

# Americans feel Meghan's pain as they devour real royal drama

Ben Hoyle Los Angeles

A royal drama is always eagerly received across the Atlantic and as the past week has proved, its appeal is magnified when an American is involved.

Royal enthusiasts in the United States were waiting for the third series of *The Crown* to start streaming on Netflix this month. Instead they have been transfixed by a real-life House of Windsor story.

For eight days Americans have devoured the headlines from Buckingham Palace and Frogmore Cottage from across the Atlantic, after learning of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's unusually candid remarks in the ITN documentary *Harry & Meghan: an African Journey*.

A clip appeared in which Meghan, 38, apparently on the verge of tears, confirmed that she was "not really OK" and was struggling in the spotlight.

The internet erupted and the footage went viral. It has now been viewed almost 30 million times on Twitter.

Within hours hashtags including #WeLoveYouMeghan were the top trends on Twitter. According to the analysis site Hashtagify more than half of the accounts using the hashtag were from the United States.

Some of the most prominent people in America have rallied to her cause. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the New York Democratic congresswoman, said: "Sudden prominence is a very dehumanising experience. There's a part of your life that you lose and it later dawns on you that you'll never get it back. The people who treat you like a human make all the difference."

Monica Lewinsky, who was forced into the spotlight after an affair with President Clinton in the 1990s, responded that Ms Ocasio-Cortez was "1000% right".

Some criticised the duchess, including the provocative black talk show

host Wendy Williams, who said: "Meghan, nobody feels sorry for you." The vast majority of comments, however, were supportive.

"I think that Meghan and Harry have been the victims of slander, lies and a negative propaganda campaign against them," Kristen Meinzer, a podcaster and author based in New York, said. She covered the Sussexes' marriage and believes that much of the criticism of the duchess in the British tabloid press is "thinly veiled racism".

"For them to come right out and confirm that it has been taking a huge emotional toll on them was brave and I think it's the right thing to do," she said.

The duchess's public pain is particularly resonant for many American royal enthusiasts because, as a mixed race, divorced career woman who was not born into the British aristocracy, she reminds them of themselves.

*Today* on NBC screened a five-minute segment on the documentary, ending with a discussion about whether the Sussexes might be about to move to Los Angeles.

The documentary was shown in the US on Wednesday, with an introduction by Robin Roberts, one of the country's most popular morning show anchors. It drew 3.3 million viewers to ABC, according to Nielsen ratings data, a highly respectable number on a night when the second game of the baseball World Series was unfolding on a different channel, and a larger audience than the programme mustered on ITV on Sunday night.

The Sussexes are likely to step away from the limelight for a while. They are expected to take their five-month-old son, Archie, to America next month to celebrate Thanksgiving with his maternal grandmother, Doria Ragland, who lives in Los Angeles. It seems likely, given the potential media attention, that the family will find another venue for the reunion.



The Duke of Sussex was a surprise guest as his wife spoke of empowering women

## Harry joins the party on equality

**M**en, the Duchess of Sussex said, need to be included in the conversation on gender equality. Fortunately, on a day when she was supposed to be making a solo appearance at a youth event at Windsor Castle, she had one already prepared: her husband (Valentine Low writes).

In an unscripted — and to the delegates at the One Young World summit completely surprising — change to the schedule, she brought him along too.

It was their first joint engagement since last weekend's television documentary in which the couple admitted that they were struggling with their royal roles. They looked relaxed and comfortable yesterday, arriving in the electric car that they acquired in June, an Audi E-Tron 55.

The duchess, who had convened the discussion with campaigners leading projects to empower women in countries including South Africa, Nigeria, Iraq, Malawi, Bangladesh, Barbados and Grenada, said: "In terms of gender equality, which has been something I have championed for quite a long time, you know I think that conversation can't happen without men being part of it."

"And this is something that is also very key to the way my husband feels and he has been working in this space since 2013, which a lot of people don't notice as much." She said it therefore made "complete sense to let him join today. Thank you for letting him crash the party."

## Huw Edwards tells of 5am burglary

Henry Dyer

Huw Edwards, the BBC newsreader, has said that he and his family are "fine" after a burglary last month.

The *News at Ten* anchorman denied newspaper reports that he chased a burglar who made off with his Mercedes SUV. In a tweet Edwards, 58, said: "Just for the record — following some misleading (shock!) press reports. Yes we had a burglary."

"No, I didn't chase the burglar. The police are dealing with it. It happened a month ago. We're all fine. Now back to more important things. Like Wales winning the Rugby World Cup."

Police were called to his house in Dulwich, southeast London, after Edwards and his wife, Vicky Flind, a television producer, were awoken about 5.30am on September 16.

Checks were carried out for fingerprints and DNA samples and the car was recovered the next day. Ms Flind

told *The Sun*: "We had a robbery but I don't want to comment on it."

The newspaper reported a local source who claimed that Edwards "ran out of the house after the burglar, but he was a whisker too late".

The Metropolitan Police said: "All lines of inquiry are being pursued. No arrest has been made at this stage."

Edwards, who was born in Bridgend, south Wales, and grew up near Llanelli, was reported last year to have lost 3st through boxing sessions under the guidance of Clinton McKenzie, the 64-year-

**The newsreader said that his house was burgled but denied that he had chased the suspects**



old former British light welterweight champion. The newsreader, who began his career on commercial radio in Swansea, became a minor star on Instagram. He seems to have closed his account on the social networking service after reports of the burglary emerged.

It was suggested this year that Edwards had been invited to appear on the BBC One show *Strictly Come Dancing*. He claimed that he had been "gauging public opinion" as to whether or not to accept but disclosed that "despite all appearances, I am quite shy". With the increasing prospect of a general election in December, which would add to his workload as a presenter, Edwards seems to have turned down the opportunity.

## Amazon's promotion glitch gives students a cheap thrill

Henry Dyer

Students at universities across the country bought hundreds of pounds worth of products from Amazon free of charge after a flaw in a discount code was discovered.

It emerged yesterday that a promotional code to give students £5 off their first purchase when they signed up to Amazon's Prime student service could be used several times by the same account. This allowed customers to make tens or hundreds of purchases of items under £5 free of charge.

The code has since been withdrawn. Ryan, a student at Nottingham Trent University, told *The Times*: "I mostly used the code to bulk buy food, stationary, art supplies, charging cables and cleaning supplies. I saved £164 on 36 items."

"The receptionists in my building

were filling entire bin bags with boxes for every student. Students were purchasing anything they could find. The most common things were crisps, protein bars and chocolates. One of my flatmates used the discount to buy sex toys for his girlfriend."

Ryan added: "I hope they bring it back next year."

The flaw was first identified on Twitter on October 15 and appears seems to have been fixed by Thursday. One student claimed to have bought £100 of makeup, while another claimed that she "bought 15 books for £0".

One student tweeted: "I know that welcome5 [the discount code] was probably deliberate to stop students hating on Jeff Bezos, but it didn't stop me from exploiting it as much as possible."

Amazon did not respond to requests to comment.