

Who wanted Jeffrey Epstein dead?

By Patrick Martin
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Let's begin by stating the obvious: Jeffrey Epstein's violent death in a Manhattan jail cell prevents a trial or a plea deal that threatened to expose business associates and political enablers who made use of the services provided by his alleged sex-trafficking activities, or who profited from this and other sordid operations of the multimillionaire money manager.

Given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his death, the efforts of the media—and *The New York Times* in particular—to dismiss out of hand any suggestion that Epstein's death was the result of anything but a suicide reeks of a high-level cover-up. Whether he was strangled in a jail cell by a hired killer or was allowed to hang himself is almost beside the point.

Epstein's life came to a violent end while in the custody of the US government. This is an undeniable fact. Even if he committed suicide, the act could not have succeeded without the direct complicity of those who were responsible for his safety.

And while Epstein was accused of deplorable crimes, it should hardly be necessary to point out that he—yes, even Epstein—had the right to a vigorous defense at a trial. That his untimely death preempts and prevents the trial from taking place is a matter of staggering seriousness.

The suspicion of homicide is clearly justified. That Epstein was murdered—whether by an assailant or by the calculated enabling of his jail cell suicide—is far more plausible than the official account of what took place at the Metropolitan Correctional Center over the past three weeks. According to prison officials, Epstein was found hanged in his cell Saturday morning. His guards had neglected to perform their every-half-hour inspections during the night and only belatedly took a look at their prisoner at 6:30 a.m.

This came even though Epstein was arguably the most notorious prisoner currently in federal custody, with his arrest on sex-trafficking charges given saturation coverage in the New York and national media. Moreover, he had been placed on suicide watch from July 23, when he was found unconscious in his cell with marks on his neck, until July 31, when the special provisions, including 24/7 surveillance, were lifted without explanation.

Epstein's attorneys and other visitors said they saw no signs that the multimillionaire was in low spirits or likely to take his own life, and he had been participating in preparations for his legal defense in an upcoming trial for as much as 12 hours a day.

Investigations have now begun by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Attorney General William Barr, and the Justice Department inspector general, all of whom have ample reason to rig the result and cover up what really happened. So far, the most elementary facts have been withheld from the public. It has not been reported how and with what material Epstein was hanged, or whether there is a video recording of his cell that would show the alleged "suicide" or otherwise shed light on the physical circumstances of his death.

The legal and political circumstances of Epstein's death are a different matter; they strongly suggest that Epstein had become a danger to an entire section of the Wall Street and political elite, who had a powerful motive to silence him.

The media has quickly moved to denounce anyone who points to the obviously concocted character of the official story as the promoter of a "conspiracy theory."

The *New York Times* is aggressively promoting the official claims of suicide. The newspaper's editorial Sunday begins, "By apparently committing suicide in his Manhattan jail cell on Saturday morning, Jeffrey Epstein spared himself a lengthy trial that could have sent him to prison for the rest of his life on federal sex-trafficking charges."

The use of the word "apparently" is entirely out of place. In the absence of any details relating to this death, nothing is "apparent." The *Times* is simply conditioning the public to accept the suicide narrative without an urgently required criminal investigation into Epstein's death, which must be considered suspicious.

Furthermore, why does the *Times* state that Epstein was "spared" a trial? Do the editors have information that supports their assumption that Epstein did not want to have a trial? What about the possibility that his death "spares" other powerful and influential people from having their connections to Epstein's proven and alleged criminal activities, either sexual or financial, brought into the public

eye by a lengthy legal proceeding.

The editorial continues:

“Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department’s inspector general would open an investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Epstein’s death in federal custody. While Mr. Epstein will never face a legal reckoning, the investigations into his crimes, and those of others connected to him, must continue. His premature death shouldn’t stop law enforcement authorities from finishing the job that they finally took up seriously years after they should have.”

This is cynical claptrap: The *Times* knows full well that Epstein's death, without a trial or conviction (technically, Epstein dies an innocent man, at least on the most recent charges), will effectively end the investigation. There is no longer the danger of a plea deal, which Epstein's lawyers would certainly have attempted to negotiate in return for his testimony in trials of others whom he might have implicated in the alleged sex-trafficking ring.

The *Times* does not raise these obvious issues, let alone demand a criminal investigation and public hearings into the circumstances of Epstein's highly suspicious death.

Any elementary review of the facts makes clear that Epstein’s death must be treated as a criminal investigation. Only 24 hours before his death, more than 2,000 pages of documents were released by a Florida court in a civil suit brought by one of the women who has charged Epstein with enslaving her as a teenager as part of his systematic abuse of young girls. The woman filed a defamation suit against Epstein’s partner, Ghislaine Maxwell, who allegedly had acted as a procuress, recruiting teenage girls to service him.

Maxwell is herself a product of the super-rich milieu that vomited up Epstein. She is the daughter of the late British billionaire publisher Robert Maxwell, also the target of numerous allegations of fraud and other financial crimes.

In a grisly similarity, Robert Maxwell died under mysterious circumstances in 1991, when he allegedly fell off his yacht, the *Lady Ghislaine* (named after the daughter), and his naked body was found floating in the Atlantic Ocean several days later. The death was ruled accidental, although both suicide and homicide were widely suggested at the time.

The documents released Thursday named a number of prominent political and society figures as patrons of Epstein’s sex ring, including two top Democrats, former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and former governor and Clinton cabinet member Bill Richardson, a one-time presidential candidate, as well as Prince Andrew, second son of the Queen of England.

Whatever the truth of the allegations against these individuals, there is no question that Epstein was for many

years an integral part of the financial and political elite in the United States, hobnobbing with former presidents like Bill Clinton and future presidents—and equally corrupt billionaires—like Donald Trump.

Epstein was a Palm Beach neighbor of Trump, and some of the girls he abused were recruited at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort. That circumstance may account for Trump’s extraordinary response to the news of Epstein’s death, as he retweeted a right-wing supporter’s suggestion that Epstein was murdered at the orders of Bill Clinton.

The death of Epstein so obviously invites the assumption that this is a case of removing an inconvenient personality, one who could have implicated dozens if not hundreds of powerful people if he were finally brought to trial, that the official claim of suicide made possible by neglect on the part of low-ranking prison guards has been greeted with disbelief.

Epstein’s death evokes recollections of Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather*. If it was a suicide, one is reminded of the scene where a mafioso kills himself, at the suggestion of a consigliere, to atone for turning against the family and collaborating with the FBI. A more likely scenario comes from the same film: when the police guard is abruptly pulled from Don Corleone as he lies in a hospital bed, to facilitate his assassination.

The Epstein case, in all its criminal depravity, sheds light on the state of American capitalist society. The super-rich prey upon the poor and the vulnerable, using them as they wish. They make use of their connections to cover up their crimes, or, depending on the circumstances, arrange for the elimination of those former friends and associates whose activities have become an inconvenience or a danger.

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