

Still no explanation for death of Epstein in prison

By a reporter
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The warden of the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC), the federal prison in Manhattan where money manager and accused sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein died Saturday, has been transferred to a desk job in Philadelphia, while the two guards on duty at the time of Epstein's death have been placed on administrative leave.

Both actions came at the direction of US Attorney General William Barr, whose Department of Justice includes the Bureau of Prisons among its units. Barr has admitted that basic prison procedures were violated and claims to be pursuing a full investigation into "serious irregularities" surrounding Epstein's death.

The warden, Lamine N'Diaye, had only recently been appointed to run the MCC, the most important federal jail in the country, housing prisoners facing trial in federal courts in New York City. He will be sent to the Bureau of Prison's Northeast Regional Office in Philadelphia while a series of investigations unfold.

James Petrucci, warden of the federal prison in Otisville, New York, was named acting warden of the MCC. The Bureau of Prisons as a whole is also under an acting director, Hugh Hurwitz, and has not had a regularly appointed director since May 2018.

The two prison guards on duty at the secure housing unit (SHU) of MCC were asleep much of the night of Epstein's death and falsified log books to make it look as if they had checked on the prisoner regularly, every half an hour.

CBS News, citing unidentified "multiple sources," reported that the video surveillance cameras positioned to observe hallways in the prison contradicted the falsified entries made by the officers. The network also reported that Epstein's cellmate at the MCC had posted bail last Friday. Instead of moving in a replacement cellmate, MCC officials left Epstein alone in his cell

for at least 12 hours before he died.

The two guards, whose names have not been made public, were placed on leave Tuesday. They were said to have been working overtime the night of Epstein's death. One was a regular prison guard working a fifth straight night of voluntary overtime. The other was a former prison guard who had been promoted to a desk job five years before, but was filling in as a guard because of personnel shortages.

Press reports also claimed that the New York medical examiner had determined that the cause of Epstein's death was suicide by hanging, but was waiting "additional information" from the police before releasing the official finding.

Also Wednesday, one of Epstein's accusers, Jennifer Araoz, filed suit against four associates of Epstein—his former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell and three members of Epstein's personal staff—charging them with acting as accomplices in multiple sexual assaults by Epstein in his New York townhouse in 2001 and 2002, when Araoz was a young teenager.

Araoz's civil attorney, Dan Kaiser, told the press, "The pursuit of justice doesn't end" with Epstein's death. "Our nation should not tolerate this kind of abuse at the hands of the elite and the plutocrats," he said.

This is the first of multiple civil suits alleged victims are expected to bring against Epstein's estate or his associates, which are expected to produce a mass of new evidence about the extent of his sex-trafficking operation and could uncover the identities of powerful figures on Wall Street, in Washington and around the world who took part.

Among those linked to Epstein in recent press reports are the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, the former prime minister of Israel, Ehud

Barak, Prince Andrew, the second son of the Queen of England, clothing billionaire Leslie Wexner (whose fortune was managed by Epstein for nearly 15 years) and several prominent Democratic politicians.

Epstein's business and personal bankers were identified as JPMorgan Chase and Deutsche Bank, which maintained close ties with him even after his 2008 conviction for sex-trafficking in Florida, for which he served a nominal 13-month sentence during which he was allowed to work from his office 12 hours a day, six days a week. This arrangement was approved by the US attorney for South Florida at that time, Alexander Acosta, who was forced to resign from his position as Trump's secretary of labor last month after Epstein's most recent arrest.

President Trump has continued to make public suggestions that a full investigation into Epstein could implicate former President Bill Clinton. Referring to Epstein's estate in the Virgin Islands, Trump tweeted Tuesday, "You have to ask, did Bill Clinton go to the island? That's the question. If you find that out, you're gonna know a lot."

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