

## People &amp; Places

## Television

## Major royal TV moments

## UK monarchy &amp; TV have complex ties

LONDON, March 7, (AP) — Britain's royal family and television have a complicated relationship.

The medium has helped define the modern monarchy: The 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was Britain's first mass TV spectacle. Since then, rare interviews have given a glimpse behind palace curtains at the all-too-human family within. The fictionalized take of Netflix hit "The Crown" has molded views of the monarchy for a new generation, though in ways the powerful, image-conscious royal family can't control.

"The story of the royal family is a constructed narrative, just like any other story," said Phil Harrison, author of "The Age of Static: How TV Explains Modern Britain."



Diana

And it's a story that has changed as Britain moved from an age of deference to an era of modern social mores and ubiquitous social media.

"The royals, particularly the younger royals, have moved from the realm of state apparatus to the realm of celebrity culture in recent decades," Harrison said. "That's worked well for them up to a point - but celebrity culture takes as well as gives and is notoriously

fickle."

So anticipation and apprehension are both high ahead of Oprah Winfrey's interview with Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan - the Duke and Duchess of Sussex - a year after they walked away from official royal life, citing what they described as the intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media toward the duchess, who is biracial. A clip released by CBS ahead of Sunday's broadcast shows Meghan, a former TV star, appearing to suggest the royal family was "perpetuating falsehoods" about her and Harry.

A look at some other major royal television moments, and their impact:

## Princess Diana

The 1981 wedding of 32-year-old Prince Charles and 20-year-old Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral was a fairy-tale spectacle watched by an estimated 750 million people around the world.

But the relationship soon soured. The couple separated in 1992, and in 1995 Diana gave a candid interview to the BBC's Martin Bashir, discussing the pressure of media scrutiny and the breakdown of her marriage.

"There were three of us in that marriage," Diana said, referring to Charles' relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles.

The interview prompted a wave of sympathy for Diana, seen by many as a woman failed by an uncaring, out-of-touch royal establishment - a pattern some say has repeated itself with Meghan.

Charles and Diana divorced in 1996; Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris the following year, triggering intense public mourning and a period of reflection for the monarchy, which has since tried to appear more modern and relatable - with mixed results.

## Prince Andrew

The biggest scandal to engulf the family in decades stems from the friendship between the queen's second son, Andrew, and wealthy convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who died in a New York jail in August 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges.

One woman who says she was a victim of Epstein alleges she had sex with Andrew when she was 17, a claim the prince denies.

The prince tried to undo the damage by giving an interview to the BBC's "Newsnight" program in November 2019. It backfired spectacularly. Andrew appeared uncomfortable and evasive, and failed to convey empathy for those who say they were exploited by Epstein, even as he defended his friendship with the man.

He called Epstein's behavior "unbecoming," a term interviewer Emily Maitlis suggested was an understatement.

Charlie Proctor, editor of the Royal Central website, said at the time that the interview was "a plane crashing into an oil tanker, causing a tsunami, triggering a nuclear explosion-level bad." After the interview, Andrew announced he was "stepping back" from public duties. He has not returned.

## Sarah, Duchess of York

Like Diana before her and Meghan since, Sarah Ferguson was a young woman who had a bruising collision with the royal family.

She was initially welcomed as a breath of fresh air for the stuffy royals when she wed Prince Andrew in 1986. But she quickly became a tabloid target, dubbed "Freeloading Fergie" for allegedly scooping up freebies and spending more time vacationing than performing public duties. Some saw snobbery in coverage of a woman who, before and after her marriage, worked for a living and was open about her problems with weight, relationships and money.

After her 1996 divorce, the duchess used television to speak out - frequently. She appeared on Winfrey's show in 1996, saying palace life was "not a fairy tale." She spoke to Winfrey again in 2010 after being caught on video offering access to her ex-husband for \$724,000. The duchess said she had been drinking and was trying to help a friend who needed money. The following year she appeared in her own reality show, "Finding Sarah," on Winfrey's OWN network.

The duchess was not invited to the 2011 wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, in what was widely seen as a royal snub.

## 'The Crown'

It may be fiction, but Netflix's "The Crown" is the most influential depiction of the royals in years. Over four seasons that have covered Elizabeth's reign up to the 1980s, its portrait of a dutiful queen, prickly Prince Philip, oversensitive Prince Charles and the rest of the clan has brought the royal soap opera to a new generation.

It is widely seen as helping the royals by humanizing them, though British Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden suggested it should come with a warning that it's drama, not history.

