

# Prince Andrew denies sleeping with Epstein accuser

● **Prince Andrew suggested that the widely circulated photo showing him and Virginia Roberts Giuffre was fake**

● **He said had reason to believe it was not genuine**

● **He also said he had “no recollection” of meeting Giuffre**

AFP | London

Britain's Prince Andrew has “categorically” denied having sex with an alleged teen victim of disgraced US financier Jeffrey Epstein, who claims she was forced to sleep with the royal, in an extraordinary interview broadcast on UK television.

In an unprecedented hour-long conversation with the BBC's Newsnight programme, Andrew insisted he had “no recollection” of ever having met his accuser, Virginia Roberts.

The prince also conceded his continued association with Epstein after he was convicted of soliciting prostitution had let the royal family down -- but that he did not believe it had damaged the reputation of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

“I can absolutely categorically tell you it never happened,” Andrew told the BBC's Emily Maitlis in the interview broadcast on Saturday evening, on the allegations he had sex with Roberts, now Giuffre, on three occasions.

“I've said consistently and frequently that we never had any sort of sexual contact whatever.”

“I have no recollection of ever meeting this lady, none whatsoever,” he added.

Andrew claimed he was “at home with the children” on the March 2001 night Giuffre alleges they had sex, after earlier taking his daughter Princess Beatrice to a pizza restaurant near London. The interview dominated the



Prince Andrew and Virginia Giuffre, then known as Virginia Roberts, along with Ghislaine Maxwell. This photo was included in an affidavit where Giuffre claimed Prince Andrew directed her to have sex with him. (Courtesy of Insider)

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THE GUARDIAN

front pages of Britain's newspapers on Sunday, with several titles across the political spectrum focussing on the prince's apparent lack of regret.

“Not one single word of remorse,” said the Mail on Sunday -- a headline echoed by the Sunday Mirror, which said: “No sweat... and no regret”.

The prince “seemed unconcerned by the seriousness of the matter, laughing and smiling at

several points during the interview... and expressed no regrets or concern about Epstein's victims,” commented *The Guardian*.

Andrew, 59 -- eighth in line to the throne -- has been heavily criticised over his links to multimillionaire Epstein, who was found dead in a New York jail in August.

A coroner ruled that he committed suicide by hanging, while awaiting trial on federal



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charges he trafficked girls as young as 14 for sex.

Epstein had pleaded guilty in 2008 to procuring a girl under the age of 18 for prostitution and served 13 months in a US prison before being released on probation.

Nonetheless Andrew, who hosted him at Windsor Castle and remained in contact immediately following his release, is adamant it has not tarnished Britain's head of state.

“I don't believe it's been damaging to the Queen at all, it has to me,” he said, noting “the wider family couldn't have been more supportive”.

“It has been, what I would

describe as a constant sore in the family,” the father-of-two added of the impact on his immediate family.

## ‘The wrong thing to do’

The BBC interview, filmed at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, is the first time the prince has answered questions on his relationship with Epstein. In 2015, he used a public appearance at Davos in Switzerland to deny the claims.

The royal, who repeatedly insisted he was “not close” to the disgraced financier, discussed a photograph showing him with his arm around then 17-year-old Roberts, now Giuffre, with Epstein's friend Ghislaine Maxwell in the background.

Andrew cast doubt on the picture's veracity, which he described as “a photograph of a photograph”.

“I don't believe that photograph was taken in the way that has been suggested,” he said, claiming he had never been in the upstairs area of Maxwell's London flat where it was taken.

“Nobody can prove whether or not that photograph has been doctored but I don't recollect that photograph ever being taken.”

Andrew also faced questions over staying with Epstein at his Manhattan townhouse shortly after his release from prison.

He claimed it was “a convenient place to stay” and that he did so to end their friendship face-to-face.

“I have gone through this in my mind so many times. At the end of the day... it was definitely the wrong thing to do.”

“But at the time I felt it was the honourable and right thing to do.”

Andrew went on to concede it was “not something that was becoming of a member of the royal family”.

