to give an interview explaining the Virginia Giuffre case ever since the scandal broke, few more determinedly than the respected BBC’s *Newsnight*. In May 2019, six months after first being approached, Amanda Thirsk opened up negotiations with *Newsnight*’s planning team, suggesting Andrew could talk about trade after Brexit, his projects and Britain’s place in the world. His friendship with Epstein would be off-limits, but after a long courtship, Thirsk finally agreed to a full-length interview.

Sam McAlister, the *Newsnight* producer who handled the negotiations, remembered talks on 11 November, when Andrew ‘seemed open, confident, energetic, boisterous and thick-skinned’. He was accompanied by his daughter Beatrice, who busily took notes during the two-hour meeting. Both Donal McCabe, the Queen’s communications secretary, and Jason Stein, the duke’s press adviser, were against an interview – Stein recommended a newspaper interview – while Thirsk and the rest of Andrew’s family thought it would be an opportunity to ‘clear the air’. They agreed to an hour-long, face-to-face sitdown with Emily Maitlis.

Going against the first rule of PR, no parameters were set about what could be raised. Maitlis and her team drew up questions and she role-played answers with her editor Esme Wren. It appears Prince Andrew did not do the same.

On the day of the interview, 14 November, Maitlis and her team were allowed to film in the Blue Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace, for which Andrew had supposedly obtained permission from the Queen on the basis that it was ‘a discussion about his official duties and his success with

Pitch@Palace'. Prince Charles and Camilla were on a six-day tour of New Zealand and Sarah was in China, but the Queen watched it alone in her private sitting room at Windsor.

Maitlis later remembered the duke making small talk before the cameras rolled: 'He seems at ease, fascinated by the mechanics of the whole process, laughing at the number of cameras Keith and Jonathan have set up ... He does not seem particularly nervous. He doesn't seem like a man who's about to decide his own fate in an on-camera interview.'

The interview started and Maitlis gave the duke the opportunity to tell 1.7 million live viewers why he was there. Without preamble, or anything about his trade envoy work, Andrew went straight to the subject of Jeffrey Epstein. He said he was 'delighted to be able to see you today', and explained that the relationship with Epstein was not about partying – 'I never have really partied' – but because Epstein, the well-connected global financier, could provide useful connections and he could learn from him. Andrew said he had visited Epstein in December 2010 in order to tell him 'that because he had been convicted, it was inappropriate for us to be seen together'.

When pressed about Virginia Giuffre, Andrew claimed to have 'no recollection of ever meeting this lady, none whatsoever' nor of 'that photograph ever being taken'. He added: 'As a member of the Royal Family ... I am not one to, as it were, hug and public displays of affection are not something that I do.'

He had never been to Tramp with her and he denied sweating profusely, explaining his 'peculiar medical condition [caused by] what I would describe as an overdose of adrenalin in the Falklands War when I was shot at, and I simply ... it was almost impossible for me to sweat.'

He could not have been at Tramp because he had taken Beatrice to a Pizza Express in Woking for a party at about four or five, which he had remembered because going to Woking was 'a very unusual thing for me to do'.

Maitlis asked if he went on to have sex with Virginia Giuffre.

'I can absolutely categorically tell you it never happened,' Andrew responded.

Asked if he regretted his friendship with Epstein, he replied:

Now, still not, and the reason being is that the people that I met and the opportunities that I was given to learn either by him or because of him were actually very useful.

‘Do I regret the fact that he has quite obviously conducted himself in a manner unbecoming? Yes,’ Andrew said.

‘*Unbecoming?*’ Maitlis responded. ‘He was a sex offender.’

‘You *stayed* with him,’ she said.

‘I stayed with him, and that’s ... that’s ... that’s the bit that ... that ... that, as it were, I kick myself for on a daily basis because it was not something that was becoming of a member of the Royal Family, and we try and uphold the highest standards and practices and I let the side down, simple as that.’

The hour-long interview was soon over. Maitlis had continually probed him about his relationship with Maxwell, Epstein and Giuffre. He had rejected every allegation made against him but admitted they had been ‘a constant sore in the family’. Asked if he had anything to add, he replied, ‘No, I don’t think so. I think you’ve probably dragged out most of what is required and I’m truly grateful for the opportunity that you’ve given me to be able to discuss this with you.’

Afterwards, McAlister asked the duke’s equerry how she thought it had gone. ‘She beamed back at me. “Wasn’t he wonderful!”’

Maitlis was given a tour of the palace, including the room in which the Queen had her weekly audiences with her prime ministers. The duke also seemed pleased, later telling his mother, ‘I reckon that went pretty well, don’t you?’

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE *NEWSNIGHT* INTERVIEW

That is the public story, and several journalists enhanced their careers as a result of that version with books and dramas. The reality is rather different. The BBC had long been investigating Prince Andrew’s relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, not in London but Northern Ireland, and the key figure was not Emily Maitlis or Sam McAlister but a BBC producer called Laura Burns.

Working for the Northern Ireland *Panorama* office, Burns, and assistant producer Olivia Davies, had travelled widely in the United States checking police reports, interviewing Epstein staff, tracing victims of both him and Prince Andrew, and persuading Virginia Giuffre and her legal team to be interviewed on camera. In Burns's words the team also:

found personal email discussions between Ghislaine and Andrew discussing Virginia. The emails between Ghislaine and Andrew didn't exclaim 'it's a fake' 'I've never met her' or any other questions, instead they worked together to build a dossier about Virginia to leak to the media.

The investigations were not without problems. The women were followed by private investigators and had the police called on them and were warned that 'just because the Palace had never sued the BBC before, we shouldn't assume that they won't sue now'.

On 26 August 2019, the *Panorama* team approached Buckingham Palace seeking an hour-long interview with Prince Andrew to respond to the public allegations and their investigations. As Burns put it, 'I knew if he gave an interview, he would hang himself and it would be TV gold. I knew he lived in a world that was entirely not real.'

On 9 September, two members of the office, presenter Darragh MacIntyre and its boss Andrew Head, had a meeting at the Palace to discuss the request, during which 'Andrew's team said that they had evidence that the photo of Andrew and Virginia was a fake but they did not offer any evidence of this at this meeting'.

This was followed by a telephone call on 8 November in which Head explained to the Palace that their investigation would continue and a right of reply letter would be sent to Andrew the following week. Four days later Burns learned that Andrew was not doing an interview with them but with *Newsnight* and that her months of research had to be passed to the *Newsnight* team.

How the interview moved from *Panorama* to *Newsnight* is debatable but the suspicion remains that the Palace preferred a straight interview to a right of reply after a hard-hitting investigation. Contrary to the narrative that has been presented, *Newsnight*, which had only previously discussed an

interview to promote Pitch@Palace, had just seventy-two hours' notice of what would prove a seminal television event.

It was Burns who was required to prepare them. She fact-checked their video insert, shared *Panorama*'s script, research, contacts, legal documents and detailed timelines, fact-checked their questions and wrote some of the most significant questions of her own. Some of them included pinning Andrew down on whether he would assist the various international investigations into Epstein, and when he last saw Ghislaine Maxwell. Burns knew that an arrest for Ghislaine was imminent and Prince Andrew was not just someone who was naively friends with one sex offender – he was good friends with two of the most prolific sex traffickers in the world. Burns also checked the veracity of the photograph of him with Virginia Giuffre and shared all of that information freely with the *Newsnight* team. It was a positive story of collaboration with historically rival departments, *Panorama* and *Newsnight* working together to hold power to account and get the prince's answers on record.

Unfortunately that was where the collaboration ended. Burns's credit was removed from the interview broadcast; there was no mention of her crucial role in the BAFTA submission, in the press or in any of the subsequent books or films. The single mother who had made the interview coup possible had been written out of the script.

The *Newsnight* programme 'Prince Andrew & the Epstein Scandal' was shown on the BBC on 16 November. The press reaction was instantaneous and unanimous. The *Washington Post* called it 'a car crash', while the *New York Times* reported that 'experts on the royal family have described the interview as the biggest public relations debacle for the British royal family since the turbulent aftermath of the death of Princess Diana in a car crash in 1997.' 'I expected a train wreck,' tweeted Charlie Proctor, editor of the Royal Central website. 'That was a plane crashing into an oil tanker, causing a tsunami, triggering a nuclear explosion level bad.'

Andrew's statements were analysed and found to be wanting. He claimed to have had no recollection of meeting Giuffre and provided an alibi for a date in question. No one had a recollection of a birthday party in Woking, including his own daughter. A diary entry showed that afternoon he had booked a manicure with a woman called Jeanne. He claimed not to know

where the bar was at Tramp, though it was by the dance floor, and he had been photographed there days after he allegedly took Giuffre.

A police protection officer remembered him returning to Buckingham Palace that night, but an attempt to check revealed the security logs were first covered by ‘national security’ and then had been destroyed. The housekeepers at Sunninghill that weekend could not remember the prince’s movements.

Experts said there was no known medical condition that made humans unable to sweat and pictures were produced from 2001 showing Andrew perspiring. After he said the picture with Giuffre must have been doctored because he always wore a suit and tie in London, pictures were produced of him photographed at events in casual clothes.

There was scepticism about why it took four nights, with a dinner party thrown in his honour, to sever the relationship with Epstein, and, in a city bristling with hotels and with the British consulate nearby, that the excuse that ‘it was a convenient place to stay’ really washed. He claimed he had severed contact with Epstein in 2010, but emails later showed the two were in touch in 2011. He denied he had ever met Virginia Roberts when there was plenty of evidence linking them, including a verified photograph. His claim not to party or be tactile was exposed with dozens of pictures in the press of him hugging and kissing various women at parties.

But Giuffre’s statements were also questioned. An investigation by the *Daily Mail* in December 2020 found that the bath at Maxwell’s house, which Giuffre described as free-standing in the middle of the room, was a ‘standard size’ – five-foot six inches by two-foot four inches – alcove bath, boxed in on two sides by walls and on a third by the back of an airing cupboard. In her depositions and memoir, *The Billionaire Playboy’s Club*, Giuffre claimed she and Andrew had an alcoholic cocktail at Tramp, though it is well known he does not drink.* She also recalled:

Moving his hands across the curves of my body, not to shy away from the fact that he was in public, he was whispering sweet nothings into my ear and kissing my neck. I would just giggle not really knowing how to reply to an aging man with a bad smile and terrible moves ...

For the article, three of his former equerries were interviewed, with one of them stating, ‘The idea of him dancing like that with all eyes on him is ...

unimaginable.’

There were always paparazzi outside the club, but none of the dozen picture agencies then covering Tramp had any record of him entering or leaving. That said, few pictures have emerged of him dancing at Chinawhite, where he was a regular. The interview, rather than killing the story, inflamed it.

Alicia Stone, who worked at Tramp for six months, remembered Andrew ‘dancing all night with a girl who looked like she could be his daughter ... they were practically going at it on the dance floor. All this while he was grabbing her tight, pouring his sweat all over her. He was dripping from dancing so much.’

Another Tramp employee, Andrew Wall, heard colleagues ‘talking about Prince Andrew groping some waif-like teenage girl ... It sounded like they were practically having sex on the dance floor. One of my colleagues told me at one point he saw Andrew biting the poor girl’s neck and pulling her hair while they danced together very close.’

A London woman, Shukri Walker, came forward and told the *Sun* newspaper that she remembered the prince with ‘a young girl’. She was supported by a second witness, represented by lawyer Lisa Bloom, who recalled ‘that Prince Andrew was smiling and seemed to be happy and Virginia was not’. Bloom offered the witnesses to the FBI, who said they were not interested.

Pressure was put on Scotland Yard to explain its decision not to investigate a complaint from Giuffre in July 2015 that she had been trafficked to the United Kingdom in 2001 to have sex with the duke in London. The force claimed they were ‘not the appropriate authority’ to investigate because it ‘would be largely focused on activities and relationships outside the UK’.

Sigrid McCawley, who represented Giuffre and other survivors, knew the *Newsnight* interview had been a red rag to a bull: ‘To have to sit there in front of the television and have Prince Andrew not take responsibility and go on national TV and say, “She’s wrong. I don’t even remember her.” That’s very offensive to a victim of sexual trafficking.’

Virginia Giuffre gave an hour-long interview to *Panorama*, which was broadcast in December. ‘I’m calling BS on this because that’s what it is,’

she said. 'He knows what happened. I know what happened, and there's only one of us telling the truth, and I know that's me.'

She now began the legal process which would ultimately destroy the prince's career and reputation.

STEPPING BACK

The Queen maintained her public support, deliberately being photographed riding with her second son in the grounds of Windsor Castle. The duchess posted on her Instagram account that:

Andrew is a true and real gentleman and is stoically steadfast to not only his duty but also his kindness and goodness of always seeing the best in people. I am deeply supportive and proud of this giant of a principled man, that dares to put his shoulder to the wind and stands firm with his sense of honour and truth.

But it was clear something had to be done. The ninety-eight-year-old Prince Philip summoned his son to Wood Farm at Sandringham and told him that for the sake of the monarchy he would have to relinquish his royal duties.

The official Palace message read:

It has become clear to me over the last few days that the circumstances relating to my former association with Jeffrey Epstein has become a major disruption to my family's work and the valuable work going on in the many organizations and charities that I am proud to support. Therefore, I have asked Her Majesty if I may step back from public duties for the foreseeable future, and she has given her permission.

KPMG (which was paying £100,000 a year), Barclays, Bosch and Standard Chartered withdrew their sponsorship of Pitch@Palace. BT said it could no longer continue as a partner with the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award. Andrew stepped down as patron of more than 230 organisations and a visit to meet flood-hit communities in the north of England was cancelled.

In December 2019, the duke was asked to stand down from Pitch@Palace. Pitch@PalaceCIC was wound down by the trustees as having no future after the Epstein scandal and concerns about the dividing line between the duke's charitable work and his business interests.

However, he refused to give up Pitch@Palace Global, which led several directors to offer their resignations: Mark Eaves and Hanadi Jabado on 19 November; David Stern, who had often accompanied Andrew on his special representative visits, on 9 December; Alex Johnston on 6 January 2020; and Martin Harriman, one of his best friends from the navy now a telecoms entrepreneur, and Martin Dunnett, a private equity executive, on 19 January. Amanda Thirsk resigned on 31 March and Johan Eliasch on 4 January 2021. Only his accountant, Arthur Lancaster, remained a director.

Thirsk had been instrumental in arranging the *Newsnight* interview. A Prince Andrew staff member explained that Amanda was the only person Andrew listened to. Nobody else was able to get through to him. It took many weeks to talk the duke into it but Amanda would not back down. 'I remember seeing them talking one late afternoon, and Andrew broke down in tears,' said the staff member. 'He told Amanda he didn't like being put "on the spot" and that there was "absolutely no way" to predict how the interview would go.' In over a decade working for the duke, the courtier had never seen him break down like this. The Queen's second son became distraught, emotional: 'Amanda had some sort of spell on Andrew. There's no way anyone, even the Queen, would have been able to convince Andrew to do the interview. He finally agreed after Amanda gave him a personal guarantee that the interview would be positive and would silence all his critics forever.'

Thirsk was forced out with a settlement that included buying her silence and help securing a six-figure job with JD, China's powerful e-commerce group. It was fixed through a Pitch@Palace contact, Yang Tengbo, who, as would come to light, was a crucial business contact of the prince.

BARON OF HOUSTON

The duchess had her own Chinese links. In July 2017 she had become a non-executive director of a Hong Kong-based venture capital company, Gate Ventures, chaired by an Anglo-Chinese entrepreneur, Dr Johnny Hon, which was expanding into the UK, US and China. This directorship was now to lead to High Court action, brought by Chinese investors against the company, and claims that it had given misleading information about loans

provided to Ginger & Moss, a company founded by the duchess, and that of the £24 million raised from shareholders, £19 million had been 'lost'. A newspaper investigation revealed 'lavish spending at Gate, unusual transactions with offshore companies and deals involving its directors', including a loan to former boyfriend Manuel Fernandez's company, vVoosh, in which the duchess had invested.

Hon, who also called himself Baron of Houston, had received a doctorate in psychiatry from Hughes Hall in Cambridge in 1998. After working in banking, he established an international venture capital company, Global Group International Holdings, with a wide portfolio of interests across many sectors. He had been the executive producer with Michael Grade, who was to become another director of Gate, on *Sunset Boulevard*, starring Glenn Close, and of the West End musical *42nd Street*, and had been one of the guests at Princess Eugenie's wedding. Hon said the duchess's main role in the directorship was 'to introduce a few people to me in Hong Kong'.

According to a company statement, she was expected to 'oversee the group's investment portfolio in the entertainment sector and assist with identifying new entertainment projects for the group as it continues to expand'. In short, to use her contacts, most importantly David Tang, and status to bring in foreign investors.

Between June 2017 and October 2018 she was paid £72,000, and required to attend a minimum of two board meetings a year, as well as 'company functions'. On top of director fees, she received £200,000 for 'marketing and promotion' from an offshore bank in St Vincent and the Grenadines in 2017, allegedly relating to her role at Gate Ventures. The bank, the European Commerce Bank, chaired by another Gate director, Geoff Morrow, went into voluntary liquidation in 2019. According to an ex-worker at the bank, it did not do a single transaction in her time there.

Three months later, the duchess received a £90,000 'loan', signed off by Dr Hon, for Ginger & Moss, which operated an online joint venture with Gate though they were in completely different industries. Her spokesman said the payments, totalling £290,000, were loans from Gate Ventures to help get Ginger & Moss off the ground. But Gate Ventures was listed as a dormant company and there is no public record of the loans. Gate Ventures' CEO Geoff Morrow, a former songwriter who penned 'Can't Smile Without You' for Barry Manilow, was also a director of Ginger & Moss. Gate

Ventures lost £5.1 million in 2017 and £9.8 million in 2018. Hon had a track record of employing members of the Royal Family to act as brand ambassadors: Peter Phillips was a paid ‘business partner’ and helped Dr Hon launch a horse-racing venture in Hong Kong in 2018 and his sister Zara Tindall had been paid £100,000 a year for being a non-executive director of Hon’s Global Group between August 2016 and March 2018. At first her lawyer described any links as ‘wholly untrue’ but admitted her role after the *Mail* provided documentary evidence of the £100,000-a-year contract.

Hon gave generously to the Duke of Edinburgh’s World Fellowship, but courted controversy when it was revealed that a members’ club he was launching claimed to offer ‘Christmas Dinner’ with Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace. When challenged, Dr Hon explained the promotional material had been published in error.

In January 2020 it was disclosed that Hon had charged nearly £3 million in expenses in a sixteen-month period in 2017 and 2018, while the duchess was on the board of Gate, including £4,050 for a private tour of Ground Zero in New York, £4,000 for a piano lesson, £4,000 for a one-hour ‘training session’ with Brazilian model and actress Adriana Lima, £16,000 for a Bastille Day reception with President Macron, £6,500 for lunch with Tommy Hilfiger, £10,000 for a meeting with Prince Harry at a Coldplay concert and £8,000 for tea with the Duchess of York. ‘That is not the purpose for which these small Chinese investors paid their money in to the company,’ pointed out Judge Sebastian Prentis, who ruled Gate should be put into administration.

Dr Hon stressed that all activities charged to the company were ‘for the benefit of Gate and were legitimate business expenses’, adding: ‘No part of the spending was for my personal benefit or personal enjoyment. It was hard, often exhausting, but necessary work.’ The following questions were put to Dr Hon:

How did Dr Hon meet the Duchess? How often have they met, where and when? Does she continue to have a commercial relationship with him or one of his companies? Has he met the Duke of York? Has he or one of his companies ever had any business dealings with the duke? On what occasions has he met their daughters? Have they been involved with him and his companies professionally or just socially? What duties did the Duchess undertake as a non-executive director of Global Group Entertainment Ltd? Who did she introduce to Dr Hon? For

what period did she work for the company? How much money was paid to the Duchess for her services? How much money was lent to the Duchess and how much repaid and when? When was the £90,000 loan to the Duchess repaid? In return for the £200,000 paid to the Duchess, what did the Duchess do or was it a loan which was repaid? Was the film in which she was an associate producer ever made?

The vice-president responsible for PR at Global Group International Holdings replied, ‘We appreciate your interest to speak with Dr Hon, however he would like to kindly decline participation in the interview on this occasion.’

Perhaps for good reasons. Apart from bankrolling the royals, Hon had close associations with the political elites of North Korea and China, and used royal associations to promote his business interests, first in Britain and then in America, where he now lives.

Though Hon was educated in Britain and has a British passport, he returned to Hong Kong to work as a private banker just as the Chinese government took control and where he became involved with, and between 2019 and 2023 was vice-chairman of, the pro-Beijing New People’s Party. His links with China are strong. He was a senior adviser and committee member to the Foreign Policy Research Centre, China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies, and a committee member of the People’s Political Consultative Conference. Court documents state that MI5 ‘regard the CPPCC as “central” to China’s United Front Work Department (UFWD) and show the FBI has said the group “enforces the rules and regulations” of the Communist Party abroad’.

Hon is an economic adviser for Jilin, the province that forms part of the border with North Korea – the main oil pipeline between China and North Korea goes through Jilin – and has also acted as an economic adviser to the People’s Government of Yuyao City in Zhejiang Province. One of his business ventures, Global Education Group, aimed to find temporary work for the several hundred Chinese students attending British universities each year. The only people who knew the location of these students was the Chinese government, which would have had to supply Hon with such lists. In turn it would be useful for the Chinese government to know where every student was working.

Hon’s association with North Korea goes back to the purchase of one of its banks in 2004 – impossible unless the North Koreans felt he had the

blessing of Beijing. He holds an honorary doctor of economics from the country and between 2008 and 2012 was chairman of the International Kim II Sung Foundation. He also established the Korea Johnny Hon Education Fund, which many suspect was used to channel money out of North Korea to pay for the education of the children of the North Korean leader in the West.

In 2011 Hon acted as a middleman for David Rowland, who was keen to act as a banker to the family of Kim Jong Un and major state-owned industries. They also discussed investment in North Korea's gold and iron ore mines. Revenue from the mines funds its nuclear weapons programme. So close were Hon's ties to the ruler that the airport was kept open until 3 a.m. for his flight home.

According to Clive Hamilton, a global authority on China: 'Hon has held a number of positions in organisations at the centre of the Communist Party's united front system for exerting influence abroad.' Hamilton added: 'Members of the Royal Family have shown themselves to be "Babes in the Wood" when offered cash by Chinese businessmen. Don't their alarm bells ring, just a bit?' Dr Hon told the *Mail* that interactions with Royal Family members and any other UK public figures were entirely professional, above board, not carried out at the direction or instigation of any third party and completely unrelated to any concept of 'penetrating the establishment'.

STEPPING FORWARD

At the end of November 2019, Sarah, who had renewed contact with John Bryan, had summoned him to a meeting at Royal Lodge, also attended by Andrew, their daughters and their husbands, for advice on how to address the crisis. Bryan remembered Andrew being 'so distressed he wasn't able to focus for more than 40 minutes. I was blown away by how much pain he was in.'

Bryan produced a five-page strategic planning document, 'How are we going to recover from this and what needs to be done legally and PR-wise', but it was never implemented. 'He was distracted back into the system which has often failed him and so many others,' the American noted ruefully.

They also discussed a ‘mad’ plan proposed by another adviser, to transform the Yorks’ chalet in Verbier, which they had bought on a £13 million mortgage and £5 million loan from its owner Isabelle de Rouvre in 2014, into a private members club and charge wealthy clients £1.2 million a year with the promise they could ‘mingle with the Royals’.

On the advice of a barrister friend, Stephen Ferguson, Andrew had created a ‘working group’ of legal and PR professionals. They included Mark Gallagher, a former director of corporate affairs and chief of staff at ITV, who specialised in crisis management. Gallagher’s private clients over the last six years had included those falsely accused of child abuse by Carl Beech, aka ‘Nick’, including former MP Harvey Proctor. The duke had also taken on Clare Montgomery QC, the leading expert on extradition law, who had advised Augusto Pinochet, Chile’s former dictator, and Nirav Modi, wanted for India’s biggest fraud; and finally he had sought help from Gary Bloxsome, a criminal defence solicitor with Blackfords, who had defended British troops against war crime allegations.

The strategy was to fight back.

The duchess contacted journalists, encouraging them to dig into Virginia Giuffre. The *Daily Mail* was offered Andrew’s diaries, but that backfired when it only confirmed that he was in New York at the time that Giuffre claimed he had abused her at Epstein’s Manhattan townhouse. It was this incident that would allow Giuffre to file her civil lawsuit in the US seeking ‘punitive damages’.

As a result of these revelations, Andrew’s sixtieth birthday celebrations in February 2020 were a muted affair compared to initial plans – promotion to Admiral, a reception at Buckingham Palace and the Union Jack flown by government buildings – with a dinner for fifty at Royal Lodge. Many invited guests shunned the event and a second round of invitations had to be sent out.

Among those who finally accepted were Bernie Ecclestone, actor Sir John Standing and his wife Sarah Forbes, who had been at school with Sarah, racing heir Guy Sangster and his wife Fiona. Two key guests reflected the fact that Andrew was now continuing to do business on his own behalf – Liu Xiaoming, China’s UK ambassador, and Aida Mahmudova, niece of the first lady of Azerbaijan.

At the beginning of 2020 the duke had issued a press statement: ‘Of course, I am willing to help any appropriate law enforcement agency with their investigations, if required.’ But Geoffrey Berman, the US attorney who led the investigation in New York into Epstein and his associates, had a different memory. He spent weeks trying to engage with Andrew’s lawyers, but the Palace proved unhelpful. When he did finally get through to the lawyers, he faced a barrage of questions: ‘What kind of an interview will it be? Are there any protections? Is there this? Is there that? And where do you want it to take place?’ Berman responded but it only led to further questions: ‘It was an endless email exchange, and it was clear we were getting the run-around. He was not going to sit down for an interview with us, despite assuring the public that he was ready, willing, and able to cooperate.’

After failing to secure Andrew’s voluntary cooperation, Berman sent an MLAT (mutual legal assistance treaty) request through the State Department:

Because of our very good relations with the UK and Scotland Yard, we almost always got what we asked when we put in an MLAT request. And I think they got the same from us. But that was not what happened with Prince Andrew. We got absolutely nowhere. Were they protecting him? I assume someone was.

Lisa Bloom, representing five of Epstein’s victims, told Andrew it was ‘time to stop playing games’ and ‘answer questions’, while her mother, Gloria Allred, a lawyer for five more of Epstein’s accusers, threatened to subpoena the duke. She asked: ‘If he has done nothing wrong ... then why won’t he talk to law enforcement? No response is the same as zero co-operation. This is ridiculous. It’s just not acceptable.’ She organised a school bus to drive past Buckingham Palace carrying the message ‘If you see this man, please ask him to call the FBI to answer their questions’. She implored the duke that ‘if you have done nothing wrong then talk to the FBI’.

The Queen’s lawyers, Harbottle & Lewis, who had previously acted for Andrew, were replaced with Andrew Brettler, a Hollywood attorney who had represented various celebrities accused of sexual misconduct, who now argued that Giuffre had signed away her right to sue others connected to

Epstein in a 2009 settlement. A further headache for the prince was news that more than three thousand pages of new evidence – the depositions from twenty-nine people, including new witnesses and Epstein himself – might be unsealed within months. This was a ticking time bomb.

Epstein had paid a former lap dancer to hire girls – often homeless, runaways or younger sisters of other strippers – to attend his parties, which were always recorded on camera. In her evidence she said there were rooms for sex and girls who looked too young were kept out of sight.

Epstein made it clear he wanted to make Andrew happy. I was told to make sure he was looked after, that he had a drink, that he was OK. I saw Andrew at parties a couple of times a year, if not more. I would flirt with him and he would hit on me and was handsy. He would stand in close proximity, looking at my breasts. He would hold my hands, put his arm around my waist, stroke my cheek. He used royalty, his celebrity, to his advantage.

A former royal protection officer, with an ‘exemplary’ twenty-three-year career in the Metropolitan Police, recalling the night Andrew first met Virginia Giuffre, said the duke ‘arrived by car at the front of the Palace in the middle of the night and hurled abuse at guards when they did not open the gates quickly enough’. The policeman had spoken out ‘to see justice done’.

