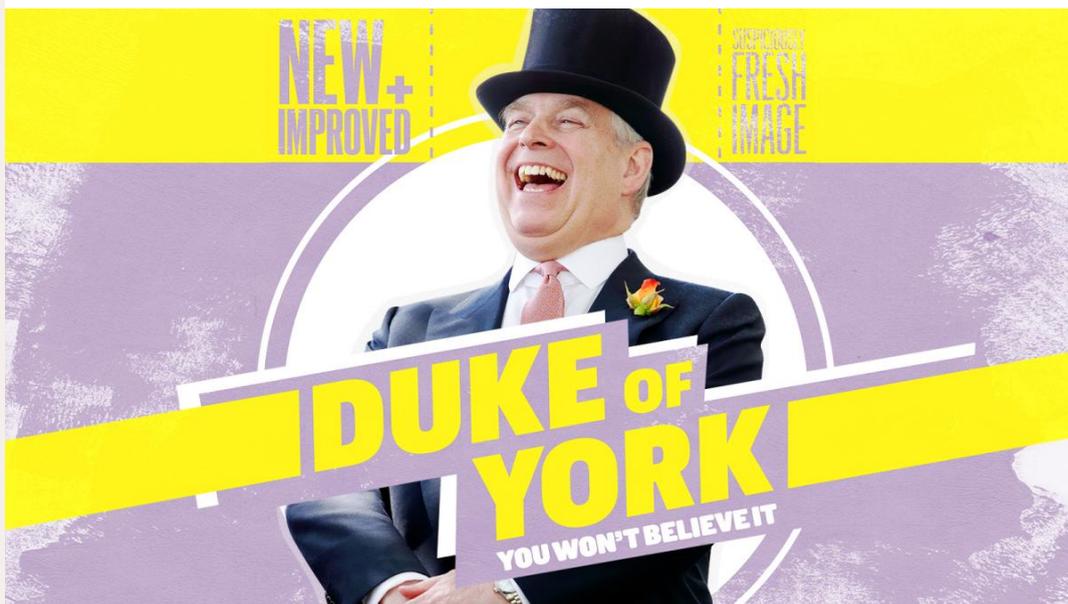


NEWS REVIEW

How do you solve a PR problem like Prince Andrew?

It's the rebranding job from hell. Experts in reputation management believe the duke's only chance lies in a high-risk mix of courtroom fights and grovelling apologies



[John Arlidge](#) | Sunday August 15 2021, 12:01am, The Sunday Times

Share

Save

It's worse than Tiger Woods, worse than Kevin Spacey and worse than Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky — put together,” said one seasoned London-based public relations and marketing executive when news broke last week that Prince Andrew was facing a lawsuit under America’s Child Victims Act. In the latest legal move in a three-year battle with the prince, [Virginia Giuffre](#) is suing him for sexually assaulting her when she was 17 and a minor under US law. She claims the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein trafficked her to the prince for sex. The prince strenuously denies the allegations.

How to solve a problem like Prince Andrew is now the talk of lawyers, branding and PR strategists from Soho to Madison Avenue. Allyson Stewart-Allen, a strategist who advises some of the world’s largest brands on crisis communications, says there is no tougher challenge. She borrows the language of product marketing to explain.

“The prince does not have strong brand value. Strong, popular brands can survive big problems by apologising, taking bold steps to fix things, and reminding people

accomplishments or public admiration he can leverage, no day job he can go back to — and he faces far bigger problems than Tiger”.



Prince Andrew was pictured with Virginia Giuffre in 2001
REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Stewart-Allen suggests Andrew “attempts redemption through public acknowledgement that he has made some very poor decisions in his life, worst of all his decision to have dealings with Epstein. Next, he needs to say he is going into psychotherapy to overcome the trauma caused by his association with Epstein and apologise to all who might have been hurt by his poor decisions — stopping just short of any admission of guilt in the Giuffre case.”

