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## Archer jailed for perjury



Archer was found guilty on four charges at the end of a six-week trial

Millionaire novelist Lord Archer has been jailed for four years after being found guilty of perjury and perverting the course of justice.

Co-defendant Ted Francis was found not guilty of perverting the course of justice by a jury at the Old Bailey on Thursday.

Before sentencing him the judge Mr Justice Potts told Lord Archer: "These charges represent as serious an offence of perjury as I have had experience of and have been able to find in the books."

**“ Sentencing you Lord Archer gives me no pleasure at all - it has been an extremely distasteful case ”**

**Mr Justice Potts**

The jury found him guilty of lying and cheating in his 1987 libel case against the Daily Star. The verdicts were unanimous on each count.

Lord Archer, who was ordered to pay £175,000 costs within 12 months, was told by the judge he would have to serve at least half of his sentence.

### No reaction

There was a shout of "yes" from the public gallery as Lord Archer's first guilty verdict was delivered by the jury foreman.

The novelist showed no reaction as he stood in the dock.

He was cleared by the jury of one count of perverting the course of justice.

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**The BBC's Duncan Kennedy reports**

"Lord Archer left the court in the back of a prison van, along with other common criminals"

**Daily Star Editor Peter Hill**

"Jeffrey Archer is a liar and has been a liar all his life"

**Former Tory Cabinet**

**Minister, Jonathan Aitken**

"I feel for him"

**The BBC's David Shukman**

charts the rise and fall of the ever-controversial former MP Lord Archer



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Archer found guilty  
'Rascal' will return  
Star demands £2.2m  
Cheer greets verdict  
Grounds for appeal?

### Background

Silent role in court  
Timeline: 1986-2001  
Sex, money and politics  
Archer's life in pictures

### Profiles

Archer: Rises and falls  
Francis: Whistleblower  
Mary Archer: Loyal wife  
Trial: Key players

### Panorama coverage

A life of lies  
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Reports and reaction

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Archer jailed: Your reaction

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Silent role for Lord Archer

Both men had denied the charges.

Lord Archer's solicitor, Tony Morton-Hooper, said outside the court that his client planned to appeal, adding that there would be no further comment from the Archer family on Thursday.

Speaking briefly after leaving court, a smiling Mr Francis waved to onlookers and the media scrum and thanked his family, friends and the News of the World newspaper.

"I am enormously relieved the whole business is over and done with," he said.

Prosecuting, David Waters QC, told the judge Mr Justice Potts the minimum cost of the Old Bailey trial would be £256,000.

### Charges

Lord Archer faced dishonesty charges arising from his successful 1987 libel action, in which he won £500,000 damages from the Daily Star over allegations that he slept with a prostitute.

He was accused of asking his former friend Mr Francis, 67, to provide him with a false alibi for a night relating to the libel case and of producing fake diary entries to back up his story.

- Lord Archer was found guilty of two charges of perjury and two of perverting the course of justice.
- The first charge was that he perverted the course of justice by asking Ted Francis to give him a false alibi.
- The second guilty verdict was on a charge that he perverted the course of justice by using a fake diary in the libel trial.
- He was found to have perjured himself in an affidavit to the High Court for the libel action.
- He was also found to have perjured himself on oath during the libel trial.
- He was cleared of a final count of perverting the course of justice in relation to a diary used in the libel case, in which he was awarded £500,000 after the Daily Star claimed he slept with a prostitute.

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A House of Lords spokesman said Archer would not lose his peerage despite his conviction.

**There is no precedent for a life peerage being removed. I think treason would be the only exception**

**House of Lords spokesman**

He told BBC News Online after the verdict: "There is no precedent for a life peerage being removed. I think treason would be the only exception."

Lord Archer was sentenced to:

- Two years for the first count of perverting the course of justice
- Four years for a second similar charge
- Three years for count five of perjury
- Four years for count six, also of perjury.

The sentences are to run concurrently.

The maximum sentence for perverting the course of justice could have been life imprisonment, with perjury carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years.

Lord Archer and Mr Francis faced charges after the News of the World newspaper revealed in November 1999 that Mr Francis' story about the night in 1986 had been a fabrication.



Mary Archer has stood by her husband

During the trial the millionaire author was cleared of one charge of dishonesty, on the direction of the judge.

Lord Archer had chosen not to take the stand during the trial, which saw his former secretary Angela Peppiatt relate details of his "marital infidelities" with a former employee.

Mr Justice Potts, presiding over his final case

as a judge, told Archer he had been convicted on "clear evidence".

He told the former Conservative Party deputy chairman: "In January 1986, you set out dishonestly to manipulate the proceedings that you had chosen to institute against the Star.

"Sentencing you Lord Archer gives me no pleasure at all.

"It has been an extremely distasteful case."

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