

Trump twists and turns over Epstein investigation

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More evidence is coming to light of the desperate efforts by the Trump White House to suppress any investigation into the connections between Trump and convicted sex-trafficker and billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein.

The Associated Press reported Saturday that Vice President JD Vance traveled to Montana last Tuesday for a meeting with media billionaire Rupert Murdoch, his son Lachlan, who heads both Fox News and News Corp, and executives of Fox News, the right-wing cable network that has been a political mainstay for Trump's fascist MAGA political movement.

Vance reportedly arrived in Butte, Montana, near the Murdoch family estate in Dillon, around 2:30 p.m. local time, or 4:30 Eastern time. He left a few hours later, according to flight records for the movements of Air Force Two, his official plane. This means that Vance was meeting the Murdochs and their top aides just as the *Wall Street Journal*, the flagship of News Corp., was preparing a major exposé on Trump's links to Epstein.

That same evening, *Journal* reporters spoke with Trump directly about their story, which revealed that Trump contributed a salacious letter and drawing to a 50th birthday book for Epstein that was compiled by his then-partner and accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell. Maxwell is now serving a 20-year prison term for her role in facilitating Epstein's trafficking of under-age girls to powerful and wealthy men.

There is little doubt that Vance was dispatched by Trump to make a final plea to the Murdochs to block the publication of the damning report. When this failed, Trump threatened the *Journal* reporters over the phone that he would sue the newspaper and seek to put it out of business. After the report was posted on the *Journal*'s website Thursday evening, Trump's lawyers

then filed a suit Friday seeking \$10 billion in damages.

The Associated Press report follows the revelation Friday by Democratic Senate Minority Whip Richard Durbin that hundreds of FBI employees were assigned to review the bureau's massive files on the Epstein investigation, searching for any mention of Trump. In letters to Attorney General Pam Bondi, FBI Director Kash Patel, and Deputy FBI Director Dan Bongino, Durbin wrote:

According to information my office received, the FBI was pressured to put approximately 1,000 personnel in its Information Management Division (IMD) ... on 24-hour shifts to review approximately 100,000 Epstein-related records in order to produce more documents that could then be released on an arbitrarily short deadline ...

This effort, which reportedly took place from March 14 through the end of March, was haphazardly supplemented by hundreds of FBI New York Field Office personnel, many of whom lacked the expertise to identify statutorily-protected information regarding child victims and child witnesses or properly handle FOIA requests ... My office was told that these personnel were instructed to "flag" any records in which President Trump was mentioned.

Note the timing of this review: It followed only weeks after Bondi's declaration on Fox News that Epstein's "client list" was on her desk for review. Last week, after the Justice Department issued a statement declaring that there was no client list, Bondi tried to

walk back her earlier statement, saying that she was referring to the Epstein file as a whole, not a list of customers for Epstein's sex-trafficking operation, which abused at least 1,000 girls.

The Justice Department statement also claimed that Epstein's death in prison in August 2019 was undoubtedly a suicide, and that the department had no further information to make public on the case, even though not a single perpetrator of sexual abuse of minors has been prosecuted, other than Maxwell, whose main role was as a procurer and supplier.

The attempt to put an end to the Epstein case has had an explosive effect, at least initially, in Trump's fascist milieu. Trump issued a series of diatribes on social media, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, denouncing his own supporters for demanding greater transparency on the Epstein case.

His most absurd claim was that the Epstein files had been created by Obama, Clinton, Biden and other Democrats, although he and his fascist acolytes have been peddling the opposite story—that Clinton and the Democrats were the principal clientele being serviced by Epstein—for a number of years.

In the end, the most damaging and persuasive material may be uncovered through the investigation into Epstein's financial affairs, which were extensive and connected him to many of the most powerful US financial institutions and an array of billionaires. Epstein made his own fortune managing the personal wealth of Leslie Wexner, founder-owner of The Limited, the giant holding company for clothing stores and lines like Victoria's Secret.

According to Democratic Senator Ron Wyden, ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee:

Treasury's Epstein file details 4,725 wire transfers adding up to nearly \$1.1 billion flowing in and out of just ONE of Epstein's bank accounts. If you ask me, that's 4,725 potential lines of investigation right there. Hundreds of millions more flowed through other accounts—that's even more to investigate. The file shows Epstein used multiple Russian banks, which are now under sanctions, to process payments related to sex trafficking. ... Again, these are all potential leads the

Department of Justice ought to be digging into. This is about years and years of international sex trafficking. None of this is a hoax. None of it is a scam. It's insulting to the intelligence of the American people when Trump and Bondi say there's nothing here to investigate.

According to an initial account by the *New York Times*, Senate investigators found that after Epstein's second arrest on sex-trafficking charges, in July 2019, "filings by four big banks flagged more than \$1.5 billion in transactions—including thousands of wire transfers for the purchase and sale of artwork for rich friends, fees paid to Mr. Epstein by wealthy individuals, and payments to numerous women ... A few transactions red-flagged were for as much as \$100 million."

The *Times* identified the banks as JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Bank of New York Mellon, and Deutsche Bank.

It is significant that the Biden administration did nothing to pursue the Epstein issue during its four years in office. This demonstrates the bipartisan desire to cover up the extent of the sex-trafficking operation and protect the hundreds of members of the financial oligarchy who were implicated as Epstein's clients, and the abusers of the young girls he made available to them.



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