US corporate media slanders anger over Epstein cover-up as “conspiracy theories”

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17 February 2026

More than six years after Jeffrey Epstein died in a federal jail cell, the US government remains engaged in a sweeping cover-up. Millions of documents related to Epstein’s criminal enterprise remain unreleased. Charging records from the 2008 Florida case and the 2019 federal prosecution are still being withheld. The Department of Justice has refused to unredact the names of Epstein’s associates and co-conspirators, in defiance of the law governing the document release. Even the so-called “unredacted” files remain inaccessible to the public and are viewable only by a small number of members of Congress, where they are still redacted in any case.

At the same time, the Justice Department claims it has found no evidence of a broader criminal network and has brought forward not a single new charge, despite documentary proof that Epstein continued to operate internationally after his 2008 conviction for soliciting prostitution from a minor.

Under these conditions, the major US newspapers have intervened to contain growing mass anger over the Epstein cover-up. In a coordinated fashion, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have sought to recast mounting outrage over Epstein’s crimes and his protection by the ruling class as a problem of “conspiracy theories,” thereby shielding the financial oligarchy and the police institutions that covered up his criminality.

A recent *New York Times* article in its Epstein series, “The Epstein Files and the Hidden World of an Unaccountable Elite,” published February 12, provides a textbook example of this method.

The article, written by Robert Draper, begins with admissions that demolish years of official denials. “In unsparing detail,” Draper writes, “the documents lay bare the once-furtive activities of an unaccountable elite, largely made up of rich and powerful men from business, politics, academia and show business.” The files, he continues, “tell a story of a heinous criminal given a free ride by the ruling class in which he dwelled.”

The *Times* situates Epstein’s impunity within the broader social crisis produced by American capitalism, noting that his “Caligula-like antics” unfolded amid “rising populist anger and ever-growing inequality,” the collapse of manufacturing, and the subprime mortgage crisis that cost millions of workers their homes. It catalogs Epstein’s documented relationships with former President Bill Clinton, billionaires such as Elon Musk, senior financiers, royalty and political operatives across the globe.

Having established this factual record, however, the article abruptly reverses course. The same revelations, the *Times* claims, “have done nothing to quiet the conspiracy theories that his behavior spawned,” instead fueling “feverish new speculation with little or no factual basis.”

Among the supposed “conspiracies” is Epstein’s death in federal custody, which has been accepted uncritically by the media as a suicide. Newly released video logs from the Metropolitan Correctional Center show an unaccounted-for figure moving toward Epstein’s cell on the night of his death. Rather than grappling with the implications of this evidence, the *Times* dismisses doubts as the work of “internet sleuths,” reiterating the official ruling, which no one believes, of suicide.

This framing collapses under minimal scrutiny. As reported by CBS News, both the FBI and the Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General had already logged the unidentified orange-clad figure in their internal timelines years ago, while refusing to disclose this publicly. Senior officials repeatedly suggested that no one approached Epstein’s cell. Dan Bongino, then in FBI leadership, explicitly stated that the footage confirmed no one else entered the cell block. That claim is now demonstrably false.

More than six years after Epstein’s death, the government has still failed to identify the alleged ligature used in the supposed suicide. The breakdown of surveillance cameras, guard staffing, recordkeeping and evidence preservation has never been explained. Forensic doubts raised by Dr. Michael Baden, who stated that Epstein’s neck injuries were “extremely unusual in suicidal hangings” and consistent with homicidal strangulation, have been brushed aside.

Another “conspiracy” the *Times* identified is Epstein’s influence among the ruling class in the US and internationally. Despite documenting Epstein’s “remarkable web of connections,” the *Times* nevertheless insists that his “influence on American policymaking was negligible.” His associates, the paper claims, were “farther down the food chain,” and “notably absent” were prosecutors, judges or law enforcement officials who could have protected him.

This argument collapses under the *Times*’ own reporting. Within 24 hours, the paper documented a “friendly, and transactional” relationship between Epstein and Thorbjørn Jagland, a former prime minister of Norway and head of the Nobel Committee, a relationship that has since led to criminal corruption charges in Norway. The *Times* also reported on the resignation of Kathryn Ruemmler, Goldman Sachs’ top lawyer and a former Obama White House counsel, after documents revealed she advised Epstein on managing media scrutiny and his response to sex crime allegations while receiving gifts, travel and career assistance.

Taken together with the resignation of Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, the billionaire head of DP World, the picture is unmistakable. Epstein maintained intimate, transactional relationships with senior government officials, global financiers and corporate legal architects long after his 2008 conviction. That the *New York Times* can

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document these relationships while asserting that Epstein's influence was "negligible" exposes the political function of the "conspiracy theory" smear.

