

As cover-up of deceased billionaire's sex trafficking operation continues

JPMorgan Chase settles with victims of Jeffrey Epstein for \$290 million

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JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the U.S., reached a tentative settlement on Monday with victims of deceased billionaire, sex trafficker and abuser of underage girls Jeffrey Epstein.

The bank and lawyers for the victims issued a statement saying JPMorgan agreed to pay \$290 million to resolve a class action lawsuit that they considered, “is in the best interests of all parties, especially the survivors who were the victims of Epstein’s terrible abuse.” The settlement amounts to less than eight tenths of one percent of the bank’s \$38 billion in revenue in the first quarter of 2023.

The lawsuit was filed last November in Manhattan federal court by a woman identified as Jane Doe 1 on behalf of the teenage girls and young women who were abused by Epstein over a 15-year period.

Her lawsuit argued that JPMorgan facilitated Epstein’s criminal sex trafficking operation by allowing him to continue making large cash withdrawals even after his depraved activities were widely known. Epstein used some of this money to pay his victims.

In 2008, Jeffrey Epstein pleaded guilty to state charges in Florida of procuring for prostitution a girl below the age of 18. He served 13 months of an 18-month prison sentence that included an unlocked cell door and “work release” of up to 12 hours per day, six days per week.

The sentence and location of his imprisonment in a private wing of the Palm Beach County Stockade were part of an elaborate non-prosecution agreement negotiated by U.S. Justice Department officials that

dismissed the complaints of as many as three dozen girls who said Epstein had abused them.

At least eight civil lawsuits were filed against Epstein in connection with his sex trafficking operation between his 2008 conviction and his death under suspicious circumstances on August 9, 2019. Many of these cases were either settled by Epstein out of court or remain unresolved.

Epstein held accounts with JPMorgan beginning in 1998 and became one of the bank’s largest revenue producers by referring clients to its “private wealth division.” Epstein exclusively managed the funds of individuals with a net worth of \$1 billion or more. JPMorgan maintained its relationship with Epstein until 2013.

On July 6, 2019, Epstein was arrested in New Jersey on charges that he trafficked dozens of girls as young as 14 at his apartment in Manhattan, his mansion in Palm Beach and his private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Less than one month after his arrest, Epstein was found dead in his Manhattan jail cell from injuries consistent with strangling. However, his death was found by the New York City medical examiner to have been suicide by hanging.

A central aspect of the lawsuit against JPMorgan was exposing the degree to which those at the multi-trillion-dollar bank—as well as other wealthy individuals in and around the bank—who knew and interacted with Epstein were aware of his criminal enterprise. With announcement of the settlement on Monday, the terms of which must still be approved by the court, many of the details about the relationship of Epstein with the

U.S. financial elite will remain concealed.

Meanwhile, the settlement permits JPMorgan to avoid admission of liability and pretend that no one at the bank knew anything about Epstein's corruption and abuse of underage girls. The actual number of women participating in the class-action lawsuit, which is estimated to be more than 100, is also being concealed.

A significant factor in JPMorgan's settlement, which is considered "minuscule" by financial experts, was the fact that top executives of the bank including CEO Jamie Dimon were deposed and forced to testify under oath.

In his 416-page deposition, Dimon claimed that an email from Epstein's office that suggested he was scheduled to meet with the sex offender along with senior bank executive Jes Staley at Epstein's townhouse was not true. Dimon protested, "I have never had an appointment with Jeff Epstein. I've never met Jeff Epstein. I never knew Jeff Epstein. I never went to Jeff Epstein's house. I never had a meal with Jeff Epstein. I have no idea what they're referring to here." Dimon added, "I don't think Jeff Epstein ever arranged for me to meet with anybody, to my knowledge," he added.

Others who were subpoenaed in the lawsuit included Tesla founder Elon Musk and Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. They faced extensive questioning about Epstein's relationship with Microsoft founder Bill Gates for a charitable fund that never got off the ground.

Other disclosures from the case show that employees of the JPMorgan noted Epstein's activity was suspicious, while other documents show Epstein's easy access to top executives at the bank even after his 2008 guilty plea in Florida. A cache of emails and calendar entries reviewed by the *New York Times* showed that top bank executives were very close with Epstein. A spokesperson for JPMorgan dismissed these facts saying that personal contact between wealthy clients and bank executives is not uncommon.

In May, Deutsche Bank agreed to pay \$75 million to settle a lawsuit brought by women who accused Epstein of sexual abuse. The class-action lawsuit was filed late last year with the victims accusing the German bank of knowingly providing funds for the operation of a large sex-trafficking ring, made possible by cash disbursements supported by the bank. The lead plaintiff

is described in court documents as "Jane Doe 1."

Another lawsuit by the attorney-general of Virgin Islands against JPMorgan, based on information the territory had gathered during litigation with Epstein's estate, is pending. The US territory said its investigation revealed that the financial services giant enabled Epstein's recruiters to pay victims and was "indispensable to the operation and concealment of the Epstein trafficking enterprise."

The Virgin Islands is seeking to recoup tens of millions in tax benefits it had awarded to Epstein's businesses based in St. Thomas.

The Virgin Islands' relationship with Epstein is itself revealing. The islands' government awarded lucrative tax breaks to his businesses in 2012 and eased travel restrictions for the sex offender after a request from his lawyers. As a sex offender, Epstein was required by law to notify authorities of his travel plans, but the notice was cut to one day from three weeks by the Virgin Islands' attorney general at the time, according to the documents reviewed by the *Times*.



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