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Prince Andrew's billionaire friend is accused of preying on girl of 14

By SHARON CHURCHER

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One of Prince Andrew's closest friends is being investigated by the FBI for allegedly paying under-

Billionaire Jeffrey Epstein has stayed at Sandringham and holidayed with the Prince in Thailand, while Andrew has visited his luxurious New York townhouse at least twice

Police in Florida are so concerned by claims that the bachelor financier had sexual encounters with under-age girls at his exclusive Palm Beach villa that they have passed the case files to the FBI.

Epstein, 54, leads a hedonistic lifestyle that has troubled Royal courtiers ever since he was introduced to the Prince by their friend Ghislaine Maxwell, daughter of the late disgraced media tycoon Robert Maxwell.

During his Thai holiday with Epstein, Andrew was photographed surrounded by topless women on a yacht.

And Epstein was a guest at the Queen's birthday party in 2000 at Windsor and has attended a weekend house party at Sandringham.

According to official documents seen by this newspaper, Palm Beach police chief Michael Reiter has asked the FBI to determine whether Epstein broke laws designed to protect children from prostitution and pornography.

Some such offences carry minimum sentences of ten to 15 years.

The documents reveal that Epstein was the subject of an 11-month undercover investigation by police after a complaint in 2005 from the stepmother of a 14-year-old girl, who claimed she was paid £150 to give him an erotic massage at his flamingopink villa.

The girl is said to have been taken there by 18-year-old student Haley Robson, who claims in a sworn statement that she was recruited at the age of 17 to provide the billionaire with a £100 nude massage.

She told police he grabbed her after she began to rub him with oil.

'After the massage,' according to a police department affidavit, 'Epstein stated that he understood she [Robson] was not comfortable, but he would pay her if she brought over some girls. He told her the younger the better.

The student claims she found at least six girls aged 14 to 16. 'Every girl knew what to expect,' the affidavit continues.

'They were told they would provide a massage, possibly naked, and allow some

One of the girls 'cried hysterically', according to a police report, as she recalled how she was recruited to provide services for Epstein when she was 16.

She claims in a sworn statement that he introduced her to a woman whom he said he had brought from Yugoslavia 'to be his sex slave'.

The girl claims that Epstein persuaded her to have sex with the woman.

He allegedly also 'forcibly' held the girl's head as he tried to have sex with her, but stopped after she 'screamed no'.

'Epstein apologised for his actions and paid her £500 for that visit,' the records claim.

'Additionally, [he] gave her a 2005 Dodge Neon, blue in colour, for her personal use.'

When police searched the villa, they say they found a pink and green couch in the master bedroom, matching a description by the alleged victims.

They say the stairway to the room was lined with photos of naked young girls.

Two hidden cameras were found inside clocks, and police also discovered pictures of Robson and other witnesses on a computer.

The allegations came to light after Epstein was accused of soliciting a prostitute. He is due to stand trial next month.

Palm Beach police believe that the relatively light charge, which makes no mention of sex with minors, was the result of intimidation by private inves-tigators and highpowered lawyers representing Epstein.

Police claim that local prosecutors were deterred from aggressively pursuing the case.

One of his legal team, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, told The Mail on Sunday that Epstein had passed a lie detector test showing he was innocent of all allegations.

The financier had paid for massages, but had not engaged in sex or erotic massages with any minors, the lawyer insisted

He said that the girl who accused Epstein of forcible sex 'had a long record of lying, theft and blaming others for her crimes'.

The hidden cameras, he said, had been installed at the behest of Palm Beach police following a theft from the villa.

An FBI spokeswoman confirmed: 'We received the referral from the Palm Beach police chief. We have a pending case.

Epstein's friends include entrepreneur Donald Trump, who once said: 'He likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.

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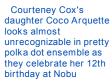


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