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Epstein

Judge signs protective order over materials feds to turn over to jailed financier Jeffrey Epstein

ABC News
By James Hill and Chris Francescani
7/26/19

Judge signs protective order over materials feds to turn over to jailed financier Jeffrey Epstein originally appeared on abcnews.go.com

Federal prosecutors in New York overseeing the case against millionaire Jeffrey Epstein are preparing to hand over highly-sensitive investigative material to the financier's defense attorneys after a federal judge on Friday granted the government's request to place a protective order on the documents.

Prosecutors sought the order because, they said in court filings, they intends to produce documents and materials that could ... "affect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals...[and that] would impede, if prematurely disclosed, the Government's ongoing investigation of uncharged individuals."

When Epstein secured a non-prosecution agreement with federal prosecutors in southern Florida in 2008 over a previous investigation, the much-criticized deal also immunized any and all potential co-conspirators, known or unknown, and also included the names of four women who had been suspected by authorities of having facilitated or participated in alleged crimes against children.

The deal, which is currently under review by the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility, allowed Epstein to plead guilty to two state counts and avoid federal charges for an allegedly broad pattern of similar conduct.

Throughout the negotiations -- and for nearly a year after the agreement was signed -- the victims were kept in the dark, their attorneys said, claiming they were strung along as government lawyers promised victims they were still investigating even long after they had cut the deal with Epstein.

One of Epstein's accusers in that investigation, [redacted] identified in court documents as “Jane Doe 1,” sued the Department of Justice in 2008, alleging that the non-prosecution agreement reached with Epstein by federal prosecutors in South Florida was hatched in violation of the Crime Victims’ Rights Act, which enumerates the rights afforded to victims in federal criminal cases, including the right "to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding, or any parole proceeding, involving the crime or of any release or escape of the accused."

In February of this year, U.S. District Court Judge Kenneth Marra ruled in favor of [redacted] and other Epstein accusers, finding that the federal government failed to confer with the victims in advance of the deal. Marra is now considering the possible remedies for the violation, which could potentially include tearing up the non-prosecutions agreement.

Epstein, 66 -- who at one time socialized with former President Bill Clinton, Great Britain's Prince Andrew and President Donald Trump -- was arrested on July 6 for alleged sex trafficking of minor girls in Florida and New York. Some of the charges date back to the early 2000s.

He was indicted on a child sex trafficking and conspiracy charges in which prosecutors charge that he "sexually exploited and abused dozens of minor girls at his homes in Manhattan, New York, and Palm Beach, Florida, among other locations," using cash payments to recruit a "vast network of underage victims," some of whom were as young as 14 years old.

Epstein has pleaded not guilty to the latest charges and his defense attorneys have argued in court that the new indictment is tantamount to "double jeopardy," the constitutional right that prevents a person from being tried on the same (or similar) charges twice, based on the same facts, following a valid acquittal or conviction.

"It is our belief that this is basically a re-do," Epstein defense attorney Reid Weingarten told the judge at a bail hearing earlier this month. "This is basically the feds today, not happy with what happened in the decision that led to the NPA, redoing the same conduct that was investigated 10 years ago and calling it, instead of prostitution, calling it sex trafficking. We think that is the heart of everything, and that will be the centerpiece of our defense."

At the same hearing, prosecutors claimed Epstein tried to buy off potential witnesses and charged that he had demonstrated a "willingness to use intimidation and aggressive tactics in connection with a criminal investigation." Prosecutors allege that late last year Epstein wired $100,000 from a trust account to a person who had been named in the 2008 case as a possible co-conspirator of Epstein's and then three days later wired $250,000 to another suspected co-conspirator.

Weingarten did not respond at the time to an ABC News request for comment on prosecutors' claims of potential witness tampering.

What Jail Is Like for Jeffrey Epstein

Wall Street Journal
By Ben Chapman
7/27/19

Now sleeping in the bottom bunk of a windowless 8-by-8-foot cell, the financier earlier was denied house arrest at his sprawling Manhattan townhouse

Since his arrest on sex-trafficking charges, financier Jeffrey Epstein has spent much of his time in the bottom bunk of a windowless 8-by-8-foot cell, according to the lawyer of his former cellmate.

