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### Jeffrey Epstein: Lies & Deceit

Jeffrey Epstein was a New York-based financier who amassed his substantial wealth through his high-profile ties to the ultra-rich and powerful. Some of his most notable relationships included President Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew, and Alan Dershowitz. Despite his abundant wealth and connections, Epstein was secretly hiding something from the public, his perverted sexual attraction to underage girls. Back in 2008, Epstein was caught and charged for soliciting a minor for prostitution in Florida. He served 13 months out of his 18-month prison sentence, and he was required to become a registered sex offender. Epstein was successfully able to make this conviction go under the radar from the public; however, it was finally exposed to the public by a reporter, Julie K. Brown, at *The Miami Herald* in November 2018. And, in July 2019, Epstein was arrested again, but this time on federal charges of sex-trafficking minors. Epstein never saw the inside the courtroom because he committed suicide while awaiting trial. In this paper, I will dive deep into the background and crimes of Epstein. I will also discuss how Brown exposed the truth behind his crimes and other journalists who attempted to bring him down. Lastly, I will explore another similar story to Epstein called the Franklin Scandal, and attempt to answer a pivotal question, how was Epstein able to get away with it?

On January 20, 1953, Epstein was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York. His mother worked as a part-time school aide, and his father worked as a

groundskeeper for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Epstein was an exceptional student and even able to skip two grades. When he graduated from Brooklyn's Lafayette High School at the age of 16, he enrolled at Cooper Union and later at New York University. Despite never receiving a degree from either school, he landed a job teaching calculus and physics at the prestigious private Dalton prep school in 1974. A former student at Dalton, Dr. Susan Cohn, remembers Epstein as being a relaxed teacher and telling his students not to stress over the class because they were all going to get A's (Klein). Another former student, Karin Williams, recalls always seeing Epstein flirting with a gaggle of female students (Klein). His employment was short-lived when he was fired for poor performance after two years.

While he was working at Dalton School, he made many distinguished connections with the parents of his students. One parent, in particular, Alan Greenberg, was the CEO of Bears Stearns, and he was impressed by the acuity with numbers Epstein possessed. In 1976, Greenberg gave Epstein an assistant job at his investment firm. Epstein quickly climbed up the corporate ladder and began advising some of the wealthiest clients. In 1981, Epstein suddenly left Bears Stearns to establish his own financial consulting firm, Intercontinental Assets Groups Inc (IAG). At the time, his mentor, Steven Jude Hoffenberg, claimed that he left Bears Stearns due to being caught executing "illegal operations" (Ward). Interestingly, in August 2006, a month after the federal investigation of Epstein, he invested \$57 million in the Bears Stearns High-Grade Structured Credit Strategies Enhanced Leverage hedge fund, which was highly leveraged in mortgage-backed collateralized debt obligations (CDOs). And, in 2007, an unnamed investor redeemed his or her \$57 million investment from the fund. Since the fund had a leverage ratio of 17:1, it was equivalent to moving \$1 billion from the thinly traded CDO market;

eventually, the fund collapsed along with Bears Stearns in March 2008. Therefore, from this coincidence, some believe Epstein “may have been the one to light the match” on the Great Recession of 2008 (Glasspiegel).

At his own financial consulting firm, IAG, he helped clients recover embezzled money and assisted clients who were embezzlers. During this time, Epstein began telling his friends and colleagues that he was working as an intelligence agent. Allegedly, Robert Maxwell, the British media mogul and father of Ghislaine Maxwell, had introduced Epstein to Israeli leaders, and they used Epstein as a “sleeper agent” to blackmail prominent individuals. Hoffenberg, previously mentioned above, suggested that Epstein would secretly record influential people doing things they would not want to be made public in a prison interview with the *Rolling Stones* (Ward). Epstein also bragged to many people, including journalists, that he was advising a whole assortment of foreign leaders, such as Vladimir Putin, Mohammed Bin Zayed, and Mohammed Bin Salman. Although it has never been verified that Epstein was an intelligence agent, his association with powerful businessmen who did deals with a variety of foreign governments are solid grounds for suspicion.

In 1987, Epstein was a consultant for a collection agency called Tower Financial Corporation, which was founded by Hoffenberg; however, the collection agency was a half a billion-dollar Ponzi scheme. Between 1988 and 1993, the hedge fund raised \$400 million by selling bonds and promissory notes to investors (Pascus & Lenghi). Instead of investing the money, Hoffenberg and his associates used the money to repay earlier investors along with enriching themselves. Epstein was one of the secret masterminds behind the scheme, but he avoided any criminal charges, a pattern throughout his life. One year later, Epstein started J. Epstein & Company, later renamed to Financial Trust Company, a financial management firm

that exclusively served billionaire clients, but the only publicly known client was Leslie Wexner, the CEO of L Brands and Victoria's Secret. Despite Epstein being a nobody at the time, he convinced Wexner to give him access to his reported \$4.8 billion net worth. In a *Vanity Fair* profile, Wexner described Epstein as being "a moral loyal friend" (Patrarca). In the summer of 1996, Epstein sexually assaulted Maria Farmer at Wexner's Ohio mansion; and, a year later, Epstein acted as a recruiter for Victoria's Secret and sexually assaulted a lingerie model, Alicia Arden. Arden went to the police and filed a report shortly after, the earliest known police record of sexual misconduct against Epstein. Despite being aware of the allegations, Wexner didn't cut ties with Epstein until he was charged with multiple counts of molestation and unlawful sexual activity with a minor in 2006. It is believed that Wexner may have been his only client, so he was responsible for "the bulk of Epstein's fortune"; however, others, including Epstein, have denied this claim (Patrarca).