The officer had applied to see his duty roster at the North Centre Gate but been told the records had been destroyed. The Metropolitan Police has consistently refused to reveal where the duke’s bodyguards were that day, because ‘the information could put national security at risk’. The officer, a member of SO14, Scotland Yard’s elite Royalty Protection Command, in an affidavit remembered a constant stream of female visitors to the Palace, including the model Caprice Bourret and Ghislaine Maxwell, who would arrive unannounced. ‘Much of the evidence that would prove or disprove what Virginia Roberts and I are saying is held by the Metropolitan Police in its human resources department and the Royal protection department. These include sickness records, duty rosters, annual leave, advance security checks, palace appointment books, especially for the North Centre Gate. There must be so many files. With the police, everything is written down.’

The policeman had informed his duty inspector about Andrew’s behaviour but was told not to make a formal complaint. ‘He said these

stories about dealings with Prince Andrew go nowhere, so just swallow it. Consequently, I made no complaint but never forgot about the incident.'

MOUNTING EVIDENCE

Denise George, the attorney general of the US Virgin Islands, remembered how: 'An employee told me that he saw Prince Andrew on a balcony out at Little St James groping girls right out in the open. He said he remembered walking up to him and saying, "Good morning, your Highness".'

Steve Scully, who maintained the internet and phone signal on Little Saint James, and said he would repeat his allegation in court under oath, claimed to see Andrew fooling around with a young blonde woman, who he identified as Giuffre, by the pool: 'He was grabbing her ass and stuff like that. They were kissing. He was grinding against her and groping her.'

Jeffrey Epstein's former 'mentor' Steven Hoffenberg, who had masterminded a Ponzi scheme with Epstein for which he but not Epstein had gone to prison, revealed how Epstein would boast that Andrew was his 'Super Bowl trophy' – 'it was his strongest bond, even more than Clinton's' – and he planned to sell Andrew's secrets to Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad.

'Andrew had a weakness for the girls and fast life, Epstein provided that fantasy,' said Hoffenberg. 'Andrew would then give intelligence that Epstein would give to Israel. This was happening when I was working with Epstein.'

Hoffenberg also claimed that Andrew had first met Epstein, through Ghislaine Maxwell, in 1991, not in 1999 as the duke claimed. 'Andrew didn't understand he was being used. He's a royal so doesn't look at that.'

Andrew's story was beginning to fall apart. He had claimed that he had had a full itinerary on 9 April 2001, when Virginia Giuffre said she had slept with him in New York, but an investigation by the *Daily Mail* showed that he had a free afternoon after arriving by jet from London at noon. He returned from an engagement in Boston on 11 April, but while his aides flew back to Britain he stayed on in the US. His next engagement was in Seoul eight days later.

Andrew insisted he had stayed with the British consul-general, Sir Thomas Harris, but the diplomat had no recollection of the prince being there, saying: ‘Normally, I would give him a dinner party in the evening.’ Harris noted the absence of records of such an event ‘makes me suspect he wasn’t with me that night’.

Andrew was now named in a federal lawsuit by Caroline Kaufman, the seventeen-year-old who claimed to have been raped by Epstein while the duke was staying in December 2010. It was not looking good.

DUCHESS INC

Sarah had now set up a new brand, Duchess Inc, a collection of bed linens (the ‘Majestic’ range), coronet pendants, scented candles at up to £40 each with their own matches, soaps, jams, ‘pudding and mocktail herbal teas’ and ‘body and bath’ fragrances based on the garden at Royal Lodge, to be sold through QVC. The Duchess Collection, her ‘accessible premium’ range, would complement the Ginger & Moss premium brand, which now included textiles and wallpaper.

She had also started describing herself on LinkedIn as ‘a global humanitarian, businesswoman, best-selling children’s book author, producer and wellness advocate’. In February 2020 she announced she had signed a deal for seven children’s books with Serenity Press. In all, they would publish thirteen books from her under the Duchess Serenity Collection, with 20 per cent of sales going to her new charity, Sarah’s Trust.

She had forged a commercial partnership with Montegrappa, an Italian manufacturer of luxury goods, to bring out a new range of fountain pens – with her personal monogram engraved on the 18-carat gold nib, and retailing at £1,742. From each sale she took a royalty, part of which was given to another of her charities, Street Child.

During the Covid lockdown, the duchess had also launched a storytelling series for children on YouTube called ‘Storytime with Fergie and Friends’, in which she read stories by well-known writers. It became a cult hit as she flapped around in a floral garland headband imitating donkey noises, wearing a blonde plaited wig to read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (a

friend joined her dressed as a bear) and taking on all the voices for any character in the books she read aloud.

She also used her new social media platform to give advice on making fun sandwiches and biscuits – a classic was making Budgie the Vegicopter from carrots and an avocado – helped by ‘friends’ such as broadcaster Stephen Fry, singer Peter Andre, and her two daughters. As one newspaper put it, ‘The pandemic has seen the mother-of-two reinvent herself as an off-the-wall Jackanory host. Whackanory if you will.’

In June 2020 the duchess launched her new charitable foundation – announced through *Hello!* – called Sarah’s Trust. Its mission statement, according to Companies House, was ‘to introduce philanthropists to causes that need funding and support to create impactful and sustainable change’.

Its first project was to deliver meals, snacks and hygiene items to key NHS workers. Some 150,000 care packages, which ranged from surgical scrubs to scotch eggs, were sent to over eighty locations. Working with the homelessness charities Under One Sky and Noah, it provided five hundred ‘kipbags’, of sleeping bag, food, toothpaste and sanitary pads, to homeless people sleeping rough in London and Luton. In Ghana, in partnership with the charity Humanitas, it supplied water tanks to an orphanage with a hundred children. She launched ‘Brew for the Crew’ – eighty English teabags and four packets of salted caramel and chocolate chip biscuits branded ‘Duchess’ – sold for £35, or £20 for just the teabags, with profits going to the charity. Other items included a cotton children’s face mask featuring her *Budgie the Helicopter* children’s book character costing £12.

It was also announced the duchess would appear as a judge on *Dancing with Horses*, in which celebrities would work with the animals to create dance sequences. The show was the brainchild of Claudia Rosencrantz, who had made her reputation commissioning *The X Factor*, *Love Island* and *Britain’s Got Talent*, and described it as ‘like *Dancing with the Stars* but your partner is a horse’. They shot a pilot – the duchess was ‘passionate and professional’, according to Rosencrantz – but coming in the middle of Covid the series was never made.

ON THE NAUGHTY STEP

Covid also provided an opportunity to try and rehabilitate Andrew, who was pictured in April 2020 on his ex-wife's Instagram account delivering cupcakes to Thames Hospice in a 'private' act of charity. But he was never far from another scandal. The following month it was reported that the Prince Andrew Charitable Trust had come under investigation by the Charity Commission regarding £355,297 of payments over a five-year period to his former private secretary, Amanda Thirsk, who was a trustee of the charity. Charity law prevents trustees benefiting from a charity. The money was repaid to the trust, which was then closed.

The same month it came to light that Andrew and his former wife were also being sued by a former close friend, Isabelle de Rouvre, for £6.7 million still owed for their ski chalet in Verbier, bought from her in a private sale. The payment had been due by the end of 2019. De Rouvre had previously rented out the seven-bedroom chalet, with six full-time staff, for £22,000 a week and the Yorks had been regular renters. After the sale, they had divided the property, with Andrew taking the upper floor and attic and Sarah the lower floor and basement. The duke and duchess would subsequently sell the chalet, reputedly for £19 million. De Rouvre described dealing with Andrew as 'a horrible experience. I do not understand how he operates and I feel very sorry for people who are involved with him in business.'

The serialisation and then publication of a new biography, *Prince Andrew: The End of the Monarchy and Epstein* (later updated as *Prince Andrew: Epstein, Maxwell and the Palace*) by Nigel Cawthorne, added to the duke's woes. A petition to the Queen, signed by 1,500 people, that his title Earl of Inverness should be removed, was ignored. The Balmoral gift shop stopped selling postcards of him. 'I'm afraid he is very much on the naughty step,' a sales assistant told the *Sun*.

The war of words between Andrew's lawyers and American prosecutors continued throughout the summer of 2020, with Blackfords alleging that the US Department of Justice had rejected three offers of help by the prince and Geoffrey Berman publicly accusing Andrew of trying to 'falsely portray himself to the public as eager and willing to co-operate', and saying a request to schedule an interview had been 'repeatedly declined': 'If Prince Andrew is, in fact, serious about cooperating with the ongoing federal

investigation, our doors remain open, and we await word of when we should expect him.'

In August an ex-model, Lisa Phillips, told a documentary series, *Surviving Jeffrey Epstein*, that she had confronted Epstein after a friend, then in her early twenties, had been told to sleep with Andrew. He replied, 'It's nice to have things on people.' The girl, Sarah, a blonde from Minneapolis, had slept with Andrew about the same time as Giuffre. Epstein later set her up in the art world.

The Royal Thames Yacht Club now replaced the duke as commodore with the Duchess of Cambridge. Jennifer Arcuri had regularly seen him at the club. 'He often brought girls there because it was private,' she said. 'It was a side everyone knew and they rolled their eyes. That's Andy. He was quite creepy.'

In December 2020 the *Daily Mail* published an investigation into the occasions Virginia Giuffre had claimed she had slept with the duke. The confidential, and until then unpublished, itinerary of Andrew's visit on 9 April 2001, when Giuffre said she had slept with him a second time at Epstein's mansion, revealed he had 'private time' from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Neither of his two Scotland Yard bodyguards, nor his equerry, were able to explain what he did during this period.

The flight logs of Jeffrey Epstein's jet showed that Epstein, Giuffre, a teenage girl called Banu and a young woman, Joanna – Johanna Sjoberg – arrived that day at Teterboro Airport some fifteen miles from Epstein's house. This was the episode during which Sjoberg, under oath, said she sat on Andrew's knee and he placed his hand on her breast.

In spite of Andrew's denial during the *Newsnight* interview, he in fact did return from Boston to New York on the night of 11 April to stay with Epstein at his gigantic Manhattan townhouse on the Upper East Side, before ostensibly flying on to the Bahamas the next day for a holiday with his ex-wife and daughters. One of the two accompanying PPOs told the *Mail* that he stayed in the townhouse in his 'usual' guest bedroom on the fourth floor – a revealing comment in itself.†

Abandoning longstanding official travel arrangements, involving Buckingham Palace, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Metropolitan Police, and accompanied by his protection officer, Andrew delayed his family holiday to follow Epstein to Little Saint James for forty-

eight hours, described by one eyewitness as a 'weekend-long party'. Giuffre, Ghislaine Maxwell and another young female 'masseuse' Andrew had just met in New York had flown ahead of the duke.

Andrew and his PPO finally joined his family three days late on Easter Sunday, 15 April.

REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE

In January 2021 the Royal Family held a summit and Andrew's siblings agreed that there was no way back for him because of the reputational damage he was causing the monarchy and his 'ungracious and ungrateful' attitude. After Meghan Markle was accused of bullying staff, Buckingham Palace braced itself for historic complaints about the duke's bullying, profanities and impossible demands. A former aide had been reduced to tears after being 'bawled at' in a phone call before dawn because Andrew was unhappy with a story in the *Sun* newspaper. One member of staff was moved to other duties because Andrew 'disliked a mole on the man's face', another 'because the man was wearing a nylon tie'. The report on Markle has never been released, some say because it would also raise questions about the behaviour of the Queen's second son.

Andrew's relationship with Charles's two sons was also a problem. At a family gathering in the autumn of 2013, Harry and Andrew had got into a heated argument, and punches were thrown over something Andrew said behind Harry's back. According to a source close to both men, Harry told him he was a coward not to say it to his face. They wanted to kill each other. Harry got the better of Andrew by all accounts, leaving him with a bloody nose before the fight was broken up.

Andrew later told Harry that he did not believe his marriage would last more than a month. According to the same source, the duke accused his nephew of going 'bonkers' and not doing any due diligence into her past. He openly accused Meghan of being an opportunist and thought she was too old for Harry and that his nephew was making the biggest mistake ever. 'Harry later told William he was planning to kill his uncle Andrew. He hated him that much.' Prince Harry denies that these events occurred.

According to the same source, the relationship with William is not much better. There have been tensions between the two men for years, partly occasioned by Andrew being rude about Kate, and William has long worked behind the scenes to evict his uncle from Royal Lodge:

He thinks Andy is abusing the property and his privilege there. He also loathes Sarah Ferguson. He can't wait for the day when Charles throws them both out. If Charles doesn't, I guarantee you the first thing William does when he eventually becomes king is to get them evicted. William refers to Andy as a 'tosser', perhaps not as bad as the vile names his brother Harry uses. Harry has referred to Andy as a 'poofteh', an 'arsehole' and a 'twit'.

HER HEART FOR A COMPASS

In July Sarah finally published her first novel *Her Heart for a Compass*, inspired by the life of her redheaded great-great-aunt, Lady Margaret Montagu Douglas Scott. In January 2005 it had been reported that rights had been sold in the novel, then called *Hart Moor*, for \$1.9 million and that it was going to be turned into a major Hollywood film, though at that point she had not written a word. It was said her assistant, Johnny O'Sullivan, was touting a script of her life to directors, such as Gurinder Chadha, with Julianne Moore mooted to play her. To date, no film has been announced.

The book was 'co-written' by Mills & Boon stalwart Marguerite Kaye, after a succession of ghosts failed to make the grade, with the duchess keen to stress that 'every single line came from my own heart' and 'I'm very much a director rather than an actual scribe'. It was endorsed by Jeffrey Archer as 'a compelling story of a young woman who rebels against the restrictive Victorian conventions of her time to find self-fulfilment and love' and spent a week in the top ten bestseller list helped by extensive publicity.

The critics were less generous, even with the contribution of an established ghostwriter. According to Jan Moir in the *Mail* it was Ferguson's seventy-seventh book, itself something of a miracle: 'Every time you think the Duchess has emptied her emotional tank and can admit no more, she comes roaring back a few years later, engines ablaze with a fresh confession and a renewed plea for atonement, redemption and forgiveness.'

In her autobiography, *My Story*, published in 1996, the duchess had been 'a single mother with few assets and less income than most presumed'.

Seven years later in *What I Know Now* she explained, ‘I do not merely rise above old wrongs; I deny them their reality’, while in 2011’s *Finding Sarah* she had admitted, ‘I was broken and lost, not even sure where I was, but out of this emotional barrenness I knew I had to find me.’ The question the columnist now posed was: ‘Has she found herself at last?’

Talking about the book, the duchess admitted she spoke to her therapist on a weekly basis: ‘I did have and still have mental health issues, which I work at literally every day, I really do, and I have been in therapy for 24 years.’

Journalist Henry Mance, interviewing her, remarked on her ability to talk about her ‘true self, while also seeming to play a part’. The duchess told Mance: ‘If you say, what’s the one thing (about me) – apart from being a great mother, I’ll own that – I love thinking. I love it! Thoughtfulness is my middle name.’

When, however, he asked about the *Newsnight* interview, her mood changed. ‘Drop it, Henry, drop it. I’m legally not allowed to’: ‘The atmosphere is now cooler than the pink champagne. Suddenly I realise how fragile Ferguson is; how supporting Andrew is not an act of foolishness, so much as the rational response to a lifetime of loss.’

As she left their three-hour lunch, she showered him with books, a toy corgi and candles. Looking down, he noticed her embroidered slippers. One foot read ‘Never Explain’, the other ‘Never Complain’.

THE LAWSUIT

On 9 August 2021 Virginia Giuffre filed a fifteen-page lawsuit for sexual misconduct against Andrew under New York’s Child Victims Act, accusing him of ‘sexual assault and intentional infliction of emotional distress’. Her lawyer, David Boies, gave lengthy interviews to BBC *Newsnight*, *Channel 4 News* and the main US news networks. The problem was not going to go away just because the duke and his legal team ignored it.

The next day Andrew and his ex-wife made the five-hundred-mile trip to Balmoral in three SUV vehicles – a new petrol Land Rover Defender (costing £53,000), a Land Rover Discovery (price £51,185) and Range Rover petrol-electric hybrid (£115,000) – for a ten-day stay that became

three weeks, continuing after Beatrice, who had married in a low-key ceremony the previous July, gave birth to her first child, Sienna.‡

Legal papers were served at Royal Lodge by Cesar Augusto Sepulveda, a partner in a London-based intelligence company, but the security staff refused to accept them. Papers were also posted and sent to the duke's lawyers, who continued to argue that they had not been properly served. Instead, his lawyers initiated a motion for dismissal that Giuffre's lawsuit was 'baseless', that she had already 'settled her sex-trafficking and sexual abuse claims against Epstein in 2009', and that in exchange for \$500,000, Giuffre had indemnified 'any and all persons who Giuffre identified as potential targets of future lawsuits, regardless of the merit – or lack thereof'.

Boies accused the duke's legal team of 'stonewalling' and said Andrew was not and could not have been a party to that agreement, the existence of which he had only just learned. Lisa Bloom, by now representing eight of Epstein's victims, agreed: 'I think Prince Andrew is trying to dodge and hide and duck service, which is not a good look for him.'

Various reputation management experts offered advice. Allyson Stewart-Allen thought he should apologise, go 'into psychotherapy to overcome the trauma caused by his association with Epstein' and devote himself to charity work in Africa. The lawyer Mark Stephens felt he was caught between a rock and a hard place: 'If he gives an interview, like he did with Emily Maitlis, he is condemned out of his own mouth. If he stays silent, he's damned by his own silence. So neither is a good option.'

Stephens believed that talking about his private life might be even more damaging than 'this kind of Neverland opprobrium'; his best bet was to 'just sit tight'.

On 21 September the duke's legal team finally accepted the service of legal papers and said he intended 'to come out fighting' and repudiate Giuffre's accusations 'point by point, claim by claim'. They accused her of bringing the lawsuit 'to achieve another payday at his expense'. A deadline of 14 July 2022 to complete depositions was set, with a preliminary hearing in Manhattan fixed for 13 October.

In July 2020 Ghislaine Maxwell had been arrested by the FBI at her secluded mansion in New Hampshire from GPS positioning on her phone, registered under the name G Max, after she had called her sister, new

husband and lawyers. She pleaded not guilty to charges of trafficking minors for Jeffrey Epstein and was denied bail. In November her trial had begun and a month later Maxwell was found guilty of five of the six charges laid against her and sentenced to twenty years in prison. It was a stark reminder of what lay in store for others who might be indicted. The big question, also, was what might she now tell the authorities to reduce her sentence?

At the beginning of 2022, the \$500,000 Epstein settlement was unsealed. There was no mention of Andrew and the judge ruled it was not relevant. He also rejected an attempt by the prince's legal team to throw out the case on technical grounds because Giuffre no longer lived in the United States. Andrew was forced to admit to the court that he had no evidence to support his assertion he could not sweat.

Buckingham Palace began to distance itself from the embattled duke and, in a sign that the initiative was now with Prince Charles and Prince William, briefed that the Queen would no longer bankroll Andrew's legal fees. According to a senior former royal adviser, the 'Andrew problem' was a long-running issue for the royal household in general.

A former Buckingham Palace staff member recalled the duke refusing to take any advice and staff being too scared to stand up to him, the Queen's second son: 'Her Majesty almost always backed him and he fully exploited that. There's an element of Buckingham Palace sleepwalking into this whole crisis. Andrew would tell his family that it was all untrue and it would all go away.'

Though his ex-wife and daughters with their husbands had gone skiing in Verbier, Andrew remained at Royal Lodge in discussions with his legal team. He faced an agonising decision to end the case by agreeing a financial settlement, which the court of public opinion would view as an admission of guilt, or continue to fight with the prospect of a potentially damaging trial and further disgrace. His answer came soon enough. On 12 January Judge Kaplan denied Andrew's appeal. The case would go to trial.

The next day the Queen received an open letter from 150 veterans, organised by Republic, asking her to strip Andrew of his honorary military roles 'and, if necessary, that he be dishonourably discharged ... These steps could have been taken at any time in the past eleven years. Please do not

leave it any longer.’ The response was swift. Buckingham Palace issued a statement:

With the Queen’s approval and agreement, The Duke of York’s military affiliations and Royal patronages have been returned to The Queen. The Duke of York will continue not to undertake any public duties and is defending this case as a private citizen.

From now on Andrew was on his own. §

* In fact, there are repeated accounts of his occasionally drinking alcohol.

† Andrew stayed so often he was given his own suite on the third floor called the Britannica Suite.

‡ The marriage had originally been planned for the Chapel Royal with a reception at Buckingham Palace but, because of the scandal surrounding her father, instead took place at the Royal Chapel of All Saints in the grounds of Royal Lodge with only twenty guests and Andrew absent from any of the released wedding photos.

§ Though she had finally given way to public opinion, her son remained Duke of York and Earl of Inverness – much to the irritation of local residents – and, it was said, to ‘cheer him up’ a vice-admiral in the Royal Navy.

VIII

DISGRACE

DELETED

In January 2022 Andrew's social media accounts were deleted, his page on the Royal Family's website rewritten in the past tense and his military affiliations and patronages removed as no longer applicable. He stopped using the style His Royal Highness, though it was not formally removed, but he remained a Knight of the Garter and continued to attend the Garter lunch and investiture behind closed doors. Journalists were now more open in their criticism and senior MPs were calling for a probe by the National Crime Agency into his financial links with Kazakhstan after Russian tanks were used to crush protesters against the country's corruption, leaving 225 people dead.

The duke was accused of being a 'useful idiot' for Beijing after making eight trips between 2010 and 2019 as a guest of its propaganda unit, the United Front Work Department. There were concerns that he was trying to lobby for a role as an intermediary between the West and oil-rich Gulf states after a secret visit on a billionaire Swiss contact's jet to Bahrain paid for by the Bahrain royal family.

It was estimated by Mitchell Epner, a former US federal prosecutor, that Andrew's legal fees were running at \$200,000 to \$300,000 and, even if he won, it would cost \$4 million to \$6 million if the lawsuit went to trial. If he lost, he would have to cover Virginia Giuffre's costs, plus pay damages. 'He has no good options in front of him,' Epner explained. 'He only has bad options, and he has to decide which is the best bad option.'

On 15 February 2022 Andrew made that decision. He settled for just over £10 million – £4 million and the rest paid in six-monthly instalments – financed from the proceeds of the sale of his Verbier chalet and a bridging

loan from Prince Charles. He also agreed to make a ‘substantial donation’ to a charity – thought to be £2 million paid by the Queen – and accept that Giuffre had ‘suffered as an established victim of abuse’. In return there was no admission of liability by Andrew but non-disclosure restrictions on Giuffre.

Commentators expressed surprise that he should pay off someone he claimed never to have met, but pressure had come from his older brother Charles to ‘shut it down’ rather than face a trial that would possibly produce fresh disclosures and overshadow the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and a service of Thanksgiving for the Duke of Edinburgh. ‘The amount of the settlement and the charitable donation, tells me there was significant evidence and leverage over the prince,’ says Christa Ramey, a lawyer not involved with the case. According to one long-time friend, ‘Settling the case is the first smart thing he has done.’

FINANCES

The Giuffre settlement focused interest on Andrew’s finances. Had he borrowed or been gifted the money, or was he actually wealthier than realised? Had he benefited from family inheritances or managed to make money, as suspected, from the contacts he had made as special representative?

In April 2022 a High Court case shed unexpected light on Andrew’s finances. It was that of a seventy-seven-year-old Turkish millionairess Nebahat Isbilen, wife of a Turkish MP jailed in their homeland on ‘politically motivated’ charges, who was suing a former Goldman Sachs banker called Selman Turk for £40 million of funds, which she claimed she had entrusted to him to move out of Turkey, fearful that her assets might be frozen by the Turkish authorities, and which he had misused.

Mrs Isbilen alleged that funds had been used by Mr Turk for things unconnected with her, including £750,000 which had been paid into Andrew’s personal bank account at Coutts in November 2019 on the grounds, Turk told Isbilen, that the duke helped obtain a Turkish passport for her. It was paid nine days after Mr Turk won an award at Pitch@Palace for his ‘digital bank’, Heyman AI. According to a senior Pitch@Palace

source, Turk ‘did an appalling pitch and I just remember thinking, “How did he get through?” It was just nuts.’

Other competitors were so surprised by the win – which garnered around ten thousand votes, while the other entrants received only hundreds – that concerns were immediately lodged with Amanda Thirsk amid suspicions that bots had been used.

Mr Turk disputed the allegations and disagreed with Mrs Isbilen’s understanding of how her assets have been handled. He told the court funds had been spent on professional or other fees or lost in bad investments.

Andrew’s office reportedly gave a different explanation for the £750,000 when Mrs Isbilen’s bank queried the payment that month: ‘It is a gift for the cost of the wedding or a gift to Princess Beatrice ... I mean, I’m not sure it makes much difference, does it? I think it’s a gift for the wedding ... What she and her family decide to do with it is really to do with them, isn’t it?’

Beatrice’s low-key wedding with twenty guests took place some seven months later.

A series of payments to the Yorks were made from a company named Alphabet Capital, which for a long time was listed in Companies House filings as a dormant company without any staff. Its registered office was at the Swan Buildings business complex in Manchester, though there was no evidence it had ever existed there. Mrs Isbilen’s solicitor, Jonathan Tickner, told the High Court in his affidavit that there was ‘strong evidence’ the firm was a ‘front used by Mr Turk ... to make payments to persons associated with him. Those persons include HRH Prince Andrew [and] Sarah, Duchess of York.’

Apart from the £750,000, which the duke repaid, a further £350,000 was reportedly paid to Andrew under the reference ‘TK Wedding’. What the reference refers to cannot be known with any certainty but TK are the initials of Tarek Kaituni, the Libyan gun smuggler who had previously brokered meetings between the Duke of York and the dictator Colonel Gaddafi and who had attended the duchess’s sixtieth birthday party – held at Royal Lodge for a hundred and funded by Turk – and Eugenie’s wedding. Turk and Kaituni had held meetings with Andrew at least twice, including a dinner for the duke with potential investors at Mr Turk’s apartment in South Kensington and at St James’s Palace. Turk had also shared images with

friends of him and Kaituni inside what is believed to be Frogmore House in February 2020.

The court papers stated that the duchess received at least £225,000 from the Alphabet account, much of it under the reference 'PEG001' – she was a brand ambassador for Pegasus Group Holdings, a technology infrastructure company specialising in renewable energy projects. A further £20,000 to the duchess's company Planet Partner Productions – which is not subject to audited accounts – came from Alphabet Capital Ltd. Reports of the case said that the £225,000 was to cover the duchess's work as a brand ambassador for a US solar energy company and the £20,000 was for her advisory role with Alphabet Capital.

A payment of £10,000 made by Alphabet Capital Ltd to Eugenie of York was under the payment reference 'TK008'. She claimed not to know Mr Turk or Mrs Isbilen and the money was from 'a long-standing family friend to assist with the cost of a surprise party for my mother'. The next day a further payment of £15,066.05 was made to Eugenie York under the payment reference 'Birthday Gift' – some five months before her March birthday.

As the case continued through various manifestations in the courts, it was revealed that Turk was living in a multi-million-pound flat in Mayfair owned by the Crown Estate and that Andrew had received half of a £100,000 payment that Turk claimed was a payment to businessman Adrian Gleave to fund a search for 'finding yoghurt production facilities in America'.

When Mrs Isbilen's lawyer Jonathan Tickner wrote to the duke, 'he declined to respond to questions or give any account of his relationship with Mr Turk.' The *Daily Mail* posed various questions to the Duke of York, such as how he knew Turk, how long he had known him, what the payments were for, why the £750,000 was paid back but nothing else, whether there was any connection between winning at Pitch@Palace and the payments. The questions went unanswered. Someone for the duchess said she was completely unaware of the allegations that have since emerged in the court case against Mr Turk and was concerned.

Further evidence of the couple's wealth came in August 2022 when the duchess bought a pair of flats in a mews house in Belgravia for £4.25 million as a rental investment for her daughters, much to the irritation of

Isabelle de Rouvre, who earlier had settled for £3.4 million, rather than the £6.7 million due to her, as she believed the couple ‘didn’t have a penny ... It is a dirty story as far as I am concerned.’

It remains a mystery how Andrew has been able to enjoy such an extravagant lifestyle without any obvious sources of income beyond his naval pension, family money he may have inherited and handouts first from Queen Elizabeth and now King Charles. He travels by private jet, has a collection of watches and expensive cars – including a £150,000 Patek Philippe watch, a £220,000 Bentley and a brand-new £80,000 Range Rover – and lives in Royal Lodge, which he spent £7.5 million refurbishing and which has annual running costs of £250,000. An acquaintance told one paper, ‘I would compare Andrew to a hot air balloon. He seems to float serenely in very rarefied circles without any visible means of support.’

