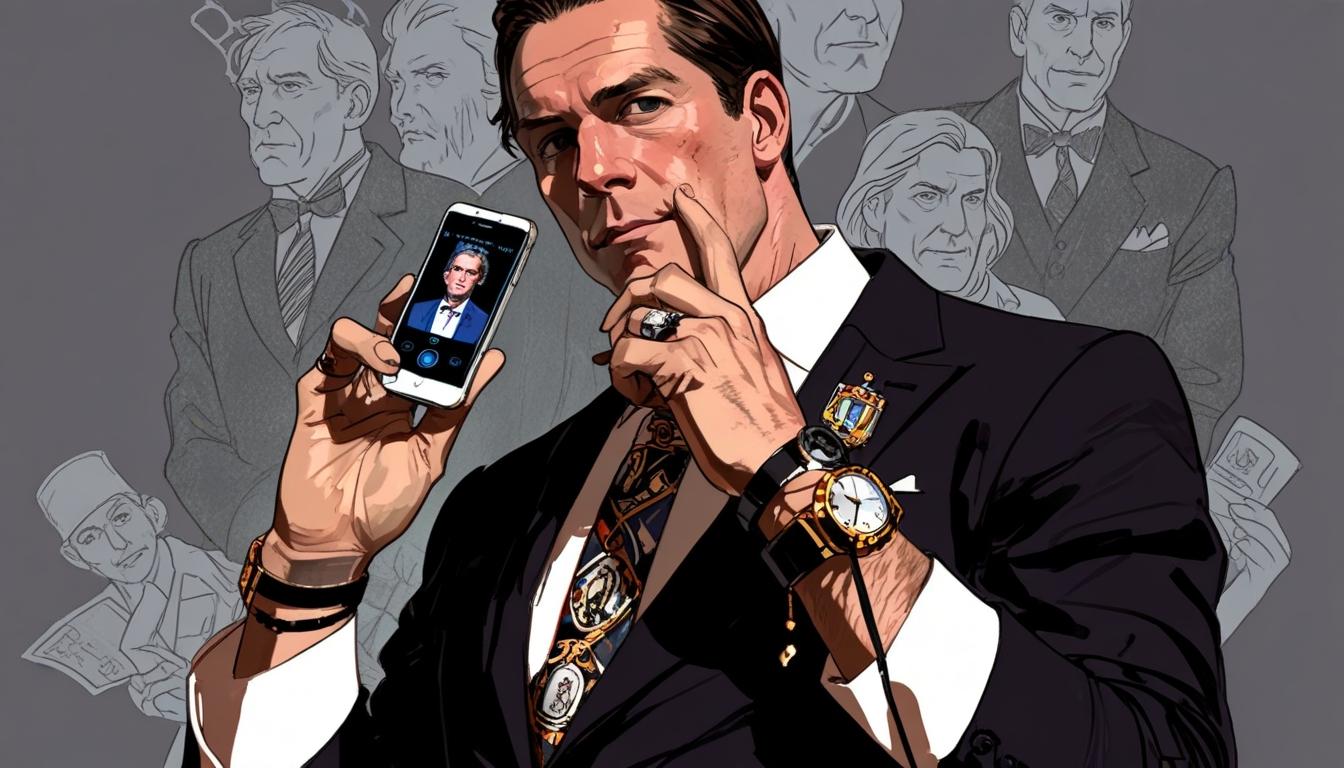
# James Stunt’s close ties to King Charles III revealed amidst scandal and financial turmoil



James Stunt, a figure known for his extravagant lifestyle and checkered past, has made headlines once again due to revelations about his connections to the royal family. The ex-husband of Formula 1 heiress Petra Ecclestone, Stunt has openly discussed a history of cocaine addiction and has familial ties to crime, yet he managed to cultivate a close relationship with King Charles III during his time as the Prince of Wales.

In an exclusive interview with *The Mail on Sunday*, John Gilmour, who served as Stunt's butler, provided insights into Stunt's unexpected friendship with Charles. Stunt, who reportedly donated £140,000 to Charles's charitable causes, frequently gained access to royal residences such as Buckingham Palace and Clarence House.

Gilmour claims he witnessed Stunt interact with the then-Prince through a phone conversation in which Stunt put Charles on speakerphone without prior notice. Stunt also attended private events with Charles and facilitated meetings between Charles and Michael Fawcett, a key aide to the royal. Gilmour noted that luxury presented was a norm during these meetings, including expensive wines and gifts for Charles, such as a luxury watch supposedly handed to Fawcett for the prince.

Despite his close royal ties, Stunt's lifestyle drew scrutiny. Gilmour revealed that Stunt led an extravagant life characterised by significant drug use and visits from individuals linked to high-profile crime. He also alleged that Stunt spent as much as thousands of pounds weekly on cocaine and hired prostitutes, enhancing the perception of a life governed by excess.

The complexity of Stunt's situation intensified in 2022 when he was acquitted of involvement in a £266 million money laundering operation involving the use of his Mayfair gold-trading firm. His colourful past, combined with recent financial troubles—having declared bankruptcy with over £5 million in debts—further complicates the narrative of his relationship with Charles.

Stunt's initial access to Charles emerged through donations made between 2014 and 2016, including £65,000 to the Prince's Trust. This relationship faced significant backlash when it was revealed that four major artworks he had loaned to Dumfries House were actually fraudulent copies produced by a known forger. This led to questioning Charles's associations with wealthy benefactors, following previous scandals involving large cash donations to his causes.

Amidst these controversies, the ongoing friendship between Stunt and Charles has raised eyebrows, especially given Stunt’s high-profile lifestyle and past indulgences. Gilmour recounted that Stunt would often boast about his interactions with Charles, indicating a level of pride in their association that contrasted sharply with his personal struggles.

As Stunt navigates the repercussions of his actions, and the broader implications for the royals in dealing with controversial figures, the situation continues to unfold, attracting significant public interest. Documents suggest that Stunt attempted to leverage his art collection, allegedly valued at £229 million, for financial favours from lenders, a claim he denies. This incident adds another layer to Stunt’s already tumultuous narrative.

The intertwining of Stunt's life with royal connections exemplifies a remarkable scenario, showcasing how those from varied backgrounds can find themselves in the corridors of power and influence, and the complications that ensue from such entanglements.

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

## Bibliography

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