

How US commerce secretary's Epstein links were uncovered by British whistleblower

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Howard Lutnick was appointed US commerce secretary by President Trump in 2025

A British man has told the BBC how he unearthed evidence indicating that his former employer, Howard Lutnick - now US commerce secretary - failed to disclose a business relationship with the paedophile financier, Jeffrey Epstein.

Simon Andriesz, previously a managing director at a Wall Street firm, discovered an email chain from 2018 in which Lutnick and Epstein had discussed the prospects of a start-up business they were both involved in.

Andriesz shared his findings - from the millions of released Epstein files - with US politicians on the influential House Oversight Committee, ahead of an appearance there by Lutnick in May.

Lutnick told the committee that, to the best of his knowledge, he had only learned this year that Epstein had been an investor in the firm. Speaking on his behalf, the US Commerce Department told us there was no evidence of wrongdoing.

Andriesz also discovered in the files that one of Lutnick's firms had made plans in 2013 to go into business with another figure linked to Epstein, the then-Prince Andrew, by commercially exploiting the contacts the former UK trade envoy had made.

"What it involved was a loan to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor of £1m... to basically buy a prince," he tells File on 4 Investigates.

Searching 3.5 million documents

"I was completely shocked," says Andriesz, describing the moment when he discovered his own name in the Epstein files - a massive collection of documents, photos, video and emails relating to the notorious sex offender, released by the US government in the past year.

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The specific files in which Andriesz appeared related to interviews he had given to the FBI while in dispute with his former employer, BGC Partners - a financial brokerage firm, part of Lutnick's Cantor Fitzgerald group.

In 2016, Andriesz had raised concerns internally about accounting irregularities at the firm. He was sacked in 2017, but some of his allegations later led to BGC being ordered to pay a \$3m (£2.24m) penalty by the US derivatives regulator for

"numerous supervision, reporting, and record-keeping violations".



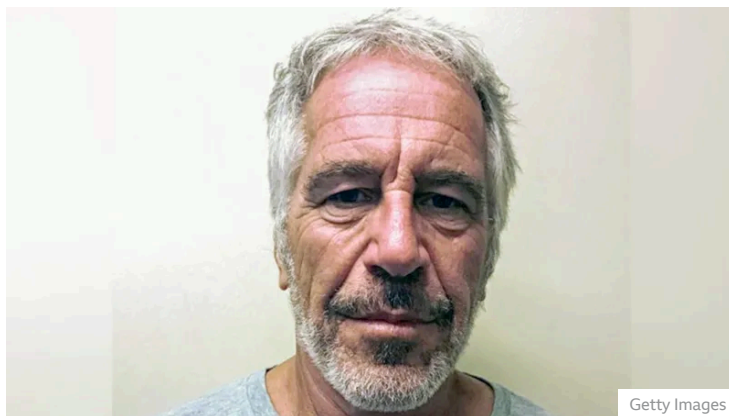
Simon Andriesz, now living in Cornwall, has been in dispute with his former employers in the US for several years

BGC told us that Andriesz's allegations lacked credibility and were "categorically false". It said the claims had been investigated by authorities in several jurisdictions which, according to BGC, had not substantiated the allegations.

Andriesz spoke to the FBI about BGC, and about the firm's ultimate boss, Lutnick, in 2020-21 - after Epstein had killed himself in jail while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

The Epstein files show Andriesz alleged that Lutnick had had undeclared business ties with Epstein. The FBI did not investigate these accusations.

Andriesz tells the BBC he was disappointed that few had seemed interested in what he had discovered: "I'm exposing Howard Lutnick's relationship, financial links, with Jeffrey Epstein, and there's no interest."



Jeffrey Epstein killed himself in jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges

In 2025, Lutnick was appointed US commerce secretary, at which point he sold his shares in Cantor Fitzgerald and passed control of the firm to his sons.

On a podcast later that year, he claimed he had only ever met Epstein once, 20 years earlier, when they had been neighbours in Manhattan, and that he had found his behaviour "gross".

However, with the Epstein files' release, inconsistencies began to appear in this version of events. A photo showed Lutnick with Epstein on the sex offender's Caribbean island, Little St James, in December 2012.