Royal finances are clouded in secrecy, but it is reputed that Andrew inherited trust income from the Queen Mother, either at birth, on reaching majority or in the 1990s, funds that were administered by Lord Carnarvon and the royal solicitor Sir Matthew Farrer. It is also thought Queen Elizabeth II left him money, worried about how he might sustain his extravagant lifestyle under a new reign.

A friend claims: ‘The fact is that all his wealth ultimately derives from gifts from the Queen and none of it comes from business dealings ... he has never earned or expected any introduction fees or commissions for arranging or fixing business deals either while acting as a UK trade envoy or at any other point in his life.’ That is debatable.

One source of income was Pitch@Palace Global, which employed fifteen people and had grown its profits to £1.2 million in the twelve months to March 2020, an increase of £260,000 over the previous year. It had moved out of Buckingham Palace to a new address in High Holborn. A spokesman explained: ‘The duke will remain as the founder of the business but the company is taking this time to conduct a review of its structure and governance, including to what extent, if any, he continues his involvement in its day-to-day running.’

Pitch@Palace gave Andrew the opportunity to network with useful business contacts. Thanks to the organisation he had made a least thirty foreign trips, many to countries with questionable records on corruption and human rights, such as Bahrain, China, Qatar and communist Vietnam. A

Sunday Telegraph investigation revealed the security costs for these trips had come to £250,000.

Many of the trips were piggy-backed on ‘official’ work for the government, and therefore paid for by the taxpayer. Royal accounts show that £139,396 was spent on five ‘official’ trips between 2014 and 2019 to Budapest, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, with a further £15,119 to Aberdeen and Edinburgh. In June 2016 taxpayers paid almost £22,000 for a trip to Malaysia on FCO business, where he stayed on for a further two days for lunches with ‘business leaders’. A trip to Singapore in June 2017 to attend the Commonwealth Science Conference for the FCDO costing £35,000 was combined with a ‘lunch for entrepreneurs’.

Andrew’s aides briefed that he had helped 1,042 entrepreneurs from 64 countries, created 6,323 jobs and generated more than £1.3 billion in ‘economic activity’. The reality was slightly different – the figures quoted were calculated by combining the entire turnover and workforce of every firm to have ever taken part at any Pitch@Palace event, many of which would have succeeded without its help. The insurance giant Aon, described as a ‘partner’, had never been involved with Pitch. Another sponsor, the Chinese company iFLYTEK, whose chairman Liu Qingfeng was on Pitch’s China committee, made ‘voice recognition’ equipment said to have been used to persecute China’s minority Muslim community and had been barred from buying US-made technology products. Questions were repeatedly asked whether a member of the Royal Family should be doing such business.

Though ostensibly no longer a director of Pitch@Palace Global, according to Companies House, Andrew remained the person with ‘significant control’. Its unaudited accounts at the end of 2023 showed that it retained an office in Pall Mall and had nearly £500,000 in shareholder funds.

There was also good news for another company, in which the duke had ‘significant control’, Urramoor Limited, set up in 2013 to manage his private investments. At the end of 2022 it had been £208,000 in the red, but accounts at the end of 2023 showed that it had received £210,402 from an anonymous donor, bringing it back into the black – for the first time in the nine sets of accounts it had filed since its creation.*

In 2020, with his former private banker Harry Keogh, Andrew had set up another company, Lincelles (after an eighteenth-century battle against the French when the British were commanded by the Duke of York), in which Andrew had a 75 per cent controlling interest through his Urramoor Trust. Keogh, who had been a guest at Eugenie's wedding, had resigned from Coutts in March 2018 after allegations from numerous female colleagues that he had made unwanted physical approaches and they refused to work with him. Lincelles had been set up as an unlimited company, allowing it not to file accounts or disclose profits or income, as a trust fund for Andrew's two daughters, but he was forced to abandon it as 'not appropriate' for members of the Royal Family.

The other account publicly associated with the duke is Naples Gold Limited, which was set up in November 2002 by RM Registrars Limited. From January 2003 the directors were Andrew Inverness, described as a Consultant, giving his address as 71 South Audley Street, and Johan Eliasch, who resigned in July 2016 but was reappointed the following December.

It appears that it was a 'shelf' company, according to a statement by a spokesman for Naples Gold, to 'facilitate a charitable initiative to conserve rainforest', which was later scrapped as conflicting with the work of Prince Charles and 'should have been dissolved in 2005 as it no longer served a purpose'. The *Daily Mail* expressed surprise that 'a senior member of the Royal Family should have chosen to remain as a director throughout that period, occasionally signing off those annual accounts and why a conservation initiative should be called Naples Gold'. The company was voluntarily struck off in March 2021, fifteen months after the newspaper drew attention to its activities.

THE ROWLANDS

One of Andrew's key financial relationships is with David Rowland – nicknamed 'Spotty' because of his acne – who has a chequered business history.

Andrew is known to have been friends with Rowland since at least 2005, when he unveiled a life-size bronze statue of the businessman smoking a

cigar at Havilland Hall, Rowland's estate in Guernsey, and there have long been suspicions that Andrew and the Rowlands have been financially in league together.

David Rowland has accompanied Andrew on several private visits to the Middle East and once officially to a meeting of the Middle East World Economic Forum in 2008 in Sharm El Sheikh, where they dined with the president of Kazakhstan. In the same year, David and his son Jonathan Rowland accompanied Andrew on a trip to Azerbaijan. Afterwards Jonathan emailed a relative of the president's wife who ran the country's largest company, Pasha Holding: 'We are business advisors to HRH and travel with him on various engagements globally where we believe we can operate as independent investors/advisors with his assistance through his unique network.'

Andrew and the Rowlands returned to the country in November. According to local media reports, Andrew 'has his own business interests' in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Leaked emails show that Pasha invested \$5 million in a fund controlled by the Rowlands that had an account at Banque Havilland, a bank set up by David Rowland to provide private banking and wealth and asset management fund services to private clients and institutions.[†]

In September 2009 on a trip to Saudi Arabia, leading a delegation of more than twenty vice-chancellors from UK universities, Andrew lobbied the king of Bahrain to help Jonathan fulfil the Rowlands' plan of launching a Middle Eastern banking operation – one that Andrew was due to have a stake in. The man who was approached to facilitate this business was Steve Harrison, Andrew's former assistant private secretary and now working as the executive director for the Bahrain Economic Development Board.

Rowland claimed in his communications that Andrew was 'facilitating' the whole project and arrangements were made for the duke to accompany the Rowlands to Saudi in mid-November to discuss Banque Havilland opening a branch in Riyadh. According to the Court Circular, Andrew arrived in Riyadh on 14 November in his role as the UK's special representative for international trade and investment. Jonathan Rowland then emailed Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud, the second son of King Salman. 'HRH suggested that you might like to become our

partner in KSA, and like him, have an involvement in the operation we create.’

Rowland claimed the Rowland Family had been investing globally for forty-five years through offices in London, Guernsey and Luxembourg: ‘We advise HRH exclusively on all his business matters and travel with him regularly and often act as an intermediary between the British Royal Family and other families around the World including Royal families and heads of state.’

Rowland concluded: ‘With our close links to HRH DOY we have many opportunities and possibilities other institutions/families are unable to execute.’

Ahead of a visit to China in March 2010, to witness the signing of a \$35 billion gas deal between BG Group, the British multinational oil and gas company, and the China National Overseas Oil Corporation, a huge state-owned oil firm, Andrew emailed Jonathan Rowland with an outline of his programme, asking which events Rowland would like to attend.

Rowland then suggested to Andrew’s private secretary, Amanda Thirsk, that a meeting with Louis Cheung, then president of the world’s biggest insurance company, be inserted into the itinerary. ‘Ping An is the largest insurance company in China and a good partner for all of us going forward.’

Rowland had already met Cheung at an event in Shenzhen in February, but now wrote to him: ‘I would like to explore ways of working with Ping An in the future and would like to invite you to meet with me and HRH Prince Andrew in Beijing in March. The Rowland family are the exclusive adviser to HRH and all his business interests and investments.’

According to the Court Circular, one of Andrew’s first appointments in a packed programme on his Chinese visit was with Mr Cheung.

Rowland was afterwards passed by Amanda Thirsk a copy of a Foreign Office diplomatic cable, intended only for government officials, detailing Andrew’s one-to-one conversations with senior Chinese politicians – information that is still not in the public domain. Royal accounts show the cost to the taxpayer of Andrew’s flight to China – and then on to the United Arab Emirates for a day to attend the Dubai World Cup horse race – was £23,586. The visit cost UK Trade & Investment another £7,700. For

Jonathan Rowland the visit had opened doors and helped forge potentially important business relationships.

In 2011 David Rowland paid for a jet that flew Andrew to Saudi Arabia and in the same year flew to Libya with the prince to meet Colonel Gaddafi. Plans to take Andrew on a trip to Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon that year to scout for business had to be abandoned when the Virginia Giuffre photograph was published in the press. ‘Disappear for a while,’ advised Jonathan Rowland.

UNDER THE RADAR

Andrew had a 40 per cent stake in a firm based in the British Virgin Islands called Inverness Asset Management, owned by the Rowlands’ Blackfish Capital Management, which operated between April 2007 and March 2019, and given to the duke in return for his contacts and consulting.

‘Contacts’ of the company, which included royal families, heads of state, government institutions and wealthy individuals, were targeted as potential investors in a separate investment fund to be based in the Cayman Islands and promised a tax-free income. The prince told Jonathan Rowland in one leaked email that ‘he had proposed using Inverness as a vehicle for Qataris interested in investing in a property company associated with his brother Charles’.

Chris Bryant MP, one of Andrew’s fiercest critics, felt this disclosure was more damaging than the 2017 ‘Paradise Papers’, which revealed the Queen’s private estate had been invested in a Cayman Islands fund. ‘This is far more significant because it is a senior member of the Royal Family engaged in offshore shenanigans ... The word that comes to mind is entitlement, really. Because he is a Duke, he can get away with anything.’

Lou Theodore, a businessman based in the Caribbean, claimed Andrew, who knew many of the richest people in the world, had put Epstein and Rowland together to the mutual benefit of all three.

After the press questioned why Andrew should have opened a private bank in Luxembourg, Jonathan Rowland wrote to the duke in March 2011, ‘Told them you attended bank as Trade Envoy supporting a British owned business’, adding: ‘We just need to reinvent the relationship to circumvent

these idiots.’ When Andrew was facing the sack from his envoy role because of the Jeffrey Epstein scandal, he and Rowland discussed how the duke might be free to ‘act without much accountability’. Jonathan Rowland suggested their commercial activities could continue ‘under the radar’. Andrew’s response? ‘I like your thinking.’

The Rowlands and Andrew regularly attended each other’s parties and were guests at each other’s houses. David Rowland stayed at Balmoral and had tea with the Queen and Prince Charles in the summer of 2010. Four months later he paid off £40,000 of the £85,000 Sarah owed her PR spokesperson Kate Waddington. In 2018 he was a front-row guest at the marriage of Eugenie.

Andrew has had a private bank account at Banque Havilland since 2015 and a credit card in the name of Andrew Inverness. He also borrowed £125,000 on average each month, a loan that was extended ten times, before requesting a further £250,000 for ‘general working capital and living expenses’ in November 2017. That year Banque Havilland had made an unsecured loan of £1.5 million to the duke at 8 per cent interest, which, according to documents disclosed to *Bloomberg News*, was ‘not in line with the bank’s risk appetite’ but was approved because it could lead to ‘further business potential with the Royal Family’. In March 2018 it was repaid early using £1,503,000 transferred to Andrew from a Guernsey-registered company, Albany Reserves Ltd. The company is controlled by the Rowland family.

Between 2017 and 2019, the duke travelled on David Rowland’s £40 million luxury fourteen-seater jet five times while on official royal duties, some of which he combined with promoting Pitch@Palace – or, it was suspected, Mr Rowland’s latest business venture. One flight in October 2018 was to open the headquarters of the Anglo-Gulf Trade Bank in Abu Dhabi, a joint venture between AGTB Holdings, a Rowland family-controlled company, and Abu Dhabi’s Mubadala Investment Company. While in Abu Dhabi, the prince also attended three events for Pitch@Palace. Buckingham Palace refused to say who funded the flights – costing up to £7,600 an hour – which royals had used the jet or who had met the security bill.

In 2018 the bank was fined £4 million by the Luxembourg regulator for not having safeguards in place to protect against money laundering, one of

the biggest fines it had ever levied, and a criminal probe opened. Prosecutors in Luxembourg in 2020 also looked at the bank's relationship with the political elite of Azerbaijan. More recently Banque Havilland was fined £10 million after being involved in an alleged global plot to ruin the oil-rich state of Qatar by manipulating financial markets. In August 2024 the European Central Bank withdrew the operating licence of Luxembourg's Banque Havilland, ending the bank's ability to trade in most of Europe.

Buckingham Palace's code of conduct states that members of the Royal Family should not accept a gift that 'would, or might appear to, place (them) under any obligation to the donor'. Gifts offered by commercial enterprises in the UK 'should normally be declined' and they 'should never accept gifts of money, or money equivalent, in connection with an official engagement or duty'.

Nigel Mills, a Tory member of the Public Accounts Committee, demanded a parliamentary inquiry into Andrew's activities: 'He clearly was never fit to hold that office. Anyone in public life knows these rules about separating your own interests from those of the job you are doing. What he is doing here isn't even close to the line – it's a million miles over it.'

The *Mail on Sunday* after its 2019 investigation approached Buckingham Palace with the results, detailing twenty-four questions for the duke. Six days later, the Palace issued the following statement: 'The duke was the UK's Special Representative for International Trade and Investment between 2001 and July 2011 and in that time the aim, and that of his office, was to promote Britain and British interests overseas, not the interests of individuals.'

The duke did not provide a comment for publication, and the Rowlands declined to comment for legal reasons.

Bloomberg Businessweek conducted its own investigations based on leaked emails, internal documents, regulatory filings and interviews with ten former bank insiders and concluded that for years Andrew had 'acted as an unofficial door opener for David Rowland and his private bank in Luxembourg ... His royal cachet and his role as the UK's special representative for international trade and investment until 2011 helped the Rowland family pitch their services to potential clients from the ranks of the world's dictators and kleptocrats.'

When approached by the paper in 2020 a spokesman for the bank claimed ‘that none of its current or former clients had been introduced or referred by Prince Andrew, that it had never employed him, and that he was never “a paid advisor or ambassador”’.

But the conclusion the *Mail on Sunday* drew from its own investigations was clear. The paper judged that Andrew had ‘leveraged’ his status and his wealthy contacts ‘made during the course of official work on behalf of British taxpayers to act as a facilitator, helping businessmen set up lucrative deals all over the world. If so, the deals and the commission he earned on them have remained secret but last week were cited as an explanation as to how Andrew appears to have amassed enormous wealth.’

THE FIGHTBACK

In September 2022 the Queen died aged ninety-six. Andrew, who was heckled as he walked behind her coffin in Edinburgh, had lost his protector. However, his advisers, emboldened by Virginia Giuffre’s withdrawal of her case against the lawyer Alan Dershowitz, briefed the media of a fightback to overturn the settlement and claimed the duke would launch an £81 million lawsuit against Giuffre if she repeated her accusations in a forthcoming memoir.

David Boies, interviewed by Piers Morgan in February 2023, expressed surprise that the British law enforcement authorities had treated Giuffre’s accusations so lightly and cautioned that if Andrew tried to overturn the out-of-court settlement he could be exposed to ‘criminal risk’ since he might have to answer questions under oath: ‘If you lie to an interviewer you may embarrass yourself, if you lie in a deposition you go to jail.’

The *Daily Telegraph* ran a photograph, released by Ghislaine Maxwell’s brothers, showing two grown and dressed people sitting in Maxwell’s bath, arguing that one couldn’t have sex in such a bath, though that had never been Giuffre’s claim. The journalist Jay Beecher, Ghislaine Maxwell, Prince Andrew in his *Newsnight* interview, Sarah Ferguson and Victoria Hervey, among others, all argued that the picture of Andrew and Giuffre was faked with digital trickery, though how Giuffre could have got access to an image of the prince that no one had ever seen before to put in a mocked-up picture

was never explained, and Maxwell in reply to Alan Dershowitz questioning its veracity in 2015 had replied, 'It looks real. I think it is.'

One defender went so far as to claim it had been pieced together using a photo with an 'Irish guy' dating one of Epstein's victims taken at Naomi Campbell's birthday party on board a yacht in Saint-Tropez in May 2001, in which Virginia can be seen wearing the same white tank top with patterned jeans. For all the attempts to discredit it, the evidence for the authenticity of the photo is overwhelming.

The journalist Sharon Churcher who tracked Giuffre, originally only known as 'Jane Doe 102', down to her home in Australia in February 2011 remembers how she supplied the original photo from a white envelope stuffed in a bookcase along with twenty-four pages of notes in her 'childish, lopped handwriting' about how she was turned into a 'little disposable play toy' for a royal by 'JE and Ghislaine'.

The photographer Michael Thomas, who accompanied Churcher to Australia, is in no doubt the photograph was genuine. 'It wasn't like she pulled the photo of Prince Andrew out, it was just in amongst the rest of them. They were just typical teenage snaps. There's no way that photo is fake.'

It is confirmed by Joel Van Hemel, a Florida-based photographic expert and court witness, and a well-known US digital forensic expert, Bryan Neumeister. UC Berkeley academic Hany Farid, a professor of digital forensics and image analysis, said the light and shadows in the image showed no inconsistencies nor 'obvious signs' that the photograph was doctored.

Experts have said it would be virtually impossible to doctor an ordinary printed photograph developed at a one-hour photo lab. A date stamp on the back of the photo shows that it was developed on 13 March 2001 – three days after Virginia Giuffre was forced to have sex with Andrew – at a branch of Walgreens, a two-minute drive from her former home in West Palm Beach. Carolyn Andriano, a friend of Giuffre and another Epstein victim, and Giuffre's ex-boyfriend Tony Figueroa, confirm they saw the picture in 2001, as does Giuffre's father, Sky Roberts.

One mystery is that a redacted court document shows that Giuffre gave twenty photographs to the FBI in 2011, which were scanned front and back, but there are only nineteen shown in a public record of the meeting. The

FBI gave sequential reference numbers to both the front and back of each photograph but two reference numbers – 03956 9431 and 03956 9432 – are missing. They are from the Andrew picture.

A MOST INTRIGUING LADY

The duchess was back in the publishing world. Asked on Royal Central, ‘Do you imagine yourself writing another memoir at some point?’ she replied, ‘Yes, I do. Watch this space.’ In March 2023 her second historical novel, *A Most Intriguing Lady* (later *A Woman of Intrigue*), again co-written by Marguerite Kaye and featuring Lady Mary Montagu Douglas Scott, was published. On the strength of endorsements from Adele Parks, Jeffrey Archer, Julian Fellowes and Joan Collins and extensive publicity, not least in *Hello!*, the book again briefly popped into the *Sunday Times* top ten. Sarah claimed to be ‘in talks for a major US TV series involving both books’, but as yet nothing has been announced.

Alongside promoting her book, her tour of television stations was part of a soft diplomatic initiative on behalf of Andrew, with frequent mentions of her close relationship with the late Queen and how the Yorks had inherited the Queen’s corgis, Muick and Sandy, on her death. The duchess claimed that when they barked at nothing it was a sign the Queen was ‘passing by’ and later expanded this to the Queen having been reincarnated in her faithful corgis. The duchess continued to reinvent herself. Having confessed to Oprah how royal life was ‘not a fairy tale’, she now told a newspaper, ‘The dream of every little girl is to be a princess, and I was a princess. And I loved every minute of it.’

The relationship with Andrew continued to intrigue the media. They shared a home and regularly went on holiday together, but as a former courtier explained, it wasn’t a romance. They still had separate bedrooms at Royal Lodge. ‘It’s more about the deepest form of friendship. a very unusual relationship for a divorced couple, especially to the outside world, but they’re utterly devoted and would defend each other to the death.’

In June 2023 the duchess underwent a single mastectomy operation – she named her reconstructed breast ‘Derek’ and the other ‘Eric’ – after cancer was discovered during a routine mammogram. But her hopes of breaking

into television presenting were dashed after the producers of *This Morning* decided not to give her a full-time role after she had made a guest appearance. A source on the show said Sarah's performance divided opinion: 'At worst it was a complete and utter disaster ... unfortunately she's not a natural.'

There was more bad news for Andrew in an April 2023 poll of 1,569 people for one national newspaper when he was voted the least popular member of the Royal Family, with 80 per cent saying he should be removed from the line of succession and 90 per cent arguing he should not receive monies from the Sovereign Grant. Only 2 per cent of respondents felt he had made a positive contribution to the United Kingdom and over half said he should not be allowed to attend the coronation of his brother Charles.

In January 2024, ten days after Andrew had walked with the rest of the Royal Family to church at Sandringham (the first time in four years), 943 further Epstein court papers were unsealed by the Southern District Court of New York. They mentioned Andrew sixty-seven times, revealed that he spoke to Epstein once a week and included claims from Virginia Giuffre that she had been told to have intercourse with Prince Andrew three times, including during an orgy on Little Saint James.

In a further deposition of documents, Epstein himself pleaded the Fifth Amendment to almost every question put to him, including whether he had paid Giuffre to have sex with Andrew, Andrew's sexual preferences and whether he had blackmailed the prince. One newspaper editorial said it all. 'For the sake of the monarchy's future, Charles must set aside fraternal feelings and consider banishing his brother from "the Firm" once and for all.'

The story continued to be played out throughout 2024 with a Netflix drama of the Prince Andrew interview, *Scoop*, starring Rufus Sewell as the duke, shown on British television in April and a three-part series on Amazon Prime, *A Very Royal Scandal*, with Michael Sheen the following September.

Andrew's security and its cost became an increasing bone of contention. Should a non-working royal be protected at public expense? Was there a legitimate threat? In April 2021 a Spanish woman, calling herself Irene Windsor, had been arrested at Royal Lodge claiming to be there for a lunch appointment. Arriving by taxi – for which she insisted the guards pay – she

had been allowed to wander the gardens for twenty minutes before entering the house, saying she was engaged to the duke and had flown from Spain to marry him. She was later sectioned.

This lapse in protection was the consequence of years of Andrew being secretive about his female visitors, refusing to sign them in or even identify them. But his security costs, which many taxpayers objected to covering, were to prove his Achilles heel.

The battle of Royal Lodge – with press leaks that the King was keen to remove Andrew from his £30 million Windsor home by threatening to remove funding, not least his £3 million a year security costs and the alleged £249,000 annual income from the Duchy of Lancaster that the Queen had provided – started in February 2023 and was to continue to play out over the coming months and years.

Charles felt the optics did not look good for a non-working and discredited royal to live in such luxury for a weekly rent of £250, but Andrew had signed a seventy-five-year lease for £1 million in 2003 from the Crown Estate and, while he fulfilled its stipulations in terms of renovation and upkeep, it was impossible for the King to evict him. The King did, however, refuse to pay an annual £32,000 bill, previously paid by the Queen, for Andrew's Indian healer, a yogi who treated him with chanting, massages and holistic therapy and who often came to live at Royal Lodge for up to a month at a time. Eventually in 2024 the King withdrew any financial support and insisted Andrew fund his own security. It was press investigations into how Andrew was now funding himself that were to bring the next crisis.

THE ALLEGED CHINESE SPY

In December 2024 a failed appeal to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission revealed that a former business adviser to Prince Andrew had been banned from Britain on national security grounds in 2023. Identified only as H6, the fifty-year-old man, who was sufficiently close to have been invited to Andrew's sixtieth birthday party at Royal Lodge and had been to Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace and Windsor Castle, had been authorised to act on the duke's behalf to seek investors in China. It was now

disclosed that he was a member of the Chinese Communist Party and had been working for its United Front Work Department, which gathers intelligence.

The man's phone had shown that he had been authorised by Andrew to set up an international financial initiative known as the Eurasia Fund to engage with potential partners and investors in China. It also included a letter from Dominic Hampshire, an adviser to the duke and the sole director of Lincelles set up as a trust fund for Beatrice and Eugenie, telling H6 that 'outside of his closest internal confidants, you sit at the very top of a tree that many, many people would like to be on'. The letter added: 'Under your guidance, we found a way to get the relevant people unnoticed in and out of the house in Windsor.'

Judge Charles Bourne in his ruling said that the individual had 'won a significant degree, one could say an unusual degree, of trust from a senior member of the royal family who was prepared to enter into business activities with him ... It is obvious that the pressures on the duke could make him vulnerable to the misuse of that sort of influence.' A document found on the alleged spy's phone said Andrew was in a 'desperate situation and will grab on to anything'.

The revelation prompted journalists to look again at Andrew's activities as special representative and with Pitch@Palace, not least in China, and question a statement from Sir Michael Stevens, Keeper of the Privy Purse, that monies that Andrew had said would support him at Royal Lodge came from a legitimate source.

It was quickly clear to commentators that H6 was Chris Yang (Yang Tengbo), who had been responsible for setting up Pitch@Palace in China. This raised various concerns. What secrets or contacts that Andrew had been privy to had been passed on to Chinese authorities? Had Chinese investors obtained exclusive access to cutting-edge start-ups involved in metal alloys for aerospace, energy technology and genetics testing? Had Andrew been monetising Pitch, started as a not-for-profit, for his own personal enrichment, and had trips to China paid for by the taxpayer supported these earnings? Looking at the accounts for Pitch, a great deal of money had been paid into accounts just as the Chinese operation started.

The Duke of York's office issued a statement that on government advice he had 'ceased all contact with the individual after concerns were raised',

but it was reported that MI5 were investigating the Chinese monies paid to Pitch and Andrew had listed Buckingham Palace as the address for the Chinese arm of Pitch until 2023 despite instructions to stop in 2019. FBI agents looking into Andrew's friendship with Jeffrey Epstein discovered that MI6 had a file on the financier with many references to Andrew.

It further emerged that Andrew had been given preferential treatment to open an account with the Bank of China in 2008, enabling him to receive payments for business deals outside the scrutiny of British authorities.

Court papers revealed that China's ambassador to London, Zheng Zeguang, regarded Andrew as a 'valuable communication channel', that the prince planned to raise \$3 billion of international financing for the Eurasia fund, aligned with China's Belt and Road initiative, with \$50 million from the leaders of Abu Dhabi and Bahrain, and that the duke's representative Dominic Hampshire had in March 2020 been in contact with Yang 'directly or indirectly on an almost daily basis for what is now just over five months'.

Prince Andrew had suggested creating a royal institute to develop closer ties with Beijing, a report on his behalf arguing: 'The royal family, being above party politics and unaffected by election cycles, can pursue long-term visions and exert stable, enduring influence.'

After a media outcry Andrew excused himself and his ex-wife from a family Christmas lunch at Buckingham Palace and the annual gathering of the Royal Family at Sandringham. The person credited with being responsible for persuading him to drop out was Sarah, who it was argued now occupied an important role as mediator between him and the King.

Yang Tengbo was not the first alleged international spy Andrew had been associated with. 'It's been going on for years,' said 'Alana', a long-time associate of the duke. She explained that he had no idea how he was being set up with spies inveigling their way into his circle as wealthy businessmen, most notably a tall, stunning blonde, who had dyed her hair red, part of a Russian spy ring operating in Britain. She had seduced him in the penthouse of a Knightsbridge hotel, loaning him £25,000 interest-free so that he could pay for one daughter's trip to Switzerland and buying him a brand-new MacBook Pro that had been bugged with an electronic eavesdropping device so she got access to everything he was up to.

THE FAMILY FIRM

The cancer battles of the King and Princess of Wales and their stepping back from royal duties in 2024 raised questions again about the problems of a slimmed down monarchy. It also provided an opportunity for the PR teams behind Beatrice and Eugenie to remind the media about their availability as potential working royals. They had already taken part in one Buckingham Palace garden party and press reports began to circulate in the autumn of 2024 of their championing of various causes and becoming British unofficial ‘cultural ambassadors’, not least in the Middle East, where they had built useful networking contacts through their father.

