

New reports on Jeffrey Epstein demonstrate deep-going corruption of US ruling elite

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A report in the *Wall Street Journal*, published on the newspaper's front page Monday morning, links important figures in the US business and political elite to financier and sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, who died in a federal prison in Manhattan in 2019 under circumstances that strongly suggest he was murdered to keep him quiet.

The *Journal* reporters wrote that they had gained access to Epstein's private diary and other documents, "which include thousands of pages of emails and schedules from 2013 to 2017, [that] haven't been previously reported." The diary listed meetings with dozens of individuals, though it supplied little information about the content or subject of the meetings. The bulk of these engagements were at Epstein's palatial townhouse in Manhattan.

Among those prominently mentioned in the *Journal* report were two high-level officials of Democratic administrations: William Burns, currently CIA director, formerly deputy secretary of state in the Obama administration; and Kathryn Ruemmler, currently general counsel for Goldman Sachs investment bank, who was White House counsel in the Obama administration.

Two liberal, pro-Democratic Party cultural figures were also named in Epstein's diary: Leon Botstein, president of Bard College and director of the American Symphony Orchestra; and Noam Chomsky, retired MIT professor (now 94) and occasional critic of US foreign policy, one of the founding fathers of the anti-Marxist pseudo-left.

There is no suggestion that any of these individuals took part in Epstein's now notorious exploitation of teenage girls. They did not fly on Epstein's private plane to his estate in Florida or his private island in the Caribbean, like former President Bill Clinton, future President Donald Trump, senators George Mitchell and John Glenn, attorney Alan Dershowitz and Britain's Prince Andrew (brother of the new king).

Rather, they met with Epstein as a billionaire who had unparalleled connections with other billionaires, long after his role as master procurer for the US ruling elite had begun to come to light.

In particular, Ruemmler, who had been a US Attorney in Georgia and headed the Justice Department prosecution of Enron, would have been acquainted with the prosecutor who let Epstein off with a legal slap on the wrist, Alexander Acosta, the US Attorney for south Florida, who was later Trump's secretary of labor.

Ruemmler had several dozen meetings with Epstein as the Manhattan legal representative of Ariane de Rothschild, when the banking family was seeking new sources of investment among the US super-rich.

The most important connection reviewed by the *Journal* account was between Epstein and his longtime banker, JPMorgan Chase,

which only closed Epstein's accounts in 2013, five years after the financier pled guilty to a solicitation charge in Florida involving a 14-year-old girl. Representatives of JP Morgan's private bank, which handles the affairs of super-rich clients, continued to meet with Epstein until at least 2017.

In the course of their nearly 20-year relationship, "the bank would come to manage some 55 Epstein-related accounts containing hundreds of millions of dollars," the *Journal* reported. Epstein's principal advocate within the bank was Jes Staley, who ran the Asset Management Division from 2001 to 2009. During that period the division more than doubled in size, from \$605 billion to \$1.3 trillion.

Staley went on to become CEO of Barclay's Bank in Britain from 2015 to 2021, when he was forced out over revelations that he had concealed his close ties to Epstein. This relationship included exchanging 1,200 emails during a four-year period, in the course of which Epstein sent him suggestive photos of teenage girls, while Staley, a visitor to Epstein's properties in Florida and the Virgin Islands, wrote back at one point, "That was fun. Say hi to Snow White."

Much of the new information is the result of two lawsuits filed in federal court in Manhattan concerning Epstein's activities in the Virgin Islands, where his private island, Little St. James, the scene of much of the sexual abuse, is located.

The suits by the Virgin Islands Attorney General and by one of Epstein's victims, now a young woman, are against JPMorgan Chase. (The young woman, identified only as "Jane Doe," is also suing Deutsche Bank.) They charge that the bank played a major role in financing the abuse that continued in the decade after Epstein's initial conviction for solicitation and are seeking compensation for the victims.

JPMorgan acknowledged the meetings with Epstein but claimed bank officials met with him as the representative of other bank clients, not about his own investments. Such "work" was the starting point for Epstein's rise to great wealth and the continuing source of his enormous income. In a single such deal in 2004, for connecting Highbridge Capital Management with JPMorgan, Epstein raked in a \$15 million "finder's fee" when the bank bought a controlling stake in the hedge fund for \$1 billion.

The bank has also countersued Jes Staley, claiming that he knew of Epstein's involvement in sex trafficking but concealed this information from other bank executives. Despite this claim, federal District Judge Jed Rakoff issued a ruling May 1 that JPMorgan could be found liable for damages if the plaintiffs could prove that Staley or other bank officers knew of Epstein's exploitation of young girls.

Given the existence of internal emails, uncovered in the lawsuits, in

which mid-level JPMorgan employees discussed Epstein's indictment in 2006 and subsequent guilty plea to one count of soliciting, this should be easy to demonstrate. JPMorgan compliance staff warned executives about Epstein, and they reclassified his accounts as "high risk," the Virgin Islands lawsuit claims.