US Department of Justice

A 2012 snapshot discovered in the Epstein files shows Lutnick (right) and Epstein (centre) on Little St James

Four years earlier in Florida, Epstein had been sent to prison for two charges of soliciting prostitution - including one with a minor.

Andriesz suspected there was yet more to find in the Epstein files that could back up his claims - if only people knew where to look in the 3.5 million pages of documents.

"Everyone was searching 'Lutnick'," he says. He knew, though, that Cantor Fitzgerald executives preferred to use initials rather than full names in their emails.

Andriesz searched for "HWL" (Howard William Lutnick) and found emails sent to and from Epstein in 2018. Epstein had talked directly to Lutnick about a digital advertising company called Adfin, in which he and Lutnick's firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, had both invested.

Andriesz spotted correspondence where Epstein had directly asked the HWL account: "what do you think the prospects for adfin are?"

Lutnick responded: "Producing revenue finally. This is their year. Next 12 months they need to become economically self-sufficient."

Andriesz then shared this information with US politicians on the House Oversight Committee, the US Congress's main investigatory committee.

Lutnick agreed to appear before the committee in an off-camera hearing in May.

He has not been accused of any wrongdoing in connection with Epstein, and he told the committee: "I unequivocally condemn the conduct attributed to Jeffrey Epstein and everyone who participated in his illegal activities. The survivors of his crimes deserve our respect and support."

Lutnick repeated his claim to the committee, that he did not know until this year that Epstein had been a co-investor in Adfin. However, Democrats on the committee accused him of lying and all 21 signed a letter demanding his resignation.

The US Commerce Department told us the allegations against Lutnick were "a desperate partisan distraction from the historic work of this Administration", adding that the commerce secretary has answered hundreds of questions before Congress and there is "no evidence of wrongdoing or legitimate cause for concern".

'To buy a prince'

Another discovery Andriesz made in the Epstein files concerned Lutnick's association with two other people who knew Epstein well - the then-Prince Andrew and his ex-wife, Sarah Ferguson.

Lutnick had been friends with Ferguson since the 1990s and was a guest at Princess Eugenie's wedding in 2018.

Documents in the files revealed his firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, had a plan in 2013 "to buy a prince", as Andriesz puts it, and exploit Andrew's contacts with wealthy individuals and sovereign institutions.



Sarah Ferguson and Howard Lutnick pictured in 2014

Under the proposed terms of the deal, £1m would be loaned to a firm controlled by the prince, which would then be bound to do business exclusively with Cantor Fitzgerald.

Epstein warned the prince's business aide, David Stern, against the deal, the files reveal. One of his concerns was about the exclusivity of the deal - under its terms, Andrew could only introduce wealthy clients to Cantor Fitzgerald and no-one else.

The files indicate that advisers to both Lutnick and the former prince discussed the deal for four months, from August to November 2013, but it came to nothing.

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Asked about the deal, Cantor Fitzgerald did not deny the talks took place but told the BBC it did not go into business with the former prince. Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor did not respond to a request for comment.



Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was stripped of his royal titles in November 2025

A world away

Andriesz, now 57, lives in a quiet Cornish seaside village, a world away from Wall Street. He says the litigation of the past decade

has had a devastating effect on his career, his finances and his health.

Despite winning a financial award of \$420,000 (£313,000) for his whistleblowing from the US regulator, Andriesz says authorities in the US and UK have failed to hold BGC and Cantor Fitzgerald properly to account - or protect him from retaliation by his former employer for his reports of wrongdoing.

BGC says it has strong policies protecting whistleblowers from retaliation and denies retaliating against Andriesz. It says it has had no involvement with him since his departure other than responding to litigation he has initiated.

It maintains Andriesz's employment was terminated after he refused to follow medical advice, declined to perform essential job duties, rejected reasonable accommodation, and ultimately abandoned his role.

Speaking on behalf of Lutnick, the White House said: "The BBC's pathetic and desperate attempt to slander Secretary Lutnick will do nothing to change the fact that he has been the most consequential Commerce Secretary in modern history."

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