In 2023 Princess Eugenie had attended a dinner in Qatar hosted by Sheikha Al Mayassa, the sister of the country’s emir, to celebrate the winners of a Fashion Trust Arabia prize and in 2024 she was in Doha for an art exhibition. Beatrice, now running her own business, BY-EQ, on the benefits of AI, was in Saudi Arabia in April 2024 for a meeting of the World Economic Forum and then in October for the Future Investment Initiative, which was described by Reuters news agency as ‘an opportunity for attendees to forge relations with some of Saudi Arabia’s biggest companies and its \$925 billion sovereign wealth fund’.

The following month she was in Abu Dhabi, first for a private conference, hosted by the UAE minister of industry, Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, and the next day for the ADIPEC Exhibition and Energy Conference devoted to moving the world away from fossil fuels. The conference was organised by the Abu Dhabi national oil company and the UAE energy ministry under the patronage of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, the president of the UAE. According to Jennifer Gnana, the Gulf correspondent for Al-Monitor, ‘Along with her sister Eugenie, Beatrice is now a regular at Saudi economic and investment conferences ... Princess Beatrice represents a more modern and accessible face of the British monarchy that works for engagement in the Middle East.’

According to a former staff member, Andrew’s entire family is deeply connected to the Middle East and every member of his immediate family has profited. The duke has made sure to include his family in some of his business deals with the richest people in countries like Saudi Arabia,

Tunisia, Libya and Dubai, people whose net worth runs into the hundreds of billions. ‘Both Beatrice and Genie have deep ties to many Arab countries,’ said the source. ‘They’ve done business there and are treated like dignitaries. Everything was arranged by their father who made sure they got connected to the most powerful people in the Mid East.’

The press continue to speculate that Andrew might in future divide his time between Britain and a palace he has been gifted in Abu Dhabi, especially after ‘sources close to the government of the United Arab Emirates’ told the *Sunday Times* that Beatrice’s visit to the country had been partly ‘cover for him’, with ‘an informed figure in British politics’ confiding: ‘He’s looking at moving there permanently.’

Concerns, too, continued to be raised about Sarah’s charitable activities and the balance between doing good works, enhancing her reputation as a humanitarian and developing useful business and social contacts. In October 2024 she had become a founding ambassador of the Youth Impact Council, a non-profit designed to facilitate intergenerational dialogue with a particular focus on climate change and social justice. Its funding, believed to come from a Middle East ruler, was opaque.

The following month she launched a campaign from Samoa, in conjunction with a global organisation, the Greater Good, to move to plastic-free nappies that are 100 per cent compostable. She also helped promote the *Telegraph*’s Christmas appeal for the Teenage Cancer Trust, the *Independent*’s Brick by Brick initiative to provide housing for those escaping domestic violence and the *Sun*’s Christmas Wrapping for Kids, using her profile to highlight various charities. Cynics added that such close relationships with the media did no harm to how she was portrayed.

Criticism also focused on Sarah’s repeated claims to have been close to the Queen, whom she called the Boss and ‘more my mother than my mother was’, and how she ‘inspired me every minute’, which was disputed by those who had been close to the monarch.

Andrew’s money-making activities also continued to attract news headlines. In February 2025 it was revealed that he had come to a commercial agreement with a Dutch-based firm, Startupbootcamp, to monetise the contacts he had gained from his Pitch@Palace initiative. A spokesman said: ‘He will earn money from each deal SBC secures from his Pitch@Palace work and the windfall will help enable him to hold on to

Royal Lodge. It is a way of exploiting the enviable business links he has secured over the years.'

The news came shortly after King Charles ended his £1 million annual grant to his brother. SBC, which describes itself as 'one of the largest emerging technology investors in the world, with a total portfolio of €5.6 billion (£4.6 billion)', had staged the 'Future World' event in Japan attended by Princess Eugenie the previous November.

By March, however, the deal appeared to have mysteriously unravelled.

RANDY ANDY

At Gordonstoun Andrew had been given the nickname Randy Andy and it had stuck with him throughout his life.

He is supposed to have slept with over a thousand women and has never had trouble attracting girlfriends. According to a friend: 'He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke and he doesn't take drugs and never has, but sex is his big thing in life. He was known as Randy Andy for a reason when he was younger and it's never really stopped. Travelling all over the world as the UK trade ambassador and for other royal duties has given him access to some beautiful women and he's taken full advantage.'

Journalist Ian Halperin claimed: 'He's shagged porn stars, actresses, models, athletes, politicians and bartenders at clubs. There's even a longstanding rumour that he was having an affair with one of his household staff members when he was still married to Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York.'

Among the women whose names have been linked to his are: Cobina Beaudette-Wellman, whose mother was supposedly one of Prince Philip's lovers; the former supermodel Christina Estrada; the American socialite Cornelia Guest; the CNN anchor Felicia Taylor; Michael Caine's daughter, Nicki; the Macedonian pianist, model and actress in *Mission Impossible*, Maya Dokic; the skincare entrepreneur Amanda Cronin; the fashion designers Alexandra Weston and Amanda Wakeley; and the fashion entrepreneur Maxine Hargreaves-Adams.

One of the most important if short-lived relationships came in 1998 with Aurelia Cecil, daughter of Lord Amherst and a direct descendant of Henry

VII. Aged twenty-three, she had set up her own PR firm, Aurelia PR, which she had sold within a few years for £4.2 million. She had been instrumental in encouraging Andrew to lose weight and become less reclusive, not least by fronting the NSPCC's Full Stop Campaign aimed at eradicating violence against children. Though within a year the relationship was over, they have remained good friends.

The television personality and Conservative MP Esther McVey dined with him several times in his private apartment at Buckingham Palace in 2005 after they met at a charity event, but according to a friend 'what she really remembered was not the candlelight nor the Prince's charm, but going for a spin in Andrew's car and him producing a zapper which changed the colour of the traffic lights. Now that impressed her.'

In August 2010 he was photographed on a 154-foot yacht off the coast of Sardinia, owned by an Egyptian millionaire friend, having sun cream rubbed on him by a twenty-five-year-old Spanish-Filipina model, Alexandra Escat, nicknamed 'the totty on the yachty'. She denied any romance, saying they had been talking about military history. He had asked her 'Which country do you think England has been at war with for the longest total duration over the years? France, Germany or the United States?' He claimed the answer was the United States.

Four years later the press reported the duke entertaining the swimwear model Monika Jakisic, known as the 'Croatian Sensation', first on his fifty-fourth birthday at the Italian restaurant Cecconi, then two days later at the Arts Club in Knightsbridge and finally a few weeks later in a private room at the Royal Thames Yacht Club. After she posted a photograph on Twitter of what appeared to be a diamond engagement ring, his press agent was forced to deny the rumour. The following year he had entertained Dara Tomanovich, a Canadian actress and model for Karl Lagerfeld and L'Oréal, in the royal box at Ascot.

Jeffrey Epstein explained in a series of interviews in 2007 that Andrew was his 'closest friend in the world' because 'We are very similar. We are both serial sex addicts. He's the only person I have met who is more obsessed with pussy than me. We have shared the same women. From the reports I've got back from them he's the most perverted animal in the bedroom. He likes to engage in stuff that's even kinky to me – and I'm the king of kink!'

This sex addiction may have been triggered by his early sexual experiences. According to a source close to Andrew, he had his first sexual experience aged eight and lost his virginity at eleven after a friend's father hired two escorts for the boys in a West End hotel.

Andrew told the source that was the moment when he lost his virginity and realised that he was obsessed with women and what he described as 'the penetrative experience'. He admitted that his second sexual experience came before he turned twelve and when he was thirteen he had already slept with more than half a dozen girls. 'I believe this might be the root of Andrew's problems,' said the source. 'I think he was a victim of sexual abuse at a very young age. To me, it explains why he's spent most of his adult life at high risk of self-abuse, depression, and risky sexual encounters. It's the effects of sexual trauma at a very young age.'

One twenty-year-old model, who met Andrew at a charity function in the late 1980s when he was still married, remembers twice sleeping with him at a hotel before being whisked to Mustique. She realised how sex-obsessed he was. 'He wanted me to engage in kinky sexual activity,' she said. 'He had no boundaries. He told me he had an open marriage arrangement with his wife ... After returning to London, I never heard from him again. I felt like he used me for a few days, so he could live his wildest fantasies.'

Malcolm Barker, who worked at Buckingham Palace, remembered how Andrew was 'forever dragging the worst bunch of tarts up to dine with his mother, each seeming to compete with the previous for lack of brains. The one characteristic his girlfriends did not lack though was ample breasts.'

'Out of all the people who stayed at the house, the most enigmatic by far was Prince Andrew,' said Jeffrey Epstein's long-time housekeeper Debra Gale, who worked on the island and in Florida for Epstein. She called the duke a 'mainstay' at the Palm Beach house and from his room it was clear that he had a lot of female visitors: 'I once found sex toys on the floor and women's panties in the bed,' said Gale. 'I just didn't expect that type of behaviour coming from a man who seemed to be like Prince Charming when you'd first meet him.'

Gale said Andrew kept newly wrapped women's pantyhose, lingerie and sandals of several sizes in his closet at Epstein's home. 'It was weird seeing all that,' she said. 'He certainly was not an easy person to figure out. It appeared he had all types of fetishes.'

It was because he had no trouble picking up women that he made little effort and projected a sense of entitlement. After one weekend guest at Sandringham asked 'What about the flowers and choccies then?' she received 'a large box awash with pink tissue papers ... buried deep within she found an apple and a single chocolate'. A female friend of the journalist Christopher Wilson told him that 'their encounters would frequently involve little more than a telephone call from the duke, a trip by the girl to an off-licence for a bottle of champagne, a taxi ride to Buckingham Palace, a perfunctory act of love and a muttered goodbye'.

'He's about as subtle as a hand grenade,' according to one Lakefield contemporary. 'His favourite trick is to rub your knee under the table. It's pathetic.'

Another acquaintance tells the story of Andrew at a wedding asking a woman he had not met before for a dance. When she declined, he responded, 'I suppose a blow job is out of the question then?'

According to one former staff member, Andrew had a reputation among staff of being creepy and to be wary of him. One nanny left because he made unwelcome advances. 'When I started, the staff warned me to stay away from Andrew. My work was primarily with the duchess, but Andrew was often in the house and would sometimes enter the staff quarters. There were a few incidents involving Andrew ... It seemed everyone was aware of his behaviour, but little was done about it.'

The employee added, 'Staff gossiped all of the time, but a tape device was found in a flowerpot in the staff area, so it was difficult to speak after this.'

According to Emma Gruenbaum, a thirty-four-year-old masseuse from the Wentworth Club often booked by Andrew for massages at Royal Lodge, 'It's always felt a bit sleazy and a bit odd really ... I felt he wanted more. It was very clear.' The duke insisted on being naked and, despite her objections, the massage taking place in his bedroom. He would try and hug her, ask her to stay and watch a film, ask her about her sex life. On one occasion, while she adjusted the massage table, he remarked, 'Hey nice arse. Do you take it up the arse?' She remembered how 'all the way through he was talking about anal sex and making anal sex jokes. He asked when I had last had sex. It went on and on. That's just not normal behaviour for a

professional sports therapy session ... He was a constant sex pest from the start.'

But as a family friend told journalist James Whitaker, 'Sure, he's a good-looking fellow and a shocking flirt, but he's not a hunter of women. To be honest, he rather expects them to come to him but when they do, he shows himself to be bone idle and not very socially adept at chatting them up.'

This was why Mala Lindsay's role arranging girls for him was so important. Otherwise his technique was to use his staff. He would spy out an attractive ballerina at the Royal Ballet and then send his PPO to the stage door to invite her to meet the prince. Other variations included sending aides to invite girls to his table at Chinawhite or come to his hotel suite when abroad.

One of his lovers claims: 'The sad truth about Andrew is that he is not a Casanova at all. He has been dumped by most of the girls linked to him because he is a bore. Let's just say that in the bedroom department he is a bit of a let-down.' Few of his relationships have lasted, partly because he has a low attention threshold and partly because women quickly tire of him. Though many have dumped him, when he does so himself it is ruthless. He simply does not take their calls.

One of Andrew's former employees said he dated several wealthy British women. 'The Duke of York was never concerned about love or intimacy with these women,' Andrew's former assistant said.

It was straight out a buyer and seller type arrangement with them. He dated several of Britain's wealthiest women who were more than eager to pay him for his attention to them. For them, it was prestige. It was like driving a Rolls-Royce or living in a castle. They threw money at Andrew for his 'services'.

STRANGE BEHAVIOUR

Andrew's behaviour has long excited comment. The writer Craig Brown remembered encountering him at a large house party when Andrew was seventeen: 'Over breakfast, three pretty girls who were sharing a bedroom told the rest of us that the prince had barged into their room in the early hours of the morning saying: "There's a ghost in my room, so I'm going to have to sleep here." Needless to say, they booted him out, and for the rest of

his stay he was that stock figure of English comedy, popularised by Benny Hill, the pompous oaf whose lascivious moves make him a laughing stock.'

A more recent variant from a society journalist has him walking uninvited into one girl's room and then into the en suite bathroom, where she was brushing her teeth, and proceeding to lecture her on the correct way to brush one's teeth.

His favourite activities at house parties were playing 'choo-choo trains', where everyone danced around the room in a conga shouting 'choo-choo', or games in which pieces of fruit were passed from under one person's chin to the next. Another woke up one morning 'with a fire extinguisher pointed at my face, behind which was the face of the foolishly laughing prince'. She told him to go away and later discovered he had played the same trick in all the girls' rooms. One friend of his explained, 'He's a nightmare to sit next to at dinner. He makes all those ghastly jokes about whether you're wearing knickers. And you can't tell him to sod off', adding that his jokes were so 'lavatorially disgusting everyone was aghast'.

'He is easily the most boorish man I have ever met,' said a titled lady of his generation. She recounted being at a dinner at Windsor Castle and the prince asking a girl of about eighteen what she did for a job: 'He asked her in the snootiest way and when she replied that she was a secretary, he looked at everybody around the table and said, "How terribly uninteresting. Is that the best you can find to do?"'

A strong and juvenile characteristic appears to be to take advantage of his position to humiliate others who may not be able to respond. At one society event in 1992 he unzipped Tania Bryer's evening dress the full length of her back. Journalist Peter Chapman remembered an incident at the opening of the new Lincolnshire Regiment's museum, 'a grand occasion, full dress medals and so on'. Major-General Dick Gerrard-Wright, whose son had worked for the Yorks, had trouble turning the pages of his script with his white gloves, so he took them off 'finger by finger laboriously'. 'Prince Andrew, beaming, leaped to his feet, strode across the platform, seized the white gloves and, calling out in a loud voice: "You won't want these now, Dick", hurled them into the audience. There was a moment's silence; and then mercifully and respectfully some laughter.'

Andrew's idea of fun is to get guests to close their eyes then place an open tube of mustard between their outstretched hands. 'Or he will tell his

victim to make a wish and clap their hands. The spectacle of someone receiving a faceful of mustard gives him great joy.' At one dinner party he sniffed the pâté served as first course and turned to his right. 'This pâté smells. What do you think?' His female companion leaned forward to smell it and he promptly pushed her face into the dish.

Sometimes, partly from boredom or mischievousness, he simply wants to provoke a reaction, a characteristic going back to childhood dancing lessons. There is the story of how he 'once walked into a room where people were watching TV. He changed channels, paused, then walked out.'

In 1981 the Queen, as a reward for his getting his helicopter wings, gave him an Egyptian holiday. President Sadat loaned the presidential Mystère jet to take Andrew to Hurghada on the Red Sea, for a couple of days at the Club Med, and thence to Luxor for a short Nile cruise, though he was rumoured to be more interested in the wife of one of his fellow guests.

Sir Michael Weir, the British ambassador to Egypt, then laid on a party for him with local high society. Accounts of what happened next vary, but according to Sir Michael, Andrew jumped into the pool fully clothed and, along with Sherard Cowper-Coles threw the hostess in too. She emerged in dripping party dress, bedraggled and despondent.

'I'M NOT A LADDIE, I'M A PRINCE'

Andrew has always had a strong sense of status but been unsure otherwise of his identity. As a child playing on the decks of *Britannia*, when addressed as 'laddie' by a sailor, he replied to the much older man, 'I'm not a laddie, I'm a Prince.' And this problem of deciding when he is a prince and when a normal person has bedevilled his whole life. One young woman after a house party in Dorset complained: 'One minute you're having your bum pinched and the next minute he's reminding you he's Your Royal Highness.'

In 2014 the writer Gareth Russell interviewed David Anderson, head of the household at Hillsborough Castle from 1984 to 2009, who remembered of Andrew that 'if people genuinely don't see him when he walks into a room, he's been known to clear his throat, say, "Let's try that again", leave the room and come back to make sure everybody in it stands, bows,

curtseys as prot[ocol] requires.’ The duke could also be ‘v prickly’ with secretaries of state who he felt showed him insufficient respect.

In July 2005 after a heavy storm Andrew gestured Anderson to a window and asked if there was any damage. ‘Yes, sir,’ responded Anderson. ‘The only major piece, unfortunately, is the tree which was planted by the Queen Mother.’

This was followed by silence. Andrew turned to face his head of household, and ‘with eyes like George III’ said: ‘By *who*? ... “Queen Mother” is for the public etc, “Queen Elizabeth” or full QETQM used “in-house”. Do you mean by my grandmother?’

‘Yes, sir, I apologise, I ...’ spluttered Anderson.

Andrew’s voice turned from cold to mocking, ‘Did you mean by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother?’

‘Yes, sir, I did. I am very sorry. That was a slip of the tongue.’

‘How long have you worked for us?’

Anderson remained quiet until he realised that it was not a rhetorical question. ‘I joined the Royal Family’s service in 1984, sir.’

‘And you still don’t know the proper way to refer to my grandmother? You fucking imbecile. Get out.’

Once playing golf in a group of four, Andrew hit an especially good shot on to the green. One of the other golfers said, ‘Good shot.’ ‘Without a second’s gap PA replied, “That’s good shot, *sir*, for you.”’

The prince has remained totally out of touch with reality. Lucy, a former stylist who dated him, remembers him as ‘Respectful. Sexually a little keen but perfectly straightforward’, though he had a particular fondness for ‘four-handed massages where two women work on you at the same time’. What particularly surprised her was that when she offered to take him to the cinema on a date, saying that she would buy the two tickets, he expected that she should buy them all – seven to include his security.

She recalled how he always introduced himself to her friends as ‘the Duke of York’: ‘Even when we were dancing on tables at two in the morning at Momo ... It struck me how impressed he was with who he is, or how impressed he wanted others to be. Every joke always ended with “... because I’m the Duke of York!” He tells the most pathetic jokes. He finds poo cushions funny.’

Prince Edward, after his then girlfriend Romy Adlington had accepted an invitation to go duck shooting at Sandringham in 1983, warned her, ‘The bad news is that you might have to drive up with my brother!’ And so it proved, with Andrew joking about farting and asking her, ‘Don’t you find they always smell worse when you do them in the bath?’

‘A DEEPLY UNPLEASANT MAN’

Because Andrew has never been disciplined, he knows he can behave exactly as he wishes. A favourite game was to insist on driving himself and then try and lose the back-up protection car by speeding up the motorway and suddenly turning off onto a side road. His protection officers were called on to collect his golf balls after he had driven them down the fairway and maids summoned from four floors below to open the curtains beside him. He once called a television technician at night to show him how to work the remote control on a TV set at Sunninghill. Wendy Berry, the housekeeper at Highgrove whose son worked at Buckingham Palace, noted that for the duke, staff were basically invisible, ‘there to serve and not to question his actions’. She pointed out his thoughtlessness as upsetting most of the housemaids and valets who worked for him: ‘Apparently his bedtime habits as a single man left a lot to be desired, and a collection of scrunched-up, soiled tissues usually lay scattered around the bed each morning for staff to collect after they had made his bed.’

A royal aide described him in 2021 as ‘a deeply unpleasant man. The difference you see between him and the way Prince William and the Prince of Wales treat their staff with respect, straight out of the Queen’s handbook, is stark.’ Colin Burgess, who served as equerry to the Queen Mother for many years, made the distinction: with Andrew, ‘there was a wrong way and a right way and that was that’. It was obvious to Burgess in the way the royals viewed the Queen Mother’s staff. For Charles, they were her companions, but to Andrew staff were just employees and were to be treated as such. ‘Charles saw my role as more of a social one,’ said Burgess, ‘while Andrew saw me as the Queen Mother’s equerry who organised trips and oversaw various aspects of her correspondence and that was that. I saw Andrew about once a month, when he came to visit Clarence House, and he

would talk to the staff, including me, as an officer talks to his subordinates. He would say things such as: “I want this done and I want it done now” or “Have that done by such and such a time.” I remember him always saying “Do it!” which was his catchphrase of sorts.’

If Andrew came to visit the Queen Mother, he showed no interest in the staff and their personal lives. ‘In all honesty,’ recalled Burgess, ‘he wasn’t a particularly nice person. I remember nearly telling him where to go when he came into Clarence House and wanted something wrapped. He looked at me and barked, “You, wrap that!” And pointed to some object. I just thought, you rude, ignorant sod, and felt like decking him.’

Everything revolves around Andrew and is about him. One woman who met him at a party in Saint-Tropez said, ‘He doesn’t have much conversation other than himself.’ The journalist Petronella Wyatt first met him at a society party in the country in the 1990s, when he behaved like he expected to be treated royally. He was self-important, insisted on deference and had no self-awareness. ‘He reminded me of Princess Margaret, who thought she was more royal than the Queen,’ said Wyatt. ‘He talked and you had to listen and ignored all attempts to change the conversation. He was as charming as a bull in a china shop and continued to make inappropriate jokes. He’s the most out of touch royal I’ve ever met and I’ve met lots. He really does believe in the Divine Right of Kings.’

Andrew has always felt the rules did not apply to him, beginning with roll call at Gordonstoun, which he often missed. Stories abound of him being banned from golf clubs because he ignored club rules on the use of mobiles. Tim Reilly, a Cambridge graduate and a vice-president of Kroll, remembers meeting Andrew in Russia when he was trade envoy. ‘Even they were stunned by his undisguised avarice; on one occasion he was angling to be given a Fabergé egg when on an official Kremlin Museum/Treasury tour ... Putin could finish Andrew (and the Royal Family) anytime he likes with photos, tales and evidence he no doubt has on Andrew in Russia.’

In October 2005 Andrew refused to go through a security scanner at Melbourne airport on a private visit en route to New Zealand, claiming that ‘lack of respect’ had been demonstrated. Eventually, after being refused permission to board, he agreed to be checked with a hand detector. It took ten seconds. A security worker was quoted asking, ‘Who does he think he

is. What a pompous prick. Everyone has to go through security screening. He should be happy to do so and set an example.'

And there is a history of road incidents. In 2002 the duke was stopped by police for speeding at 60 in a 40-mph area, rushing to catch a plane to Scotland to watch the Open Golf championship. When stopped he refused to get out of the car, leaving his protection officer to handle it. The offence carries a minimum fine of £60 and three penalty points, but Andrew was let off on the grounds that 'I'm in a hurry.'

On another occasion he had an accident driving his Range Rover near Borehamwood. His protection officer took the blame. In July 2009 the Windsor Park lodge keepers signed a petition to the Queen, complaining about Andrew speeding through Windsor Great Park in his Aston Martin breaking the speed limit and 'forcing them to leap out of the way as he zooms past'.

Travelling to Royal Lodge in March 2016 in his £80,000 Range Rover, he found the gates' sensor in Windsor Great Park broken. Instead of taking a mile detour, he rammed the gates open, causing thousands of pounds' worth of damage – money that ultimately came from the taxpayer. A formal complaint by Republic CEO Graham Smith to Thames Valley Police was dismissed on the grounds that it had to be reported by someone involved in the alleged incident. A Windsor worker remarked, 'He has a bit of a reputation for roaring around like Toad of Toad Hall and seems to think he can do what he likes.'

In 2010 the duke hit a policeman as he sped into Buckingham Palace. The uniformed officer suffered an arm injury and complained to his bosses, but nothing was done. In September 2013, two days after a trespasser was found in the State Rooms, Andrew was mistaken for an intruder in the Buckingham Palace garden after going for an early evening walk. He was 'livid', admonishing the policeman, 'Don't you know who I am?', later releasing a sarcastic statement that he was 'grateful for their apology'.

Ken Wharfe, personal bodyguard to Princess Diana and her two sons, was scathing after being evicted from his seat on a return flight from Balmoral so that Andrew could look out of the window. 'Unlike the rest of his family, Andrew has always proven to be a very arrogant individual,' said Wharfe. 'It's just in his nature ... and anyone he comes across in policing or public service is certainly of a lower class than him ... His manners are just

awful and his behaviour and attitude quite frankly does not endear him to everybody.'

'WHY CAN'T THEY DIVERT THAT TRAIN TO BIRMINGHAM?'

Playing in an exhibition match at the Belfry, the home of the PGA, in 1998, Andrew earned £30,000 for the Golf Foundation for a skilful drive on the difficult tenth hole, but then spoiled his feat on the next hole where he hooked his drive into a bunker on the left of the fairway. According to one observer, he marched into the bunker, took a quick look at his ball, didn't fancy the lie, picked it up and threw it sideways onto a better one. Such an act called for at least one or possibly two strokes penalty but nobody said anything, and no one wanted to call out the Queen's second son, least of all the rules official. 'In the space of two holes,' said the observer, 'to many in the crowd who witnessed this brazen cheat, Prince Andrew went from hero to zero.'

The golf official has encountered Andrew several times. On one occasion, playing in a Golf Foundation pro-am, Andrew decided to call the club steward. The conversation with the steward, who did not know the identity of the caller, went something like this:

ANDREW: Can you sort out a private room and a prawn salad?

STEWARD: No, sorry, we've got a big do on today.

ANDREW: Don't you realise I'm Prince Andrew?

STEWARD: Yes, sir. And I'm the Queen of Sheba.

On another occasion Andrew arrived late to a golf event in Buckinghamshire 'and not in a great mood. He proceeded to charge along the line at a speed which was just short of being rude.' He was then presented with a sheet of paper with the starting times for the following day.

The Lord Lieutenant of Bucks said a few words of welcome, but received no response from the duke. Andrew began to read the paper he'd been given and continued to say nothing. The room was in absolute silence and stayed that way – for probably only several minutes but it seemed like hours. 'It

felt as if the whole room of middle-aged men had been paralysed,’ said the source. ‘Meanwhile Andrew continued to read this A4 sheet of paper on which I doubt he knew a single name. At the conclusion of his “power play” he simply handed back the paper and suggested we go through for dinner.’

The comedian Katy Brand has a story from a friend of Andrew’s who once had a lift in his chauffeured car with police escort from Buckingham Palace to Canary Wharf. With all the traffic stopped, the journey took under eight minutes. The friend asked Andrew if he felt embarrassed that everything had to stop for him. ‘Oh no, people are very good about it. They don’t seem to mind at all.’ A diplomat tasked with taking Andrew to various locations in Qatar remembers how, after spending a day together, Andrew then reintroduced himself to the diplomat at dinner. ‘He clearly hadn’t even looked at him once.’

One day a train taking the duke to Birmingham was cancelled and he was told he could wait in the VIP lounge for the hour until the next one departed. He was furious, venting his rage at his equerry Rupert Maitland-Titterton: ‘Why can’t they organise another train?’ He flicked his hand and shouted, ‘That train over there, for example, why can’t they divert that train to Birmingham?’

Another time Andrew asked to have lunch with Boris Johnson, when he was Mayor of London, turning up with a list of things he wanted to talk about. Darren Johnson, a colleague of the mayor, remembered how the duke wanted to redesign traffic lights with ‘fewer of them with fewer red lights’. He thought the whole of Battersea Power Station should be demolished and that incorporating the towers, though listed, was putting off developers. He felt the Queen Elizabeth Centre was too small and not fit for purpose. Boris Johnson responded, ‘Well if it’s too small it’s your mum’s fault.’ Andrew responded by sticking his tongue out at Boris. ‘It was the most bizarre meeting I ever had in my sixteen years at City Hall. He hadn’t been briefed and they just seemed issues he had picked up driving around London.’

After Andrew was escorted from the lunch, Boris turned to Darren Johnson, ‘I’m the last person to be a republican but fuck, if I ever have to spend another lunch like that, I soon will be.’

After the Department of Trade and Industry decided that Andrew should become an ambassador for the British fashion industry, he was invited to a briefing by fashion editors at Vogue House. The duke was in gung-ho mood

and suggested he ask them a question. Nicholas Coleridge recounts what happened. ‘If you were steering an 8,000-ton Daring-Class destroyer into harbour, how far in advance of reaching port would you shut down the engine?’ asked Andrew. ‘Now, come on ladies, don’t be shy, I want you all to guess.’

