

Federal prosecutors argue against bail and home confinement for Epstein assistant Ghislaine Maxwell

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On Monday, federal prosecutors replied to the \$5 million bail request from Ghislaine Maxwell, the former assistant to deceased convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, in advance of today's arraignment in a New York court. The prosecutors argued that Maxwell must remain in custody to block her plans "to flee and live comfortably abroad for the rest of her life."

In the government's brief, Audrey Strauss, acting US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, argued that Maxwell's memorandum in opposition to detention "wholly fails to appreciate the driving force behind this case: the defendant's victims were sexually abused as minors as a direct result of Ghislaine Maxwell's actions, and they have carried the trauma from these events for their entire adult lives."

Strauss further stated that "there is every reason to think" that Maxwell, if granted her request for home confinement, would be "afforded the opportunity to flee the jurisdiction." Maxwell, according to Strauss, "poses a clear risk of flight, and no conditions of bail could reasonably assure her continued appearance in this case."

She argued that among the reasons Maxwell is a flight risk is that she is a citizen of France, which "does not extradite its own citizens," she appears to have "access to considerable wealth domestically and abroad," she declined to provide the court with detailed "information about her finances," and she appears "to be skilled at living in hiding."

In response to Maxwell's health concerns about being held in the federal Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, the prosecutors acknowledged that "the COVID-19 pandemic is—and should be—a relevant factor for the Court and the parties in this case." However, the prosecutors wrote, Maxwell had not given any reasons why she should be "treated any differently from the many

defendants who are currently detained" at the MDC pending trial, and that she "should not be granted the special treatment she requests."

Ghislaine Maxwell, 58, was arrested by the FBI at her secluded 156-acre home in Bedford, New Hampshire on July 2 and charged with six federal offenses, including enticing and grooming teenage girls as young as 14 to be sexually abused by the wealthy investment advisor and New York City socialite Jeffrey Epstein and his elite friends and associates from around the world.

Maxwell had been a girlfriend and a close associate of Epstein going back to the early 1990s, when she moved to New York City from London following the death of her father, Robert Maxwell, the owner of an extensive publishing empire in the UK. After it was discovered that Robert Maxwell had misappropriated hundreds of millions of pounds from his employees' pension fund, he was mysteriously found drowned and floating in the North Atlantic not far from his yacht on November 5, 1991.

Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein built up an extensive list of friends and associates from among the bourgeois world's superrich and politically influential, including dozens of US political figures (both Democrats and Republicans), European and Middle Eastern royalty, Hollywood celebrities and Wall Street billionaires. They congregated at elaborate social gatherings at his private residences in New York City, Palm Beach, Florida, Paris and a private island in the US Virgin Islands.

From the mid-1990s through 2019, based on victim statements, the social gatherings, as well as flights on a 727 passenger jet, included sexual abuse of underage girls both by Epstein and some of his elite associates, to whom girls were trafficked.

A 2008 case against Epstein was settled by federal

authorities with a “non-prosecution agreement” that permitted him to plead guilty to Florida state charges of procuring a minor for prostitution. He served 13 months in a special Palm Beach jail cell that he was allowed to leave six days a week for 12 hours a day. The nonprosecution agreement protected Epstein, Maxwell and other co-conspirators from any future charges.

With his sex ring left intact, Epstein continued his abuse and trafficking of teenagers for another decade. He was eventually rearrested while departing from his private jet at Teterboro Airport on July 6, 2019.

He was found strangled to death in his New York City jail cell while awaiting trial on multiple counts of sex trafficking. Although his death was determined by the medical examiner to be the result of a suicidal hanging, the suspicious circumstances surrounding his death pointed in the direction of murder, and statements by other forensic experts supported this conclusion.

As evidence that Maxwell poses a flight risk and is “skilled at living in hiding,” the government pointed to the fact that when the FBI showed up at her New Hampshire mansion, “the property was barred by a locked gate.” There was an individual “who was later determined to be

a private security guard,” and when the agents announced themselves and “directed the defendant to open the door,” Maxwell ignored them and tried to “flee to another room in the house, quickly shutting a door behind her.”

The prosecutors also presented in their brief the fact that when “agents conducted a security sweep of the house, they also noticed a cell phone wrapped in tin foil on top of a desk.” This was cited as evidence of Maxwell’s attempt to evade detection by law enforcement.

Maxwell’s legal team filed a motion on July 9 requesting that their client be released from lockup on \$5 million bail with a commitment from six cosigners and \$3.75 million in property collateral located in the UK. Maxwell’s lawyers have emphasized that she has not fled the country and her legal team has been in touch with the US Department of Justice since Epstein’s death in prison one year ago.

Since her arrest, anonymous prison officials have been quoted in the media as saying that Maxwell is being monitored closely out of concerns that she may take her own life. In addition to reports that she was given paper clothing to wear and forced to sleep on a bare mattress in the MDC, anonymous “insiders” told the *Daily Mail* on Saturday that prison authorities are “terrified someone

will try to kill her” and that she is being moved around in the prison to protect her.

The insider said, “She is being moved from cell to cell and sometimes has a cellmate, sometimes not. Jeffrey Epstein died behind bars, and they are terrified someone will try to kill Ghislaine.”

A major reason for the court’s decision to bind her over before trial would be the ability to block her from talking. She has limited time to meet with her legal team, and visits are restricted at the MDC.

It is apparent, as was the case with Epstein, that there are many powerful people who would like to make sure Maxwell does not have an opportunity to tell or share details of what she knows about what went on at Epstein’s “Orgy Island” or his jetliner “Lolita Express.”

The *Sun* reported on Sunday that a former associate of Epstein and Maxwell, Robert Steel, had seen video surveillance footage of “two high-profile US politicians having sex with minors and two high society figures having a threesome with an under-age girl.” Steel, who is an ex-thief-turned-writer, told the *Sun*, “I was forced to watch their videos because they were trying to impress me. They wanted to convince me of their power and who they held in their grip. They boasted about ‘owning’ powerful people.”

Some experts are speculating that Maxwell may be released on Tuesday by Judge Alison Nathan of the Southern District Court of New York. Former federal prosecutor Jaimie Nawaday told the *New York Post* on Monday, “All bail arguments look a little bit different now given COVID. That’s definitely in her favor. More and more there is a push toward home confinement, especially holding people pretrial, when you still have the presumption of innocence.”

Arguing against prosecutors’ claims that Maxwell is a flight risk, Nawaday said, “She obviously could have left the country, she didn’t. She was keeping a low profile here. I don’t think that shows a risk of flight.”



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