The cell is in a wing of a federal jail in downtown Manhattan that is known as “the box” and has been the subject of inmate complaints about mice and insect infestations, as well as standing water on the floor, according to lawyers of inmates.

Mr. Epstein’s roommate until Tuesday was Nicholas Tartaglione, a retired police officer accused of killing four people, according to Mr. Tartaglione’s lawyer, Bruce Barket.
“It is dark and it’s disgusting,” Mr. Barket said of the jail cell Messrs. Epstein and Tartaglione shared.

Mr. Epstein, 66 years old, was arrested July 6 and was later denied bail when a judge rejected his lawyers’ request that he be placed on house arrest in his sprawling Manhattan townhouse, which is valued at $77 million.

Mr. Epstein had built a fortune of more than half a billion dollars by cultivating his ties to rich and powerful individuals. Prosecutors this month said they found a “piles of cash” and dozens of diamonds in a locked safe at his New York mansion.

The financier has pleaded not guilty to sex-trafficking charges stemming from what prosecutors allege was a yearslong scheme from 2002 to 2005 to recruit and sexually abuse dozens of girls.

Following his arrest, he has mostly been at the Manhattan jail, which is known as the Metropolitan Correctional Center. He was moved to a suicide-watch unit after being found unconscious in his cell Tuesday morning, according to people familiar with the matter.

A lawyer for Mr. Epstein declined to comment. Mr. Tartaglione was interviewed in connection with Mr. Epstein's injuries but had no part in them, Mr. Barket said.

The jail houses 774 inmates, most of them awaiting trial. It has been home to such high-profile inmates as Mexican drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, who was sentenced earlier this month to life in prison.

Federal records show that the current occupants include Cesar Sayoc, who pleaded guilty to sending bombs to prominent Democrats and is awaiting sentencing, and Sayfullo Saipov, accused of killing eight people by driving a truck on to a Manhattan bike path. Mr. Saipov has pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Epstein and other inmates are allowed to leave their cells for an hour of recreation each day, as well as meetings with lawyers, according to a correction officer.

Mr. Barket said that Messrs. Tartaglione and Epstein were friendly and frequently spoke while they were bunkmates. Mr. Tartaglione was arrested in 2016 for killing four people in Chester, N.Y. He has pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Tartaglione's lawyer has been a vocal critic of the conditions in the jail, filing complaints to correction officials about rodents and bugs.

Lawyers for Mr. Guzmán blamed frigid temperatures, lack of clean blankets and contaminated water at the jail as reasons for their client's failing health.

Serene Gregg, a case worker at the Metropolitan Correctional Center and president of the correction workers' union chapter, said there are mice and broken toilets and sinks.

Representatives for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which manages the Metropolitan Correctional Center, didn't respond to questions about the conditions there.

"There is no worse place you can find yourself," Mr. Barket said.

Lawmaker says she was warned to back off Jeffrey Epstein case: 'Little girl, you don't know what you're getting into'

Tampa Bay Times
By Miami Herald
7/26/19

Florida Sen. Lauren Book has reached out to Capitol police after receiving an anonymous warning connected to her demand for a state inquiry into Palm Beach Sheriff Ric Bradshaw's handling of accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein's lenient work release program, the Miami Herald has learned.

Book, a vocal advocate for child sexual assault survivors, said she also received more than a dozen calls from Bradshaw's political supporters asking her to back off on her call for an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement into Bradshaw.

On Monday, Book, a Democrat, wrote a letter to Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis asking him to authorize a probe into how Epstein, accused of molesting dozens of underage girls and a registered sex offender, was permitted to leave the Palm Beach County Jail and spend much of his 2008-2009 incarceration in an office in West Palm Beach.

DeSantis said Thursday after a Cabinet meeting that he would “certainly consider” an investigation but that he has yet to decide how the state should respond.

“I saw someone sent me a letter. I looked at it,” he said. “I’ve got to figure out what the proper role of FDLE [is]. I know they are investigating it down in Palm Beach. ... Clearly when you look at how that happened, if even like 10 percent of the things about him are true, then that whole agreement was obviously suspect and willfully below what he should have faced.”

