

Judge denies bail for Ghislaine Maxwell, charged with aiding Epstein's abuse of underage girls

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A federal judge in Manhattan denied bail on Tuesday to Ghislaine Maxwell, the confidante of the dead convicted sex offender and investment advisor Jeffrey Epstein, saying she “poses a substantial actual risk of flight.”

The judge said that Maxwell should remain in jail before her trial, scheduled for July 12, 2021, on charges that she enticed underage girls to participate in Epstein's sex trafficking scheme and also perjured herself about these matters in previous court depositions.

During the arraignment, at which she appeared via videoconference from a federal prison in Brooklyn, Maxwell pleaded not guilty. If convicted on all six charges for offenses that allegedly occurred between 1994 and 1997, Maxwell faces up to 35 years in prison.

In response to the motion from Maxwell's lawyers for a \$5 million bail, combined with home confinement in New York, US Southern District of New York Judge Alison Nathan said, “The court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that no combination could reasonably assure her presence in court. The risks are simply too great.”

During the proceeding, Assistant Federal Prosecutor Alison Moe repeated the arguments made by the Manhattan US Attorney's Office in their brief filed on Monday that Maxwell's citizenship in France and Britain, her significant wealth and her ability to live under an assumed identity show that she has the “ability and willingness to live off the grid indefinitely.”

As evidence of Maxwell's ability to evade law enforcement, the federal prosecutors presented the fact that she purchased a \$1 million secluded home in

Bedford, New Hampshire by using the name “Jen Marshall” and saying she was a journalist who needed privacy. The prosecutors say that this information contradicted what she had told law enforcement at the time of her arrest, that she did not know who bought the property and that it was owned by a corporation.

During the hearing, Moe read out a statement from one of Epstein's victims, identified as “Jane Doe,” who said, “without Ghislaine, Jeffrey could not have done what he did. If she believes she risks prison, she will never come back. ... If she is out, I need protection.”

Annie Farmer, who spoke at the hearing off-camera, said she was abused by Epstein and Maxwell and that Ghislaine was a “a sexual predator who groomed and abused me and countless other children and young women. She has never shown any remorse for her heinous crimes or the devastating, lasting affects her actions caused.” Farmer added, “Those that survived implore this court that she be detained pending trial” and “the danger Maxwell poses must be taken seriously.”

Lead defense attorney Mark Cohen argued for the bail proposal and said prosecutors had failed to show that Maxwell was in fact a flight risk because she had not attempted to flee the US after Epstein's death in jail on August 10 of last year. He said that her attorneys had been in regular contact with the prosecutor's office over the past 11 months.

Cohen also said that prosecutors were portraying Maxwell as “a ruthless, aimless, sinister person,” and “she's not the monster that's been portrayed by the media and government.” He additionally pointed out that the conditions in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, especially with restrictions

imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, made it impossible for Maxwell and her lawyers to prepare an adequate defense.

Judge Nathan denied bail for Maxwell at the conclusion of the three-hour hearing, reiterating verbatim the arguments of the prosecution and saying, “The risk is simply too great.”

During the course of his presentation, Cohen said that the defense will be making a “very significant motion that will decide whether this indictment survives, or the shape of this indictment.” This was a reference to the fact that Cohen is preparing to argue that the majority of the case against Maxwell is barred by the precedent of the nonprosecution agreement between Jeffrey Epstein and federal prosecutors in South Florida in 2007.

In exchange for a guilty plea on a state prostitution charges, a federal indictment against Epstein for abusing underage girls between 1999 and 2007 was dropped. Epstein was sentenced to 18 months, of which he served just 13, in the Palm Beach County Stockade where his jail cell door was never locked, and he was paid for his own security detail while “work release” for 12 hours a day, six days a week.

An unprecedented aspect of the nonprosecution agreement was that Epstein and a list of co-conspirators, including Maxwell, were made perpetually immune from any prosecution on matters related to the original federal charges against him in Palm Beach, Florida.

At the time, the nonprosecution agreement was worked out behind closed doors with Epstein’s legal team, which included the high-profile defense attorney Alan Dershowitz, US Attorney for South Florida Alex Acosta and Palm Beach State Attorney Barry Krischer. Local law enforcement, along with lawyers representing Epstein’s numerous teenage victims, were stunned by the secret deal which denied them the ability to testify against their abuser in court.

According to a report by investigative journalist Vicky Ward that was published in *The Daily Beast* on July 9, 2019, Acosta, who was being vetted as Labor Secretary for the incoming Trump administration, was asked by the Trump transition team, “Is the Epstein case going to cause a problem [for confirmation hearings]?” According to Ward, Acosta replied that “he had ‘been told’ to back off, that Epstein was above his

pay grade. ‘I was told Epstein “belonged to intelligence” and to leave it alone,’ he told his interviewers in the Trump transition.”

The possibility that Epstein and Maxwell had high-level intelligence relationships—a plausible explanation for both the sex ring as a tool to blackmail politicians and other members of elite ruling circles around the world as well as for the suspicious death of Epstein in his jail cell one year ago—was also revived in interviews published since Maxwell’s July 2 arrest.

In an interview with the *New York Post* “Page Six,” Stephen Hoffenberg, a former investment associate of Epstein’s who spent 18 years in federal prison for securities fraud, said, “She’s going to be naming some big names—not only in terms of those who abused underage girls at Epstein’s parties—but also those who made financial agreements with Epstein or benefited from his generosity, including flying on his plane and staying at his homes.”

Hoffenberg went on, “Ghislaine thought she was untouchable—that she’d be protected by the intelligence communities she and Jeffrey helped with information: the Israeli intelligence services, and Les Wexner, who has given millions to Israel; by Prince Andrew, President Clinton and even by President Trump, who was well-known to be an acquaintance of her and Epstein’s.”

Whether the truth of any of these matters will emerge during the Maxwell trial is difficult to predict. Whatever direction the case unfolds, it is clear that there are many wealthy and politically connected individuals who do not want information about their relationship with Epstein and Maxwell—and what went on at their elite social gatherings—to see the light of day.



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