The fashion editors all looked at each other in puzzlement. Eventually editor Alexandra Shulman ‘suggested five hundred yards’. Her fashion director Lucinda Chambers went with ‘half a mile’, editorial director Anna Harvey ‘a thousand yards’ and Kate Reardon of rival magazine *Vanity Fair* suggested ‘a mile’.

The answer was more than a mile but time had run out and it was time for Andrew to leave.

A soldier who was part of the Royal Guard at Balmoral in the late nineties for three months also assisted the ghillies. He remembers Prince Andrew turning up one day with a tall blonde actress ‘acting like a complete idiot trying to be flirtatious’. When the prince saw a frog on the ground he turned to the female guest and said, ‘Oh don’t go kissing that frog, dear, we don’t want any more princes running around here’ and started manically laughing at his own crude joke. The ghillie’s feelings were clear: ‘I saw him multiple times throughout that three months and he was just an obnoxious wanker.’

Harry Beaufort, 12th Duke of Beaufort, was not much impressed by Prince Andrew, finding him dull and appearing to assume ‘we were interested in the quantum mechanics of golf club design or detailed technical aspects of his work in the Navy.’ He peppered his heavy-handed attempts at humour, ‘followed by guffaws of laughter’, with some ‘very bland stories about “Mother”’.

The wife of a former naval colleague remembered Andrew having basically few social skills. All he could talk about was how you could tell the difference between a real Rolex and a fake: ‘The fake ticks, the real one swishes. I will never forget that,’ she recalled. She found Andrew cocky at times, yet insecure around ordinary people who were superior to him.

An uncomplicated man whose mobile ringtone was once the theme to 24 – ‘Jack Bauer is a man with no boundaries, no limits’ – Andrew is awkward in company, finds it hard to relate to people and has few friends. He rarely

reads, preferring camera manuals or mindless videos such as *Terminator*. His ex-wife described him as ‘an intellectual zombie’.

Apart from golf and making money, Andrew had a special fascination with special forces and the intelligence services. Author Ben Macintyre writes of how the duke at the height of the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege ordered his protection officer to contact siege police commander John Dellow, saying he ‘would like to visit for lunch’. According to Macintyre: ‘The last thing Dellow needed, at this delicate moment, was a princeling and his entourage in the building standing around asking questions and eating sandwiches ... The young royal wished to be where the action was. And he was used to getting what he wanted.’

The request was refused, as were the repeated offers of his services to the head of MI5, Eliza Manningham-Buller. She turned him down on the grounds he was too high profile, but according to one witness ‘He wouldn’t let it go and continued to write letters to her.’

Colin Burgess identified part of the problem. ‘Andrew just carries on, struggling – even now, I think – to find his real identity and role in life. He’s not going to inherit the Crown and the combination of that and being a middle child has made him a bit whiney and temperamental.’

‘I’M A GLOBAL MOTHER’

It is clear which role his ex-wife is most proud of. Interviewed in 2011, Sarah told *Harper’s Bazaar*, ‘the only thing I know I’ve done 100 percent right is to be a good mother. I’m proud to say I’m the best mom I know. People say to me, “What is your brand identity?” And I say, “I’m a global mother.”’ It’s a mantra she has repeated throughout her life. In *Finding Sarah*, published that year, she listed some of her qualities: ‘I am smart. I am special and unique. Very sensitive, loving, caring, and sooo [sic] funny ... I discovered, too, that the best job I have ever done was as a mother.’

There is no disputing the pride both parents take in Beatrice and Eugenie, but the fact Sarah continues to make the claim about being such a good parent does not mean it is necessarily true. Visitors noticed that the duchess had such trouble controlling her daughters when they were young that she would hand them over to a nanny unless photographers were present. Even

the protection officers remarked that the girls' behaviour tended to be 'awful' when around their mother.

Whenever *Hello!* magazine arrived for one of those six-figure photo-shoots, it was 'completely staged from beginning to end', with nannies hovering to take over the children after each shot. On arrival at public functions, the duchess would grab the children's hands while smiling for the cameras, then pass them back to their nanny once safely out of view.

Marlborough parents were surprised how rarely the Yorks attended the school when Eugenie was there. It is keen for parents to attend events whenever they can but, said one, 'I can't remember the last time I saw either the Duke or the Duchess there. Many of us parents have talked about it, especially after we read that she had got that Mother of the Year award, and to be frank, we find it rather odd. Perhaps we just miss them, or perhaps it's a question of security. And they do both do a lot of travelling, of course.'

Motherhood is central to Sarah's sense of identity because, as she has often claimed, she did not have an attentive mother herself. This sense of abandonment is at the centre of her personality and goes some way to explain her need to please, her extravagance and her insecurities. Piers Morgan, after lunching with her, found her 'absolutely exhausting company – a whirlwind of energy, tormented emotion and quite painful and obvious vulnerability', adding: 'She lives her life at a frantic pace, racing round in a terrible hurry without, it seems to me, knowing where she's hurrying to.'

Julia Llewellyn Smith, profiling her, felt that there were two Fergies: 'One is "no longer a people pleaser", who snaps at you and regards you coldly. But when she calms down, another Fergie emerges – the skittish, smiling, English eccentric we all love ... The thin line between the two is unnerving.'

Michael Usher, after Sarah walked out of his 2011 interview with her on *Sixty Minutes*, was struck that throughout she had insisted on being addressed as duchess, but also that she behaved afterwards as if there had never been any sharp words, asking about his children and offering to sign books for them.

Ross Benson, writing about her in the *Daily Mail*, thought her a mass of contradictions: she could be 'warm and engaging' but just as quickly 'cold and imperious' and she demanded loyalty, 'all too often ... of the one-way

variety, and should anyone dare to question her behaviour, she is liable to turn nasty’.

Allan Starkie noticed her staff struggled to cope with her, especially as she found it hard to find the right balance with them, ‘confiding far too much when she treated them as friends and compensating far too angrily when she remembered they were servants’.

During the divorce proceedings she gained the moniker Fruitcake Fergie, given her irrational behaviour, the claim to hear voices, her reliance on colonic irrigation, hypnosis, acupuncture and various psychics and shrinks. But throughout her life she has been searching for purpose. Part of this comes from her charity work. No one disputes her genuine feeling for the deprived and vulnerable, and how it gives her a sense of spiritual fulfilment.

Sarah’s childhood worries about being overweight and the absence of a strong mother figure led to low self-esteem, insecurity, an excessive need for approval and an eagerness to please. It also led to alternative medicine, café society and ostentatious spending. She was constantly seeking the love that had been missing in her childhood, constantly falling out with friends, especially those providing truthful advice.

Part of that led her to behave like a child. Frances Hardy felt that this was perhaps the essence of Sarah: ‘to be child-like is to be released from the obligation to conform to adult expectations and conventions.’ As Sarah told her, ‘When I got married people said: “You mustn’t make faces when you go out. You mustn’t do this or that.” But I just want to be myself. I’m 59 but I feel about eight years old.’

‘I’ve always found her a sympathetic figure, with her mad bulging blue eyes and appalling taste in men, business partners, and just about everything,’ said journalist Tina Brown, who also pointed out her instinctive friendliness and admired ‘the way she ate the indignity of having to become an “ambassador” for WeightWatchers to pay the bills’. But Brown also landed on Ferguson’s vulnerability: ‘Fergie has always concealed her fragility under the guise of being a raucous good sport. Because she wasn’t thin or blond or the daughter of an earl, her instability was never glamorous like Diana’s. It manifested itself as exhibitionism.’

Alongside this the duchess is big-hearted, full of energy, enthusiastic, exuberant, boisterous and generous. At one point she had 450 people on a birthday gift list. Her personal trainer and close friend Josh Salzman

remembers her renting and paying for a three-bedroom house for him after his wife left him to raise five children alone.

The television producer Nick Bullen has worked with Sarah many times and believes she has ‘a good heart, she genuinely cares for people, but is desperate for people to like her and will do anything to please them. She also has the fault of listening to the last person who spoke to her.’

Nick Durden-Smith, who has known Sarah since she was employed by him forty years ago, and worked alongside her at the Motor Neurone Disease Association, said, ‘She’s always been a very generous person ... a person who acts on impulse.’ He admired the way she has raised tens of thousands of pounds for charities, calling her a marvellous president of the MNDA: ‘She went to see umpteen people, families, one of whom had the disease, father or mother normally and she would send the whole family off on a holiday to somewhere like Bermuda and pay for it. We’re talking about six/seven people and pay for it because the father or the mother was actually dying and this was a last holiday for that family.’

Durden-Smith also visited hospitals with her as part of Children in Crisis, and described her going round and talking to children, holding their hands, asking after them, sharing about her own daughters: ‘She has this wonderful way of getting into a child’s mind if you like, a child’s psyche, and she’ll talk about the things that Beatrice and Eugenie do, naughty things ... and she’ll have children laughing who are desperately ill, I’ve seen her do that on many, many occasions.’

Theo Ellert was still ‘very, very fond of Fergie now despite all that we’ve been through ... she’s tremendous fun ... she lives life to the full ... she likes doing things to make people laugh, she likes doing things to shock people ... but on the other hand she really revels in doing things that do make people happy, particularly if people are underprivileged or ill.’

Ellert believed Sarah has ‘a genuine gift with disabled, particularly mentally disabled youngsters’ and remembered, in particular, a visit to a home in Split with Bosnian refugees who had just been left in a gym, with their own excrement all over the floor. Despite the powers that be not wanting her to go inside the gym, and warnings from Ellert, Sarah just walked straight in. The youngsters rushed up to her, ‘clawing at her, they were pulling at her hair’, yet within a few minutes: ‘She had got them, she

was on the floor with them, holding their hands, eye to eye, soul to soul, they were calm, they were loving her and she was loving it.’

The journalist Judy Wade was also there and confirmed Sarah’s gift for connecting with the disadvantaged. She too remembered the stench and the feral children. ‘They were very hostile, very nervous, very upset ... and some of them spat at her, they hit her and she just carried on, she just reached out to them and touched their faces, held their hands and talked very soothingly to them.’

Anna Lubienka accompanied Sarah on one of the trips to Poland and said Ferguson used her contacts to fundraise for the children’s leukaemia hospital and brought a teddy bear for every child. She was hands on, mucked in and behaved like a mother hugging the children. Lubienka said she appeared genuine and made no attempt to capitalise on the trip.

The Duchess of York excites very contrary opinions. In a profile in June 2024, ‘The Enduring Ghastliness of Sarah Ferguson’, after she claimed to be an ambassador for Generation Z, Julie Burchill declared that Sarah had seen her elevation to the monarchy ‘not as a privilege which brought duties, but as a sure way to grab a never-ending smorgasbord of lux freebies’. ‘Would Ferguson admit to being lazy, greedy, plagiaristic, grifting and seeking fame by association?’ asked Burchill, noting she still used her HRH on her novels.

But the journalist Liz Jones defended her on the grounds that she gave hope to ‘the always-picked-last-for-the-team!’. Jones applauded the duchess’s attempts to make her own living instead of sponging off Andrew and the way she faced her cancer diagnosis in January 2024: ‘Not for her the gravitas of a solemn video; instead, she appeared on ITV’s *Loose Women*, doubtless encouraging women all over the country to get checked. She might be a bit posh, but she is also Everywoman. One of us.’

Paul Burrell, who worked for Princess Diana for many years, described the duchess as strange, with a reputation of ‘pimping’ her daughters in social situations. But he also thought her a survivor, which she had learned how to do by going to America. This farmer’s daughter, said Burrell, was ‘like a little girl brought into a sweet shop and told she could have anything she wanted. And she did, she had everything, not just one thing, she had the lot. Absolutely. Abused everything and had everything she could possibly, gorged herself. I saw it.’

‘THE ROYAL ODD COUPLE’

One of the most intriguing elements about the couple is the nature of their relationship. Separated since 1992, after six years of marriage – much of which they spent apart – they have continued to live together for much of the ensuing period and claim to be the ‘happiest divorced couple in the world’. The story, however, is not quite as simple as that.

Introduced to each other in June 1985 by Princess Diana, they had a whirlwind romance, becoming engaged in February 1986 and marrying the following July. Sarah had despaired of ever marrying her live-in boyfriend, Paddy McNally; Andrew was under pressure from his family to settle down. Both families were surprised by the romance. Her father wondered if she was more attracted to the prince than the man and she later admitted that within a week of the wedding she realised it was a mistake. The Queen is reputed to have told Sarah, ‘I’m so glad you’ve taken Andrew off our hands ... but why on earth did you do it?’

Though the couple share an unsophisticated sense of humour, they have few mutual interests – he likes shooting and golf, she prefers skiing and riding – and are dissimilar characters. Almost immediately after the marriage, Andrew was either at sea or on a naval base far away. In 1990 he spent only forty-two days at home. Sarah, insecure, in need of love and attention, became bored, depressed and lonely, amid the pressures of court life and criticism from both the media and the Palace. Andrew, focused on his own needs and exhausted by the demands of his career, admitted his priorities to his wife, ‘I am a prince, then a naval officer, then a husband.’

One of the journalists closest to Sarah, Ross Benson, felt she was desperate for his support. At a time when she was being criticised relentlessly by the press, the duke failed to advise her or even to offer some comfort. Instead, ‘he spent his leave slumped in front of the video. If he did stir himself, it was only to join his male friends for rounds of golf. Sarah took that as the insult, however unintended, it was.’

As Sarah told Madame Vasso, ‘He’s just not strong enough, he really isn’t. He doesn’t stand up for me when I need support and he’s never there when I need him.’ A mutual friend remembered: ‘Andrew’s idea of a good time on a beautiful sunny day was to sit in the house and watch golf on the

television. His dinner would be placed in front of him so that he could continue watching TV, and then he would go to bed.' It got to the stage where Sarah would make any excuse not to be with her husband in the house. 'She would ask if the duke was in for dinner and if he was going to be in she would make sure she was out.'

Initially, she tried very hard to save the marriage. 'All the compromising came from her side, probably because at the start she was so thrilled and grateful at the status and privileges this marriage had conferred on her,' argued Benson. But eventually she saw it for what it was: 'a tiresome, thankless exercise' for someone born and moulded to believe that such attentiveness from those around him was his birthright.

Sarah tried to raise the state of her marriage with the Queen, but the latter found it uncomfortable to become involved in other people's emotional problems and the talk was quickly deflected to dogs, horses or the weather. It was only a matter of time before the duchess found the excitement and affection she craved with other men.

'Fergie had a lot of regrets about a lot of things but freeing herself of Andrew I don't think was one of them,' said an old friend of the duchess, who blamed the prince's 'serious attitude problem' for the difficulties in the marriage.

Ingrid Seward, who wrote an authorised biography of the duchess, was told by friends of the couple how 'at times she can't stand Andrew. She thinks he is a bit of an oaf, a bit of a cringe-maker. He can really embarrass her.' At other times Sarah would say, 'Andrew is my best friend ... He is a puppet, but sometimes he is a dull puppet.'

It was a strange relationship, as a family friend told the journalist Richard Kay: 'Sarah has been by far the stronger of the two ... almost a mother-madonna figure to him, especially as his father is a bully and his mother hates confrontation. Nothing was ever Sarah's fault, whatever the problem ... He lived in denial of her infidelities. He has leaned on her for years, even when she found his apparent weakness a sexual turn-off.'

But in spite of their differences and problems the two needed each other. As one friend remarked: 'Andrew is nothing without a woman ... He's sweet, but also rather clunky and gauche. He needs someone who knows what she wants and who can navigate his life for him.' Andrew, guilty about his initial neglect of his ex-wife, remained loyal and supportive even when

Sarah publicly cuckolded him and humiliated both him and the Royal Family – not least when she was caught by ‘the Fake Sheik’ selling access to him. In turn, after Andrew’s fall from grace, Sarah has proved to be his most loyal supporter.

The timings were never right for a reconciliation. Andrew, at first after the separation and divorce, remained half in love with her, relishing his freedom to enjoy a series of casual sexual flings while still retaining the security of apparent married life. ‘He’s a charmer but most of the romances fizzle out, and that’s why he’s kept the stability of being close to Sarah,’ says one friend. ‘He has the family side and the playboy side and he’s been able to balance the two for decades.’ But it left Sarah confused. As she told Madame Vasso, ‘He says he wants me back, then he goes off with the girls.’

The duchess equally appreciated the attention of various lovers and escape from the constrictions of royal life, while also enjoying the status and trappings that royal life brought. ‘You have to understand that Andrew still loves Sarah,’ a friend of the couple told *Vanity Fair*, highlighting their fluctuating relationship. Amid talks of remarriage, with her career in America going strong, with her Weight Watchers contract, her books, she could reject the possibility: ‘She thought her career would continue to support her expensive lifestyle, and she didn’t want to give all that up to become a boring royal again.’ But after Sarah’s US career nosedived, it was Andrew who didn’t want to remarry, telling the friend, ‘Given Sarah’s weaknesses, she wouldn’t make an appropriate royal anymore.’ The duke also acted ‘for the sake of his daughters’, not wanting to ‘cause a commotion at Buckingham Palace’.

Andrew accepted his wife’s infidelities and often would dine alone off a tray in his study while Sarah and one of her lovers ate together elsewhere in the house. Sarah, however, was jealous of any of Andrew’s girlfriends. She wanted to remain ‘the One’, with all the perks that brought, and girlfriends were invariably despatched through a mixture of charm and ruthlessness. In this she often had the support of her mother-in-law. According to a senior royal aide, ‘It used to be a bit of a joke that whenever Andrew showed too close an interest in girls like Amanda Staveley or Angie Everhart, the Queen promptly issued an invitation to Fergie for afternoon tea at Windsor.’

As over the years Sarah moved in and out of Andrew’s homes, the speculation about the nature of their relationship and possibility of

remarriage continued unabated – a speculation they did not discourage. In November 1998 the *Daily Mail* reported that, over dinner at Highgrove, Andrew had told guests he and Sarah might remarry. The following October the *Sun* claimed, ‘Fergie told last night how she could yet remarry Prince Andrew – and longed to have another child.’ Two days later the paper admitted, ‘The Duke has ruled out EVER remarrying his ex-wife Fergie.’ On 4 May 2000 the *Mirror*’s front-page headline was ‘I May Wed Sarah Again’. After a twelve-page *Tatler* interview ‘We are Family’, the duke revealed, ‘I don’t rule remarriage out and I certainly don’t rule it in.’

On 25 June under the headline ‘The Yorks: Back “as Man and Wife”’, the *Sunday Telegraph* claimed: ‘That magic which they first shared is back. They are very happy, very comfortable in each other’s company.’ Six months later Sarah was telling the *Daily Express*, ‘We still live together, but there’s no chance, of course, of any romantic reconciliation between us.’ In August 2013 the *Telegraph* reported the couple might remarry. ““Mark my words, they will remarry,” says one pal. “It is only a matter of time”.’ Richard Kay described the speculation about the nature of their relationship as ‘part game to keep the puzzled observer guessing and part unbreakable bond that has withstood scandal, adultery and embarrassing financial catastrophe’.

Though they have long been divorced, the couple continue to enjoy a tight bond, which first revolved around joint parenting of their daughters and has now been cemented by their role as grandparents. In spite of the problems in their marriage, they remain soulmates. As Sarah put it in one of her memoirs: ‘Andrew and I will not remarry precisely because we *like* where we are now. Our relationship suits us as it is ... The marriage was the marriage, and that is over. But ours is the wedding of the souls, and we’ve never parted, and never shall.’

A PROBLEM SUCH AS ANDREW

The question remains: what does one do with a problem such as Andrew? A.N. Wilson, writing in *The Times*, thought going abroad was not the solution. ‘The Duke of York must be grounded in Britain,’ he declared. ‘His minder and only friend, his ex-wife, will have to be paid by the King, out of

his own pocket, to keep Andrew safely playing golf and trotting round the park on one of the late Queen's horses and going for walks with her corgis.' Such a system of 'containment and good propaganda' could ensure Andrew's 'greed and his sense of entitlement are made to seem an aberration rather than a family trait'.

Even if Andrew fades from public view, it is difficult to believe that the story will die. Even though most of those who could speak are too loyal or deferential, have signed NDAs, been paid off or may have much to lose themselves if they go public, there is always the chance of old depositions being released, new court cases being brought, fresh witnesses coming forward to fill in pieces of the jigsaw.

Buckingham Palace has tried hard to suppress the story, not least the pressure put on ABC not to run its interview with Virginia Giuffre all those years ago. The British government has so far failed to release any significant information about Andrew's time as a taxpayer-funded special representative in spite of numerous Freedom of Information requests, and neither the duke nor duchess has ever fully addressed the criticisms directed against them, notably the monies paid by Selman Turk and Johnny Hon. According to journalist Omid Scobie: 'A former Buckingham Palace staff member who worked with the Duke of York claimed that many inside and close to the Firm spent "at least four years" actively nudging trusted or easily influenced members of the press away from negative Andrew stories, claiming that "those who could be convinced it wasn't worth dealing with all the legal issues were helped in other ways".'

He added: 'There are believed to be dozens, if not hundreds, more unwise connections to uncover from Andrew's years in the role.'

Andrew continues to live with his ex-wife at Royal Lodge as the building falls apart around him. A member of his staff interviewed for this book is saddened by the situation. He notes that many full-time staff are now part-time or have been let go and the once stunning property is now a crumbling ruin with 'cracks in the walls in one of the loos. In the kitchen, there was water dripping down from the sink onto the floor. It's a total mess.'

The staffer continues about his former boss: 'He's a man with self-destructive habits that hampers his enjoyment of life. He's his own worst enemy. Unlike many famous people who act strange for amusement, he doesn't. Simply put, he's a complex, rather strange grown-up man.'

He instances Andrew's daily habit of twenty-minute 'air showers' where he sits by an open window or on a balcony, closes his eyes and 'sucks in fresh air – regardless of the temperature outside'. He highlights the duke's insomnia – 'I don't think Andrew has slept through an entire night since he was a teenager' – and how 'he's the consummate paranoid prince, thinking everyone and their uncle is out to get him'.

Andrew's health is not good, occasioned by recent stress, making him look much older than his real age. He is no longer the youthful, charismatic prince that we recall from the eighties and nineties.

'Remember, the most difficult thing for the Duke of York was not the allegations of sexual misconduct. It was being stripped of his royal titles and losing his key role with the Royal Family. He's never gotten over this.'

According to the staff member, Andrew 'tries to live in denial, pretending that everything is good when he subconsciously knows that things are really bad'. He spends his time riding, playing golf and reading, usually thrillers (his favourite book is *The Talented Mr Ripley*). Aside from that, he has become obsessed with aviation and watches endless videos of planes taking off and landing on a giant screen, talking on his mobile for hours on end.

Young attractive massage therapists regularly visit the house 'to help him heal', where in one of the guest bedrooms they work to the sound of country music. 'Andrew loves country music.'

Ian Halperin in the course of researching his book and documentary on Jeffrey Epstein talked to many people in Andrew's circle and confirmed Epstein 'sold Prince Andrew's most intimate secrets to several notorious foreign intelligence agencies, including Israel's Mossad, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Mukhabarat el-Jamahiriya which was the national intelligence service of Libya under the rule of Muammar Gaddafi'.

In mid-2007 Halperin interviewed Epstein who described Andrew as 'like a brother to me but he has two dual personalities. I never met anyone like him. On one hand he's Prince Charming and on the other he has the dirtiest mind I've ever seen. I feel bad for him. He's tormented.'

When the journalist asked Epstein if he was serious, he replied: 'I'm as serious as a heart attack.'

It was Prince Andrew's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein and Virginia Giuffre that was instrumental in his fall from grace, far more than press criticisms of his role as special representative, his financial scandals or his

abuse of taxpayers' money. It is clear how Epstein played Andrew. The prince was a useful idiot who gave him respectability and access to political leaders and business opportunities. What drew Andrew to Epstein? An opportunity to join the super rich and a lifestyle to which the duke had long aspired, a supply of available women, a chance to make money himself and someone who would bankroll his life as well as settle his ex-wife's debts. Both men, ostensible friends, used each other but it was an unequal relationship. According to one of Prince Andrew's friends, Epstein to Andrew 'was like putting a rattlesnake in an aquarium with a mouse'.

Much is at stake with this story. What would be the consequences for the monarchy if the full extent of the Yorks' involvement with Jeffrey Epstein emerged? According to one former Buckingham Palace employee:

They'd be toast ... They'd never be able to bounce back from it. They've endured more than their share of scandals over the years but this one would bury them for good. I'm still in contact with many people who work at Buckingham Palace and they refuse to broach the subject of Andrew. It's too sensitive. Nothing good can come from it ... If the unconditional truth is ever released I think the British public would try to impeach the Royal Family. Because a lot of Andrew's wrongdoings were done on the British taxpayer's tab.

Janice, a Frenchwoman, told author Ian Halperin:

I just want to confirm with you, Ian, that I was one of many girls Prince Andrew had sex with in Jeffrey Epstein's house. I was paid off to keep quiet years ago by Epstein ... I was drunk at Epstein's home on his private island when Andrew threw himself on me ... to this day I can't believe how Prince Andrew has never been investigated or held accountable ... One day the entire truth will come out ... Now is not the time because Andrew seems to be above the law. I promise, the final chapter of this sad saga is far from being written.

Indeed, the story continues to run, most notably with the suicide of Virginia Giuffre, aged forty-one, in April 2025, just one of Epstein's many victims who have taken their own lives. Although she was thankful that Ghislaine Maxwell, whom she regarded as 'more evil than Epstein', was convicted, Giuffre had never felt closure: 'It's definitely not over. There are so many more people involved with this. It doesn't stop with Maxwell.'

Indeed, much may still emerge, not least if the FBI files on Epstein are released, not just about Andrew's sexual antics but also the business activities of the couple. The media have now woken up to the way they

have both leveraged their royal position for personal gain and it is likely that there are many more scandals to be exposed. It is ironic that the Duke and Duchess of York, ostensibly the strongest defenders of the monarchy, may through their behaviour between them have done most to hasten its demise.

* In January 2025 the account was closed.

† Prince Andrew opened the bank in 2009.

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NOTES

BABY GRUMPLING

'It was lavish' Sarah Ferguson The Duchess of York, with Jeff Coplon, *My Story* (Simon & Schuster, 1996), p.103.

'The christening went off very well' *Daily Mail*, 16 November 2007.

'The baby is adorable' *Ibid.*, 31 March 2011.

'He was into everything' Stephen Barry, *Royal Service* (Macmillan, 1983), pp.26–7.

'Andrew, hoiked backwards' *Express*, 8 October 1996.

'a bloody nuisance' Lady Colin Campbell, *The Royal Marriages* (St Martin's Press, 1993), p.169.

'a bit of a handful' Nicholas Courtney, *Prince Andrew* (Macdonald, 1983), p.19.

'most troublesome' royal *Daily Mail*, 17 November 2022.

'A TIRESOME LITTE SHIT'

'tiresome little shit' Tom Jackson to the author, 3 February 2023.

His dance teacher remembered Interview, 11 April 2022.

'very, very noisy' Andrew Morton, *Diana: Her True Story – In Her Own Words* (Michael O'Mara, 1997), p.53.

'they adored him' Barry, *Royal Service*, p.28.

'one for ladies' *Telegraph*, 27 October 2010.

'He fitted in but' Interview Frank Egerton, 16 August 2022.

'He was cocky' Interview, 30 March 2022.

'He had crossed out' Private information. Some accounts from other contemporaries say the theft was of Parker pens.

THE FERGUSONS

'It's me they have come to see' Andrew Morton, *Duchess* (New English Library, 1988), p.22.

having an affair with his polo teammate Interview, 19 December 2023.

'I remember always believing' *You Magazine*, 2 February 2003.

'Sarah was very brave' Ingrid Seward, *Sarah HRH Duchess of York* (HarperCollins, 1991), p.6.

'When she was little' Morton, *Duchess*, p.29.

'metal beds and horsehair mattresses' *The Times*, 12 December 2024.

'It was an obsession' *Sunday Telegraph*, 25 March 2001.

'I was 14' *Sunday Times*, 20 October 2002. Hurst Lodge was run by the sister of the actor Trevor Howard, whom Ron had met while acting as military adviser for the film *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, in which Howard starred. *Sunday Telegraph*, 25 March 2001.