While the governor was still weighing the merits of the senator’s request, the Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office issued a new statement that its previously announced internal affairs investigation of the deputies who guarded and supervised Epstein during his work release had become a criminal investigation as well. No further elaboration was provided.

Meanwhile, Book, in an interview with the Herald, said she had asked the Capitol police, who handle security for state lawmakers, to look into claims made on a Russian website alleging that Bradshaw was behind an effort to access her phone and emails by using the pretext of “imminent danger’’ to obtain her personal information.

“I’ve received countless phone calls saying ‘Little girl you don’t know what you’re getting into,’ and telling me that I should just stop,’’ said Book, a child sexual abuse survivor herself who has worked to pass strict sex offender laws in Florida.

In a statement, the Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office said it had no knowledge of anyone trying to threaten or pressure Book.

“Nor has (the Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office) made any effort to access her phone or emails as alleged on a salacious website run by a disgruntled former employee,’’ the statement said.

Pbsotalk.org, the website in question, is a blog tied to a former Palm Beach sheriff’s deputy who moved to Russia after starting the site, which claims it is dedicated to exposing corruption in the Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office. The former deputy, John Dougan, fled to Moscow in 2016 following an FBI raid on his Palm Beach home that he claims was politically motivated.

The pressure against Book came on the same day that Epstein, 66, was found injured in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York, where he is awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges brought earlier this month by the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. His arrest stemmed from alleged behavior with underage girls dating back more than a decade in New York and Florida. Epstein was taken into custody July 6 after arriving at New Jersey’s Teterboro Airport from Paris on his private jet.

Epstein was found unconscious in his cell Wednesday evening amid speculation that he may have tried to commit suicide or been attacked by another inmate. Jail officials said he was in the lockup Thursday.

Last Friday, Bradshaw announced the internal affairs investigation after reports emerged that Epstein — while on work release in Palm Beach — was allowed female visitors to his office, including at least one visit that led to a sexual encounter. The terms of Epstein’s incarceration were detailed by the Herald as part of a series published last year about Epstein’s case, Perversion of Justice.

[redacted], who represents several of Epstein’s victims, said it is ludicrous to think that Bradshaw is able to investigate his own department.

“The allegations are against the sheriff and there’s no way a credible investigation can be conducted by the sheriff’s office when the allegations extend to the very top of the organization,’’ [redacted] said.

Book, whose father, Ron Book, is perhaps the most powerful lobbyist in Florida, said she intends to pressure the governor for a full and thorough investigation.

“The privileges that Epstein received in Palm Beach County were outside the scope of what anyone else would receive. We need an independent body to identify whether this was an issue of individual failures or systemic failures. And if it was

an individual failure, we need to hold those individuals accountable,'' she said.

Bradshaw, who is running for his fifth term, wields tremendous power in Palm Beach, where the agency has also been the lead law enforcement detail assisting the Secret Service during President Donald Trump's visits to Mar-a-Lago. The Palm Beach Sheriff's Office spent $5.6 million for Trump's 2017-2018 trips, the Palm Beach Post reported in April. The department is reimbursed for the work.

Epstein was found on the floor of his jail cell with injuries to his neck, according to a report from NBC New York late Wednesday.

The television station said another inmate had been questioned and that Epstein is on suicide watch. A source told CBS News the injuries were not life threatening. The New York Post reported that Epstein was taken to a nearby hospital and may have intentionally hurt himself in order to win a transfer out of the federal facility.

Quoting unnamed law enforcement officials, The New York Times said prison officials were treating the incident, which left Epstein with "bruising around the neck," as a possible suicide attempt.

The jet-setting financier was denied bail last week after a federal judge said he posed a danger to young women. His lawyers have filed their intent to appeal, saying he should be released to his palatial Upper East Side Manhattan townhouse.

Epstein, who has pleaded not guilty, roamed the halls of power before dozens of underage girls accused him of sexual assaults. After preparing a 50-plus-page indictment on sex trafficking charges, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida shelved the charges and allowed Epstein to plead guilty to minor charges in state court. That's how Epstein ended up in the Palm Beach County Jail — and then on work release approved by Sheriff Bradshaw.

