# James Stunt’s tangled ties to King Charles amid art forgery and addiction scandals



James Stunt, the former husband of Formula One heiress Petra Ecclestone, has made headlines for his extravagant lifestyle and connections with royal circles, particularly with King Charles III. Stunt, 43, who has openly discussed his struggle with a cocaine addiction and has familial ties to notorious crime figures, forged a relationship with Charles during his time as Prince of Wales. This association, however, has recently come under scrutiny, particularly following a scandal involving fake artworks that Stunt had loaned to royal charities.

In an exclusive interview with the *Mail on Sunday*, Stunt’s ex-butler, John Gilmour, detailed Stunt's frequent visits to royal palaces and described how the gold bullion dealer ingratiated himself with the royal family. Gilmour recounted various instances, such as when Stunt unexpectedly placed a phone call with Charles on speakerphone, allowing Gilmour to overhear the conversation, and how Stunt was personally invited to both private audiences at Clarence House and events at Buckingham Palace.

The relationship became contentious after a charity loan of 17 paintings, thought to be masterpieces, was revealed to be a collection of forgeries crafted by convicted art forger Tony Tetro. Documents obtained during legal proceedings indicated that these paintings were initially perceived to be worth significantly more than their actual value.

Stunt's philanthropic efforts included donations totalling £140,000 to Charles’s charities from 2014 to 2016, which contributed to their apparent camaraderie. Gilmour described how Stunt’s first significant connection with Charles formed after he contributed £65,000 to the Prince's Trust and subsequently loaned artworks to Dumfries House, prompting a warm letter of gratitude from Charles that praised Stunt’s ‘kindness and generosity’.

Despite his apparent influence, Stunt's personal life has drawn much negative attention. Not only was he cleared of being involved in a £266 million money laundering scheme, but he has repeatedly faced allegations regarding his substance abuse and use of sex workers. Gilmour disclosed that Stunt would often spend thousands on cocaine each week and had engaged in dubious practices involving upscale escorts. He described an instance where Stunt purportedly used a gold bar as payment for one of his escorts, a claim Stunt has contested.

The revelations surrounding Stunt’s life raise broader questions about the nature of connections made with individuals who donate lavishly to royal causes. Previous instances, such as the revelation that Qatar's former prime minister had delivered cash contributions in luxury shopping bags, have added to ongoing concerns regarding the integrity of royal associations.

Stunt was also noted for his ostentatious lifestyle, which included a lavish wedding that reportedly cost £12 million. He frequently exhibited his wealth through extravagant purchases, including luxury cars and high-end artworks. However, his financial status has since deteriorated, culminating in bankruptcy in 2019, where he claimed debts exceeding £5 million.

As investigations and media scrutiny unfold, the implications of Stunt's relationships and lifestyle will likely continue to attract attention, particularly in light of the intricate ties between wealth, influence, and royal connections.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/james-stunt-king-charles-bernie-ecclestone-b2211992.html> - This article details James Stunt's interactions with King Charles III, including photographs taken at Clarence House and St James's Palace, and mentions Stunt's close relationship with former Prime Minister David Cameron.
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