

Justice Department report fails to substantiate the suicide narrative of Jeffrey Epstein's death in federal custody

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30 June 2023

The US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on Tuesday released a long-awaited report summarizing its investigation into the August 10, 2019 death of billionaire financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein while he was in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in New York City.

The main purpose of the OIG report was to uncritically bolster the findings of Chief New York Medical Examiner Dr. Barbara Sampson the day after Epstein was found at 6:30 a.m. unresponsive in his cell at the Manhattan Correctional Center (MCC) and pronounced dead at 7:36 a.m. at New York Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital.

The executive summary of the OIG report states, “On August 11, 2019, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner performed an autopsy and determined the cause of death was hanging and the method was suicide.”

The OIG report fails to address in any substantial manner the widespread public belief that Jeffrey Epstein was murdered to prevent him from exposing others within the financial, political and celebrity elite who were participants in, and/or facilitators of, his sex trafficking operation.

The report states, “The Medical Examiner who performed the autopsy told the OIG that Epstein’s injuries were consistent with suicide by hanging and that there was no evidence of defensive wounds that would be expected if his death had been a homicide.”

The OIG does not address itself to the independent autopsy conducted on behalf of Epstein’s family by forensic pathologist Dr. Michael Baden, who determined in October 2019 that the injuries suffered by Epstein, such as his fractured hyoid bone, “points to homicide rather than suicide.”

Instead, the OIG report moves quickly onto an analysis of the “job performance and management failures on the part of BOP personnel,” and “widespread disregard of BOP policies that are designed to ensure that inmates are safe, secure and in good health.” It presents these failures as the reasons why Epstein was able to take his own life.

Among the “failures” acknowledged by the OIG are the fact that Epstein was left alone in his jail cell with a surplus of bed linens on the night of his death; that nearly every surveillance camera on his unit did not record what was happening outside cells, despite a purported suicide attempt two weeks earlier; and that Epstein was

not checked on regularly, as required by BOP procedures.

As is stated in the OIG Executive Summary:

The combination of negligence, misconduct, and outright job performance failures documented in this report all contributed to an environment in which one of the BOP’s most notorious inmates was provided with the opportunity to take his own life, resulting in numerous questions being asked about the circumstances of his death, how it could have been allowed to happen, and most importantly, depriving his numerous victims, many of whom were underage girls at the time of the alleged crimes, of their ability to seek justice through the criminal justice system.

The OIG’s reference to Epstein’s victims is for public relations purposes only, since the report provides no new information about the criminal enterprise that the billionaire was running, with the tacit support of both his wealthy friends and federal law enforcement officials, for at least 15 years.

The report does not bother to mention, for example, that it was the DoJ—specifically US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida Alexander Acosta—that intervened in 2008 to arrange a non-prosecution agreement with Epstein that effectively blocked a probe into his sex crimes involving at least three dozen victims.

In any event, the 128-page OIG report offers a series of “recommendations to the BOP to address the numerous issues identified during our investigation and review.” Among these are calls for the BOP to address staffing shortages, to adequately train the staff on cell inspections, to ensure security cameras are functioning properly, and, above all, to develop procedures for protecting inmates who are on suicide watch.

It must be stated that, even if Jeffrey Epstein did commit suicide—and this has by no means been proven conclusively by the Department of Justice—the facts presented in the OIG report demonstrate that the BOP staff at MCC and, by extension, the US government, facilitated it.

It has been established during numerous lawsuits brought against the deceased billionaire’s estate that Jeffrey Epstein had many relationships with individuals within the ruling establishment in

the US and around the world who were well aware of his criminal sex trafficking of underage girls, and in some cases participated in it.

Among the significant individuals with known connections to Jeffrey Epstein are Bill Clinton, Donald Trump, Britain's Prince Andrew, Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, Elon Musk and Bill Gates.

These revelations came to a head recently in a class action lawsuit brought by some of Epstein's victims against JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the US, which continued to do business with the billionaire long after his depraved criminal activities became public knowledge. In the end, to prevent further revelations about the bank's collaboration with and financial support for the sex trafficker Epstein and to avoid admitting any wrongdoing whatsoever, JPMorgan settled out of court with the group of victims for a reported \$290 million.

The wealthy and well-connected Jeffrey Epstein was arrested on July 6, 2019 by federal and New York City police at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey on numerous sex trafficking charges. He pleaded not guilty on July 8, and, after his request for pretrial release—including an offer to post \$100 million bond—was denied on the grounds that he posed a danger to the public and was a serious flight risk, Epstein was jailed at MCC, awaiting his trial.

The events of July 23, 2019, when Epstein was found injured and semiconscious at 1:30 a.m. on the floor of his cell and with marks on his neck, are critical to the narrative that the billionaire killed himself. His cellmate, referred to in the OIG report as Inmate 1, was former New York City police officer Nicholas Tartaglione, who was awaiting trial on four counts of murder. Tartaglione has maintained that he had no knowledge of what happened to Epstein that night and he was officially cleared of any wrongdoing by the BOP within days of the event.

However, the OIG report says the billionaire stated multiple times that he believed someone had tried to kill him that morning, and the last thing he remembered was going for a drink of water at 1:00 a.m. before he woke up on the floor. Epstein said he could not remember exactly what happened on July 23.

Meanwhile, there is a glaring contradiction in the report that is not addressed in the OIG executive summary or the conclusion. This has to do with the extensive details about Epstein's mental health condition in Chapter 4 of the report, entitled, "Custody and Care of Epstein Prior to His Death."

From the day he arrived at MCC, Epstein was screened and evaluated repeatedly by medical and psychological professionals. The report says numerous times that Epstein "denied having a history of mental health treatment and any history of mental health symptoms," and "denied passive or active suicidal ideation."

As standard procedure, Epstein was initially placed on "psychological evaluation status," and he was given a psychological care rating of level 1, which means that "they have no needs and will not be followed up with unless requested by staff or the inmates."

On July 11, the report notes that Epstein and his attorney, with whom he met on nearly a daily basis while at MCC, were laughing at the fact that the chief psychologist "was inquiring as to whether Epstein was suicidal and dismissing the possibility that Epstein

could be suicidal."

After the incident on July 23, Epstein was placed on suicide watch. However, he was removed from suicide watch a day later and then, after he was seen by the chief psychologist daily between July 25 and 29, he was removed from psychological observation altogether on July 30, following an evaluation in which Epstein "identified reasons to live and was future-oriented."

All of this is consistent with information on Epstein's "clear mental status" days before his death, derived from documents in the JPMorgan Chase lawsuit obtained by the Associated Press in early June. It is also consistent with the statements of Epstein's lawyers shortly after his death, who said that he was looking forward to pursuing his legal defense and showed no indications of suicidal tendencies.

Responding to the conclusions in the OIG report, which took four years for the US Justice Department to produce, Mark Epstein, brother of the deceased billionaire, told the *Insider* on Tuesday, "It doesn't make sense."

Mark Epstein said the marks on his brother's neck were inconsistent with suicidal hanging, stating that "if he was hanging from the way they said, that doesn't match up to where the broken bones are in his neck." He added, "What most likely happened is that those marks are probably because he got either punched or a karate chop into the neck by whoever killed him. Because that's a technique they use to incapacitate people that they're going to eliminate. That makes much more sense."

The corporate media has dutifully picked up the conclusions of the OIG report and repeated them without a word of criticism. The *New York Times*, for example, begins its report by saying Jeffrey Epstein "died by suicide, not foul play—after a cascade of negligence and mismanagement at the now-shuttered federal jail in Manhattan where he was housed, according to the Justice Department's inspector general."



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