



POLITICS (/TOPIC/POLITICS)

The Salacious Ammo Even Donald Trump Won't Use in a Fight Against Hillary Clinton



By Ken Silverstein (/contributor/ken-silverstein)

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"If Hillary thinks she can unleash her husband, with his terrible record of women abuse, while playing the women's card on me, she's wrong!" Donald Trump tweeted (https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/681447548133965824?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) at the end of December. He was referring, of course, to his potential Democratic rival for the presidency, Hillary Clinton, and her husband, Bill.

While other GOP candidates indicated they wouldn't make Bill Clinton's sexual improprieties an issue in the campaign — Hillary's Democratic rival Bernie Sanders has said the same — Trump was making it plain he would.

"That's what makes Donald Trump more dangerous than any person out there," MSNBC

host Joe Scarborough said (<http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/mark-finkelstein/2016/01/08/scarborough-msm-wont-mention-bill-clinton-and-jeffrey-epstein>) on his show a week after Trump's tweet. "He will bring up stuff that nobody else will bring up."

And Scarborough had a specific figure from Bill Clinton's past in mind.

"People in the know always talk about Jeffrey Epstein."

Palm Beach billionaire Jeffrey Epstein is a financier and political donor. He is also a convicted sex offender who is the subject of ongoing litigation from at least a dozen of his then-underage victims.

Flight logs show (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/under-the-radar/2015/07/judge-unseals-more-details-in-jeffrey-epstein-underage-sex-lawsuit-210065>) Bill Clinton traveled at least 10 times on Epstein's private jet, dubbed the "Lolita Express" by tabloids, and he is widely reported to have visited Little St. James, Epstein's private island in the US Virgin Islands. That's where, according to attorneys for Epstein's victims, many of the worst crimes against minors were committed by Epstein and friends who traveled there with him.

In a 2011 interview with her attorneys, Virginia Roberts, one of the teenagers preyed upon by Epstein, said he had told her he had "compromising" information on Bill Clinton and that the former president "owes me a favor."

Yet despite Bill Clinton's ties to Epstein and Trump's stated willingness to make Clinton's sexual past an issue in the campaign, Trump will almost certainly avoid bringing up Epstein's name. Because in addition to haunting Bill Clinton's past, Epstein also haunts Trump's.

* * *

Trump's attorney Alan Garten told VICE News last week that the presidential candidate had "no relationship" with Epstein, and only knew him because Epstein was a member of Mar-A-Lago, Trump's private club and residence in Palm Beach.

"A lot of people hung out there, including Jeffrey Epstein," Garten said. "That is the only connection."

But according to someone with intimate knowledge of the situation, Trump and Epstein appeared to have a somewhat stronger connection.

"I've known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy," Trump told (http://nymag.com/nymetro/news/people/n_7912/) *New York* magazine in a 2002 profile of Epstein written three years

before Epstein began to be investigated. "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. No doubt about it — Jeffrey enjoys his social life."

When asked about a subpoena served to Trump in 2009, Garten said it "never happened." The subpoena called for Trump to give a deposition in a case against Epstein; Garten's denial baffled Brad Edwards, one of Virginia Roberts' attorneys.

"There is no debate over what happened," Edwards told VICE news. "I served Mr. Trump with a subpoena for deposition in 2009. He talked to me voluntarily, and consequently we withdrew the subpoena in light of his voluntarily providing information.... I can't imagine there being any dispute of any of this."

Edwards also said that it is "obvious" Trump himself was not involved in any of Epstein's illicit activity.

Three days after denying the subpoena, Garten emailed VICE News.

"Brad [Edwards] called me to let me know that you had reached out to him," Garten said. "I looked back at my records and saw that Mr. Trump was subpoenaed."

In 2000, both Trump and Epstein reportedly attended a small party hosted by media magnate Conrad Black, who in 2007 was convicted and served time in prison for fraud and obstruction of justice (the fraud charges were overturned on appeal). Black is currently an enthusiastic supporter of Trump's presidential bid.

Mark Epstein, Jeffrey's brother, testified in 2009 that Trump flew on Jeffrey's private jet at least once. Meanwhile, message pads [see below] from Epstein's Palm Beach mansion that were seized by investigators and obtained by VICE News indicate that Trump called Epstein twice in November of 2004.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR Mr. J.F.

DATE 11/11/04 TIME 11:03 ^{A.M.}/_{P.M.}

M Darvon

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE _____

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE _____

He has the info

please call him.

SIGNED [Signature] 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR JF

DATE _____ TIME 7:00 ^{A.M.}/_{P.M.}

M _____

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE _____

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE _____

wondering if

you want her to

work tomorrow

& what time

SIGNED _____ 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR JF

DATE _____ TIME 5:15 ^{A.M.}/_{P.M.}

M Donald Trump

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE 212 [Redacted]

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE _____

SIGNED _____ 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR JF

DATE _____ TIME 9:55 ^{A.M.}/_{P.M.}

M Court Wilde

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE _____

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE _____

SIGNED _____ 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR Mr. J.E.