In its February 13 article, "Conspiracy Theories Only Flourish With More Epstein Evidence," the *Times* escalates its effort to contain the fallout from the Epstein files by deploying a false equivalence, blaming both the "right" and the "left" for spreading "conspiracy theories." While right-wing figures are cited for advancing grotesque fantasies, the *Times* claims that left-leaning users have promoted conspiracies by accusing the Trump administration of covering up Epstein's crimes and death in order to protect the president.

The paper writes, "Left-leaning accounts circulated different theories, often accusing the Trump administration of having a hand in Mr. Epstein's death or of covering up his misdeeds to protect the president."

It is, in fact, not a conspiracy theory to state that the Trump administration is engaged in a cover-up. It is an objective fact, demonstrated by the administration's own actions. The Trump administration has redacted Trump's name and image from released materials, withheld documents placing him in contact with Epstein during periods of investigation, and allowed Trump to falsely claim the files exonerate him. Trump himself is named in tips to the FBI as a participant in sexual assault alongside Epstein. To describe accusations of a cover-up as "conspiracy theories" requires ignoring the documentary record.

Over the weekend, the *Washington Post* escalated the "conspiracy theory" smear by conflating exposure of the criminal ruling class with "antisemtism." In an article titled, "How the Epstein files are fueling antisemitic conspiracy theories," the *Washington Post* writes:

> Denunciations of out-of-touch elites and the 'money power' are a recurring feature of American politics. But in response to the Epstein files, antiestablishment voices have advanced the claim that Jewish networks and interests are corrupting American society.

Antisemitic slanders such as the medieval blood libel and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are reactionary lies. But the existence of such lies has nothing to do with the extensive documentary evidence that Epstein maintained close relationships with senior figures in the Israeli state and intelligence apparatus.

The *Post*'s method is to shift the axis of discussion from what is true to what is offensive, thereby immunizing state actors and intelligence agencies from accountability.

The paper cites grotesque statements by right-wing figures and then asserts guilt by association, extending the antisemitism charge to critics who have pointed to Epstein's documented ties to Israeli officials. For the *Post*, Matthew Schmitz, editor of the right-wing Compact, wrote:

> Progressive influencers got in on the act. Ana Kasparian, the host of a popular left-wing online news show, described Epstein's network as a "pedophile ring/Israeli blackmail operation." The month before, she asked an Israeli interlocutor, "Why are you monsters always slaughtering innocent children and shaking us down for money?" Briahna Joy Gray, former press secretary for Bernie Sanders, called Epstein's network a "ring of billionaire pedophiles with ties to Mossad" engaging in "full-on blackmail."

This paragraph performs the core maneuver of the *Post*'s article. Evidence that Epstein maintained relationships with senior Israeli officials, facilitated covert diplomacy or operated within intelligence-adjacent networks is not antisemitic, any more than opposition to the genocide in Gaza is. It is a matter of record reported by investigative outlets and corroborated by released documents.

Reporting by Drop Site News shows that Epstein facilitated back-channel diplomacy involving former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Russian President Vladimir Putin and US officials during the Syrian civil war. Leaked emails show Epstein advising Barak, arranging meetings, sharing intelligence-adjacent information and pressing for US military intervention against Iran and Syria. These are matters of state policy and intelligence operations, not religious identity.

To describe such reporting as antisemitic is itself a blatant slander. States are not religions. Intelligence agencies are not peoples. Exposing covert diplomacy, blackmail networks and imperialist maneuvering is not an attack on Jewish people. It is an exposure of the criminal ruling class.

That the *Washington Post* advances this smear is not accidental. The paper is owned by Jeff Bezos, has recently laid off hundreds of workers, functions as a long-standing conduit for US intelligence agencies and has played a central role in downplaying Israel's genocide in Gaza while advocating expanded military confrontation with Russia and China. Its attack on alleged antisemitism is a continuation of the Biden administration's campaign to criminalize opposition to US imperialism and suppress student protests against the slaughter in Gaza.

Taken together, the interventions by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* reveal a coordinated strategy to contain the Epstein revelations and protect the ruling class. Where the *Times* deploys the language of "conspiracy theory" to pathologize demands for accountability, the *Post* escalates to the antisemitism smear to shut down investigation into state and intelligence connections altogether. In both cases, the aim is the same: to sever documented facts from their political implications, delegitimize opposition and shield the institutions of wealth, intelligence and imperialist power that enabled Epstein's crimes and continue to block justice.

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