Other possible bold moves being discussed over flat whites in London and New York include Andrew leaving Britain to devote himself to charity work abroad, perhaps in Africa, an option once favoured by Prince Harry in his efforts to escape press scrutiny. Or trying to secure a financial settlement with Giuffre, with no admission of guilt.

One thing all image-makers agree on is that, as Stewart-Allen puts it, “the old British ‘ignore it and hope it will go away’ approach won’t work” because Giuffre is determined to continue pressing her case in public. Her lawyer, David Boies, gave lengthy interviews to BBC Newsnight, Channel 4 News and the main US news networks after she filed her claim.

“The old royal mantra of ‘never complain, never explain’ is hopeless,” Stewart-Allen says, “because it means the ‘she said, he said’ will go on and on. The more it does, and the more the now-infamous photograph of the two of them together is published, the worse it will get for Andrew and, more importantly, for the royal family.” Prince Charles made it clear last week that Andrew could never return to public life while he was the subject of such serious litigation.



Prince Andrew could face ‘far bigger problems’ than Tiger Woods once did, according to Allyson Stewart-Allen
NEZAR BALOUT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

possible. Those with knowledge of the thinking of the working group of senior lawyers and communications executives advising him say they spy an opportunity in the latest legal moves in New York.

Andrew's team believe Giuffre's decision to file her case in court in Manhattan could give them a chance to cross-examine her under oath. Legal sources say they will attempt to pick what they see as holes in her story and try to discredit her character and cast doubt on her motives. Critics argue she has been inconsistent in her account of her alleged meetings with Andrew and say there are serious unresolved questions about her relationship with Epstein, who died in prison two years ago. Some also question the reliability and authenticity of the photograph of her and Andrew.

It might not work. The US judge hearing the case might agree but only on condition that Andrew also gives evidence and is cross-examined in court under oath — something his legal team insists he will never do, for fear his performance will be as bad or worse as that in his catastrophic Newsnight interview with Emily Maitlis in November 2019.

Even if the judge does agree to allow Andrew's legal team to cross-examine Giuffre — perhaps in return for Andrew giving evidence in absentia in a sworn statement — the strategy is highly risky. As Johnny Depp and Amber Heard found out to their cost recently in Depp's unsuccessful libel battle against The Sun over reports that he assaulted Heard, the mud-slinging in court can get vicious and cause irreparable harm to both sides.

Legal sources say Andrew's team hope they will be able to cast enough doubt about Giuffre's claims, character and motives to take the sting out of her allegations and "clear the air" to enable Andrew to move to the second and third stages of his comeback strategy. The plan is to follow Stewart-Allen's advice and make "a full, authentic and credible public apology", as one source puts it, for this association with Epstein, the hurt it caused individuals and the harm it did the monarchy. After that, he will pledge to devote himself to "good works and public service for the rest of his working life", the source adds.

It is a measure of the seriousness of Andrew's predicament that he is considering such a high-risk legal strategy, but those close to him say it is his only hope.

"It's last resort time," says one. "With the court case hanging over him, he cannot have the public role he craves now or in the future. He has to neutralise the case or push it to one side to have any hope of a shot at redemption. It's time to roll the dice."

Golf

Related articles



PREVIOUS ARTICLE
[Vaccine for teenagers before school returns](#)



NEXT ARTICLE
[Help! I can't kick my fantasy football addiction](#)



JAMES FORSYTH

Britain needs the royal family more than ever

In different circumstances, Prince Andrew might be a rather active royal right now. Until 2011, he was the trade envoy and...

August 13 2021, 5.00pm

James Forsyth

Police review Andrew claims as 'no one is above the law'

Britain's most senior police officer warned "no one is above the law" as she revealed that detectives would review sex...

August 12 2021, 12.00pm

Fiona Hamilton, Crime Editor

Charles 'sees no way back to public life for Andrew'

The Duke of York will never return to public life because of the US lawsuit against him alleging sexual abuse, a source close...

August 12 2021, 12.01am

Valentine Low, Will Pavia, Ben Ellery

Comments (186)

Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

Allyson Allen



Add to the conversation...

