

Prince Harry and Meghan: Noblesse Without the Oblige?

It was inevitable. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, aka Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, were always going to quit the royal family. The countdown started after they publicly complained about how miserable they were in the documentary "[Harry and Meghan: An African Journey](#)" that aired in October.

The biggest surprise is the timing. According to the [BBC](#), the Queen and the rest of the royal family were not given advance notice that the couple would announce their intention to "step back" from their official roles. Whatever else you want to say about Harry and Meghan's decision, that's not a respectful way to treat your 93-year-old grandmother.

It is also amazing to ponder the speed with which "Megxit" – as the media has nicknamed it – came about. Meghan has received so much media coverage it feels like she's been part of the royal family forever. But the couple has only been married 19 months. Meghan was on maternity leave for a big chunk of that. Were they ever even serious about carving out a role for themselves in the royal family? It's hard not to wonder whether this was their intention all along.

Prince Harry and Meghan say the British tabloids made their lives intolerable. It is certainly true that they took a bruising 2019. But plenty of public figures have gone through phases of receiving negative press coverage only to stage a comeback and become media darlings again. All it takes is the right PR strategy. There is no reason why Harry and Meghan couldn't have done the same thing. They just didn't want to.

They may find their press coverage gets worse at this point. For all of Meghan and Harry's complaints, the British media actually treat their royal family with a great deal of

deference. The gloves may come off when Meghan and Harry are downgraded to mere “celebrities.”

The announcement also contains the remarkable declaration that Harry and Meghan intend to “work to become financially independent.” What does that mean? Prince Harry has a personal fortune [estimated](#) to be in the range of \$30 to \$40 million. So they’re already “financially independent.”

The choice of wording was probably intended to garner public sympathy. Meghan and Harry will pull themselves up “by their own bootstraps,” as it were.

But does anyone expect them to renounce their taxpayer-funded security and start paying for their protection out of their own pockets? No. Does anyone expect Harry or Meghan to take a full-time job in an office? No.

Their “work” will likely resemble the way the Clinton and Obama families have cashed in on their post-presidential fame. Harry and Meghan are in the process of launching their own charitable foundation, Sussex Royal, which may well become a vehicle for financing their lifestyle, a la the Clinton Foundation. In fact, one of their top aides is [Sara Latham](#), who used to work for the Clintons.

Chelsea Clinton has [started](#) writing children’s books. Don’t be surprised if Meghan also publishes one in the next few years. Last week, the media reported that Chelsea has [earned](#) \$9 million since 2011 from a corporate board position. Maybe Prince Harry could take Hunter Biden’s old seat on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma? Getting paid \$50,000 a month, as Biden was, for doing little and having no expertise sounds exactly like the kind of job Harry and Meghan will be searching for.

In their Instagram announcement, Harry and Meghan say they plan to continue to “honour our duty to The Queen, the Commonwealth, and our patronages.” In other words, they want

to retain the privileges of royalty while simultaneously cashing in. It remains to be seen if their dream will come true.

In response to the announcement, Buckingham Palace issued a [statement](#) that could be summarized as “Whoa! Hold your horses!” It read, “Discussions with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are at an early stage. We understand their desire to take a different approach, but these are complicated issues that will take time to work through.”

By publishing their announcement, Harry and Meghan have undercut their negotiating position. The royal family does not have much incentive to placate them anymore.

Will Meghan get to have her cake and eat it too? Will she and Harry get to enjoy the perks of royalty without the obligations? Or will they discover that self-absorbed, woke, media influencers are really not as beloved – by the public or the Palace – as they first thought?

While their wedding was being planned, Harry is alleged to have yelled at his staff, “What Meghan wants, Meghan gets!” Only time will tell if that was merely a reference to Bridezilla behavior or if it was, in fact, a prophetic statement.

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