

Tampa Bay Times

VIEWPOINTS

A former federal agent explains how to resolve the Epstein case / Column

Ghislaine Maxwell is hard to take at her word.

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August 10, 2025



Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell were both accused of sexually exploiting and abusing multiple minor girls. [JOHN MINCHILLO | AP]

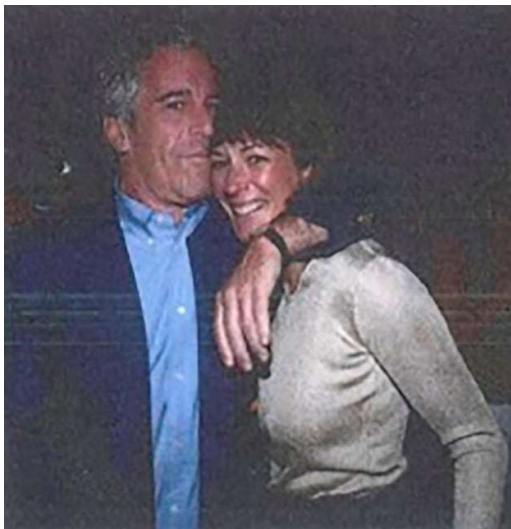
Regardless of your political affiliation, it is essential to understand how we are being misled about the Epstein scandal, how we can get to the truth, and who should get us there.



Robert Mazur
[Courtesy of Robert Mazur]

I have read most of the pleadings and transcripts filed in Manhattan federal court concerning the prosecutions of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. The thousands of pages tell a haunting story. I'm not a reporter; I am a retired U.S. federal agent who spent decades working with grand juries and prosecutors investigating criminal cases. Maxwell was not only the primary recruiter of the children Epstein sexually molested; she often participated in lengthy sexual exploitation sessions with Epstein and those kids.

Maxwell approached many victims while walking in malls, on streets and in parking lots, including the parking lot of President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort. Many of them had hopes of becoming musicians, models, college students and more. Maxwell claimed to be interested in their lives. She later introduced them to Epstein, a person she said was a good man who liked to help people. He offered them letters of recommendation that would get them into prestigious universities, paid for music lessons or claimed he could satisfy some other aspiration. Maxwell and Epstein took victims to movies, talked with them at length and bought them clothes. Built on that web of manipulation, they trapped victims into years of molestation.



Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. [TNS]

Why would we ask Maxwell, the predator, to tell us how and to whom she trafficked young female victims when the victims are prepared to do that, and are far more reliable? Several attorneys representing hundreds of Maxwell's victims, including attorney Bradley Edwards, state that their clients are ready to tell all about the icons of wealth and power to whom they were trafficked.

Edwards recently offered an example of the type of knowledge his clients possess. Trump denies giving Epstein a signed 50th birthday card in January 2003. Several of Edwards' clients will testify that they saw that card near the time of Epstein's birthday. They'll also explain that, at the direction of Maxwell, they made an album of the 50th birthday cards, including Trump's. According to Edwards, that album is now in the custody of the executors of Epstein's estate, who will honor a subpoena requiring them to turn that album over to authorities. An inscription in Trump's card ends with a comment to Epstein, "A pal is a wonderful thing. Happy Birthday — and may every day be another wonderful secret."



The U.S. attorney's office released images during the trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, left, who was convicted on federal charges relating to accusations in the sexual exploitation of girls with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, middle. [SDNY | TNS]

Maria Farmer, one of Epstein's and Maxwell's victims, says Epstein summoned her to his Manhattan office in 1995. As she sat alone in the waiting room, Trump entered. Trump walked to her and stood over her. He initially said nothing, just stared at her. To break the tension, she made what she described as "an ugly face" at Trump just as Epstein came out of his office. Epstein quickly told Trump, "No, she's not here for you." Epstein then escorted Trump toward another office as Trump told Epstein, "Oh, I thought she was 16." Farmer does not know who, if anyone, was in the office to which Trump was led. Farmer first reported this event to law enforcement in 1996, a time when Trump was a Democrat. She recently repeated her account of the incident during an interview on a nationally televised news program. She emphasized that her account of this incident has been consistent for three decades.

White House Communications Director Steven Cheung has said Trump was never in Epstein's office. But several people claim Trump frequented Epstein's office, including a former business associate of Trump's, Jack O'Donnell, and Jeffrey Epstein's brother, Mark Epstein.

During a recorded 2002 interview, Trump said, “I’ve known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy. He’s a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.”

Trump knew some of Epstein’s younger women because some, like underage Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre, once worked at Mar-a-Lago. Others, including the victim who testified at Maxwell’s criminal trial under the pseudonym “Jane”, were introduced by Epstein to Trump at Mar-a-Lago. This occurred during a time Epstein described himself as Trump’s best friend. “Jane” went on to compete in Trump’s Miss Teen USA pageant.

Other events suggest a close Trump-Epstein relationship. During a deposition, Epstein invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when asked if he ever socialized with Trump in the presence of females under the age of 18. Flight logs confirm that Trump flew with Epstein on Epstein’s private planes seven times. Pictures and videos show Trump and Epstein socializing and joking together at parties. Trump sent an invitation to Epstein to attend Trump’s 1993 wedding, and Trump’s name and contact information were in what has been described as Epstein’s “Little Black Book. A redacted version of Epstein’s “Little Black Book”, including entries concerning Trump, was published on the internet by Gawker in 2015. An unredacted version was published in 2019.

