

New analysis of jail video raises questions about supposed Epstein suicide

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According to a report by CBS News broadcast Tuesday, the 11 hours of video released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation earlier this month, showing the time leading up to the discovery of the body of convicted sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein in August 2019, contradicts statements made by Justice Department officials at the time, as well as more recently.

The grainy silent video depicts the final hours before Epstein was, according to official accounts, found hanged in his cell on August 9, 2019. The camera shows the doorway into two adjacent cells, as well as a work area where prison guards were stationed throughout that time. During that night, the guards did not carry out the wellness checks they were supposed to perform every half hour on Epstein, who had been on suicide watch after a previous supposed attempt.

Despite claims by then-Attorney General William Barr, echoed recently by FBI Director Kash Patel and Deputy Director Dan Bongino, the recording “doesn’t provide a clear view of the entrance to Epstein’s cell block—one of several contradictions between officials’ descriptions of the video and the video itself.” The report continues:

CBS News also digitally reconstructed the Special Housing Unit, or SHU, where Epstein was held, using diagrams and descriptions from the 2023 report on Epstein released by the Justice Department inspector general. The CBS News review found the video does little to provide evidence to support claims that were later made by federal officials. Additionally, CBS News has identified multiple inconsistencies between that report and the video that raise serious questions about the accuracy of witness statements and the thoroughness of the government’s investigation.

The CBS review does not directly disprove the claim that Epstein’s death was a suicide, but it “raises questions about the strength and credibility of the government’s investigation, which appears to have drawn conclusions from the video that are not readily observable,” the report said.

By comparing the video with the diagram of the SHU, CBS found that someone could enter the tier on which Epstein’s cell was located without being observed. Even Epstein’s own entrance to his cell, placed at just before 8:00 p.m., cannot be documented from the video. This means that the claim that no one approached Epstein’s cell depends on the testimony of two prison staff, at least one of whom was seen to have fallen asleep during the night shift.

CBS quoted Jim Stafford, a video forensics expert: “To say that there’s no way that someone could get to that—the stair up to his room—without being seen is false.” CBS reported that four other “leading video forensics experts” it interviewed agreed with Stafford’s analysis.

At about 10:40 p.m. “an orange shape is seen moving up the stairs leading to Epstein’s tier,” CBS reported. While the Office of Inspector General identified this as a corrections officer, the video forensic experts consulted by CBS “were skeptical about that interpretation and suggested that the shape could be a person dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit climbing the stairs.”

The expert analysis of the video released by the FBI found that the file was actually first created on May 23, 2025, nearly six years after Epstein’s death, and was likely a screen capture of two pieces of the original video, stitched together. The two pieces had different aspect ratios (the ratio of the width to the height of the image).

The so-called “missing minute” about midnight, where the video was spliced, is actually three to four minutes, according to separate analyses by *Wired* magazine and CBS. Then at 12:05 a.m., an unidentified person is seen

on the video, who was not mentioned in the official OIG report.

The CBS report concluded: “Mark Epstein, Jeffrey Epstein’s younger brother, has long voiced his belief that his brother did not die by suicide, but was murdered. He spoke with CBS News and said without a recording of the camera in the actual tier where Epstein was housed, it is unclear if the door to his brother’s prison cell had been properly locked or if other prisoners could have had access.”

The damning questions posed by the CBS report come as the political crisis over the Epstein affair continues to rock the White House and Congress. Trump was repeatedly questioned about the release of the Epstein files and his relationship with the late sex-trafficker during his trip to Britain, and his responses were angry and dismissive, but also damaging.

At one point, he blurted out that he ended his relationship with Epstein because the financier, who had a home in Palm Beach near Mar-a-Lago, was hiring employees away from Trump’s resort, including a young spa attendant, Virginia Giuffre, who later became a key witness against Epstein. Giuffre’s father worked at Mar-a-Lago and he got her a summer job as a spa attendant. The young woman committed suicide in April of this year.

Trump also declared, using remarkable language that aroused both ridicule and serious questioning, that he had never gone to Epstein’s private island in the Caribbean, one of the locations where he conducted his sexual abuse of young girls. “I never had the privilege of going to his island, and I did turn it down,” Trump said.

On Wednesday, Senate Democrats issued a letter citing the so-called “rule of five,” a provision in federal law empowering any five members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to compel the production of federal government records for investigative purposes. The letter was sent to the Justice Department, signed by all seven Democrats on the committee as well as Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

This rule was established by law in 1928 and has been used infrequently, but it is a legal provision rather than a Senate rule, and therefore presumably binding on the executive branch. No president has challenged its use.

Schumer made a demagogic attack on Trump at a press briefing Wednesday which presented the letter. He noted that Trump had raised the Epstein question during his 2024 presidential campaign and promised to release all the Epstein files, while suggesting this would damage the

Democrats.

“Trump was asked earlier this month if he had ever been informed whether or not he was mentioned in the Epstein files, and now we know he lied,” Schumer said. “He said no, but in fact he was told by the Attorney General in May that he was mentioned. And when the House had an opportunity to take votes on the Epstein files, Speaker Johnson skedaddled out of town, launching the Epstein recess.”

Meanwhile, a court filing Tuesday evening revealed that the grand jury transcripts in the case involving Epstein’s principal accomplice, Ghislaine Maxwell, contain the testimony of only two witnesses, one a federal agent and the other a New York police detective. Both were giving summaries of victim statements, but none of the victims actually testified.

Trump ordered the Justice Department to seek release of the grand jury transcripts from the judges who heard the charges against Maxwell, but this latest news underscores the performative character of that gesture. Neither of the cops could implicate Trump in Epstein’s operations.

On Monday, attorneys for Maxwell filed a motion with the US Supreme Court asking the justices to hear an appeal of her 2021 sex-trafficking conviction. They cited the sweetheart deal which Epstein received in 2008 from the US Attorney for South Florida, Alexander Acosta, which provided both a lenient sentence for Epstein on the charge of solicitation the prostitution of a minor, and also prohibited charges against any potential co-conspirators. This prohibition should have been applied to Maxwell, they argued.

In his first term, Trump named Acosta to head the Department of Labor, but Acosta was forced to resign in 2019 after Epstein was arrested and charged a second time for sex-trafficking.



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