CBS’ 60 Minutes program raises questions on death of Jeffrey Epstein

By Kevin Reed
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On Sunday the CBS television news program 60 Minutes revealed important new details about the conditions before and after the death of millionaire sex offender Jeffrey Epstein in his jail cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in New York City on August 10. The details both substantiate and add to already existing evidence that Epstein did not commit suicide in his cell as determined by the New York Medical Examiner’s Office, but was, in fact, murdered.

The 14-minute CBS segment, titled “Inside Jeffrey Epstein’s Cell,” was presented by correspondent Sharyn Alfonsi and produced by Oriana Zill de Granados. In it, Alfonsi reviews exclusive photos and other evidence from inside Epstein’s prison cell on the morning of his death.

The most important revelations emerge in Alfonsi’s conversation with the well-known forensic pathologist Dr. Michael Baden. Alfonsi reviews photos—including pictures of Epstein’s extracted and fractured hyoid bone and crushed larynx, as well as up-close pictures of the deceased, including his toe tag and the strangulation injuries on his neck—from the autopsy conducted by the New York Medical Examiner on August 11.

In addition to the 60 Minutes TV segment, CBS published some of the photographs, a news article, a transcript of the broadcast and a five-minute supplementary video called “Jeffrey Epstein’s Autopsy: A Closer Look” on its website.

CBS reviewed hundreds of photos taken inside cell 220 at the MCC by the Medical Examiner’s Office on the morning of Saturday, August 10 after Epstein was found unresponsive and strangled to death. However, there are no photos of Epstein in the cell at 6:33 am, when prison guards found him.

The CBS report states: “Additional forensic pathologists ‘60 Minutes’ consulted say that knowing the position in which Epstein was found would clarify certain aspects of the autopsy, including the location of the ligature around his neck, injuries found on his body postmortem, and the way lividity settled, which is the way the blood pools after death.”

The report goes on: “Baden says he [Epstein] was rushed to an emergency room after guard Michael Thomas found him. But Baden believes, based on the autopsy, Epstein had been dead for two hours by then and he says the scene should have been treated as a crime scene, leaving the body alone.”

The photos show a prison cell in complete disarray, with a mattress and numerous orange prison bed sheets strewn on the floor. As the CBS report says: “[P]hotos from his jail cell also appear to show inconsistencies, including questions about whether investigators examined the correct ligature used in Epstein’s death.”

It continues: “At least two nooses were photographed lying on the floor of the cell, both appearing to be made from strips of orange bedsheets.

‘It doesn’t look like anybody ever took scissors to it,’ Alfonsi said. ‘So, there is some question—is that the right noose?’

“But photos of the noose taken in as evidence and presumably thought to be responsible for killing Epstein show both ends of the noose folded and hemmed, not cut. Sources have told 60 Minutes that the guard who found Epstein cut him down before trying to revive him.”

Alfonsi asks Dr. Baden if he thinks that there was foul play in Epstein’s death, to which he replies: “The forensic evidence released so far, including autopsy, point much more to murder and strangulation than the suicide and suicidal hanging. I hesitate to make a final opinion, until all the evidence is in.”

Baden reviews in detail the photographs of Epstein’s fractured hyoid bone and crushed thyroid cartilage of the larynx, and explains that in his experience, having reviewed more than 1,000 suicidal prison hangings, “I have never seen three fractures like this in a suicidal hanging.”

He explains that his job is to “find what the truth is: just to find out whether it’s a homicide or a suicide.” He adds that he has not received the information he needs to draw a conclusion.

The CBS report says, “The Justice Department told the
family, they say, that it won’t release the video pertaining to
the case and additional forensic testing because of the
ongoing criminal case against the two guards on duty the
night of Epstein’s death.

“The charges have also silenced the guards themselves.
Michael Thomas’s attorney Montell Figgins says Thomas
still hasn’t spoken to investigators or revealed how he,
alone, found Epstein’s body, a key piece of information in
any death investigation.”