Prince Harry has defended the show - while underscoring that it's fiction - telling TV host James Corden that he was "way more comfortable with 'The Crown' than I am seeing stories written about my family or my wife."

Now Harry and Meghan are getting their chance to tell their story. It's a high-stakes strategy, especially since the interview is airing as 99-year-old Prince Philip, Harry's grandfather, in a London hospital after a heart procedure - timing critics have called insensitive.



In this Tuesday, July 10, 2018 file photo, members of the royal family gather on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, with (from left), Britain's Prince Charles, Camilla the Duchess of Cornwall, Prince Andrew, Queen Elizabeth II, Meghan the Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry, Prince William and Kate the Duchess of Cambridge, as they watch a flypast of Royal Air Force aircraft pass over Buckingham Palace in London. The timing couldn't be worse for Harry and Meghan. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex were to finally get the chance to tell the story behind their departure from royal duties directly to the public on Sunday, March 7 when their two-hour interview with Oprah Winfrey is broadcast. (AP)

## People

## First unprecedented peek into couple's backstory

## Harry, Meghan delve into tough royal split

LOS ANGELES, March 7, (AP) — The time has finally come for audiences to hear Meghan and Harry describe the backstory and effects of their tumultuous split from royal life.

Sunday night's airing of a two-hour special hosted by Oprah Winfrey will provide the first, and unprecedented, peek into the couple's departure from royal duties and the strains it has placed on them.

How it's received is likely to depend on which side of the Atlantic Ocean viewers are on.

The show, which includes Winfrey's interviews with Meghan and Harry, will air first in the United States - Meghan's home country - at 8 pm Eastern. Hours earlier, Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, will deliver a royal address before Commonwealth Day.

British audiences will wake up Monday to headlines and social media posts about Winfrey's special, but won't be able to see the full interview until Monday night when it airs on ITV.

Royal interviews that aren't tied to a specific topic are rare, and prior televised sessions have often proved problematic. Prince Andrew's 2019 BBC interview about his links with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein led to his own departure from royal duties after he failed to show empathy for Epstein's victims.

Harry and Meghan's departure from royal duties began in March 2020 over what they described as the intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media toward the duchess, who is biracial.

Clips released ahead of the airings suggest that at least Meghan will have some pointed criticisms of royal life. In one she describes the royal family as "the firm," a nickname that is some-

times used affectionately and sometimes critically.

At one point, Winfrey asked Meghan how she felt about Buckingham Palace "hearing you speak your truth today?"

"I don't know how they could expect that after all of this time we would still just be silent if there was an active role that the firm is playing in perpetuating falsehoods about us," she said. "And if that comes with risk of losing things, I mean, there's been a lot that's been lost already."

In another clip, Harry invoked the memory of his late mother, Princess Diana, who had to find her way alone after her divorce from Prince Charles.

## Relieved

"I'm just really relieved and happy to be sitting here talking to you with my wife by my side, because I can't begin to imagine what it must have been like for her going through this process by herself all those years ago," Harry said, adding, "because it's been unbelievably tough for the two of us."

In Britain, the interview is seen as poorly timed. It will air while Harry's grandfather Prince Philip remains hospitalized after undergoing a heart procedure.

Meghan is shown in a clip released Friday contrasting the conversation the two women were able to have now versus in 2018 ahead of her wedding. Meghan described not being able to talk to Winfrey, who was seeking an interview, without royal minders present.

"As an adult who lived a really independent life to then go into this construct that is... different than I think what people imagine it to be, it's really liberating to be able to have the right and the privilege in some ways to be able to say yes," Meghan told Winfrey.

It is unclear what public reaction, if any, the queen and other royal family members will have to Sunday's interview.

On Wednesday, the palace said it was launching a human resources investigation after a London newspaper reported that a former aide had accused Meghan of bullying staff in 2018.

A spokesman for the duchess said she was "saddened by the latest attack on her character, particularly as someone who has been the target of bullying herself."

The snippets already released provide some details about the interview, which includes Winfrey speaking one-on-one with Meghan and a joint session with the couple.

Holding hands, Harry and Meghan sat opposite Winfrey while she questioned them in a lush garden setting. The couple lives in Montecito, California, where they are Winfrey's neighbors.

Meghan, who recently announced she is pregnant with the couple's second child, wore an empire-style black dress with embroidery. Harry wore a light gray suit and white dress shirt, minus a tie.

As Meghan Markle, the actor starred in the TV legal drama "Suits." She married Harry at Windsor Castle in May 2018, and their son, Archie, was born a year later.

