

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

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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’.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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