In 2010, a compliance officer sent an email to an executive that read: "See below new allegations of an investigation related to child trafficking—are you still comfortable with this client who is now a registered sex offender." The bank continued to profit from Epstein's accounts for another three years, and bank officials met with him regularly for four years after that, according to his private diary.

The list of those who have already given depositions in the Virgin Islands suits is a who's who of billion-dollar fortunes. They include Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google; Thomas Pritzker, executive chairman of Hyatt Hotels, cousin of Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and brother of Obama Education Secretary Penny Pritzker; Michael Ovitz, former CEO of Disney; Leon Black, Wall Street financier; and Mortimer Zuckerman, real estate mogul and publisher.

JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon, himself a billionaire, has been subpoenaed. On April 25, Judge Rakoff ordered him to set aside two entire days to give sworn testimony in the suits. At least 20 lower-level bank officials have already given depositions, according to reports in the *Journal* and the *Business Insider* website.

The suits have become the subject of a vicious conflict within top circles in the US Virgin Islands. Governor Albert Bryan, a Democrat who once approved "lucrative tax benefits" for an Epstein-owned company, according to the *New York Times*, fired Attorney General Denise George on December 31, 2022, four days after she filed the lawsuit against JPMorgan Chase. In March of this year, he removed her interim successor, Deputy Attorney General Carol Thomas-Jacobs, by appointing her to a judgeship. Assistant Attorney General Ariel Smith is now interim attorney general, but the lawsuit continues.

Significantly, there has been almost no reporting of the Virgin Islands suits and the high-profile depositions in the corporate media aligned with the Democratic Party, particularly the *New York Times*. This is in keeping with the role of the *Times* in relation to Epstein's death in prison, where the newspaper unquestioningly parroted the declarations of prison officials that he had died by suicide, despite the contrary evidence uncovered by his family, who hired longtime medical examiner Dr. Michael Baden to conduct a second autopsy.

The *Times* continues its silence on this topic even as the federal Department of Justice refuses to release its final report on Epstein's death. A lengthy article in *Business Insider* March 14 documented the complaints of lawyers for Epstein's victims and of Mark Epstein, Epstein's brother and next of kin, that the DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz has still not released a final report, some three and a half years after the alleged suicide.

Mark Epstein said he still had not been able to obtain some medical records, including the report by the EMTs who were called to the scene when Epstein was found hanging from a rolled-up sheet in his cell. The two critical questions—how did Epstein die, and how did the prison staff in the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) allow it?—have not been answered, the *Business Insider* account declared. The report continues:

Within those questions are a number of smaller mysteries, still unresolved. Why was Epstein's body moved after his death, in violation of jail protocol? If his body was found hours

after he already died, why did paramedics try to push air into his lungs? If he hanged himself, why does Baden believe the bone fractures in his neck were more consistent with strangling? Why would he tear strips of bedsheets to make a noose instead of using the cord of his sleep-apnea machine? Why weren't the cameras watching his cellblock working the day he died? Who else was incarcerated in the same block, and did they see anything?

Two MCC prison guards were fired for failing to regularly check on Epstein, as required, particularly given a previous suicide attempt. The Bureau of Prisons shut down the MCC in August 2021 and transferred all the inmates to other prisons.

In a separate criminal case, Nicholas Tartaglione, the former cellmate of Epstein's, who was moved out just before the alleged suicide, was convicted April 6 of four counts of murder. A policeman turned drug dealer, Tartaglione killed Martin Luna, subordinate in the drug ring whom he suspected of stealing money, and three nephews whom Luna had brought to a meeting as reinforcements.

Tartaglione was in the cell during the first "suicide" attempt by Epstein, and the selection of such a prisoner, charged with crimes involving torture and execution-style killings, to share quarters with Epstein, raises many unanswered questions.

It appears that the reports in the *Wall Street Journal*, owned by ultra-right billionaire Rupert Murdoch, and in *Business Insider*, owned by the Axel Springer media group, publisher of several Murdoch-style right-wing tabloids in Germany, are part of a ferocious conflict within the ruling elite.

The *Journal* report comes only two weeks after Murdoch was forced to agree to a \$787 million payment to Dominion Voting Systems to settle a lawsuit over slanders against the company promoted by Fox News after the November 2020 US presidential election, which provided political fuel for Trump's attempted coup against Congress on January 6, 2021.

Viewers of *Succession* will have no difficulty in recognizing the methods employed in the largely subterranean conflict within this narrow and infinitely corrupt social stratum—perhaps 2,000 billionaires who actually rule America. Here everyone knows everyone (including their vices and weaknesses), but a mutual amnesty usually keeps such information out of the public domain.

And there is little doubt that some scenes in the film *Eyes Wide Shut*, which depict depravity and violence among wealthy New Yorkers, are inspired by a reality that goes much further.



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