

Prince Andrew's Trusted Ex-Staffer Could Have 'Devastating' Impact on His Argument

By Tom Sykes

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The deposition of a former key staffer for [Prince Andrew](#) could be “devastating” if he confirms that the prince met [Virginia Giuffre](#), a legal expert has told The Daily Beast.

Robert Olney is believed to have run much of Andrew’s diary in the years during which Giuffre alleges in her suit that the prince raped her, and he is likely to have intimate knowledge of his movements over the years in question.

He is now likely to be asked to testify in the civil case being brought against him by Giuffre, who accuses Andrew of raping her three times.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan has written to U.K. authorities asking them to seek the co-operation of Olney, now a senior executive at Britain’s Civil Aviation Authority. The judge has imposed an April 29 deadline for his cooperation.

Olney could decline to accede to the request, as the court doesn’t have jurisdiction over people who are U.K. residents. When his name was first revealed as a person that Giuffre’s team wanted to depose, his wife told reporters: “I’m sorry, but Rob is not going to say anything, he’s got nothing to say.”

In the early days of the case, Andrew was widely criticized for “hiding behind his mother’s skirts” after he appeared to attempt to dodge service of legal papers by moving between various royal residences.

The Daily Beast has been told by sources in Andrew’s camp that they strongly dispute this characterization of events and say he has never attempted to evade proper service or frustrate the litigation.

Christopher C. Melcher, a [top family law attorney](#) and legal expert based in Los Angeles who is a partner at [Walzer Melcher](#), told The Daily Beast: “Prince Andrew faces much greater risks than to his reputation. If Robert Olney were to volunteer to be a witness, it could be devastating to his former employer in the civil case and any criminal action that might follow. The jury in the civil action will have to determine who is telling the truth, and Mr. Olney might confirm that Prince Andrew was present at times claimed by Virginia Giuffre. Those details may be all the jury needs to find for Ms. Giuffre.

“If Mr. Olney maintains his silence, the jury should not hear about the efforts Ms. Giuffre’s attorneys made to secure his cooperation, unless there is proof that Prince Andrew discouraged Mr. Olney from cooperating,” stated Christopher C. Melcher who is ranked as one of the [best family law attorneys](#) in California.

This means that Olney, a frequent figure by Andrew’s side when the prince was in his pomp as roving trade ambassador for the U.K., could hold Andrew’s fate in the palm of his hand.

Andrew took on the role of trade envoy after retiring from the Royal Navy in 2001 and was nicknamed “Airmiles Andy” for what some critics saw as an excessive appetite for luxury foreign travel. He stood down in 2011 as the extent of his links with the pedophile Jeffrey Epstein were beginning to be exposed.

Olney, who worked for the prince as an equerry until 2004, was frequently listed in the official court circular as being “in attendance” to the prince on foreign trips, including high-profile missions to destinations including the U.S.

Kaplan has now asked the U.K. courts to request they ask Olney to be available to Giuffre’s team, who have said they want to question Olney about Andrew’s travel to Epstein’s homes and about any communications with Epstein and his accomplice, convicted sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell.

Rachel Fiset, co-founder and managing partner of Zweiback, Fiset & Coleman, told The Daily Beast: “It is very difficult for Olney to be compelled to testify as a UK resident, so he has the luxury of deciding if he would like to appear for testimony. If he chooses to testify, he will take an oath to do so truthfully that makes untruthful testimony a crime. If his goal is to help the prince, the decision will likely hinge on what he can truthfully say about the allegations in the complaint and Prince Andrew’s whereabouts at the time. If he believes the Prince has nothing to hide and would like to defend him, he will likely appear. If, however, he does not believe he can offer truthful testimony that absolves Prince Andrew of the allegations, he may choose to sit this one out.”

Giuffre's lawyers have also had rubber-stamped their request to seek to depose a woman who says she trod on Prince Andrew's toe in the Tramp nightclub when he was allegedly with Giuffre.

Prince Andrew, who denies all the allegations, has claimed he was at a Pizza Express on the night in question with his young daughters.

However, Shukri Walker says she remembers seeing Andrew and Giuffre in the London nightspot after apologizing to him for stepping on his foot.

Andrew has also been granted assistance in two requests his side have made to seek to depose overseas citizens, including Giuffre's husband Robert and her psychologist Dr. Judith Lightfoot.

Lightfoot, documentation shows, will be asked by Andrew's team to discuss "the theory of false memory."

Again, as non-U.S. citizens they are not under any obligation to consent to the depositions.