Sort by **Recommended** ▾



Sparky · 13 HOURS AGO



Prince Andrew may well wish to return to a public role but the truth is that his public don't want him to.

Reply ☆ Recommend (169)

↳ Show 1 previous reply



Martin Elsea · 3 HOURS AGO



Replying to Sparky

Because the trial by media finds him guilty

Reply ☆ Recommend (2)

↳ Show 1 more reply



Joe Black · 6 HOURS AGO



Replying to Sparky

I'm sorry but he should never, never be out on any royal duty again, he has just done too much damage. He needs to stay up in Scotland out of the way

Reply ☆ Recommend (37)

↳ Show 7 more replies



Judith Conway · 12 HOURS AGO



No matter the outcome, Andrew needs to remain retired. He wasn't particularly popular to begin with.

Reply ☆ Recommend (118)



Jack M · 6 HOURS AGO



Replying to Judith Conway

Not sure that's true. He did a lot for education, business, and served in the military. My opinion of him before this wasn't particularly positive, but neither was it negative.

Reply ☆ Recommend (7)

↳ Show 1 more reply



Christine Morton · 12 HOURS AGO



There's a shortage of HGV drivers because of Brexit. There's an opportunity for him to do something useful. *(Edited)*

Reply ☆ Recommend (107)

↳ Show 3 previous replies



Gee · 2 HOURS AGO



Replying to Christine Morton

You were probably having a bit of a joke there but I think you may have a point. John

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(3\)](#)
[Show 1 more reply](#)

M Martin Elsea · 3 HOURS AGO

Replying to Christine Morton

Very good, but it's a pity to bring that B word up yet again. It's time to file it away under 'old news'.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend](#)

[Show 2 more replies](#)

M Margaret Clark · 11 HOURS AGO

I worked in the City of London in a previous life and met people who had to have dealings with him. He was considered to be arrogant, boorish and not very bright. I have no idea what his return to public life would entail but I can't see any value he would bring. Personally I would find it abhorrent that someone who thought it was a good idea to associate themselves with a sex offender after his release from prison would, by dint of an accident of birth, be in a position to represent us.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(101\)](#)

[Show 1 previous reply](#)

O Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake · 31 MINUTES AGO

Replying to Margaret Clark

Personal I blame the parents

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(1\)](#)

J Joanne Fisher · 3 HOURS AGO

Replying to Margaret Clark

many who came into contact with him would agree with the description.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(4\)](#)

S StudhamBob · 11 HOURS AGO

"The plan is to follow Stewart-Allen's advice and make "a full, authentic and credible public apology", as one source puts it, for this association with Epstein, the hurt it caused individuals and the harm it did the monarchy."

The problem with that is that Andrew in all he says and does comes across as being insufferably arrogant and unduly status conscious. That would make any such apology appear to be anything but sincere.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(51\)](#)

B Brexit Schmexit · 5 HOURS AGO

Replying to StudhamBob

After all his denials, any apology would undermine his previous position. He has dug a hole for himself.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(2\)](#)

R Rex Tremendae Majestatis · 9 HOURS AGO

Aside from this scandal, Prince Andrew was held in very low esteem by the public. His contribution was really questionable and was always on his own terms. He is therefore a huge liability to the Royal Family, and should not be allowed any form of public profile or payment from the public purse. If found guilty, a renunciation of his royal status also needs to be facilitated.

[Reply](#) ☆ [Recommend \(48\)](#)

M Melissa Roy · 9 HOURS AGO

What world do these lawyers live in? Both sides are deposed in U.S. civil suits and you don't get to that point until you have filed for the defence. You cannot "cross-examine" a complainant until you answer the complaint - that means accepting the U.S. court's jurisdiction. You can ask for the case to be dismissed on various grounds but denying the allegations isn't one of them - and you still don't get to impugn the witness.