In examining the photos of Epstein’s neck wounds from
the strangulation, the CBS report says that “the noose that
was sketched and included in the autopsy report doesn’t
appear to match the wounds on Epstein’s neck.”

It continues: “And Baden says the ligature mark was in the
middle of Epstein’s neck, not beneath the jawbone, as one
would expect in a hanging. Also puzzling to Baden is that
Epstein would make a noose out of a bedsheet when wires
and cords were present in his cell.” Epstein was permitted a
C-PAP machine in his cell—typically used for individuals
suffering from sleep apnea—that had a lengthy power cord.

A handwritten note was found inside Epstein’s cell that
included a list of complaints about the conditions in the
MCC, including that he had been locked in a shower stall for
one hour, that he had been served burnt food, and that giant
bugs were crawling across his hands in the cell. The CBS
report quotes Baden as saying, “If anyone thought Jeffrey
Epstein was suicidal, they wouldn’t have let him have a
ballpoint pen that could be used to harm himself or someone
else.”

CBS’s Alfonsi interviews Bruce Barket, the attorney for
Epstein’s original cellmate at MCC, Nick Tartaglione, the
brawny former police officer who was in jail awaiting trial
on charges of murdering four people. Barket describes the
Special Housing Unit of the prison where Epstein was
housed after he was sent there on July 6. He says that
someone of Epstein’s background was going to have a
“tough time in the general population” at MCC.

During the interview with Barket, Alfonsi notes that
“Epstein was directing money to be deposited in other
inmates’ commissary accounts in exchange for his
protection,” because he feared for his life. Although prison
authorities say Epstein tried to kill himself the first time on
July 23 while in the cell with Tartaglione, Epstein told his
lawyers he was assaulted by his cellmate. Barket says
smugly on camera, “It’s not just Nick says, ‘Absolutely
nothing happened.’ Absolutely nothing happened. No one
says that Nick tried to kill Epstein.”

Alfonsi interviews Cameron Lindsay, a former federal
prison warden, who attempts to substantiate the position of
the Department of Justice that Epstein committed suicide
because of a “perfect storm” of screw-ups by prison staff.

Lindsay says, “This was a monumental failure on all levels.
And that’s why it has fueled the conspiracies and I
understand that.”

CBS also interviews Tyrone Covington, the president of
the prison guard’s union. Covington says that the two
guards—Michael Thomas and Tova Noel—who have been
accused of not checking in on Epstein every 30 minutes per
protocol on the night of August 9 and the early morning of
August 10, are victims of scapegoating. He asserts, “When
you’re being forced to stay over shifts, not go home and see
your family, you start to see people take short cuts.”

It is not clear why CBS elected to broadcast the Epstein
segment on 60 Minutes when the overwhelming majority of
the corporate media has fully accepted the suicide
conclusion of the New York Medical Examiner’s Office and
Attorney General William Barr. Major news publications
such as the New York Times and the Washington Post have,
as of this writing, chosen not to report on the CBS findings.

From the day that Epstein was found dead in his cell and
reports began to emerge that he committed suicide,
corporate news organizations were quick to try and bring the
story to a conclusion. The New York Times, in particular,
sought to discredit widespread skepticism toward the claim
of suicide, arising from the fact that Epstein, a
multimillionaire Wall Street figure with links to well-known
political, corporate and media figures, was the most
prominent prisoner in the federal prison system at the time
of his death and had for a time been placed on suicide
watch.

When the Medical Examiner’s finding of “suicidal
strangulation” was contradicted by the emergence of
numerous facts, media organizations began to attack anyone
questioning the suicide story as a “conspiracy theorist.”

Epstein was a well-connected member of the Wall Street
elite with a history of sex trafficking minor females. For
decades, he hosted well-to-do guests at his Manhattan
mansion and private Caribbean island. Among his friends
were Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, Britain’s Prince Andrew
and the crown prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin
Salman.

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