'Although enthusiastic' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.56.

'Everyone looked up to Fergie' Seward, *Sarah*, p.30.

'with two O levels' *Daily Mail*, 7 January 2024.

THE SNIGGERER

'stickler for protocol' Interview, 21 January 2023.

'didn't know whether he wanted' Seward, *Sarah*, p.92.

'I'm afraid he had' Anwar Hussein, *HRH Prince Andrew* (Hamlyn, 1979), p.25.

'man with a big bottom' Seward, *Sarah*, p.91.

'By the time he's finished' Andrew Morton, *Andrew: The Playboy Prince* (Corgi, 1983), pp.39–40.

'trashy magazines and comics' *Ibid.*, p.55.

'Jack the Lad' Interview, 21 September 2022.

firing at cans Topliss would sit his A levels alongside Andrew and also conduct an affair with one of the teachers, who was dismissed as a result.

'He never quite fitted in' *Tatler*, October 1992.

'liked to laugh' Interview Tim Radford, 11 August 2022.

dab hand at crosswords Interview Peter Neilson, 25 September 2022.

'not streetwise' *Ibid.*

'He rubbed me up' Interview Andrew Day, 11 August 2023.

'THE ONE WITH THE ROBERT REDFORD LOOKS'

'In a way he quite resented' *Sun*, 12 July 1991.

'Were we lovers?' *Evening Standard*, 15 September 1992.

'He was absolutely charming' Interview Lynn Nightingale, 27 February 2023.

FIRST STEPS

'important to get some sort of training' Morton, *Duchess*, p.44.

'Bright, bouncy redhead' Seward, *Sarah*, p.54; Morton, *Duchess* pp.44–5; Ferguson, *My Story*, p.62.

'bubbly, helpful' Morton, *Duchess*, p.47.

'spending a great deal of time' Ibid.

'If I had a knotty problem' Ibid., p.48.

'I saw in her something' Interview Neil Durden-Smith, A&E Biography Channel 1999.

GORDONSTOUN AGAIN

'more thoughtful' Morton, *Andrew*, p.54.

'ripping off the flysheets' Interview, 10 August 2022.

'He thinks he's funny' Ibid.

'He was so full of himself' Interview, 21 January 2023.

'He was kind' Interview, 1 March 2023, and email, 26 January 2025.

'All I had heard' Interview, 4 May 2022.

'He dismissed me' Ibid.

DARTMOUTH

'Prince Charles is still remembered' Nigel Cawthorne, *Prince Andrew: Epstein, Maxwell and the Palace* (Gibson Square, 2022), p.48.

never missing a birthday Interview Ian Hendry, 15 September 2022.

'He was born in the wrong age' Ibid.

'He was confused' Ibid.

'He wasn't a person' Interview, 16 December 2022.

'We've put him through' *Daily Mirror*, 22 March 1980.

Many Marines ... objected Interview, 16 January 2023. ADM 201/319, TNA, gives details of his two-week attachment. It noted: 'There is concern that the press may ask questions concerning the award of a Green Beret to Prince Andrew. The likely questions with the answers, which have been cleared by the Queen's Press Secretary, CGRM & DPRR(N).' The answers are redacted. Forums such as <https://www.pprune.org/military-aviation/116560-prince-andrew-knob-apparently.html> are full of critical comments about Andrew's naval career and in particular the commando course, with claims he was out of time and there was a helicopter on standby to pick him up.

'Andrew was spared nothing' Morton, *Andrew*, p.74.

From there it was In 1994 the *People* published a front-page story, 'Prince Andrew and Me', the confessions of a local barmaid with whom he'd had a fling with the strapline 'He felt my breasts and wanted to show me his mangoes'. Elaine Rey revealed he had 'kissed her and once even playfully grabbed her naked breasts' and that she had visited him at his base where he showed her some mangoes which he claimed to eat to improve his sex life. *People*, 29 May 1994.

'He wants his own way' *The Times*, 20 November 1980.

'Everyone treated him' Interview Euan McNair, 14 September 2022.

put his 'Prince's hat on' Ibid.

'He didn't shine' Interview Ian Hendry, 15 September 2022.

prize for the course's best pilot However, according to one contemporary, he 'took three goes to pass his initial helicopter training on the Gazelle'. Interview, 18 December 2023.

'People think that' Morton, *Duchess*, p.78.

SETTLING DOWN

'She was a super saleswoman' Morton, *Duchess*, p.52.

'He brought me into' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.65.

'I was trying too hard' Ibid., p.64.

'Paddy was my father figure' Vasso Kortesis, *The Duchess of York: Uncensored* (John Blake, 1996), p.30.

offering Ferguson the option Interview, 22 June 2024.

'Quite frankly' Morton, *Duchess*, p.55.

'I desperately wanted to marry him' Ferguson, *My Story*, pp.74–5.

HIS ROYAL HEART-THROB

'I have found him' Courtney, *Prince Andrew*, p.56.

'By chance in our general direction' *Sun*, 13 June 2002.

'If we were in a rush' Interview Tom Arnall, 10 December 2022.

'uncongenial' Interview Steve George, 8 October 2024.

judging him self-important Interview, 5 February 2023.

'Outside my squadron' Ralph Wykes-Sneyd to the author, 12 October 2023.

'They were as much about' Ibid.

no requirement for him to go ashore Ibid.

'I saw it being struck' United Press International, 19 June 1982.

'I have no doubt that' Ralph Wykes-Sneyd to the author, 12 October 2023.

'The line was so clear' Morton, Andrew, p.127.

'He went away a royal rascal' Sun, 23 August 1982.

'At first the prince seemed' Ibid.

'going to war gave him a tremendous jolt' Ibid.

'I am not sure if it made me' Daily Telegraph, 30 March 2002.

STARKERS

met a young dark-haired actress The romances appear to have carried on concurrently as naval colleagues remember a picture of the ballet dancer while he was in the Falklands and also helping him write letters to Stark when in the South Atlantic. Parker now teaches yoga under her married name.

'Initially I wondered' Daily Mail, 14 February 2015.

'When Andrew comes into your life' Ibid. In fact, she was dating a British-Turkish businessman, Touker Suleyman, later owner of Hawes & Curtis and a star of TV reality show *Dragons' Den*, and both had just visited her mother to discuss marriage. Previous boyfriends had included Alexander Andreadis, the former husband of Christina Onassis, and millionaire Robert Winsor whom she had left the day before they were due to marry.

'thought the world of Koo' Daily Mail, 10 August 2006.

'evenings spent playing parlour games' Daily Mail, 14 February 2015.

'Whose are those?' Ibid.

'The paparazzi were flying over' Ibid. An Argentine plan to land an assassination squad on the island by submarine was never implemented.

'They talked about spending' Daily Mail, 25 June 2001.

'Andrew would call to let us know' Mail on Sunday, 10 March 2002, and Steve Strange, *Blitzed!* (Orion, 2002), pp.106–7.

'real schoolboy humour' Mail on Sunday, 10 March 2002.

Her letters to him The photos and film were published in newspapers in August 1996.

'a second home' Sun, 22 February 1983.

'By then it was basically over' Daily Mail, 15 February 2003.

FROG

'launching into a series of jokes' Mail on Sunday, 3 November 2002.

'We asked what' Ibid.

'Suddenly, I looked round' Ibid.

'I really do wish' Ibid.

Koo had taught him to count Ibid.

'very full of himself' Interview Vicki Hodge, 28 November 2023.

'I'll speak to you tonight' *Mail on Sunday*, 3 November 2002.

'He needs someone' *Daily Mirror*, 30 March 1983.

'He's the world's most eligible bachelor' *People*, 3 April 1983.

'If he wasn't a member of the Royal Family' Ibid.

didn't endear him to others Ralph Wyke-Sneyd to the author, 12 October 2023.

'He certainly had a strong sense of entitlement' Interview, 22 September 2022.

MISSTEPS

'It will be like going from a tank' *Sunday Express*, 19 June 1983.

'The policy of allowing His Royal Highness' 24 May 1983, DEFE 24/3465, TNA.

'In the course of a full' 19 April 1984, FCO 82/1433, TNA.

'I haven't worn that' *Daily Express*, 21 April 1984.

'It was his opportunity' Ibid.

'It was the most unpleasant royal visit' Ibid.

'Twit of the Year' *People*, 30 December 1984. The runner-up was Mark Thatcher.

cover for his shyness *Mirror*, 21 April 1984.

dating Bridget Matthey The relationship with Matthey may, according to private information, have gone back to his schooldays. She was fourteen years older than the prince.

'very serious about his photography' *Vanity Fair*, 28 June 2011.

'a small slice of autobiography' HRH Prince Andrew, *Photographs* (Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p.7.

'Dare I say it?' *Vanity Fair*, 28 June 2011.

'string of wildly unsuitable boyfriends' *Sun*, 31 March 1984.

ENTER SARAH FERGUSON

'It does not require a vast knowledge' Christopher Warwick and Valerie Garner, *Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of York* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), p.30.

'We could go fishing' *Sun*, 27 January 1992, and interview Martin Schreiber, 14 July 2023.

Stark had married The marriage lasted a year. In 1997 she had a daughter, Tatiana, whose godfather is Prince Andrew, with a banker, Warren Walker.

'I am a loner' Warwick and Garner, p.92.

'Things got better and better' Morton, *Duchess*, p.72.

'Fergie couldn't stop talking' Private information.

'She's either in love with Andrew' Donald Spoto, *The Decline and Fall of the House of Windsor* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), p.422.

'That phrase was used to me' Stuart White to the author, 10 January 2023.

'No one is expecting' *Daily Mirror*, 23 December 1985.

'While she was enormously happy' Morton, *Duchess*, p.80.

'Fiona Campbell' *People*, 9 February 1986. Stark later successfully sued newspapers who suggested the relationship had continued after her and his marriages.

Diana bought several pairs Donald Edward, *Prince Andrew* (Arthur Barker, 1980), p.180.

'Snow Castle' Stolen photos of Sarah at the chalet, including of her in a bubble bath, later appeared across seven pages of *Paris Match*, *'Sarah: Les Photos Scandale'*, 18 April 1986, and in the Swiss magazine *Blick* in July 1989.

'She was overjoyed' Seward, *Sarah*, p.117.

'for about twenty minutes' Ibid.

'It was a very merry evening' Interview transcript Penny Thornton, *'Sarah Ferguson: Royal Flush Week'*, A&E Biography Channel, 1999.

'If the sailor Prince' *Daily Mail*, 12 March 1986.

'a few years ago Andrew looked' *The Times*, 26 November 2019.

ENGAGED

'For the next couple of hours' Morton, *Duchess*, p.88.

'Andrew's bedroom and dressing room' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.92.

'By all the evidence' Wendy Berry, *The Housekeeper's Diary* (Barricade, 1995), pp.38–9.

THE HONEYMOON IS OVER

the best day of her life *Daily Mail*, 23 July 2023.

'Miss Sarah Ferguson radiates character' *Evening Standard*, 23 July 1986.

'Friday night he'd come home' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.111.

'and I would break' Ibid.

'She never felt she could make it her home' Twice they looked over the 3,500-acre Barnacre Estate in northern England as a possible permanent home. United Press International, 1 March 1987.

Andrew had his naval pay Morton, *Duchess*, p.126.

'You can't touch me. I'm royal' Sun, 22 January 2022.

'She resembled not so much' Morton, *Duchess*, p.130.

'Fergie Makes It 9 Holidays' *Daily Express*, 31 August 1987.

'The Duke strolled up' *People*, 11 October 1987.

'The lovely, carefree, unaffected girl had gone' *News of the World*, 5 September 1993. Conway's predictions had included 'Charles will marry again – but not Camilla. Diana will marry twice more – both times unhappily. Fergie too will marry again – this time happily. Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones will probably never marry.' *Sunday Mirror*, 19 May 1996.

'Marriage brought her attention' Berry, *The Housekeeper's Diary*, p.39.

'She was very dedicated' Andrew Morton, *Inside Buckingham Palace* (Michael O'Mara, 1993), p.40.

'The Duchess came out once' Chris Hutchins and Peter Thompson, *Fergie Confidential* (Neville Ness House, 2015; originally published 1992), p.158.

'to such an extent that the sponsors' Ibid., p.164.

'Their Royal Highnesses' contribution' Cowper-Coles to Smallman, 21 October 1988, FCO 82/1861, TNA.

A NYMPHET CALLED BABS

charging between £1,000 and £5,000 a head Nicholas Davies, *Elizabeth II: Behind Palace Doors* (Mainstream, 2000), p.346.

habitué of the Wigmore Club He had ignored warnings six months earlier from senior Palace officials to stay away from such clubs. Davies, *Elizabeth II*, p.346.

said to be more upset by the suggestion The Queen's cook told journalist Ian Halperin that Ronald had once taken Andrew to a West End massage parlour. According to the cook, 'They shared a good laugh about it.' Ian Halperin to the author, 12 February 2025.

'Hold your head up' *Daily Mail*, 29 September 1994.

'drowned my sorrows in mayonnaise' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.144.

'obviously loving every moment' Berry, *The Housekeeper's Diary*, pp.90–1.

'all of it' Ibid.

BABY YORKLET

'I needed to shore up my marriage' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.147.

'I'd write to him almost every day' Vasso, *The Duchess of York*, p.44.

'if there was anything else' Ibid., p.99.

'charity of their choice' *Today*, 8 August 1990.

'The pool and tennis court' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.190.

'A little daylight was not so terrible' Ibid., p.192.

'a fashion obscenity' *Washington Post*, 20 December 1988. He thought Prince Andrew looked 'like an unemployed embalmer who dresses in Salvation Army castoffs'.

BUDGIE

'Everything had to be checked' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.225.

'Fergie never misses a cliché' *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 February 1996.

'I don't think Budgie stands anywhere' Ibid.

'a 100 per cent coincidence' *Daily Express*, 25 May 1990.

'the greatest single threat' John Sargent, *Turning Pages: The Adventures and Misadventures of a Publisher* (Arcade, 2023), p.40.

'At one point she told me' Ibid., p.43.

'she was having trouble deciding' Ibid., p.44.

'The room service charge' Ibid.

SHAPING THE CAREER

'There's no doubt that Andrew' *Mirror*, 20 June 1994.

'No one else of his rank had that' Ibid.

'On one occasion he came on to the bridge' Interview, 18 December 2023. There are also unverified stories Andrew was ordered off HMS *Broadsword* after asking a stoker party to work between watches but not bothering to get out of bed to supervise them.

'He was only interested in' Interview Tony Hogg, 27 June 2024.

complex parental environment Ibid.

'Which one?' Ibid. Maclean, a former helicopter pilot, who mentored Andrew on HMS *Brazen*, rose to vice-admiral before dying aged seventy-one of cancer in 2021.

The officer duly wrote the paper Email to the author, 10 November 2024. Andrew had a propensity at Gordonstoun to get others, including one particular scholarship boy, to do his homework. Email to author from the scholarship boy, 9 November 2024.

STEVE WYATT

Wyatt's *real father* It was never clear whether he had committed suicide, been killed by a tram in Vienna or was living in penury under an assumed identity.

'It was obvious that Sarah was enormously attracted' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.193.

'Did your husband teach you to fly?' *Daily Mail*, 17 April 1996.

'I think that was the moment' Nigel Dempster and Peter Evans, *Behind Palace Doors* (Orion, 1993), p.188.

'Not even Joan Collins' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.195.

'Sarah is a sensual woman' *Sun*, 14 September 1992.

having flown there in Oscar Wyatt's private jet Sarah later claimed it belonged to Lord Palumbo. Ferguson, *My Story*, p.202.

'a display of mutual fondling' Dempster and Evans, *Behind Palace Doors*, p.193. According to one of McAlpine's daughters, the dinner was held in a private room. Interview, 5 January 2025.

SUNNINGHILL

'looked like a miniature warehouse' Lesley Player, *My Story: The Duchess of York, Her Father and Me* (Grafton, 1993), p.117.

'Chill him' Dempster and Evans, *Behind Palace Doors*, p.194.

SEPARATION

he chose not to attend According to a friend of his, Wyatt thought her 'dangerous'. 'She used to call him fifty times a day, stalk him and pose as his wife when she wasn't. He did everything he could to try to ignore her but she was "obsessed".' Ian Halperin to the author, 25 February 2025.

'Steve Wyatt did not carelessly leave the pictures' Arthur Edwards with Judy Wade, *I'll Tell the Jokes*, Arthur (Blake, 1993), p.215.

'Scotland Yard was asked to investigate' James Whitaker and Christopher Wilson, *Diana vs. Charles: Royal Blood Feud* (Dutton, 1993), p.63.

'He was in his mid-fifties' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.10.

'MI6 does not spy on members of the Royal Family' *Sunday Express*, 22 March 1992.

'whizzing around the cabin' Player, *My Story*, p.263.

'cutting eyeholes in an airsick bag' Allan Starkie, *Fergie: Her Secret Life* (New Holland edition, 1996), p.30.

'She is a real trooper' *Daily Express*, 21 January 1992.

'it was all part of a plot' Vasso, *The Duchess of York*, pp.95–6. The Royal Family used similar tactics against Diana.

the couple drove to Sandringham According to royal servant John Barratt: 'There was no doubt that the Duchess of York was pushed. She didn't just walk away. The Establishment realised that the Duchess would become a danger to the family and they persuaded the Queen that it was necessary for her to be ousted so she could bring no further discredit on the family. So out she went.' Davies, *Elizabeth II*, p.347.

JOHN BRYAN

'The Duchess of York is utterly childish' Sarah Curtis (ed.), *The Journals of Woodrow Wyatt*, Vol. 2 (Macmillan, 1999), p.651.

'more than a dozen women' Ian Halperin to the author, 12 February 2025.

'Sarah discovered that Andrew' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.158.

'the arguments bordered on domestic violence' Ibid., p.271.

'You have to understand' Ibid., p.272.

'Here she was jumping into bed with me' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.30.

'Using John's closeness as a weapon' Ibid., p.37.

'that her husband had assassinated President Bush' Ibid., p.18.

dating Geraldine Harmsworth According to Sarah, she first met Bryan at a dinner party hosted by Geraldine Harmsworth in 1990 (*My Story*, p.216), but it is more likely that Wyatt had introduced his friend to his lover.

'Both came from broken homes' Ibid., p.23.

'I was needy and full of doubts' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.216.

'He was marvellous with my daughters' Ibid., p.217.

'If Andrew minded' *News of the World*, 23 August 1992.

'The next time we went in' *News of the World*, 15 March 1992.

'He stood up and flung down his plate' Ibid.

'Sarah's friends have told me' *Daily Mail*, 16 March 1992.

'Andrew wanted what was best for Sarah' *Daily Mail*, 15 March 1992.

THE SPLIT

'The disco dancing, Randy Andy public image' *Daily Mail*, 20 March 1992.

'I have finally got him out of my system' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.47.

'would go out with other women' Ibid.

LE MAS DE PIGEROLLE

'a campaign of emotional and financial terrorism' *Daily Express*, 18 August 1992.

ran a spoiler headline Sun, 18 August 1992.

maintained she entered the breakfast room Whitaker and Wilson, *Diana v Charles*, p.62.

'There was not one voice raised against Anne' Hutchins and Thompson, *Fergie Confidential*, p.265.

'She acted in the strangest way' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.54.

'The redhead's in trouble' Tina Brown, *The Diana Chronicles* (Doubleday, 2007), p.347.

'actually come to the pool' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.51.

THE PRESS TURNS

'Throughout her marriage she has seemed' *Evening Standard*, 20 August 1992.

'The British people are now fed up' *Daily Star*, 21 August 1992.

'a man declaring his love for her' The Sun had also handed to the Queen's solicitors a 1990 taped phone call between Andrew and Sarah on their marriage problems.

'Much like Dorothy in the Land of Oz' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.227.

'wandering aimlessly round Romenda Lodge' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.12.

'old lard farce' *News of the World*, 23 August 1992.

'up to 10 different types' *News of the World*, 30 August 1992.

'showing off' Ibid.

'You'd hardly ever see the Duke' Ibid.

'Over the eight months I was with them' Player, *My Story*, p.277.

'duke holed up in his bedroom' Brown, *Palace Papers*, p.333.

'The ranch is getting closer' Ibid.

'He's a good-looking boy' *Daily Mail*, 5 September 1992.

'Sarah will not accept easily to lose her children' Ibid.

That same month another publication It was reissued in 2015 as *Fergie Confidential*.

'two hot water bottles be placed on her side' *Today*, 26 October 1992.

'And when she said freshly squeezed orange juice' Ibid.

'cheap old lemon cream puffs' Ibid.

'proper dinners, liver or sausages with gravy' Ibid.

THE CHARITY DILEMMA

'no doubting her sincerity' *Daily Mail*, 1 December 1992.

'It was a place of terrible want' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.230.

'might get tarred by working too closely' Ibid.

calling herself Sally Metcalfe She sometimes used the name Sarah Metcalf, pretending to be Splaine's aunt, when calling Bryan.

'From a kudos point of view' *Daily Mail*, 18 January 1996, and *Daily Mail*, 8 April 1995.

CHARITABLE INTENTIONS

'They had seen how Diana's trip' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.238.

'Getting on a plane' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.126.

earned her the nickname 'Crisp' *Standard*, 18 January 1994.

'She wanted to be actively involved' Interview John Thorne, 3 January 2024.

'Fergie is like my God and mother' *Daily Mail*, 13 November 1994, and *Mirror*, 14 November 1994.

'Fergie probably has no inkling' *Daily Mail*, 21 March 1998.

'No, I don't want to speak about her' Ibid.

'One week she's created a UN envoy' *Mirror*, 14 July 1993.

The scam This was not the first of Bryan's traffic violations. He had not paid six traffic fines in the United States for speeding and jumping a red light going back to August 1985. Each contempt of court carried a year's jail sentence.

she took legal action against her former butler The following month the duchess took out a High Court injunction against her former cook Simone Beasant who had tried to sell a story to the papers.

SCANDAL

'I don't want to sign any cheques' *Daily Mail*, 27 January 1996.

'discreetly been arranging Fergie's public relations' *Mail on Sunday*, 14 August 1994.

'Let's put it this way' Ibid.

'He's like a machine' *News of the World*, 29 September 1994.

'I'm a separated mother of two' *Daily Mirror*, 8 December 1994.

'I underwent two tests' *Daily Mirror*, 14 December 1994.

stood by the story Ibid. Her father claimed to have had two tests 'for insurance purposes'.

'Was the need to be HIV tested' *Daily Mail*, 14 December 1994.

'Make up your mind!' *The Globe*, 1 December 1992. The maid also claimed Edward was 'an avowed homosexual drag queen who liked to be called Mavis'.

he joked he must be the only person There were later Fleet Street rumours that Andrew had been treated in an Australian hospital at the same time as Kylie Minogue was in for breast cancer.

TURNOVER

'at Fergie's office in Plantation Wharf' Sun, 2 April 1996.

'If you don't choose her' Sun, 17 January 1996.

spent £16,000 annually on phone bills Daily Express, 1 June 1995.

£3,000 on a champagne tea party Daily Mirror, 17 April 1996.

HUMANITARIAN OR SLOPE RANGER?

'filled with children' Ferguson, My Story, p.261.

the charity had received only £300 David Taylor to author, 20 February 2024.

'come up trumps' Herald, 3 June 1996.

'The Slope Ranger' Today, 26 July, 1995.

'It was just non-stop partying' Sun, 2 April 1996.

'His work is so good' Daily Mail, 4 December 1995.

'The Duchess is obviously in a complete muddle' Daily Mail, 28 January 1996.

'did not appear to be embarrassed' Sun, 30 September 1996.

duchess's tendency towards obsession Starkie reported that, after the duchess's stay, the manager of the Carlyle had rung him agitated, asking him to settle a \$12,000 bill for the incidentals she had run up. These were supposedly paid by an admirer, Bill Simon. Starkie, Fergie, p.144.

'That's not going to bother me!' Ibid., p.143.

Staff were then ordered to spy on his apartment Ibid.

'He's mine!' Vasso, The Duchess of York, p.194.

'She'll suddenly turn around' News of the World, 7 April 1996.

'When you're dead' Starkie, Fergie, p.206.

'She realised it wouldn't work' Daily Mail, 17 April 1996.

'the best I have ever had' News of the World, 8 October 1995. And Mazher Mahmood, Confessions of a Fake Sheik (HarperCollins, 2008) p.250. The following year the People ran a story about Bryan paying a call girl, Amanda Dunn, £150 an hour to dress as a schoolgirl struggling over her maths homework. According to a friend, 'Bryan was obsessed with having sex with girls dressed as schoolgirls and insisted she wore a gymslip, white blouse and white socks when she visited him. He also liked her long hair tied up in pigtails and he had a thing about school uniforms.' People, 17 March 1996.

'in a bid to slur the duke' People, 6 December 1992.

'They became very friendly' Sun, 17 May 1993. In 1994 Neville met Teddy Stanley, shortly afterwards 19th Earl of Derby, whom she married the following year. Andrew is a godfather to their elder son Edward.

SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

her debts exceeded \$5 million Ferguson, My Story, p.267.

'These accounts just never get paid' Mirror, 18 April 1996.

'The Duchess's financial affairs' Ferguson, My Story, p.267.

Her income was estimated as Daily Mirror, 18 January 1996.

THOMAS MUSTER

'I hear she drops the kids off' Woman's Day, 15 April 1996.

'This Fergie has turned his head' Daily Express, 18 April 1996.

'Sarah's very nice but' Daily Mail, 12 June 1996.

'It's difficult to get rid of people' News of the World, 30 June 1996.

ON MANOEUVRES

Oceonics Deutschland The business went bust and Allan Starkie, the fall guy, was briefly imprisoned.

'any incident, conversation or other information' Evening Standard, 7 February 1995.

'Because she was so indiscreet' Sunday Mirror, 11 February 1996.

'I don't know how to make it' Sunday Times, 25 February 1996.

'She screamed at his partner Allan Starkie' News of the World, 28 April 1996.

'I don't want to answer that' Daily Mail, 29 April 1996. This is confirmed by several journalists involved in the sale. Private information.

'Bryan was, of course, involved deeply in this' Clive Goodman to the author, 6 November 2024.

One investigation found News of the World, 3 March 1996.

she was on holiday in the Bahamas Ibid.

'She has never paid us' News of the World, 13 June 2010.

'To the best of my knowledge' Mira Riad to the author, 9 July 2024.

'an extra from the Night of the Living Dead' Express, 27 March 1996.

DIVORCE

'It all had to end' Express, 17 April 1996.

'She's very manipulative' Daily Mail, 28 March 1996.

'Dull. Thick. Couch potato' Daily Express, 19 February 1996.

'I also knew that the claim that Sarah had chosen to drop' Vasso, *The Duchess of York*, p.298

'a vulgar extended holiday' Daily Mirror, 17 April 1996.

'The big companies' Daily Mail, 28 May 1996.

reputation for cancelling trips Ibid.

'Given my other commitments' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.290.

'She also got people like Robert Stigwood' Spectator, 27 July 1996.

THE END OF THE ROAD

'I want to go home and be with my family' Mirror, 1 October 1994.

stay with Kyffin Simpson Andrew subsequently became close to Kyffin's daughter Heidi.

'He appeared to find great solace in the cockpit' Interview Martin Davis, 2 June 2023.

'You can put those in there if you like' Duncan Falconer, *First into Action* (Warner, 1998), p.423.

'treat him as any other naval officer' Interview Martin Davis, 2 June 2023.

Davis had many conversations with him Ibid.

The report laid bare his shortcomings Ibid.

'It was quite clear to all that, were he not a royal' Ralph Wykes-Sneyd to the author, 19 July 2023.

'Technology in the Navy' Daily Express, 2 August 1996.

'I never detected that any lack of maths skills' Interview, 10 November 2024. By this time Andrew was beginning to undertake some of his freelance business activities.

'Andrew is a good, solid officer' Express, 2 August 1996.

CRACKING UP

'We are delighted to have this unique opportunity' Daily Express, 6 June 1996.

'The Di idea just grew out of the discussion' Daily Star, 7 June 1996.

'how to use the correct cutlery' Sunday Mirror, 11 August 1996.

'We have gone beyond chronicling' Mirror, 7 October 1996.

'If it weren't for the children' Starkie, *Fergie*, p.117.

'I pick up the dog shit' Allan Starkie to the author, 26 May 2023.

'I have heard her throw' *Mail on Sunday*, 13 October 1996.

