Lawyers raise questions after medical examiner declares Epstein committed suicide

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17 August 2019

On Friday, New York City's chief medical examiner, Dr. Barbara Sampson, released the official conclusion of the autopsy of multimillionaire financier and accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. The fixture in top Wall Street and political circles, who has been linked to such prominent figures as Donald Trump, Bill Clinton and the UK's Prince Andrew, was found dead in his cell at New York's Metropolitan Correctional Center on the morning of August 10 under mysterious and yet to be explained circumstances.

The death in federal custody of a man charged with running a sex ring involving underage girls, who was facing a trial that might have exposed criminal activities by members of the business and political elite, has understandably and legitimately aroused suspicions, especially in light of multiple violations of prison protocols that have been revealed since Epstein's demise.

Yet the corporate media, led by the *New York Times*, has denounced all questioning of the circumstances surrounding Epstein's death as baseless "conspiracy theories."

The bare statement released by the medical examiner's office was limited to the assertion that "after careful review of all investigative information, including complete autopsy findings," the cause of death was determined to be suicide by hanging. No facts or details were provided in the brief statement to back up this finding.

Epstein's defense lawyers said they did not accept the ruling and planned to conduct their own investigation. They have claimed that their client showed no signs of suicidal tendencies, had been in good spirits and had spent many hours helping prepare his legal defense.

"We are not satisfied with the conclusions of the medical examiner," said the lawyers. "We will have a more complete response in the coming days."

New revelations over the past few days have added to suspicions of foul play in connection with the death of Epstein, who was without question the most prominent inmate in the US federal prison system. This might have placed increased pressure on Dr. Sampson to issue her ruling. She had delayed making public any determination of the cause of death for several days following the completion of the autopsy, claiming she required further information from the police and other officials.

On Thursday, the *Washington Post* reported that the autopsy showed Epstein had multiple broken neck bones, including the small hyoid bone that is located behind the Adam's apple. The hyoid can break during hanging but is far more likely to be broken as a result of strangulation.

Forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht told *USA Today* that "Fractures of the hyoid bone are almost always associated with strangulation... [b]ecause the hand gets high up underneath the chin of the victim."

Wecht further noted that "multiple breaks and fractures are rare to find in suicidal hangings," and that while they can happen, they require a great deal of force.

The official narrative promoted by the *Times*, the *New York Post* and others is that Epstein hanged himself by tying a bed sheet to a bunk, kneeling on the ground and leaning forward to kill himself. According to Wecht, this action likely would not have provided the force necessary to break as many bones as were found.

Epstein had been left alone in his cell in the special housing unit at the Metropolitan Correctional Center for at least 12 hours before his death after his cellmate

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was removed. This is a violation of a rule requiring inmates considered to be at risk to always have a second person in his or her cell. Such a move was all the more inexplicable since Epstein had been found last month with injuries to his neck and had been placed on suicide watch for six days. Why he was taken off suicide watch after so short a period has not been explained.

Moreover, his guards had failed to check his cell for hours on end, also in violation of prison rules. Finally, reports surfaced earlier this week that shrieks were heard coming from Epstein's cell prior to his death.

Despite all such questions, the *New York Times* posted a "news" article on the medical examiner's ruling on Friday that reads more like a propaganda release. Under the headline "Jeffrey Epstein Autopsy Results Show He Hanged Himself in Suicide" appears the second headline, "The New York City chief medical examiner's determination refutes conspiracy theories that he may have been murdered."

The second paragraph states: "Mr. Epstein's death has set off a wave of conspiracy theories, as people speculated online, without evidence, that he might have been killed to keep him from providing information to prosecutors about others in his social circle, including President Donald Trump, former President Bill Clinton and Prince Andrew of Britain."

There is no factual basis for the rush by the *Times* and most other media outlets to shut down any discussion of possible foul play in Epstein's death. Their heavy-handed approach only raises questions as to what they may be seeking to hide.

Even if one assumes, for the sake of argument, that the medical examiner's ruling is correct and Epstein's death was a suicide, that by no means forecloses the possibility, if not likelihood, of a conspiracy to eliminate him prior to a trial or plea deal. The confluence of rule violations, omissions and seemingly reckless decisions that allowed the notorious prisoner to be left alone without being monitored demands a serious investigation.

The public, well aware of the criminality of the American ruling class, is entirely justified in believing the authorities to be capable of carrying out such an operation if they deemed it necessary to contain a scandal that otherwise could destabilize the political and economic system.

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