They should also be aware (if they bother to read) that Giuffre got a lot of 'smoking gun' evidence in her defamation suit against Ghislaine Maxwell - including information about Andrew's whereabouts on the days she alleges to have had contact with him. There are

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(43\)](#)

[↩ Show 1 previous reply](#)

M **Mol** · 2 HOURS AGO

Replying to Melissa Roy

Well said. The obvious elephant in the room is; what do the records of Andrew's Met Police protection officers from the dates in question reveal? Perhaps they have conveniently disappeared.. The Police could find themselves in a very tricky situation if they have been present in properties while these underage girls have been coming and going. Of course Andrew could potentially turn that scenario into a positive for himself, ie "well if the police protecting me did not realise these girls had been trafficked how could I have been expected to pick it up?". Either way Andrew is finished in public life and he should resign from all military roles immediately given the atrocious judgement he has shown.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(1\)](#)

[↩ Show 1 more reply](#)

C **Cautious Optimist** · 4 HOURS AGO

Replying to Melissa Roy

I couldn't agree more. Thinking they could attack the accuser's character and credibility through a cross examination? Really? It's 2021 and the idea that you can try to shred an accuser on the stand, accuse her of being a liar, trying to shake down the prince or whatever, is a very risky strategy. A jury may sympathise with her and hate PA even more. Americans don't know much about PA except that he was happily friends with the most hated man in America, Epstein. That will be the jury's starting point when they consider what sort of man PA is and whether he's believable.

As for calling her character into doubt, are they kidding? Their client is Prince Andrew! A man who has been photographed for years on numerous yachts with topless women, coming out of nightclubs (covered in sweat no less...) There will be more witnesses to PA in Epstein's and the accuser's company, in fact there already is one other witness so far. Andrew himself has put his credibility on the line with his silly pizza story. Which friends of the daughters attended? Which protection officers were there? They're all fair game to be questioned, and yes that might include PA's daughters since he's made them his alibi.

The most important thing for PA to remember is that a civil case ultimately has a lower burden of proof standard than a criminal case. A jury won't necessarily need a smoking gun piece of evidence to decide he's liable.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(6\)](#)

[↩ Show 1 more reply](#)

D **Dr Armchair** · 7 HOURS AGO

I'm troubled this article seems to completely overlook the fact there is an (alleged) rape victim in all of this. Reducing it to a 'PR problem' seems incredibly crass.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(42\)](#)

A **Andanotherthing** · 7 HOURS AGO

Why rehabilitate an arrogant, spoilt, morally bankrupt waste of space?

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(42\)](#)

K **kaymanisle3627** · 6 HOURS AGO

My cousin worked with him in the Royal Navy and said Andrew was disliked by his colleagues, describing him as insufferably arrogant and big headed. It's hard to know what to do about Andrew now, exile for sure, but where? Why should we foist him on some African country, what have they done to deserve him?

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(26\)](#)

M **Mark Turner** · 3 HOURS AGO

Replying to kaymanisle3627

Can't make him Governor-General of the Falklands because there are people there. What about a newly created role of resident G-G of South Georgia, with an injunction to stop him visiting Gritviken when it is populated during the summer months.

[Reply](#) [☆ Recommend \(2\)](#)

[^ BACK TO TOP](#)

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

GET IN TOUCH

[About us](#)

[Help](#)

[The Sunday Times Editorial Complaints](#)

[Classified advertising](#)

[The Times corrections](#)

[Careers](#)

[Contact us](#)

[The Times Editorial Complaints](#)

[Place an announcement](#)

[Display advertising](#)

[The Sunday Times corrections](#)

MORE FROM THE TIMES AND THE SUNDAY TIMES

[The Times e-paper](#)

[Times Currency Services](#)

[Times Print Gallery](#)

[Times Crossword Club](#)

[Times+](#)

[Times Expert Traveller](#)

[Schools Guide](#)

[Best Places to Live](#)

[Sportswomen of the Year Awards](#)

[Podcasts](#)

© Times Newspapers Limited 2021.

Registered in England No. 894646.

Registered office: 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF.

[Privacy & cookie policy](#)

[Cookie settings](#)

[Topics](#)

[Terms and conditions](#)

[Licensing](#)

[Site map](#)

[Commissioning terms](#)