Harry and Meghan's departure from royal life was supposed to be reviewed after a year. On Feb. 19, Buckingham Palace confirmed that the couple would not return to royal duties and Harry would relinquish his honorary military titles - a decision that made formal, and final, the couple's split from the royal family.



Dolly Parton performs on the main Pyramid stage at Glastonbury music festival, England on June 29, 2014. It's been 51 years since Dolly Parton earned her first Grammy nomination, and this year the national treasure who has won nine Grammys throughout her career is competing for her 50th honor. (AP)



Stanley



Dolcè

## Variety

**CLEVELAND:** Michael Stanley, a Cleveland-based rocker who with his namesake band reached the Top 40 in the 1980s with the hits "He Can't Love You" and "My Town" before going on to a long career as a radio disc jockey, has died. He was 72.

Stanley died Thursday after a seven-month battle with lung cancer, his family said in a statement. The rock radio station WNCX in Cleveland, where he worked for 30 years, posted a message from Stanley himself, saying:

"Hey gang... Well, if you're reading this then I am off to catch up with that big club tour in the sky. But before the bus pulls out I wanted to thank all of you for being part of my musical journey, both on the stage, on record, and behind the microphone here at WNCX."

Accompanied by his signature, Stanley's send-off continued: "Somebody once said that if you love your job then it's not really work. And if that's true (and I definitely think it is) then I have been happily out of work for over fifty years!"

The Cleveland legend released his first album while still in college and formed the Michael Stanley Band in 1974. After a brief period of national popularity in the early '80s, sales fell off and the band broke up in 1987. Stanley, also a songwriter, continued to record and tour, and remained beloved in his hometown as a radio and television personality, performer and recording artist.

"He was so emblematic of that raging heart that doesn't care that it's gonna lose - it's still gonna leave everything on the field. And when he wrote those songs, those kids in a city where the river caught on fire and the lake died, they felt like their lives mattered," music critic and author Holly Gleason told Cleveland.com. "If you were a kid coming of age in Cleveland in the '70s or the '80s, he was our hand on the brass ring."

A private funeral for Stanley was planned. (AP)

**MILAN:** The Milan fashion house Dolce&Gabbana has filed a defamation

suit in an Italian court seeking over \$600 million in damages from two US fashion bloggers who reposted anti-Asian comments attributed to one of the designers that led to a boycott by Asian consumers.

The suit was filed in Milan civil court in 2019 but only became public this week when the bloggers posted about it on their Instagram account, Diet Prada. Their feed is widely followed in the fashion world for its cutting commentary on originality in designs and on social issues.

"This whole case is a way of trying to silence Diet Prada, and to silence Tony (Liu) and Lindsay (Schuyler) personally," said Susan Scafdi, director of the

Fashion Law Institute at Fordham Law School, which is coordinating the bloggers' defense.

Lawyers for Dolce&Gabbana reached by the AP declined to comment on the case.

The case dates back to November 2018, when Dolce&Gabbana faced a boycott in Asia after outrage over what were seen as culturally insensitive videos promoting a major runway show in Shanghai and subsequent posts of insulting comments in a private Instagram chat.

The show was canceled in the backlash, which included retailers pulling Dolce&Gabbana merchandise and Asian VIPs disavowing the brand.

Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano



Linda Perry and her son Rhodes perform 'What's Up' during Rock 'N' Relief on Saturday, March 6, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Gabbana initially said that Gabbana's account had been hacked. The two later appeared in a video apologizing to the Chinese people.

"A public apology and a quiet lawsuit really cancel each other out in my mind," Scafdi told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Italian defense attorneys filed a brief this week in Milan civil court, arguing that Italy is not the correct venue for the case, given that the blog is produced in the United States and the alleged damages occurred in Asia.

The fashion house is seeking damages totaling more than half a billion euros, Scafdi said.

She said the fashion house is seeking 450 million euros spent to restore brand image since 2018 and damages of 3 million euros for the company and 1 million for Gabbana, to whom the remarks were attributed. The suit also seeks more than 8.6 million euros for the cancellation of the Shanghai show, another 8.6 million euros for staff expenditures and 89.6 million euros for lost Asian sales from November 2018-March 2019.

Since going public, Diet Prada, which has over 2.5 million Instagram followers, has raised more than \$38,000 for its defense.

In a statement, Liu and Schuyler both said they would not allow their platform, which has also been vocal about the #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter and recent attacks on Asians in the United States, to be silenced by lawsuits.

"Diet Prada will continue to be a platform to elevate these crucial issues," Liu said.

Schuyler called on "public figures and brands to respond to public opinion and media critiques with progressive action, not lawsuits." (AP)