

# Judge forces unsealing of alleged Epstein “suicide note”

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A purported suicide note written by Jeffrey Epstein was released Wednesday by US District Judge Kenneth Karas in connection with the separate case of Nicholas Tartaglione, Epstein’s former cellmate, after a request from *The New York Times*.

The note remains unauthenticated with multiple outlets reporting that neither the Justice Department nor the court has verified that Epstein wrote it, and the BBC noted it has not been verified. The note is also not clearly a “suicide note” in any conventional sense—it is a scrawled, hard-to-read hand-written message on lined paper, without a signature, and its meaning is uncertain.

The text appears to read, in substance: “They investigated me for month— found nothing!!! So 15 year old charges resulted. time to say goodbye. No fun—not worth it!!” Other fragments from the same document include awkward, partially illegible phrases such as “It a treat be able one’s to say” and “Watch me to—Bust cryin.”

This language leads to the first obvious question: if the note is real, why was it never formally authenticated, and if it is not authenticated, why should it be treated as proof of Epstein’s state of mind just before his death on August 10, 2019?

Tartaglione claims he found the note after Epstein’s first alleged suicide attempt in July 2019, when the two were sharing a cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in Manhattan. According to reports, Tartaglione later said he discovered it tucked into a book, and his attorneys told the court they believed Epstein wrote it based on Tartaglione’s account and other writings found later in the cell.

But that explanation raises another obvious question: Why would an alleged suicide note be left in a book in a cell shared by a man then facing murder charges, and why did it not surface publicly until Tartaglione talked

about it years later?

The legal team for Tartaglione claims they used handwriting experts in late 2019 or early 2020 who concluded the writing on the note is a match with Epstein’s handwriting.

The *New York Times* sought release of the note because Tartaglione had been speaking publicly about the document, and Judge Karas found it was subject to the presumption of public access. The judge also accepted the argument that Tartaglione’s repeated public commentary waived any attorney-client protection over the document. That leaves a larger question: Why did the federal government apparently not know the note existed until this year, when it had been sitting inside a sealed court record since 2021?

Nicholas Tartaglione is a former New York police officer who was later convicted of the 2016 murders of Martin Luna, Miguel Luna, Urbano Santiago and Hector Gutierrez. He was sentenced in 2024 to four consecutive life terms. He was awaiting trial on those charges when he was selected to be Epstein’s cellmate in the MCC in July 2019.

Because the note surfaced in Tartaglione’s case file, it must be understood first as evidence in his criminal proceeding, not as an Epstein record. Tartaglione has long been a central figure in the death of Epstein because he was present during Epstein’s first alleged suicide attempt and later claimed to have found the note.

But being a cellmate does not by itself establish authenticity, and the court’s release of the note also fails to accomplish this. The most basic question remains unanswered: Who wrote it, when was it written, and how was it handled before it ended up in a sealed criminal file?

On July 23, 2019, Epstein was found injured in his

cell with marks on his neck, and he was placed on suicide watch. CBS reported that Epstein claimed Tartaglione attacked him, but former Attorney General Bill Barr later said in testimony that he viewed the incident as “an attempted suicide.” It has also been reported that Epstein later retracted his statements about being attacked by Tartaglione and said he could not remember exactly what happened.

That conflict is crucial because it shaped how officials interpreted Epstein’s mental state in the final weeks of his life. Epstein’s lawyers and family later questioned the circumstances around the alleged first attempt, while prison investigators concluded that Epstein was at risk and should have been managed more carefully.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that after the July 23 incident, Epstein was supposed to have a cellmate and be monitored under prison procedures, yet those safeguards were not in place. Another obvious question follows: If Epstein was on heightened watch, why was he later left without a cellmate at all?

The timeline after July 23 is one of escalating failure. Epstein was removed from suicide watch after several days, then later transferred back into conditions that should have included a cellmate. On August 9, his cellmate was transferred out, and Epstein was left alone overnight in violation of the Bureau of Prisons’ own procedures, according to the OIG.

He was found dead the next morning, August 10, 2019, in what authorities ruled a suicide.

Those facts make the newly released note especially combustible, because it seems to sit at the intersection of an apparent prior suicide attempt, a missing chain of custody, and a prison system that repeatedly failed to follow its own rules.

Until these basic questions are answered, the sudden appearance of a suicide note from an unrelated trial that can only be understood as further mystification of Epstein’s sex trafficking enterprise and the claim he committed suicide in his jail cell and blocking any genuine investigation into his accomplices.

Epstein was arrested at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey on July 6, 2019, after flying in from Paris, and then transferred to the MCC in Manhattan. Federal prosecutors charged him with sex trafficking and conspiracy based on allegations that he sexually abused underage girls and recruited others to do the same.

In 2008, Epstein was granted a non-prosecution agreement and pled guilty to minor charges in an unexplained Florida plea deal, after an intervention by then-Florida Attorney General Alex Acosta. This deal, which allowed Epstein to avoid being confronted in court by dozens of his victims, is part of the reason his arrest and pending case in 2019 drew intense public scrutiny.

The newly unsealed document from Tartaglione’s appeal case adds to the many inexplicable but established facts before and during the night of Epstein’s death, all of which call into question the finding by former-New York City Medical Examiner Dr. Barbara Sampson that he hanged himself with twisted bed sheets.

The missing surveillance video of his cell, the failure of prison guards to perform 30-minute checks of his cell along with the determination by Dr. Michael Baden during an independent autopsy that Epstein’s injuries, including fractures of the hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage, were more consistent with “homicidal strangulation” than “suicide by hanging,” all undermine the official suicide version of Epstein’s death.



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