As for Trump’s views on women, one need only watch the infamous Access Hollywood tape, review E. Jean Carroll’s successful defamation and sexual abuse case, examine the files of the successful criminal prosecution of Trump for illegal hush money payments made to cover up his affair with porn star Stormy Daniels or analyze the testimony about \$150,000 in hush money paid by a Trump friend to cover up Trump’s affair with Playboy Bunny Karen McDougal.

Maxwell was found guilty of participating in a conspiracy with Epstein to entice minors to engage in illegal sex acts, and covering up those crimes by frequently lying under oath. According to court records, she “repeatedly provided false and perjurious statements, under oath, regarding, among other subjects, her role in facilitating the abuse of minor victims by Jeffrey Epstein.” Why would we ever believe her?

In addition to victim testimony, the FBI and Department of Justice have more than 2 million pages of documents concerning Epstein and Maxwell. Most of that documentation is not grand jury material and does not require a court order to disclose. Those documents include a mountain of evidence obtained from searches of homes, computers and phones.

It makes no sense that Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, Donald Trump’s former personal attorney, recently met with Maxwell at the federal prison in Tallahassee, where she was serving her 20-year prison sentence. Blanche’s visit defies everything I know

about how law enforcement normally addresses high-level criminals who repeatedly lied under oath, are serving decades behind bars and want to sell their version of the truth.

Blanche wasn't a part of the Maxwell prosecution team. Members of that team spent more than eight years checking every fact related to Epstein and Maxwell. They should have evaluated what she had to say. After Blanche met with Maxwell, she was inexplicably transferred from a minimum-security prison in Florida to a much lower security federal prison camp in Texas, a facility that doesn't normally house sex offenders. What favor will come next, and for what reason?

We don't need to hear what Maxwell has to say; we can learn the true version and much more from victims and documents. Meanwhile, the government can let Maxwell continue to appeal her conviction, which is sure to fail. Once she exhausts her appeals, she can be called before a grand jury, and without reducing her 20-year prison sentence, be immunized and forced to answer questions. If she lies or refuses to answer questions, her prison sentence can be increased.

The FBI and Department of Justice now claim the Epstein files contain no evidence of crimes by others, but that's not what FBI Director Kash Patel and Assistant Director Dan Bongino told the world in 2024. They consistently insisted that Epstein's death behind bars was likely a murder committed to cover up crimes of the rich and powerful with whom Epstein and Maxwell trafficked underage girls.

Trump now claims, without offering any proof, that the Epstein files controlled by the FBI and Department of Justice were in some way altered at the direction of former officials in the Biden administration. That claim is laughable. The FBI, Department of Justice and the New York Police Department compiled most of those files during Trump's first term as president. These agencies cross-file and track every document in their custody. Most of the personnel handling the Epstein and Maxwell matters when Trump was president remained on those cases throughout the Biden administration.

This matter requires the appointment of a special counsel to perform a truly independent and transparent review of the files to identify and prosecute anyone who conspired with Epstein and Maxwell. The special counsel should conclude the investigation by publicly releasing the findings. Given Trump's history with Epstein and Maxwell, the special counsel must have a sterling reputation for bipartisanship, integrity and transparency, and no business, financial or personal ties to Trump.

Our highly partisan Congress should not initiate an Epstein investigation until the special counsel releases their public report. The last thing this matter needs is a public drama driven by partisan elected officials more interested in scoring points with leaders of their respective parties than professionally and efficiently unearthing the truth.

Attorney General Pam Bondi and Deputy Attorney General Blanche should recuse themselves from any further involvement in matters related to Epstein and Maxwell. They have conflicts of interest.

Bondi earned millions through her representation of Trump personally and her investment in Trump's Truth social media platform. Blanche represented Trump in his failed defense of criminal charges stemming from Trump's payment of hush money to adult film star Stormy Daniels. Blanche and his firm received more than \$5 million in legal fees for representing Trump.

Court filings and other public records in the Epstein and Maxwell cases reveal at least three rich and powerful people who, according to some of the victims, were benefactors of Epstein and Maxwell's sex trafficking enterprise. One is a U.S. multi-billionaire and big-time political donor, one is a wealthy and prominent resident of the United Kingdom, and the third is a well-known French entrepreneur. No doubt, there are more.



Virginia Roberts Giuffre, with a photo of herself as a teen. [EMILY MICHOT | Miami Herald]

One of the victims who would have implicated all three of these powerful people, Virginia Giuffre, succumbed to the trauma of Maxwell's manipulation that started in the parking lot of Mar-a-Lago. She died by suicide on April 25.

We cannot turn our backs on the many hundreds of victims tortured by Maxwell, Epstein and others. It is time for a special counsel who is highly trusted by both sides of the political aisle to shine a light on the truth.

Robert Mazur, a federal agent for 27 years, is a court-certified expert in money laundering-related matters in both the U.S. and Canada. He is the New York Times best-selling author of "The Infiltrator," a memoir about the first half of his life undercover as a money launderer within Pablo Escobar's Medellin cartel. During that assignment, he also infiltrated the Bank of Credit & Commerce International (BCCI). His work exposed BCCI's global conspiracies with account holders to evade taxes, launder drug money and hide fortunes of corrupt country leaders. His new book, "The Betrayal," is a memoir about his final undercover assignment, a deep dive into Colombia's Cali Cartel and Panama's underworld that nearly cost him his life.