



Prince William's sadness over death of Edgbaston pilot shot down by elephant poachers

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Roger Gower died when his helicopter was machine gunned by criminals

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Roger Gower killed in his helicopter

The Duke of Cambridge has been left “saddened” by the death of Edgbaston helicopter pilot Roger Gower, shot dead by elephant poachers in Tanzania.

Mr Gower, 37, was helping authorities in the African country track the criminals when **they fired on his aircraft on Friday**, the Friedkin Conservation Fund (FCF) said.

The pilot managed to bring the helicopter down in the Maswa Game Reserve, near Serengeti National

Park in the country's north, but died from his wounds before he could be rescued. Three people have reportedly been arrested.

William has been campaigning for years to try to stop the illegal trade in animal parts, particularly elephant ivory and rhino horn.



Prince William, Duke of Cambridge meets a rescued elephant

The Duke, who has visited southern Africa extensively, did not know Mr Gower but a Kensington

Palace spokesman said: “The Duke was saddened that yet another life had been lost due to poaching.”

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William is royal patron of the wildlife conservation charity Tusk Trust that works to secure a peaceful co-existence between Africa’s wildlife and its people.



The helicopter wreckage at the site where a British pilot was killed after his helicopter was fired on by elephant poachers

He also founded the umbrella organisation United for Wildlife to try to tackle the global problem of illegal poaching and other issues.

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Tanzania is fighting a bitter struggle to stop ivory poachers - a report last year stated 60 per cent of its elephant population had been lost in the previous five years.

China is the world's largest market for illegal ivory, which has been **thriving under the cover of legal ivory sales**. Tanzania also last year charged a Chinese woman, Yang Feng Clan, 66, with smuggling 1.9 tons of ivory from the country between 2000 and 2014.

Mr Gower's brother Max said he was proud of him and how he had managed to land the helicopter and allow his passenger, a friend and colleague, to get out.



The helicopter wreckage at the site where a British pilot was killed after his helicopter was fired on by elephant poachers

He said that his sibling did not want to sit behind a desk and quit as an accountant the day he qualified so he could go and work with the two things he enjoyed the most, flying and animals.

Max Gower told Sky News: “I’m proud of what he did. I’m proud he got his passenger down safely. I’m proud he got himself out of the helicopter and I’m proud that even after he was shot he was still laughing.”

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Roger Gower, who was shot dead in Tanzania.

Roger Gower was reported to have been a former

accountant who qualified as a pilot in 2004.

He was believed to have been the youngest son of David Gower, a former partner of Birmingham-based law firm Pinsents.

He was understood to have attended the prestigious Hallfield independent school in Edgbaston , while his family had links to Edgbaston Golf Club.

In a message posted on its website, FCF founder Dan Friedkin said the organisation was “profoundly saddened by the loss of our dear friend”

He said: “We are committed to honouring Roger and his work. We are also committed to ensuring that those responsible for this attack are found and brought to justice. We believe that Roger can best be honoured by redoubling our commitment to protect elephants and our priceless wildlife heritage.”

Mr Gower qualified as a pilot in 2004 and moved to Africa around two years later, according to a profile with his former employer Tropic Air Kenya. In a Facebook post Tropic Air Kenya said it was “shocked and immensely sad” at the news that he had been killed.

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Birmingham MP reveals she was the victim of a sexual assault like many other women, but says only a "tiny minority" of men behave this way

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Birmingham Yardley MP Jess Phillips appears on BBC One's Question Time

Birmingham MP Jess Phillips has revealed that she was the victim of a sexual assault as a young woman.

She was pinned to a wall in a bar at the age of 19 by

a man who put his hand up her skirt, the MP said.

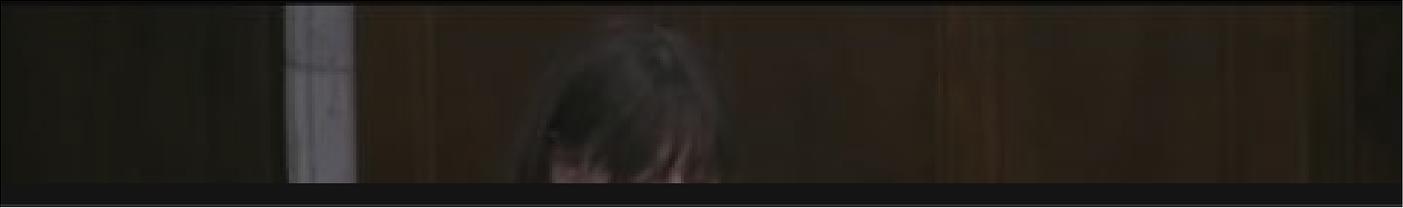
She slapped her assailant in the face - only to be thrown out of the bar for defending herself.

Ms Phillips, Labour MP for Yardley, was speaking in a Commons debate as she warned that violence against women happened often - but only a “tiny minority” of men were responsible.

Most men wanted equality for women, she said.

Watch: Jess Phillips says she slapped a man in the face after he assaulted her





Ms Phillips told MPs: “When I was 19, I was having a drink in a bar and a man pinned me against the wall, and stuck his hand up my skirt and inside my knickers, in full view of all of his mates.

“I slapped him in the face, as I am sure everybody in this room today would expect me to do, and I was thrown out of the bar, even though I told the security staff what had happened.

“The man and his mates laughed at me as I was ejected.

“I was terrified, and I am sad to say that that was the not the one and only time that I have been terrified by a member of a tiny minority.”

She told MPs that many other women had experienced violence which was “pedestrian and everyday” but left them in fear.

She said: “My story and every one of the hundreds of stories that I have read this week have one thing in

common - the victim never mentioned the incident to their parents, their partners and certainly not the police.”

She added: “Women shrug it off - ‘just one of those things.’”

Ms Phillips admitted that she could have chosen her words more carefully when she appeared on BBC One show Question Time and suggested that mass sex attacks in Cologne, Germany, on New Year’s Eve were similar to the situation faced by women in British nightlife districts such as **Birmingham’s Broad Street**.

She came under fire from critics after telling a TV audience: “A very similar situation to what happened in Cologne could be described on Broad Street in Birmingham every week where women are baited and heckled.”

But she said many women had written to her to say they had been assaulted.

Ms Phillips said: “Following my recent outing on Question Time - an occasion when my words could possibly have been chosen better - I received

hundreds of messages from around the country.”



Birmingham Broad Street

And she told MPs: “It would be fair to say that sometimes I can be clumsy with my words. Sometimes, my emotions and frustration pour out in words that perhaps I should consider just a little more, but I get angry because it is an unpalatable truth that women are sexually harassed and assaulted and physically abused hundreds and hundreds of times every day in this country, and always have been.

“For every man who has tweeted me, emailed me and called my office this week to say that that is total rubbish, three times as many women have sent me messages telling me their experiences.

“The most wonderfully heartening messages this week, and I think they were the messages that I received most frequently, were those from hundreds of men showing their support for the women in this country.”

Read more: MP Jess Phillips defends claim that Cologne sex attacks are like a night out in Birmingham



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