DATE 11/16/04 TIME 2:20 AM

M CACIA

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE (20) [REDACTED]

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION

MESSAGE _____

Please call her

back

SIGNED [Signature] 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR J.E.

DATE _____ TIME 5:18 AM

M Donald Trump

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE 212 [REDACTED]

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION

MESSAGE _____

SIGNED _____ 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR Mr. J.E.

DATE 11/20/04 TIME 2:43 AM

M Jenny

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE (917) [REDACTED]

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION

MESSAGE _____

Returning your

call.

SIGNED [Signature] 1184

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR Mr. J.E.

DATE 11/20/04 TIME 2:00 AM

M Jean Luc

OF _____

PHONE/MOBILE _____

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CAME TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	RUSH
RETURNED YOUR CALL	SPECIAL ATTENTION

MESSAGE _____

Please call

him

SIGNED [Signature] 1184

Two pages of Epstein's phone messages from November 2004

Garten said Trump had never been to Epstein's home. But a 2002 story in *Vanity Fair* listed Trump as one of a small group of mega-rich businessmen, including newspaper publisher Mort Zuckerman and Revlon chairman Ronald Perelman, who periodically dined with Epstein at his Palm Beach estate. And a 2003 story (http://nymag.com/nymetro/news/features/n_8672/index2.html) in *New York* reported that Trump had dined at Epstein's Upper East Side home, a nine-story building that is reportedly (<http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2003/03/jeffrey-epstein-200303>) the largest private residence in Manhattan.

That dinner, for 30 people, was also attended by Google co-founder Sergey Brin, businessman and philanthropist Les Wexner, former British Cabinet minister Peter Mandelson, and Bill Clinton aide Doug Band.

"The dialogues are so engaging," Epstein told the magazine at the time, "that serving even the most extraordinary food sometimes seems inappropriate."

* * *

Roberts and a number of Epstein's other victims are seeking to overturn a 2007 US Justice Department non-prosecution agreement with Epstein that capped financial damages against him. Epstein allegedly unsuccessfully sought to block his victims from going to court, but the case, *Jane Does vs. United States of America*, is currently being heard in a Palm Beach courthouse.

In the late 1990s, Roberts was recruited to perform a massage for Epstein while working as a \$9-per-hour locker room attendant at Mar-A-Lago. Roberts' father also worked at Mar-A-Lago, which is located about 3 miles away from Epstein's estate, as a maintenance manager.

Roberts, who is now 32 and runs an anti sex trafficking organization in Colorado, has alleged in sworn depositions and remarks to the press that Epstein turned her into a "sex slave" and pimped her out to various friends, including England's Prince Andrew. Over the years, the passengers on Epstein's jet, she said, included "a whole bunch of other girls, sometimes famous people, sometimes some politicians."

Roberts' account is corroborated by a number of Epstein's other victims, by lawyers in the case interviewed by VICE News, and by court documents, including the deposition of Juan Alessi, Epstein's former gardener and then majordomo, who was one of the prosecution's key witnesses.

In his deposition, Alessi — he did not respond to VICE News' request for comment — said that Epstein made clear to him that he was never to ask any of the girls who came to the estate for proof of their age, so that everyone would have plausible deniability if any problems with law enforcement later emerged.

Roberts was originally recruited for Epstein by Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's then live-in girlfriend and the daughter of disgraced British newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell. She is accused by a number of Epstein's victims — their accounts are supported in court records and by other witnesses — of being among Epstein's procurers of underage girls.

After three years of abuse, Roberts fled in 2002, at age 19. Last year, she filed a lawsuit against Maxwell, alleging that she was behind a smear campaign seeking to tarnish Roberts' reputation. The lawsuit is ongoing. Roberts did not respond to requests for comment.

During this same period, Epstein and Maxwell were repeat guests at Mar-A-Lago. In 2000, they hung out there with Prince Andrew, who arrived for vacation on Trump's private plane. That same year, the *Palm Beach Post* reported that Trump, Epstein, Prince Andrew, and Maxwell were all at a tennis tournament/celebrity event at Mar-A-Lago.

Garten told VICE News that Trump had no relationship with Maxwell aside from the fact that she periodically turned up at Mar-A-Lago. The 1997 photograph below, of Trump and Maxwell "out on the town," was taken in New York City.



Photo via Getty Images

In 2010, Epstein pled the Fifth when asked by a lawyer representing one of Epstein's victims about his relationship with Trump:

Q: Have you ever had a personal relationship with Donald Trump?

A. What do you mean by "personal relationship," sir?

Q. Have you socialized with him?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Yes?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you ever socialized with Donald Trump in the presence of females under the age of 18?

