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Pictured for the first time since 'sex slave' scandal broke: Ghislaine Maxwell, the woman accused of 'facilitating Prince Andrew's acts of abuse'

* Ghislaine Maxwell stands accused of 'procuring' girls for Jeffrey Epstein

* She is described in court papers as his 'co-conspirator' in 'sexual abuse'

* Accused of 'facilitating Prince Andrew's abuse by acting as a madame'

* 'Sex slave' ██████████ claims she met the royal at Maxwell's home

* Ms Maxwell has previously denied any involvement with Epstein's crimes

Ghislaine Maxwell, the woman accused of 'facilitating Prince Andrew's acts of sexual abuse', has been seen in public for the first time since the 'sex slave' scandal broke.

Dressed in a long grey coat and sunglasses, the 53-year-old looked sombre as she left her home in New York City and made her way to a nearby office building.

She stands accused of procuring young girls for the sexual gratification of billionaire paedophile Jeffrey Epstein and his 'friends'.

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Court documents filed by Jane Doe 3 - now known to be ██████████ - say that Ms Maxwell 'facilitated Prince Andrew's acts of sexual abuse by acting as a madame for Epstein'.

Ms Maxwell was described in the court papers, filed in a Florida court last week, as a 'primary co-conspirator in Epstein's sexual abuse and sex trafficking scheme'.

A spokesperson for Ms Maxwell has reportedly strongly denied the allegations, and she has previously made clear that Epstein's crimes were committed long before she had dealings with him.

The Duke was meanwhile holed up at his Royal Lodge mansion in Windsor today from where he is believed to have spoken to the Queen by phone to tell her he is innocent of claims levelled against him in a US court.

The extraordinary allegation made by Miss ██████████ is part of a US civil case against Epstein.

She claims Prince Andrew had sex with her when she was 17 – a minor under US law – and employed as a 'sex slave' by Epstein.

The fifth in line to the throne slept with Miss ██████████ at an orgy with other under-age girls on Epstein's private Caribbean island, as well as in a private house in London and in Epstein's New York mansion, according to the court papers.

In a strongly-worded statement, a Buckingham Palace spokesman has said: 'It is emphatically denied that the Duke of York had any form of sexual contact or relationship with ██████████. The allegations made are false and without any foundation.'

Miss ██████████ claims she was 15 when she met Ms Maxwell at a Florida spa in 1998. Ms Maxwell allegedly invited her to Epstein's mansion to be a masseuse.

Miss ██████████ claims she was made to perform sex acts on Epstein.

She also claimed that the first time she met Prince Andrew was at Ms Maxwell's home in London, where she was flown at the request of Epstein.

One picture, said to have been taken by Epstein during Andrew's first encounter with the girl in March 2001 shows the Prince with his arm around her waist as Ms Maxwell looks on.

Describing what happened, Miss ██████████ said Epstein invited her to accompany him on a six-week trip in 2001. They flew to Paris, then Spain, then Tangier and finally, they went to London.

'After we landed, we drove straight to Ghislaine's Maxwell's house' and 'was given a small upstairs bedroom,' Virginia said.

She said: 'The following morning, Ghislaine came in. She was chirpy and jumped on the bed saying, '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 said I needed to be 'smiley' and bubbly because he was the Queen's son.

'Ghislaine and I went to Burberry, where she bought me a £5,000 bag, and to a few other designer stores where we bought a couple of dresses, a pair of embroidered jeans and a pink singlet, perfume and make-up,' she said.