A fixture on the high-society social circuit, he was known to associate with figures such as Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Prince Andrew of Britain. He owns homes around the world, including a mansion in Palm Beach. His lawyers pegged his wealth at $559 million in court documents.

In an email, the Bureau of Prisons said Epstein was currently at the federal jail Thursday morning, not a hospital, but did not address his condition or whether an incident had occurred.

"As with all inmates, for privacy and security reasons, we do not share information on an inmate's medical status or their conditions of confinement," the Bureau of Prisons said.

The federal detention center where Epstein is locked up has been described by The New York Times as "less hospitable than Guantánamo Bay." It has also held Joaquín Guzmán Loera, the Mexican drug lord known as El Chapo, Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff and Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who plotted the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, according to the Times.

This story was written by Miami Herald staff writers Julie K. Brown and Nicholas Nehamas. Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau staff writer Elizabeth Koh contributed to this report.

One of the earliest known accusations against Jeffrey Epstein was reported to Santa Monica police in 1997

Insider
By Kat Tenbarge
7/26/19

In a police report obtained by The New York Times and published Thursday, a then-27-year-old model named [redacted] accused the wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein of a now all-too-familiar sequence of events resulting in what Santa Monica, California, officers classified as sexual battery.

Epstein, who registered as a sex offender after a 2008 case, is being held without bail in the Southern District of New York on charges of sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy involving dozens of underage girls from at least 2002 to 2005. Epstein has pleaded not guilty.

The newly unearthed police report is one of the earliest known accusations against the financier— [redacted] filed her accusation with the Santa Monica Police Department in May 1997.

In that accusation, [redacted] said Epstein identified himself as a talent scout for Victoria's Secret before inviting her to a hotel room in Santa Monica for an interview that [redacted] was told could have landed her a spot in the lingerie company's catalog. [redacted] told the police she "started having reservations" before her appointment with Epstein, because "generally, interviews are not conducted in hotel rooms."

Read more: How Jeffrey Epstein, the mysterious hedge-fund manager arrested on sex-trafficking charges, made his fortune

When [redacted] met Epstein in the hotel room for her interview, she told the police, she was "unsure of whether she was safe" because he "was attempting to get her to act in an unprofessional manner for a model." She said that included Epstein asking her to undress, twice, and on the second time pulling her blouse and skirt up and groping her buttocks while saying, "Let me manhandle you for a second."

[redacted] told The Times she fled in tears and went to the police the next day. She put her report on the record a week later, worried that Epstein, whose hands she called "weopons," would use his Victoria's Secret connection to assault other women.

Accusations from other women include descriptions of similar tactics. A former Italian model named [redacted] said Epstein also used his Victoria's Secret connection to attempt to coerce her into sex acts in 2004.

What's more, The Times reported that two senior executives at L Brands, the company owned by Epstein's only known financial-services client and then friend [redacted] knew Epstein was posing as a Victoria's Secret talent scout. L Brands was, and still is, the parent company of Victoria's Secret.

The Times cited the two unnamed former executives as saying they had learned in the mid-1990s that Epstein, then serving as [redacted] financial adviser, was pitching himself to women as a recruiter for the Victoria's Secret catalog. The two executives signed nondisclosure agreements while working for [redacted] but told The Times he was made aware that Epstein was posing as a Victoria's Secret talent scout.

[redacted] promised to take care of the situation at the time, the executives said, but the [redacted] remained extraordinarily close with Epstein until 18 months after Epstein was charged with an array of sexual misconduct in Palm Beach, Florida. After pleading guilty to state prostitution charges in that case, Epstein is now facing new charges accusing him of trafficking girls as young as 14.

In a letter to L Brands employees this month about the new charges, [redacted] said he was "NEVER aware of the illegal activity charged in the indictment" and "would never have guessed that a person I employed more than a decade ago could have caused such pain to so many people."

That being said, the relationship between [redacted] and Epstein was extensive, with The Times reporting that [redacted] transferred Epstein's Manhattan mansion, private 727 Boeing jet, and Ohio estate to him from his and L Brands' previous assets and that he gave Epstein full control over all his finances from 1991 to 2007.