A: Though I'd like to answer that question, at least today I'm going to have to assert my Fifth, Sixth, and 14th Amendment rights, sir.

Epstein did not respond to a request for comment.

* * *

During its investigation, the FBI obtained a copy of Epstein's private 194-page phone book. Lawyers for one of Epstein's victims told VICE News it was stolen by a household employee sometime around 2004.

A copy we obtained includes investigators' margin notes pointing to key witnesses against Epstein as well as handwritten notes identifying dozens of then-underage girls, as well as their phone numbers.

Among people listed in the phone book were well-known political figures such as Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia, Tony Blair, former Utah governor and Republican presidential candidate Jon Huntsman, Senator Edward Kennedy, and Henry Kissinger. Also listed were major political contributors like David Koch and Pepe Fanjul.

All those names were listed alphabetically at the front of Epstein's telephone book, along with the names of Trump's former wife, Ivana, his daughter Ivanka, and his brother, Robert.

Epstein created a number of other odd categories, including one called "Jeffrey." There were dozens of names in the Jeffrey category, including Ehud Barak, Alan Dershowitz, then-Senator John Kerry, former senator and lobbyist George Mitchell, powerhouse DC lobbyist Thomas Quinn, and David Rockefeller.

Trump was also listed in this section. Under his name were 14 phone numbers, including emergency numbers, car numbers, and numbers to Trump's security guard and houseman.

* * *

The state of Florida began investigating Epstein in 2005; the FBI began its own probe the following year. Investigators amassed a mountain of evidence against Epstein, but in the end the Department of Justice agreed to a bizarre deal not to prosecute him.

On September 27, 2007 — a few weeks before the *New York Post* reported that Epstein was banned from Mar-A-Lago — Epstein acknowledged guilt in "knowingly and willfully conspiring with others known and unknown to... persuade, induce, or entice minor females to engage in prostitution."

The terms of the agreement, which was secret at the time (<http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/news/for-palm-beach-sex-offender-jeffrey-epstein-house-/nMGds/>) and was drafted by Epstein's own lawyers, have never been fully disclosed, but an attorney with direct knowledge of the case told VICE News that it capped damages against Epstein — reportedly worth about \$2 billion — to between \$50,000 and \$150,000, depending on what year he had abused the girl. The agreement also barred victims from seeking any future financial redress.

Roy Black, Epstein's lawyer, did not respond to a request for comment.

When asked why he believed Epstein received such a light sentence, Sky William Roberts, Virginia's father, told VICE News. "Because he's a billionaire. You're not a billionaire and neither am I; if we did what he did we'd be in prison."

In 2008, Epstein was sentenced to 18 months for his crimes by the state of Florida. He "could have been charged with multiple federal counts of sexual exploitation of minors, resulting in much harsher penalties," the *Palm Beach Daily News* reported in 2010 (<http://m.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/news/for-palm-beach-sex-offender-jeffrey-epstein-house-/nMGds/>) when Epstein was finishing up his prison stay. He served in a segregated, vacant wing of the county stockade. Epstein, the newspaper said, "was let out on work release six days a week for up to 16 hours a day."

Maxwell fled the United States on the eve of her deposition and never testified in Epstein's case. In fact, several of the *Jane Doe* lawyers, who spoke off the record because the case is ongoing, said that every key person investigators wanted to interview — especially those with potential knowledge of what took place on St. James Island — eluded subpoenas on technical grounds.

There was one exception: Donald Trump.

* * *

Edwards, the lawyer for Roberts and about 10 other Jane Does, said that after he served Trump with the subpoena in 2009, Trump immediately contacted him.

"During the conversation, Mr. Trump was open and forthright," Edwards said. "I cannot discuss the substance of the conversation. But I will say that it was obvious to me that he was in no way involved in any untoward activity."

It appears that Trump cut ties to Epstein a few weeks after the non-prosecution agreement was reached. On October 15, 2007, the *New York Post* reported (<http://pagesix.com/2007/10/15/sex-case-victims-lining-up/>) that Mar-A-Lago had barred Epstein because he hit on a masseuse at the club. Epstein denied to the the *Post* that he had been banned. One of the *Jane Doe* attorneys told VICE News a slightly different account, saying that he had been told Trump broke ties with Epstein after Epstein tried to pick up the underage daughter of a Mar-A-Lago club member.

Garten said he was not aware of the *Post* story or the incident.

Virginia Roberts and at least a dozen of Epstein's other victims refused to accept the terms agreed to by the US government, and hired attorneys to seek additional damages. One of the more intriguing allegations made by Roberts in an affidavit last year is that Epstein "trafficked me for sexual purposes to many other powerful men, including politicians and powerful business executives."

She says that Epstein made her tell him about the sexual encounters she had with these men. The reason, in her estimation, was "so that he could potentially blackmail them."

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