

The attached article which was on the front page of the Style section = of today's NY Times.=A0  
Fortunately, the reporter – whom I = know =A0but did not speak with about this story – ignored  
what = Sarah said in the UK and just treated her association with Jeffrey in = brief passing – and  
not by name.

Mike

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## Saving Sarah From Herself, Oprah Style

= George Burns/Harpo Productions, Inc., via Associated = Press

**ODYSSEY**= "Finding Sarah," a = six-part documentary about Sarah Ferguson's transformation,  
will be = shown on Oprah Winfrey's network.

By = LAURA M. HOLSON

Pub= lished: June 3, 2011

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=B7 = Times Topic:Sarah Ferguson

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= Sally Ryan for The New York Times

**CLIMBING = OUT** Sarah Ferguson says = self-hatred and poor judgement caused her to "go into the = gutter."

IN = the past year or so, Sarah = Ferguson, the much-maligned Duchess of York, has been caught = trying to sell access to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew; has narrowly = escaped going bankrupt; and was shut out of the royal wedding of Prince = William and Catherine Middleton. Among other memorable low points, she = recalled one recent afternoon over lunch in the penthouse at the James = Hotel here, was a rain-soaked weekend near Edmonton, Alberta, when she = showed up to give a motivational speech at a Canadian resort. =

R= 20;I got there, and it was a casino in the middle of nowhere, = right?" said Ms. Ferguson, as she picked at a plate of sliced = pastrami and a bowl of lettuce leaves. "I was working weekends. I = was working 24/7 to pay for my staff. And I got to the tent and, because = of the pouring rain, the water had come into the tent, and only eight = people showed up. I took a photograph of the billboard that looked like = Buffalo Bill had come to town."

Ms. = Ferguson scrolled through her BlackBerry until she found it: her = airbrushed portrait pasted onto a piece of flimsy white paperboard. = "I had gone from marrying the queen's son to now being on a = poster in a casino in the pouring rain in a tent in the middle of = nowhere with eight people in the audience," she said with a sigh = and a roll of her azure eyes. "I'd got down to bowling = alleys."

Befo= re there was Bethenny Frankel, Kelly Bensimon or Camille Grammer, there was Sarah = Ferguson, the irrepressible royal housewife of Windsor. Few other = English princess brides have lived their lives so like a reality = television star: feuds with the in-laws; weight fluctuation calculated = in the tabloids; romantic misadventures captured on film — and, = after it all fell apart, a plucky extension of the personal brand with = books and a spokeswoman gig for Weight Watchers. =

So = it seems only natural that when Ms. Ferguson's self-hatred and = poor judgment caused her to "go into the gutter," as she = described it, her rehabilitation would be played out on a small screen. =

Who = better to oversee her transformation than Oprah Winfrey? It was she who = persuaded Ms. Ferguson last year to ditch an offer from "Dancing = With the Stars" and become the subject of a six-part documentary called "Finding = Sarah: From Royalty to the Real World," scheduled to be broadcast = on the Oprah Winfrey Network beginning June 12.

Ms. = Winfrey is attracted to people who need to be made over or done up or = who are in the process of reinventing themselves. And Ms. = Ferguson's story in theory makes for compelling television. = American audiences are practiced at seeing fallen potentates make a = comeback (see Eliot Spitzer). And the British royalty, in particular, = remains popular: an estimated 23 million

Americans stumbled out of bed in the early hours of April 29 to watch the royal wedding live, with millions more watching it later online.

At 20; With Catherine going up the aisle, you know what went through my head?" Ms. Ferguson said, referring to Ms. Middleton's wedding walk at Westminster Abbey, retracing the steps that Ms. Ferguson took in 1986. "I feel like I've handed her the baton and said: 'Well done. And you'll do it right.' I didn't do it right, and now I am going to go get Sarah right."

Hours before her interview at the James Hotel, Ms. Ferguson arrived at 8 a.m. in the green room at Ms. Winfrey's Harpo Studios, where she was taping her sixth appearance on "Oprah," one of the host's treasured final shows. Forced to jettison a staff of 12 last summer because she had no money to pay them, Ms. Ferguson was trailed by Martin Huberty, her personal assistant whom she has known since she was 16. With no makeup, her curly hair gathered in a knot, she looked like a suburban soccer mom in a knee-length navy and white pleated Ann Taylor skirt, her skin freckled and creased from too much sun.

She plopped into a makeup chair where a hairstylist crowned her head with orange and green curlers. "I lost 45 pounds on Weight Watchers," the hairstylist whispered to Ms. Ferguson, who congratulated her.

A little before 9 a.m., Ms. Ferguson, 51, slipped into a black Michael Kors dress — the label had been snipped out — that hugged her shapely figure. When she walked onstage, carrying a blue-and-red flowered handkerchief that she later tucked under her left thigh (in case she began to cry), the mostly female crowd cheered wildly.

