

January 17, 2015 Saturday  
Late Edition - Final

## Prince, Back in News, Faces Curse of the 'Spare'

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**SECTION:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 1191 words

LONDON -- It's not easy being the spare, the second son trained for little except hanging around waiting for your older brother to die, or to have children who then outrank you. Being Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, is a lot like being the vice president of the United States -- only for life.

As he has aged, and fallen further down the line of succession (at 54, he is now fifth in line to the throne), Prince Andrew has faced the problem of what to do with himself -- being public but not prominent -- and has not always made the best choices, even he has admitted.

To be a spare means to have a vague but unclear purpose in life, said Peter York, a social commentator. "There are lots of things by definition you cannot do, that are potential embarrassments. And there are lots of things you cannot do because you're not trained for them."

Prince Andrew is back in the news with the resurgence of old allegations that he had sex with a minor provided by an old, wealthy friend of his, Jeffrey E. Epstein, who was jailed in 2008 and served 13 months of an 18-month sentence for soliciting a minor for prostitution.

In 2011, when the allegations against Prince Andrew surfaced, and again this month, when they re-emerged in a filing in a Florida court, Buckingham Palace issued explicit denials, saying that Andrew did not have sex with the woman bringing the complaint or, for that matter, with any minor.

The allegations by the woman, whom the palace named as [REDACTED] were well ventilated in 2011 by the British press and in the magazine *Vanity Fair*. The controversy over Prince Andrew's continuing friendship with Mr. Epstein caused the prince to resign that year after a decade as Britain's special representative for international trade and investment.

The main difference now appears to be a direct allegation by Ms. Roberts through her lawyers of specifically sexual contact with Prince Andrew and other public figures, like the lawyer Alan Dershowitz, who has said he intends to countersue to put Ms. Roberts under oath.

The new attention to old allegations has brought renewed embarrassment to the monarchy, which had been basking in friendly British news coverage of Prince William and his wife, the former Kate Middleton, and their young son, and of the dutiful Queen Elizabeth II.

The Prince Andrew furor erupted just days after another controversy over a postponed BBC documentary about how Prince Charles, Andrew's elder brother, tried to rebuild his own damaged public reputation after the death of his first wife, Diana, Princess of Wales. And it has raised a familiar problem of carving out a life as a royal family member who has no role.

The problem only worsens when the generations pass, military service is no longer feasible and the line of inheritance grows implausibly distant.

"Andrew was rather handsome when young, the best looking of those children," Mr. York said, but he was "old-fashionably philistine and gaffe-prone, like his father," Prince Philip, whose sometimes rude and insensitive remarks have been collected in books.

"Unless you create a rock-solid purpose for yourself, it's a very considerable challenge, and you drift into a half-world of people who are very keen on royals," Mr. York said. "Andrew did live in the Mayfair subworld that was a bit ratty -- if you're a royal person, and you don't have a role, you tend to fall into that world. And if you are rather randy, and he was known as 'Randy Andy,' then you're more likely to fall into it."

"To be a spare is a horrendously difficult human position," said a person who has been close to the royal family and spoke only without attribution, because of continuing relationships. "It's hard to be royal in any case, with the lack of freedom involved. But if you're the spare, and people look up to you to preserve all family values, but you have no real role, it's immensely frustrating."

The most successful royals, the person continued, "are those who completely understand the difference between their public and private lives, as the queen and Anne have done, and Philip has almost done. They are the hardest-working royals, as well, so they earn credibility and privacy."

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