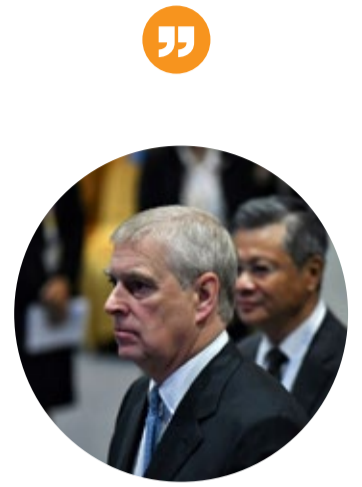
“We try and uphold the highest standards and practices and I let the side down, simple as that,” he said.

Andrew, who was captured on video during the 2010 stay waving goodbye to a woman leaving Epstein's property, described the it as “like a railway station” with people coming and going.

He also said he was “absolutely sure” he had not received a foot massage from a young Russian woman as one witness had reported.

## ‘Sex slave’ claim

Over the years Epstein, 66,



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PRINCE ANDREW

hobnobbed with politicians, socialites and celebrities, including Donald Trump before he was president, and Bill Clinton.

After his death Giuffre, who says she was abused by Epstein for years and farmed out to his wealthy friends including Andrew, said “the reckoning must not end, it must continue”.

She has alleged she was forced to have sex with the prince three times -- in London in 2001 when she was 17, in New York and on Epstein's private island in the Caribbean -- which Andrew consistently denied throughout the interview.

But the allegations were struck from the record by a US judge in 2015, who said the “lurid details” were not needed to decide a civil case concerning Epstein.

“He knows exactly what he's done and I hope he comes clean about it,” she told reporters after a US hearing on August 27.

Jack Scarola, a lawyer for Giuffre, told *The Times* Andrew should “submit to an interview under oath with the investigating authorities” who continue to probe whether others assisted Epstein in the US.

“Talking to the media doesn't quite cut it,” he said.

The prince said he would “in the right circumstances” but added he was “bound by what my legal advice is”.



Jeffrey Edward Epstein was an American financier and convicted sex offender. Epstein, who began his professional life as a teacher and later switched to the banking and finance sector in various roles, developed an elite social circle and procured women and many underage girls who were then sexually abused by Epstein and some of his contacts.

# Activists hit Hong Kong police officer with arrow

Hong Kong

A police officer was struck in the leg by an arrow shot by a Hong Kong activist yesterday, the city's force said, as fierce clashes raged at a university which has become a fulcrum of pro-democracy protests.

Images showed the arrow embedded in the calf of the police officer, who was working with the force's media liaison team at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), the scene of fierce clashes. A statement said he was taken to hospital in “a conscious state”.

Police deployed water cannon and tear gas against protesters occupying the campus in the Hung Hom area of Kowloon, now a key battleground as the



An anti-government protester uses a bow during clashes with police outside Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Hong Kong

demonstrators fight to keep a stranglehold on the Cross-Harbour Tunnel nearby, blocked since Tuesday.

Activists have vowed to “squeeze the economy” as the increasingly divided city reels from one of the worst weeks of violence in the months-long crisis.

Protests have swept the global financial hub since June as many in the city of 7.5 million people have vented fury at eroding freedoms under Chinese rule.

A marked change in tactics last week to a “Blossom Everywhere” campaign of blockades and vandalism stretched the police force, shut down large chunks of Hong Kong's train network and forced schools and

shopping malls to close.

Students and protesters occupied several major universities around the city -- the first time a movement characterised by its fluidity and unpredictability has coagulated in fixed locations.

A poster circulating on social media called for the “dawn action” to continue on Monday. “Get up early, directly target the regime, squeeze the economy to increase pressure,” it said.

The education bureau said schools will remain closed at the start of the week “for the sake of safety”. The Polytechnic University (PolyU) has become a major flashpoint in the city rocked by a week of intensified violence and chaos.

# Trump pardons Army officers

Reuters | Washington

US President Donald Trump pardoned two Army officers accused of war crimes in Afghanistan and restored the rank of a Navy SEAL platoon commander who was demoted for actions in Iraq, a move critics have said would undermine military justice.

The White House said in a statement Trump granted full pardons to First Lieutenant Clint Lorange and Major Mathew Golsteyn, and ordered that the rank Edward Gallagher held before he was convicted in a military trial this year be restored.