And she did not disappoint. Audience members nodded sympathetically as Ms. Ferguson dabbed her tears while watching a clip from the new series in which she describes the 1998 death of her mother by decapitation in a car accident. During breaks in taping, they were equally engaged. Ms. Ferguson demurred when Ms. Winfrey asked what kind of pajamas Queen Elizabeth wore, instead effusing about the more than 20 royal attendants available to her at Buckingham Palace before her divorce in 1996, including six ladies-in-waiting. "Get out!" Ms. Winfrey shouted, as the audience gasped. "No wonder you are finding Sarah!"

After the show, Ms. Ferguson was exhilarated, but not without doubts about the audience's reaction. "I think I was making up a huge story that they were going to judge me," she said at the James. "Everyone had enjoyed the wedding so much. And it's been so beautiful, the recent royal wedding, that they are going to look at me and say, how can I be so silly?"

Her desire to be liked often overrides her self-protective impulse. So much so that during one taping break, she gave this reporter a thumbs up and mouthed the words, "Am I doing O.K.?" When asked later about her tendency toward self-deprecatory apology, she seemed puzzled. "Why do I apologize?" she wondered aloud. "I think it's playing into my addiction of people pleasing and approval and acceptance." She fell silent, then added, "And do you think that it could also be that I am truly sorry to have broken everybody's illusion about the fairy tale?"

The finance guru Suze Orman, who spent two days with the duchess analyzing her money woes as part of the documentary, had another theory about Ms. Ferguson's constant need to make amends. "She has a desire to be needed," she said in a phone interview. "When you make

= mistakes, those that love you step up to the plate to take care of you. = You get rewarded for doing something wrong. You get rewarded with = others' attention. And any attention is better than no attention. =

R= 20;The real problem," Ms. Orman added, " is she is trapped = in her heritage, and she can never get rid of that." =

Inde= ed, Ms. Ferguson's pattern of self-criticism is so ingrained that = the notion that she could move past her mistakes — including = having her toes licked by a paramour while married to Prince Andrew or = accepting a = \$22,500 loan from a friend who was convicted of soliciting a = prostitute — seemed to be a revelation. "You are = right!" Ms. Ferguson said. "You know what? That was then. = This is now. And this is me. And I'm O.K. now. But see how good = that is? You've given me a lesson." She called out to her = assistant. "Martin, will you make a note of that?" she said. =

Ms. = Ferguson is charming and refreshingly candid, particularly so when = describing the problems that led her to Oprah. Ms. Winfrey's = favorite psychologist, Dr. Phil McGraw, who gave Ms. Ferguson therapy = sessions as part of the documentary, has a theory here: "She has = crossed a threshold where she has decided to say it the way it = is." But the duchess, he added, is painfully na=EFve: "The = ability for her to see danger and manipulation is not good." =

So = it would seem.

On = the morning of Friday, May 21, 2010, Ms. Ferguson said, an investor came = to visit her at the Royal Lodge in Windsor, which she shares with her = ex-husband and, at times, their two college-age daughters, Princesses = Eugenie and Beatrice. (She and her ex-husband are still close friends, = Ms. Ferguson said.) She and her visitor, she said, discussed a = =A3500,000 investment (about \$800,000) in a line of products she wanted = to create for a proposed lifestyle brand. "I've always = wanted to be a British Martha Stewart," she said. =

It = was her second business meeting that week. A few days earlier, she had = met with someone she thought was a businessman to discuss a similar = venture. During their conversation, which the man was secretly = videotaping, Ms. Ferguson said she could introduce him to Prince Andrew. = She left with \$40,000 in a black briefcase. On Sunday, May 23, 2010, The = News of the World published an explosive = article by the man, who turned out to be a reporter there, = condemning Ms. Ferguson for trading access to Prince Andrew for cash. =

She = said that this wasn't the case and that the footage was cut for = salacious effect. (Dr. Phil challenged her on this explanation in the = documentary.) "Honestly, I could never sell him out," she = said of Prince Andrew in the interview at the James Hotel, adding: = "That's why he's still with me. He knows it is = nonsense."

Stil= l, reprisals were swift. The legitimate investor sent her an e-mail that = Sunday that she retrieved from her BlackBerry at the James and read = aloud: "Sadly, it looks like this morning you've hung = yourself and I will now be unable to help you. What a waste. What a = pity."

The = lost opportunity stung. But perhaps what stung more was that she had = sullied the royal Windsor name once more. "I really missed not = being at the wedding," Ms. Ferguson said,

wistfully. “I = missed being part of it all.”

But = it may be something she is finally getting used to. When Ms. Ferguson = got up to leave, she handed over her business card. She had drawn a line = through the title “The Duchess of York” and scrawled in red = ink: “Just Sarah.”

= A version of this article appeared in print on June 5, 2011, on page ST1 = of the New York edition with the headline: Saving Sarah From Herself, = Oprah Style.

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