'Car journeys are the worst' Ibid.

'She assumes, quite wrongly' Ibid.

'Would you rather date Fergie' *Sun*, 29 September 1996.

A PUBLICATION WAR

'the English courts to keep the truth' *Daily Express*, 26 September 1996.

'And yet John still had' *Daily Mail*, 7 November 1996.

'twenty-seven concubines' *Daily Mirror*, 14 November 1996.

The paper identified Daily Mail, 15 November 1996.

She agreed to do the interview Interview David Freeman, 25 January 2023.

'Oh my gard!' *'Ruby Wax Meets ... the Duchess of York'*, 17 November 1996.

'may reach in her locker for one last bomb' *Sunday Times*, 17 November 1996.

'It remains to be seen' Ibid.

'She attracted and became attracted to' *Sunday Times*, 17 November 1996.

It would air the following year Sunday Mirror, 8 December 1996.

'cloak-and-dagger stuff' *People*, 18 May 1997.

PAYING THE DEBTS

'She got more hilariously indiscreet' Piers Morgan, *The Insider* (Ebury, 2005), pp.161–2.

'Poor old Tiger' Ibid.

DIANA

'They were fighting an ongoing battle' Allan Starkie https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCRc9_6YxPQ.

'canary down the mineshaft' Brown, *The Diana Chronicles*, p.326.

'no longer had special access to the Queen' Patrick Jephson, *Shadows of a Princess* (HarperCollins, 2000), p.327.

'long, rambling and very emotional' letter to Charles Sun, 21 October 1997.

'how she might fill the yawning gap' *Daily Express*, 22 October 1997.

RELATIONSHIPS

'absolutely no objection to their affair' *Daily Mail*, 14 September 1998.

'Yes of course, he's my boyfriend' *Daily Mail*, 8 October 1998.

she ploughed into a delivery truck The previous year she had written off her car in a high-speed crash in which her car had overturned seven times. She was saved by wearing a seatbelt.

'Mum just made everything happen' Ferguson, *My Story*, p.37.

'I never felt anger toward Mum' Ibid., pp.55–6.

'I could never leave my girls' Vasso, *The Duchess of York*, p.31.

'I think of her every day' *Daily Telegraph*, 30 March 2001.

'We are going to try to position her' *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1999.

'She was brilliant at working a room' Interview Brian Patterson, 20 December 2023.

PALACE CONTROL

'The difficulty now is trying to convince you' *Sun*, 3 October 1998.

'Further to certain articles that have appeared' Ibid.

'For even longer than two decades' *Mirror*, 3 October 1998. Two days later the paper gave twenty further examples of lies told by the Palace.

It appeared the instructions had come from the Palace Interview Gareth Nugent, 20 December 2023.

TURNING FORTY

'guardian angel' Sarah later wrote the foreword to *A Recipe for Life*, a collection of reminiscences, poems and recipes gathered by friends for a limited edition book in aid of the Cancer Vaccine Institute and Byford Church, near Hereford, where Cotterell is buried.

'extremely personable and genuinely curious about people' *The Times*, 16 October 1999.

'The Duke of Edinburgh does not need me' Ibid.

'She's a woman of excess' *Daily Mail*, 13 October 1999.

'I'm proud of the fact that I married him' *Sunday Mirror*, 18 October 1999.

'living in the land of Nod' *Sunday Express*, 17 October 1999. According to the Queen's former cook, he once told Sarah to 'please take a long walk off a short pier'.

'had never stopped loving the Duke of York' *Mail on Sunday*, 31 October 1999.

'I set a trap for a fox and caught a bear' *News of the World*, 25 July 1999.

'There was no suggestion of romantic involvement' *Daily Record*, 24 July 1999.

'let it be known the evening did not end' *Mail on Sunday*, 31 October 1999. The next night they were reunited at Sir Evelyn de Rothschild's sixty-eighth birthday party.

ENTER JEFFREY EPSTEIN

over the period 1999–2007 would give her more than \$30 million *Business Insider*, 6 December 2021.

entrusted Epstein with up to \$20 million Craig Unger, *American Kompromat* (Scribe, 2021), p.177

Anna Malova She later lived in Trump Tower – the rent covered by an unidentified sugar daddy – and signed to Karin Models set up by Epstein’s friend Jean-Luc Brunel.

‘the early 1990s’ *Guardian*, 20 November 2019.

‘She was tall, bleached blonde’ *Daily Mail*, 13 March 2011.

‘He was really nice’ *Daily Mail*, July 1999.

‘accustomed to the duke’s tantrums’ *Daily Mail*, 13 March 2011.

‘That’s what he always does’ *Ibid*.

‘charming’ and ‘very attentive’ *Daily Record*, 17 February 2000.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRINCE

Donald Trump, interviewed on television The interview can be seen at <https://news.sky.com/video/i-dont-know-prince-andrew-says-donald-trump-11877120>. In November 2018 the duke and Trump played eighteen holes of golf, and in the following year Andrew accompanied Trump on his state visit to Westminster Abbey.

‘He’s not pretentious’ *HuffPost*, 5 December 2019.

Trump and Andrew together were overheard Interview, 7 August 2024.

‘Nice guy, got a lot of problems coming up’ *Independent*, 23 July 2020. Journalist Sandra White, who minded Giuffre when the *Mail on Sunday* bought her story, heard stories of photographs of Andrew and Bill Clinton pictured together by a pool. Sandra White to the author, 5 March 2025.

‘The first time Donald had sex with Melania’ Email to the author, 2 February 2025. This is confirmed by Michael Wolff who taped Epstein for his book on Trump.

‘Both Trump and Epstein were there’ Private information. The full extent of the relationship between Trump and Epstein is laid out in *Vanity Fair*, 24 October 2024, and Craig Unger’s *American Kompromat* (Scribe, 2021) and which also demonstrates how he has also become an agent of influence for Vladimir Putin.

‘Terrific guy’ Quoted Unger, *American Kompromat*, p.174.

‘Donald’s closest friend for 10 years’

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU08/20250227/117951/HHRG-119-JU08-20250227-SD006-U6.pdf>.

‘I remember seeing him sitting at a table’ *Sunday Times*, 26 July 2020.

‘Whenever Andrew was in town’ Email to the author, 3 February 2025.

‘One time I drove Prince Andrew and two young girls’ Ibid.

‘One night he took a Swedish girl’ Email to the author, 7 February 2025.

‘When the girls would leave Andrew’s bedroom’ Ibid.

‘WE ARE JUST FRIENDS’

‘Andrew is a strange guy’ Mail on Sunday, 8 October 2000.

‘He loved being top of the Tatler list’ Daily Mail, 12 February 2000.

A lapel badge given to him Ibid.

‘If he did meet a girl’ Ibid.

‘We are just friends’ Daily Mirror, 28 February 2000.

A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

‘You lot are nothing but freeloaders’ Sunday People, 20 February 2000.

Peter Nygård’s property In December 2020, Nygård was formally charged on sex trafficking and racketeering charges, including allegations of sex trafficking involving minors, and three years later convicted for assaults on four women, ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-eight at the time of the offences, occurring between the late 1980s and 2005.

‘a luxury vehicle deal’ Ian Halperin to the author, 8 February 2025. The Thai deal is said to have taken place in 2000.

‘I don’t rule remarriage out’ Tatler, 5 May 2000.

‘There is not a chance of her’ Daily Mail, 5 May 2000.

‘Open, warm and has a surprising moral strength’ Tatler, 5 May 2000.

‘the Red Thunderbolt’ Daily Mail, 6 May 2000. The Italian press had dubbed her ‘The Queen of Tuscany’ and *La Stampa* described her as his fiancée.

The match was broadcast live It was claimed Sarah had stormed out of the match after Andrew started flirting with guests Anna Kournikova, Liz Hurley, Claudia Schiffer and Koo Stark. *Express*, 8 July 2000.

‘The sideways glance to her publicist’ You Magazine, 20 January 2002. Stanbury was later a star of the reality show *Ladies of London*.

‘They split up moments before walking out’ Daily Mail, 31 July 2000.

‘a very enthusiastic patron’ Sunday Times, 11 August 2000.

Jukes noted he sweated profusely Interview Peter Jukes, 1 August 2022.

FOREIGN ANTICS

'I took the entire strawberry in my mouth' *Mail on Sunday*, 14 January 2001.

'I absolutely wanted to make love to him' *News of the World*, 14 January 2001.

'He gave his mobile number to me' *Mail on Sunday*, 14 January 2001.

She and the duke remain in touch Interview, Denise Martell, 23 July 2024

the prince stayed in a three-bedroom building near the ranch entrance According to a ranch hand, Andrew stayed several times. *Daily Record*, 4 July 2021.

'She knew him better than anyone in that circle' *Daily Record*, 12 February 2022.

'I've known Andrew almost five years' *Mail on Sunday*, 29 June 2003.

'routinely' allowed to land there *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 2011.

'There is the spectre of drugs' *Sunday People*, 28 January 2001.

'The solution lies in finding him something to do' *Daily Express*, 7 January 2001.

'He's spiralling out of control' *Evening Standard*, 22 January 2001.

RECOLLECTIONS MAY VARY

as if ordering from a catalogue Kirby Sommers to author, 16 January 2023. Laura Burns talks of a book 'being circulated at lunches on the island'. The FBI traced Roberts from such pictures. Laura Burns to the author, 8 February 2025.

'Where, on their first morning' *Vanity Fair*, 27 January 2022.

'When I went downstairs' Ibid.

'Prince Andrew was like' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sweVMJzJ-s>.

'All of us went upstairs' *Vanity Fair*, 27 January 2022.

INTO THE WIDE WORLD

'It seems there is one rule for the Prince' *Sunday Mirror*, 2 May 1999.

'It became very evident in the summer' *Daily Mail*, 3 May 2001.

'It is fair to say that the duke's talk' *Daily Express*, 3 May 2001.

article looking at the business interests of royals *Guardian*, 2 April 2001.

'It would be a disaster again' *Guardian*, 10 April 2001.

'The necessity of all of us' *Guardian*, 11 April 2001.

Peter Mandelson Mandelson's close links to Epstein are detailed in the *Financial Times*, 21 June 2023.

'There is no way that we will let British trade policy' *Guardian*, 11 April 2001.

'He thinks he won't be able to resist' *Sunday People*, 15 April 2001.

'Fergie and a lot of other people who love Andrew' *Mail on Sunday*, 6 May 2001.

'One has to think that this is all' Ibid.

'I think that he is going to become very well-liked' Ibid.

'THERE MUST BE SOMEONE OUT THERE WHO'S NUTS!'

'Well, I'll just say' <https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/lkl/date/2002-01-08/segment/00>

'Are pork chops greasy?' *Cincinnati Post*, 18 January 2002.

'It would be nice to have someone' *Daily Mail*, 17 April 2002.

'Prince Andrew had lately been entertaining' *Daily Mirror*, 19 November 2003.

'discreetly join him for candlelit dinners' *Daily Mail*, 21 September 2002.

'He is a friend' Ibid.

Staveley insisted he was quite different *Mail on Sunday*, 5 September 2004.

'but to become the Duchess of York' *Vanity Fair*, August 2011.

HIS BUFFOON HIGHNESS

'the butt of a number of schoolboy jokes' *Daily Mail*, 5 December 2010.

'the Prince usually ignored all advice' Ibid.

'He didn't give a reason' Ibid.

'His private secretary had sounded people out' Ibid. The Foreign Office permanent under secretary Michael, later Lord, Jay denies this. Interview Lord Jay, 18 June 2024.

NEW BEGINNINGS

paring away 'the false and inessential' Sarah Ferguson, *What I Know Now* (Simon & Schuster, 2003), pp.1–2.

'I don't know whether they have worked out' *Daily Mail*, 21 May 2002.

'one of the most remarkable comeback stories' *You Magazine*, 2 February 2003.

'For almost 30 years' Ibid.

'There will definitely be another baby for me' *Woman's Day*, 17 February 2003.

'Feeling totally forlorn' Ferguson, *My Story*, pp.271–2.

AIR MILES ANDY

'Everyone understands that there will be circumstances' *The Times*, 6 July 2004.

'a small bomb threatening to detonate' *Daily Mail*, 25 January 2005.

'The potential revenues were massive' Paul French to author, 1 May 2024.

'He was very self-important' Interview, 29 May 2025.

'He showed no interest' Ibid.

'I felt sorry for him' Interview Catherine Mayer, 4 November 2022.

'I wish I could have been a plumber' Ibid.

found him affable and interested in technology Interview Graham Cowperthwaite, 21 July 2023.

'IS THAT A SURFBOARD YOU'VE PACKED?'

'went ballistic' *Daily Mail*, 6 March 2005.

'He's always gone for dominant' Ibid.

'Is that a surfboard you've packed?' Ibid.

'being with him would change her life' Ibid.

ROYAL LODGE

Some said Prince Edward had had his eyes on it Bagshot Park was leased to Edward for seventy-five years in 1998 – since extended to 150 years for £5 million – and the costs of renovations shared with the Crown Estate. He pays an annual rent of £90,000.

'extremely dubious' *Mail on Sunday*, 17 October 2004.

'The Crown Estate could have offered up the lease' *People*, 15 May 2005.

'You couldn't shift her with dynamite' *Sun*, 21 July 2002.

PAOLO LIUZZO

'The Queen was driven to distraction' *People*, 28 August 2005.

'a luxurious holiday and sports complex' *Daily Mail*, 31 August 2005. One guest there who engaged in Sarah's favourite game – Monopoly – discovered she always won because she would secretly steal from the bank. Interview, 3 February 2025.

owner had to spend £7,000 cleaning the house *Mail on Sunday*, 4 March 2007.

'Daddy loves Mummy more than' Ibid.

'golf and helicopters' Ibid.

'Talk to my assistant' Ibid.

'Sir Fixit' *Daily Mail*, 25 April 2024. Liuzzo, who had convictions for fraud and gambling and drug debts, was found dead in a Miami hotel of a suspected drugs overdose in February 2024.

'He likes redheads' *Daily Mail*, 27 September 2009.

described him as 'lovely' Ibid.

'Just because I've been linked' Ibid.

A KNIGHT OF THE GARTER

'During his short stay' Andrew Marshall to the author, 2 July 2024.

'Once each heard they were both in town' Ibid.

'Royals putting it about' Ian Proud to the author, 5 December 2024.

'ordering that a junior diplomat's place setting' Ibid.

'I heard of him once boring guests' Ibid.

'After he had gone up to his room' Ibid.

a thing for effeminate young men in their twenties Ibid.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

'certainly seemed to be' *Daily Mail*, 27 May 2006.

'I felt so sorry for Bea' Ibid.

'You must tell me your diet secrets' *New Idea*, 17 February 2007.

covered the cost of her entourage Porcelanosa, which holds a royal warrant, has donated huge sums to King Charles's charities and done cut-price work for him at Highgrove. *Homes and Property*, 13 April 2012.

BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE

'Prince Andrew sat stony-faced' Norinka Ford to the author, 20 January 2022.

'fell within the official Royal travel guidelines' *Sun*, 16 February 2007.

spokesman admitted it was just £30 *Daily Mail*, 17 February 2007.

'In terms of the return on investment' *Daily Mail*, 30 April 2007.

'the Prince did everything in his powers' *Daily Mail*, 25 May 2007.

'He has helped us win' *Daily Express*, 6 February 2010, and *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 2011.

'get you access you don't get' *Evening Standard*, 1 June 2007.

'a real grasp of the importance' Sky News Online, 7 March 2011.

'No comment' Della Green to the author, 7 November 2024.

THE DUKE OF HAZARDS

FBI investigation was mounted Julie Brown's 2018 exposé in the *Miami Herald* identified eighty victims.

'Andrew sat on another chair' *Mail on Sunday*, 23 September 2007.

'I would be massaging him and he'd be on the phone' Ibid.

THE SUNNINGHILL SALE

The buyer, it emerged Kulibayev continued to deny he was the owner until 2010 and always insisted the purchase was a 'commercial decision'.

'striking, Russian-looking woman with long black hair' *Sunday Times*, 27 July 2008.

'The sale of Sunninghill Park' *Daily Mail*, 27 July 2009.

'Prince Andrew was not hired' *Daily Mail*, 26 July 2009.

'tired and outdated' *Daily Mail*, 31 December 2010.

'THIS TIME WE AIM TO WIN!'

'thought the request was well out of order' *Guardian*, 30 November 2010.

'railed at British anticorruption investigators' Ibid.

remembered thinking Andrew was Interview Tatiana Gfoeller, 26 June 2024.

'No surprise there' https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BISHKEK1095_a.html

'not helpful' In 2009 the *Financial Times's* reporting from Dubai prompted a complaint by Prince Andrew, even though he admitted not to have read the articles himself. Lionel Barber, *The Powerful and the Damned* (W.H. Allen, 2020), p.122.

'a crowd-pleaser' *Daily Telegraph*, 1 December 2010.

SECRET MISSIONS

'She's desperate to be a success' *News of the World*, 16 March 2008. One of the strangest elements was Eric, an ancient monk, with whom the duchess communicated through a psychic, Mia Dolan.

'a son who now power-walks to school' *Telegraph*, 15 May 2008.

'just a publicity stunt' *Daily Mail*, 21 May 2008.

'dressed in bedclothes and rags' *Mail on Sunday*, 2 November 2008.

'tied to benches like dogs' Ibid.

'The Sarah Ferguson Foundation has, as pledged' *Daily Express*, 8 February 2009.

'The plight of children is an issue' *The Times*, 30 May 2010.

TAREK KAITUNI

Abdelbaset al-Megrahi Al-Megrahi was released the following year. Gordon Brown insisted it was not linked to any trade deal including a multi-billion-pound oil exploration contract secured by BP.

'If Andrew happens to get on with people' *Daily Mail*, 14 March 2009.

ILHAM ALIYEV

'common interests and a shared sense of humour' *Daily Mail*, 7 June 2009.

rumours that Askerov was trying to gain a foothold Ibid.

'We just do not understand exactly' Ibid.

THE DUCHESS ON THE ESTATE

'You've got to live de life' *Telegraph*, 13 January 2012.

'She makes him feel guilty' *Daily Mail*, 23 August 2009.

One plan was to sell copies *News of the World*, 20 December 2009.

big-screen versions of five of her Little Red series *Daily Mail*, 9 March 2010.

book about a forgetful elephant Ibid.

THE YORKS AT FIFTY

admitting she was in debt There were rumours she had been sacked from Weight Watchers after she had made inappropriate approaches – possibly sexual as well as financial – to one of its main sponsors. Interview, 23 September 2024.

'Nothing big' *Guardian*, 13 February 2010.

THE STING

'details of two tycoons' *News of the World*, 23 October 2010.

'She told him she could fix up meetings' *News of the World*, 23 May 2010.

'You see if I can get Billy' Ibid.

'I spoke to Billy' *Daily Mail*, 14 March 2011.

'It's Thursday night and we need' *News of the World*, 23 May 2010.

'I never talk money ever' Ibid.

'That opens up everything' Ibid.

'I have the biggest heart' Ibid.

'I'm a complete aristocrat' Ibid.

'for his college tuition' Sarah Ferguson, *Finding Sarah* (Simon & Schuster, 2011), p.2.

'Five hundred thousand pounds when you can to me' The video can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcBAMUxr54c>.

'I very deeply regret' *Guardian*, 23 May 2010.

'Under no circumstances did I offer' Ferguson, *Finding Sarah*, p.4.

'The Duke of York categorically denies' *New York Post*, 25 May 2010.

'to sell access to him' *Daily Beast*, 14 July 2017.

'The position of the Duke of York' *The Times*, 14 March 2011.

had organised Beatrice's fourteenth birthday party Ibid. The entertainment was provided by the rapper Wyclef Jean.

GREEDY AND NEEDY

'The bottom line is' <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xdgfu4>. These were a dozen children's books, the Helping Hand series to help children and their parents deal with issues such as exercise, food, bereavement, divorce and bullying. Sold through branches of Lloyds Pharmacy, half the royalties went to charities such as the Teenage Cancer Trust and Tommy's.

'She's jet-lagged' *Sun*, 25 May 2010.

'In a word' *Daily Mail*, 26 May 2010.

'You have done more to bring shame' Ibid. The duchess later boycotted Margaret's funeral, though Andrew attended.

'yet to surface regarding' *Daily Mail*, 26 May 2010.

'with evasion, buck-passing' *Daily Mail*, 19 August 2010.

'role is independent of UK Trade & Investment' Ibid.

'HRH will undertake activities' *'Duke of York's new role with British Trade International 24 August 2001'* in FOI2024/03588 to the author, 16 April 2024.

no one would say who sat on the committee No files are available in the National Archives on the Royal Visits Committee after 1992, but even in those which are available the minutes are heavily weeded.

'One person involved in the sting' *Daily Mail*, 19 August 2010.

'I think she secretly loves the attention' *Daily Mirror*, 28 May 2010.

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'Ghislaine had just given him a present' *Ibid.*

'Prince Andrew should be stripped' *Daily Telegraph*, 12 March 2011.

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'He was available in a way' Interview Alastair Morgan, 9 March 2022.

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Many talk of Interviews with former ambassadors, 16 October 2024 and 20 January 2025.

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'When she used to hit me' *Daily Mail*, 5 June 2011.

'simply the most brilliant, zestful person' *Daily Mail*, 29 June 2011.

'Susan, although very charming' *Daily Mail*, 11 June 2011. Sarah later backtracked on the claim in an interview with *Hello!*, *Daily Mail*, 31 July 2011.

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MY ROLE CONTINUES APACE

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Buckingham Palace refused to say *Daily Mail*, 22 September 2011.

Records showed that Andrew had visited Singapore Sykes was described as an assistant private secretary though he is better known as Major-General Matthew Sykes, defence services secretary, responsible for liaison between the Armed Services and the Royal Household, until April 2010. In 2011 he was chief executive of a charity dealing with financial hardship. Why he should have been on the trip, and another to Qatar in November 2011, is unknown and the author's request to him about them went unanswered.

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offered to act as patron of a London Business School Interview, 21 September 2022.

DIGNITY, HONESTY, LOYALTY, TRANQUILLITY AND ROYALTY

royal watchers noticed *Evening Standard*, 12 April 2012. The relationship was confirmed by a former member of Sarah's staff and a friend.

revitalised by her weight loss *Daily Mail*, 4 January 2015.

'He is accountable to nobody' *Daily Telegraph*, 17 January 2015.

INCRIMINATING DEPOSITIONS

'The third time I had sex with Andy' *Independent*, 21 October 2019.

'This relates to long-running' *Guardian*, 3 January 2015.

'It is emphatically denied that the Duke of York' *Hello!*, 5 January 2015.

'On the instruction of my lawyer' *Daily Telegraph*, 5 January 2015.

'Has Prince Andrew ever been involved with under-age' *Ibid.*

'Let me know when we can talk' *Daily Mail*, 3 January 2015.

'the best man in the world' *Daily Telegraph*, 5 January 2015.

'put their concerns in writing to the Queen' *Private Eye*, 6 February 2015.

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'looks at women as just being his mission to conquer' Alana interviewed by Ian Halperin in 2018.

'I've only known him to be honourable' *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2015.

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'He can't hold a conversation' Interview, 6 February 2025.

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'Prince Andrew loved Astana' Ian Halperin to the author, 8 February 2025.

'visited once a month' Interview with TEFL teacher, 8 April 2024.

'a straight commercial transaction' *Guardian*, 3 July 2016.

'The Queen called the right people' Ian Halperin to the author, 18 February 2025.

HOUSE OF FERGUSON

'I have begun the process' <https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/2016021129758/sarah-ferguson-applies-residency-switzerland/>.

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'She pulls his strings' *Daily Mail*, 10 August 2017.

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'It inspired me' Interview Quintus Liu, 6 September 2024.

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'The woman is utterly incorrigible' *Daily Mail*, 17 October 2018.

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TROUBLES MULTIPLY

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In spite of being contacted The video can be seen at <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/princeandrew/video-1987812/Video-Jeffrey-Epstein-seen-leaving-place-New-York-girl.html>.

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'THAT WENT PRETTY WELL'

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'I can absolutely categorically tell you' Ibid.

'Now, still not, and the reason being' Ibid.

'I stayed with him' Ibid.

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Her spokesman said the payments *Daily Mail*, 9 August 2019.

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'That is not the purpose' *Daily Mail*, 8 May 2020.

'No part of the spending was for my personal benefit' *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2020.

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'mingle with the Royals' Ibid.

'Of course, I am willing to help' *New York Times*, 27 January 2020.

'What kind of an interview will it be?' Geoffrey Berman, *Holding the Line* (Penguin, 2022), p.175.

'Because of our very good relations with the UK' Ibid., p.176.

'If he has done nothing wrong' *Daily Mail*, 28 January 2020.

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'He was grabbing her ass' *Sun*, 22 February 2020.

'it was his strongest bond' *Sun*, 24 January 2020.

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'If he gives an interview' *Guardian*, 20 August 2021.

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'I would compare Andrew to a hot air balloon' Daily Mail, 1 April 2022.

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a 'shelf' company Daily Mail, 13 December 2019.

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'HRH suggested that you might like' Daily Mail, 30 November 2019.

'We advise HRH exclusively' Ibid.

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Lou Theodore, a businessman Ian Halperin to the author, 19 February 2025.

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'I like your thinking' Ibid.

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'It's more about the deepest form of friendship' Daily Mail, 1 June 2023.

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'The royal family, being above party politics' Sky News, 3 February 2025.

'It's been going on for years' Private information.

THE FAMILY FIRM

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'Along with her sister Eugenie' *The Times* 15 November 2024.

'Both Beatrice and Genie have deep ties' Interview 16 February 2025.

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'more my mother than my mother was' *Channel 5 News*, 10 October 2024.

'He will earn money from each deal SBC secures' *Sun*, 8 February 2025.

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'He doesn't drink' *Sun*, 24 August 2019.

'He's shagged porn stars' Halperin, *Controversy*, p.67.

'what she really remembered' *Daily Mail*, 11 October 2013.

his *'closest friend in the world'* Halperin, *Controversy*, pp.56–7.

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'Out of all the people who stayed at the house' Debra Gale interviewed by Ian Halperin in 2017.

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'What about the flowers and choccies then?' *Vanity Fair*, 28 June 2011.

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'He's about as subtle as a hand grenade' *The Times*, 25 November 2019.

'I suppose a blow job is out of the question then?' Interview, 10 August 2022.

'When I started, the staff warned me' Interview, 11 August 2024.

'>Staff gossiped all of the time' Ibid.

'It's always felt a bit sleazy' *Sun*, 11 February 2022

'Hey nice arse' Ibid. Many girlfriends talk of his interest in anal sex.

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STRANGE BEHAVIOUR

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'I'M NOT A LADDIE, I'M A PRINCE'

'I'm not a laddie, I'm a Prince' Edwards, *I'll Tell the Jokes*, Arthur, p.209.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FIRST PLATE SECTION

Sarah and Andrew (John Scott/*Daily Mail*/Shutterstock)
Sarah with her parents and her older sister (© Alpha Press)
Andrew, aged eight (Keystone-France/Getty Images)
Andrew at his Canadian school (Bob Olsen/Getty Images)
Sarah and her childhood friend Diana (Georges De Keerle/Getty Images)
Susan Ferguson, and her second husband (KG/JT/Camera Press, London)
Sarah with her millionaire boyfriend (Collect/Shutterstock)
Koo Stark (James Gray/ANL/Shutterstock)
Andrew returns from the Falklands (Anwar Hussein/Getty Images)
The newly ennobled Duke and Duchess of York (Derek Hudson/Getty Images)
Romenda Lodge (Ian Sayer)
Sunninghill Park (Tim Graham/Getty Images)
Kingsbourne (Tim Graham/Getty Images)
It's a Royal Knockout (The Fincher Files/Popperfoto/Getty Images)
The Fab Four (Steve Wood/Popperfoto/Getty Images)

SECOND PLATE SECTION

Ronald Ferguson with his lover Lesley Player (Steve Douglass/*Daily Mail*/Shutterstock)
The duchess as humanitarian (Thierry Orban/Getty Images)
Sarah with her assistant Jane Andrews (PA Images/Alamy)
The psychic Madame Vasso (Shutterstock)
Allan Starkie (Shawn Baldwin/Bridgeman Images)
Sarah's lover John Bryan photographed on holiday (© Alpha Press)
Sarah and her lover (Nick Cornish/Shutterstock)
The Norwegian frozen foods tycoon, Geir Frantzen (AlloverNorway/Shutterstock)
Sarah with her boyfriend Manuel Fernandez (David M. Benett/Getty Images)
Once dubbed 'The Duchess of Pork' (Vinnie Zuffante/Getty Images)
Andrew with his long-term on-off girlfriend (Matrix Pictures)
Andrew meeting businesswoman Amanda Staveley (Geoffrey Robinson/Shutterstock)
Andrew and Ghislaine Maxwell (Shutterstock)
Caroline Stanbury (Dave Bennett/Getty Images)
Prince Andrew's Australian PR girlfriend (ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy)
Denise Martell (The Mega Agency)

THIRD PLATE SECTION

Andrew in front of his first and only command (David Cooper/Alamy)
Andrew, Melania Trump, Jeffrey Epstein and Gwendolyn Beck (Davidoff Studios Photography/Getty Images)
A family portrait (Mark Stewart/Camera Press, London)
Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine (The Sun/News Licensing)
Andrew 'reading' on a boat in Thailand (The Mega Agency)
Andrew claimed in his *Newsnight* interview ... (David Abiaw/Shutterstock)
Andrew, Virginia Giuffre and Ghislaine Maxwell (Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy)
Epstein's private island (*Miami Herald*/Getty Images)
David Rowland (David Hartley/Shutterstock)
Tarek Kaituni (Mark Stewart/Camera Press, London)
Ilham Aliyev (Albanpix/Shutterstock)
Andrew and the Queen greet another business partner (Chris Jackson/Getty Images)
Sakher El Materi (Fethi Belaid/Getty Images)
Andrew with Goga Ashkenazi (Richard Young/Shutterstock)
Andrew and Donald Trump (Max Mumby/Indigo/Getty Images)

FOURTH PLATE SECTION

The Swedish billionaire Johan Eliasch (Max Mumby/Indigo/Getty Images)
Laura Burns and Olivia Davies (Courtesy of Laura Burns)
Emily Maitlis grilling Andrew (Mark Harrison/Camera Press, London)
Andrew and Epstein (Jae Donnelly/The Sun/News Licensing)
Jeffrey Epstein's prison mugshot (Associated Press/Alamy)
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Sarah with Selman Turk (Dmg media licensing)
Sarah with Johnny Hon (Courtesy of Johnny Hon)
Andrew with alleged Chinese spy Yang Tengbo (News Licensing)
The couple's Swiss chalet (Getty Images/Fabrice Coffrini)
The thirty-roomed Royal Lodge (The Mega Agency)
The Queen (Getty Images/Anwar Hussein)

PICTURE SECTION



Sarah and Andrew at a polo match, June 1970, sixteen years before they marry.



Sarah with her parents and her older sister. A third child, Sophie, died shortly after birth in 1969.



Andrew, aged eight, starts at his prep school, Heatherdown.



Andrew at his Canadian school Lakefield in 1977.



Sarah and her childhood friend Diana. They fell out over a verruca.



Susan Ferguson and her second husband, Hector Barrantes, for whom she left her family.



Sarah with her millionaire boyfriend, Paddy McNally, known as 'the Toad'.



Koo Stark, the actress known as 'Starkers', whom Andrew was prevented from marrying.



Andrew returns from the Falklands War, September 1982.



The newly ennobled Duke and Duchess of York on their wedding day respond to the crowd's request for a kiss.



Romenda Lodge, the duchess's home 1992–5.



Sunninghill Park, which was described as looking like a Tesco supermarket, a wedding gift from the Queen.



Kingsbourne, Fergie's eight-bedroomed home after her divorce, which cost her £1500 a week.



It's a Royal Knockout, a crucial moment in changing perception of the Royal Family and especially the duchess.



The Fab Four. Charles initially exhorted Diana to be more like Sarah but quickly changed his mind about her.



Ronald Ferguson with his lover Lesley Player. Sarah made her a lady-in-waiting to facilitate the affair.



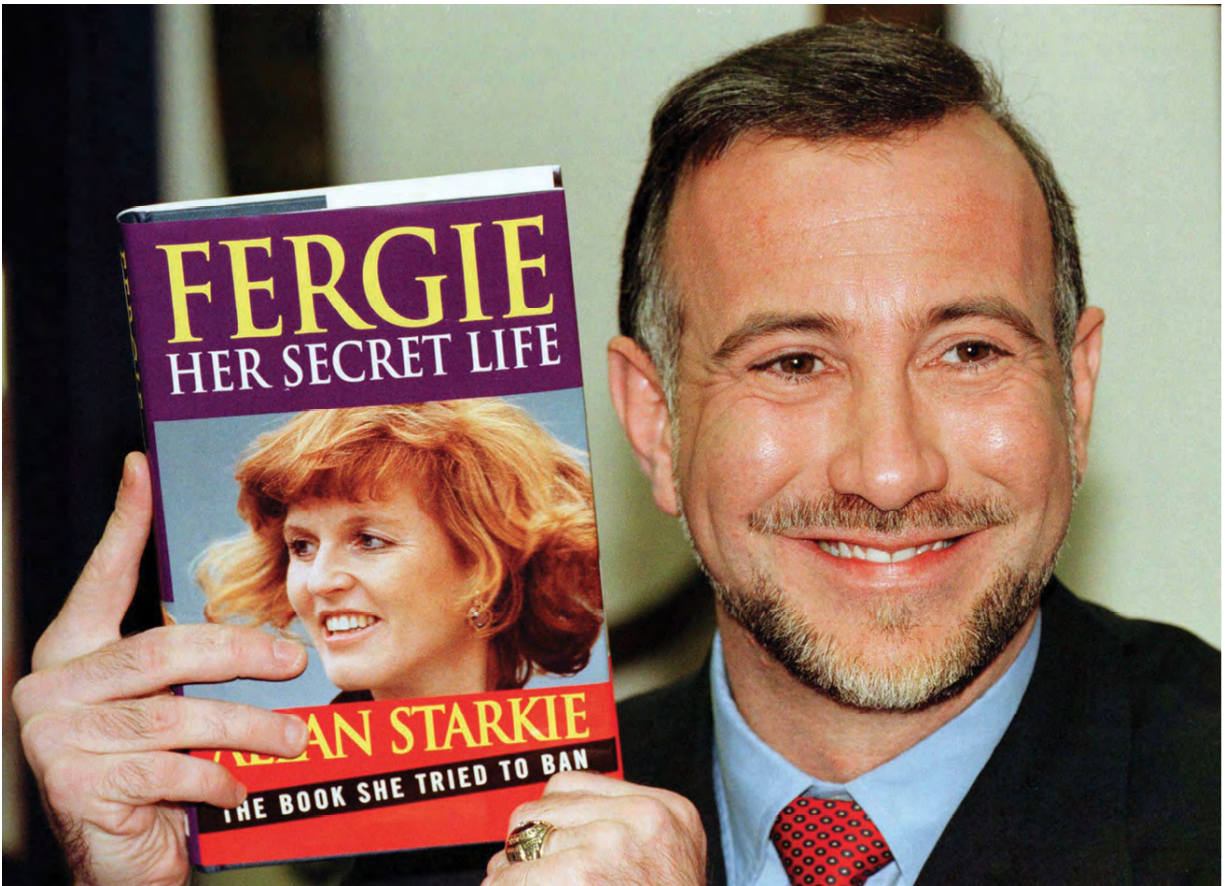
The duchess as humanitarian, Kenya, 1994.



Sarah with her assistant Jane Andrews who was later convicted of murder.



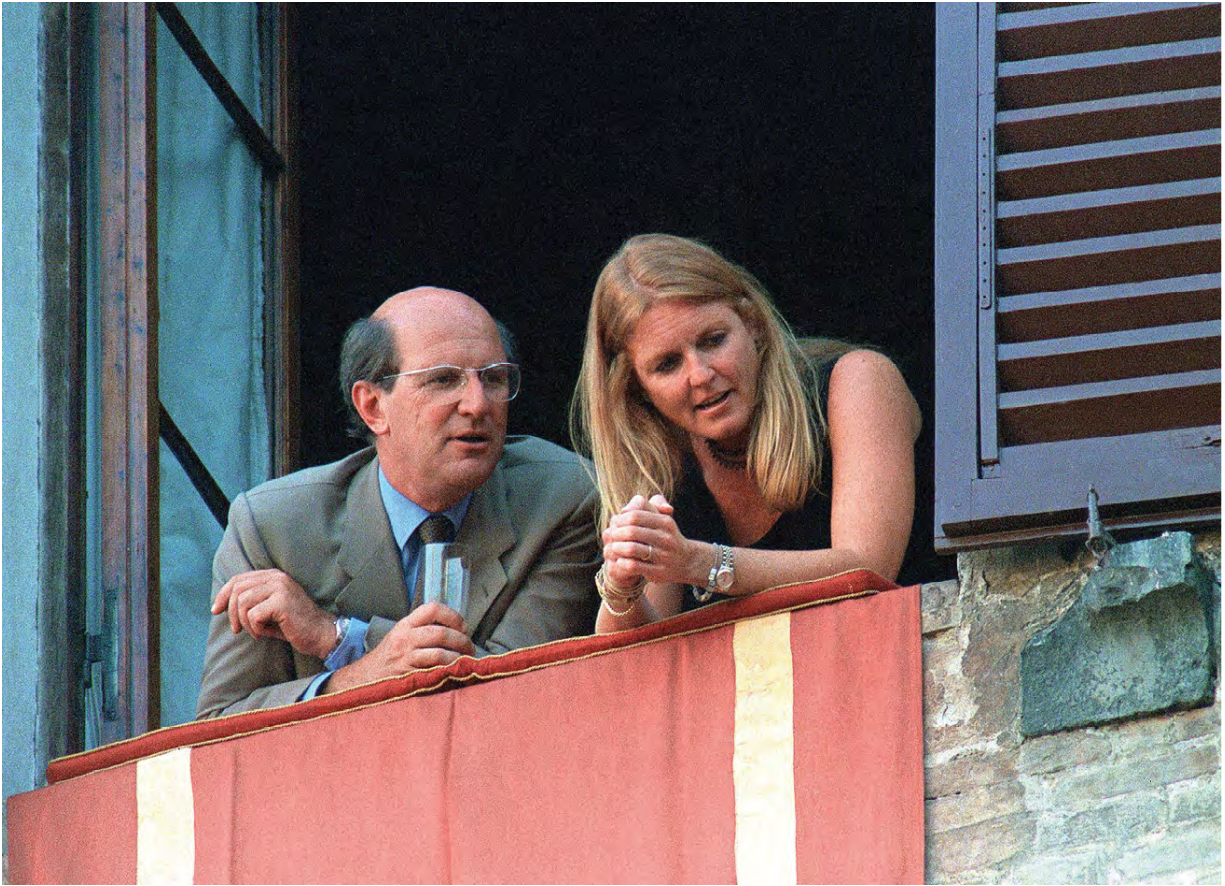
The psychic Madame Vasso under her pyramid. She also wrote a revealing book on the duchess.



Allan Starkie, Sarah's lover and confidant.



Sarah's lover John Bryan photographed on holiday in the South of France. The scandal led to the Yorks' divorce.



Sarah and her lover of the late 1990s, Count Gaddo della Gherardesca.



The Norwegian frozen foods tycoon, Geir Frantzen, with whom Sarah was involved romantically in the 2000s.



Sarah with her boyfriend Manuel Fernandez, known as 'Mino'.



Once dubbed ‘The Duchess of Pork’, Sarah’s role promoting Weight Watchers earned her £1.2 million a year.



Andrew with his long term on-off girlfriend, actress and *Playboy* model, Angie Everhart.



Andrew meeting businesswoman Amanda Staveley to whom he proposed marriage.



Andrew and Ghislaine Maxwell with whom he enjoyed an on-off relationship for many years and who introduced him to Jeffrey Epstein.



Caroline Stanbury, Andrew's girlfriend who later found fame as a reality TV star.



Prince Andrew's Australian PR girlfriend Emma Gibbs whom he met through Ghislaine Maxwell in 2000.



Denise Martell, the *Playboy* model, who went on to have a five-year relationship with the prince and made him godfather of her son.



Andrew in front of his first and only command, the minesweeper HMS *Cottesmore*.



Andrew, Melania Trump, Jeffrey Epstein and Gwendolyn Beck with whom it's alleged Andrew visited Epstein's island.



A family portrait at Beatrice's 18th birthday ball.



Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine at Beatrice's 18th birthday ball.



Andrew 'reading' on a boat in Thailand in 2001 with, among others, Atomic Kitten's Jenny Frost and model Erica Baxter.



Andrew claimed in his *Newsnight* interview that he suffered from a condition which meant he could not perspire. No Sweat.



Andrew, Virginia Giuffre and Ghislaine Maxwell, the first night he slept with the teenager whom he had selected to meet as if ordering from a catalogue.



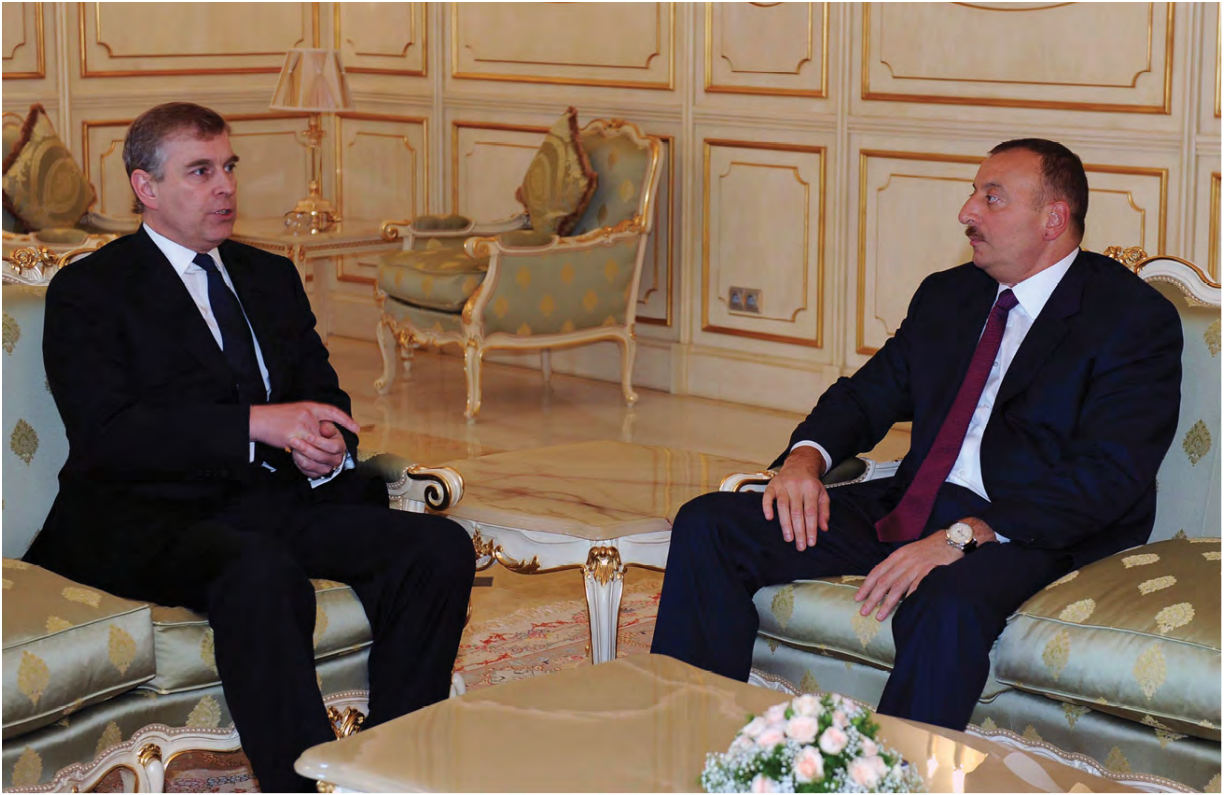
Epstein's private island in the US Virgin Islands where both Andrew and Sarah Ferguson stayed.



David Rowland who claimed to be Andrew's business representative on the prince's taxpayer-funded trips as Special Representative.



Tarek Kaituni, the convicted Libyan gun smuggler and business partner of Andrew.



Ilham Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan, whose regime is said to have rigged elections and thrown political opponents in jail, and a close business partner of Andrew.



Andrew and the Queen greet another business partner, the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. The president's son-in-law, Timur Kulibayev, bought Sunninghill through an offshore company at £3 million over the asking price.



Sakher El Materi, son-inlaw of Tunisian deposed president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, accused of money laundering who was entertained at Buckingham Palace.



Andrew and Goga Ashkenazi at Ascot a few weeks after she brokered the sale of Sunninghill to the father of her son.



Andrew and Donald Trump, a close friend of Jeffrey Epstein. Trump claimed not to know Andrew.



The Swedish billionaire, Johan Eliasch, who set up the non-trading company Naples Gold with 'Andrew Inverness' and was a director of Pitch@Palace.



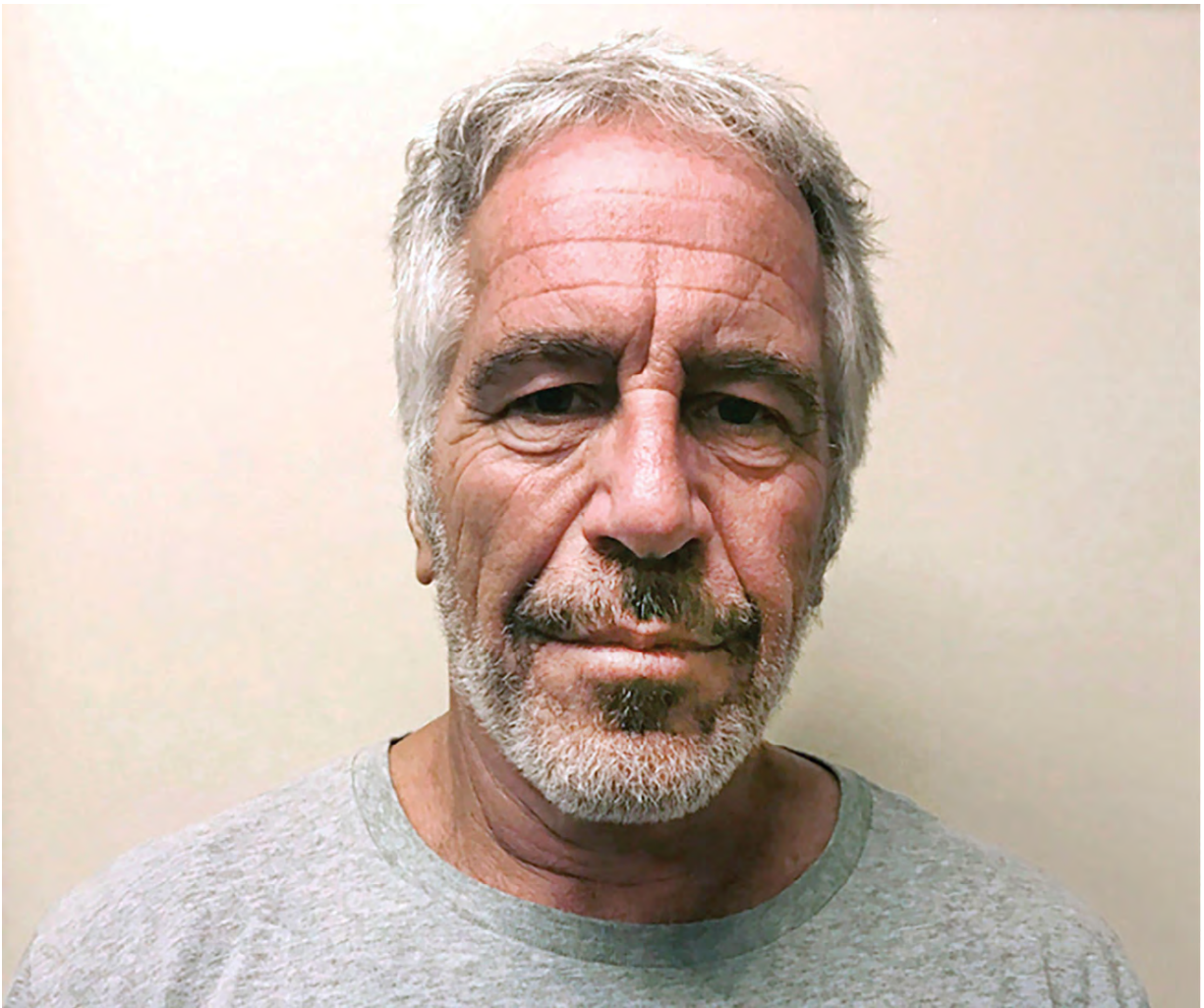
Laura Burns and Olivia Davies whose *Panorama* investigation into Andrew was handed to *Newsnight*.



Emily Maitlis grilling Andrew for *Newsnight*.



Andrew and Epstein walking in Central Park discussing their breakup in December 2010, months after the financier was released from prison.



Jeffrey Epstein's prison mugshot. Many suspect his suicide was murder.

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THE PEOPLE'S PAPER

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SHOCK ROYAL EXCLUSIVE

Andrew was my creepiest massage client

Dick is axed for scandal at Met

By MIKE SULLIVAN

MET Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick was last night forced to resign by the Mayor of London. She said, Sadie Khan "left me with no choice" after losing confidence in her leadership. The force has been rocked by a string of scandals.

Full Story — Page Two

Queen in Covid scare as Chas hit

By MATT WILKINSON

THE Queen was being "closely monitored" last night after it emerged Prince Charles visited her just two days before testing positive for Covid. Her Majesty, 95, has been tested, it is understood. The Palace refused to speculate on the result.

Full Story — Page 11

HOTTER & JOTA!

SEE SUNSPORT

Emma Gruenbaum

PRINCE A 'CONSTANT SEX PEST'

VULGAR COMMENTS ABOUT BUM

By RACHEL DALE

A MASSAGE therapist who was told to treat Prince Andrew in his bedroom claims he was her creepiest client and a "constant sex pest".

Emma Gruenbaum, 50, says he quizzed her on her love life and tried to bug her after sessions at Royal Lodge, Windsor.

She says she groaned at the Duke and glared at him after a remark about her bottom, adding: "It was just so tense and weird."

Full Story — Pages Four and Five

Sports massage therapist Emma Gruenbaum who was asked by Andrew 'Do you take it up the a***?'

EXCLUSIVE

By Abul Taher and Figen Polat

THE Duchess of York praised a Turkish businessman accused of fraud as a "wonderful man" during a meeting at an exclusive London restaurant just weeks after he had transferred almost £250,000 into her bank account.

Remarkable footage from two events in September 2019 and the following February when Sarah Ferguson met with Selman Turk also show her giving support for Heyman AI, one of his companies.

The digital bank won an award in November 2019 from PoshPalace, the Dragons' Den-style project created by her ex-husband Prince Andrew. Nine days after that victory, Mr Turk transferred a total of £750,000 to Andrew.

While there is no evidence of any wrongdoing by the Duke or Duchess of York, her praise for Mr Turk and his business will intensify pressure on the couple to provide precise details of their relationship with the colourful businessman as well as any financial dealings.

Mr Turk – clearly delighted by the Duchess's backing – shared the footage with friends. It was subsequently circulated widely and The Mail on Sunday obtained the video from sources based in Turkey. In the first nine-second snippet taken during dinner at a Belgravia restaurant, the 62-year-old Duchess appears to have her arm behind Mr Turk's back as she says: "Good luck, Heyman team. Come on, let's do this. Let's do it, we can do it."

'I am here to support and help, whatever I can do'

In the second, lasting 21 seconds and filmed at the same upmarket restaurant five months later, she leans in towards the businessman and says: "So, good luck, good luck in what you are doing, because I completely believe in the customer care of this wonderful man, Selman, and what you are doing in every single aspect of what you are doing."

"I am here to support and help, and whatever I can do, to take this to the next level. So good luck and well done."

A grinning Mr Turk then turns admiringly towards her and says: "Thank you."

Details of the transfer of funds by Mr Turk to the Duke and Duchess emerged last month in documents relating to a complex fraud case in which the businessman is accused of stealing at least £18million from Nabouk Isbilen, 72, the UK-based wife of a jailed Turkish MP.

Fearful that her assets might be frozen by the Turkish authorities, Mrs Isbilen claims she sought the assistance of Mr Turk to move her fortune out of the country, but alleges that he stole vast sums from her personal account and equity fund. Mr Turk denies her claims and any wrongdoing.

Documents submitted to the High Court claim that around £1.1million of the allegedly misappropriated £18million was transferred to Andrew, including the £750,000 payment to the Duke's account with Coutts in November 2019.

That sum – described as a "wedding gift" for Princess Beatrice – has since been repaid by Andrew, but three further payments to him by Mr Turk between October and December 2019 totalling £269,000 do not appear to have been returned.

Mrs Isbilen has told the court she regards claims that the money was a wedding gift or a thank you for the Prince helping with her passport to be false.

The Duchess has previously said that a sum of £225,000 transferred to her by Mr Turk was for her work as a brand ambassador for a US

'This wonderful man!' Fergie's dinner with Turkish fixer weeks after he put £250,000 in her bank account



PRAISE: Selman Turk and the Duchess at a Belgravia restaurant in 2019



ADMIRER: The pair at the same restaurant five months later in February 2020

CAUGHT ON CAMERA... YET AGAIN

THE Duchess of York has an unfortunate habit of attracting controversy after being caught on camera.

She was famously trapped in a newspaper sting in 2010 where she allegedly offered to sell access to Prince Andrew in exchange for £500,000.

Eighteen years earlier – and having split from Andrew – she was photographed with Texas millionaire John Bryan. The

images included shots of him kissing her toes as they lazed by the pool of a villa in St Tropez.

In 2009, she was criticised ever The Duchess On The Estate, an ITV documentary in which she offered advice to families on a Manchester council estate that she described as poverty-stricken and blighted.

It followed another TV documentary, The Duchess In Hell, in which she was accused

of being 'patronising' for trying to persuade an obese family living on benefits to embrace a healthier lifestyle.

The Duchess even faced the prospect of jail in 2012 after being charged with secretly filming in an orphanage in Turkey where the authorities accused her of involvement in a politically motivated campaign designed to derail the country's bid to join the EU.

The first meal, which involved about eight guests, was held after a mutual friend introduced her to the businessman in September 2019, the source said.

Mr Turk did not sit out with the Duchess on the second occasion and only joined her briefly as she had been unable to be at a business meeting that day, the source added.

A spokesman for the Duchess said: "The Duchess has been completely open about the fact she knew Mr Turk. Her dealings with him were always on a primary business level and she was happy to be supportive, as she would of any new venture."

"She last met Mr Turk in February 2020. She was completely unaware of the allegations that have since emerged against him. She is naturally concerned by what has been alleged against him."

Heyman AI, which once employed more than 100 staff, ceased operations last year. Mr Turk did not respond to requests to comment.

See the full video at www.mailonsunday.co.uk/fergie

solar energy company and that one of his companies was merely a conduit for the payment.

Court papers lodged last week claim a further £20,000 was sent to her bank account by the businessman. Court documents also claim Mr Turk made two separate payments totalling about £25,000 to Princess Eugenie.

There is no suggestion that the Duke, the Duchess or their daughters have been involved in, or had knowledge of, fraudulent activity. The case will not help with Andrew's dreams of rehabilitation after he was forced to step down as a working Royal following a protracted multi-million-pound legal battle with Virginia Gifford, who accused him of sexually assaulting her when she was 17.

The Duke, who has always denied her claims, met Ms Gifford through paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein and his girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell, who was convicted of sex trafficking in December.

A source close to the Duchess last night denied that there was anything untoward about the two dinners with Mr Turk, or her comments in the footage.

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Sarah with Selman Turk, a friend of Tarek Kaituni. A High Court case revealed Turk had paid her £245,000, a sum which was never publicly explained.



Sarah with Johnny Hon, the Hong Kong businessman with close links to the Chinese government, who refused to answer questions about the £270,000 she was paid by his companies.



Andrew with alleged Chinese spy Yang Tengbo who spearheaded Pitch@Palace in China.



The couple's Swiss chalet in Verbier which they sold in 2022 for just under £20 million.



The thirty-roomed Royal Lodge where the couple have lived since 2005 on a peppercorn rent from the Crown Estates and from which King Charles has tried to move his brother.



The Queen who doted on her second son and protected him. Each time there was another scandal she gave him a new honour.

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