Throughout the 2000s, Epstein expanded his financial portfolio by investing in hedge funds, startups, and media companies. Even after pleading guilty to felony charges in 2008, Epstein was still a prominent figure in the financial world. And, in 2012, Epstein became a tax consultant for Leon Black who was one of the co-founders of the private equity firm Apollo Global Management. Black's net worth is estimated to be worth around \$10 billion (Paulden & Steverman). Black had previously been introduced to Epstein back in the 1990s, and he was impressed by Epstein's ties to prominent figures in business, politics, and researchers working at Ivy League universities. Between 2012 and 2017, Black paid Epstein \$158 million because Epstein saved around \$1 billion to \$2 billion in taxes for him (Paulden & Steverman). And, between 2013 and 2018, Epstein formed a close relationship with Deutsche Bank where they helped him transfer millions of dollars. Despite Epstein being a "high-risk client", the bank

helped Epstein transfer “more than \$7 million to resolve legal issues and more than \$2.6 million in payments to women, covering tuition, rent, and other payments, among other transactions” (bbc.com). It is believed that Epstein used this money to cover up old crimes, or maybe, to facilitate new crimes as well. However, soon after the public found out, Deutsche Bank was hit with a \$150 million fine for failure to properly monitor transactions of Epstein (bbc.com). It should be noted that this type of suspicious activity is not uncommon for Deutsche Bank, and Epstein wasn’t their only shady client. To this day, the various sources of Epstein’s exceptional wealth have not been substantiated by anyone.

In 2003, a journalist at *Vanity Fair*, Vicky Ward, was assigned to write a profile on Epstein. During her research on Epstein, Ward came across two young women, both sisters, who claimed Epstein had sexually abused them. Ward conducted on the record interviews with both sisters separately, and their mother corroborated the accounts, which was also on the record. Despite the on-the-record accusations against Epstein, the allegations did not make it into the published profile because the magazine editor, Graydon Carter, suppressed them. Since there were not three sources on the record, Carter believed the story did not meet the magazine’s “legal and editorial standards” (Tracy). The three women were disgusted with the published profile and decided against going on the record in any later stories. “This was exactly what they feared would happen – that they wouldn’t be believed,” Ward said (Tracy). Although the profile didn’t cover the accusations, it didn’t portray Epstein as a financier poster boy; for example, Ward explored Epstein’s questionable financial practices, such as insider trading and stock-price manipulation. Ward understood why Carter declined to print the accusations in retrospect, but she believed it was the wrong decision to do so.

In March 2007, a distraught woman went to the Palm Beach police station and claimed that her 14-year-old stepdaughter had been molested by a wealthy man. Her stepdaughter lived at a juvenile educational facility, and she had shown up one day with 300 dollars of cash (Weiss). This incident concerned the teachers working there, and they sent her to a therapist where she explained how she received the money. The young girl said she went to a big house on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and a grey-haired man molested her. Based on the description, the police began a full investigation into their prime suspect, Jeffrey Epstein. At his Palm Beach mansion, underage girls would routinely be brought over, and they would be paid to give Epstein a massage. Epstein would subject the girls to sexual abuse during the massages. And, after it was over, Epstein would offer them more money to find more girls, the “recruits” were usually found at malls and house parties. It essentially operated like a “sexual pyramid scheme” according to the lead detective on the case, Joseph Recarey (Coaston). Shockingly, Courtney Wild, who was one of the recruiters, claimed she had recruited 70 or 80 girls for Epstein; however, some accounts said the total number may have been much higher (Coaston). After being molested by Epstein, many of the girls began engaging in self-destructive behaviors, such as drugs and criminal activities.

Epstein told the police it was consensual, and he believed they were at least 18; however, the police had seen enough evidence, so they started building a case against Epstein. In addition, the FBI got involved as well in the investigation, and they prepared a 53-page sex crimes indictment against Epstein. Essentially, according to the indictment, Epstein was facing life behind bars, but he had a trick up his sleeve. The United States attorney in Miami, Alexander Acosta, had cut a “sweetheart” deal with Epstein, and Epstein only had to serve 13 months in a private wing of a Palm Beach County jail. Even though Palm Beach Sheriff’s Department

prohibits work release for sex offenders, Epstein was granted permission to leave the jail for 12 hours a day to go to a “comfortable office.” To add insult to injury, the deal was kept secret from the victims, which prevented them from challenging it in court. And, since it was a non-prosecution agreement, any potential co-conspirators had immunity from Epstein’s crimes. Later, Acosta was appointed by President Donald Trump to be the Secretary of Labor from 2017 to 2019. This was an enormous slap in the face to the victims, and Epstein got off easy, to say the least.

In November 2018, an investigative journalist at *The Miami Herald*, Julie K. Brown, published a three-part series titled “Perversion of Justice” that exposed Epstein and his sexual abuse allegations. Brown began her investigation into Epstein in early 2017. In her three-part series, Brown investigated Epstein’s secret plea deal with Acosta and identified 80 alleged victims. Brown also exposed some revelations about the case, such as the story of Virginia Roberts Giuffre. From 1999 to 2002, Epstein kept Giuffre as a sex slave and sent her to other prominent men for their sexual gratification. Later, in 2015, Giuffre settled her defamation suit against Ghislaine Maxwell for around \$5 million (Briquelet). Giuffre claimed that Maxwell took part in the sexual abuse of her along with the other girls, but Maxwell has adamantly denied this accusation. Immediately after publishing the bombshell series, public awareness about the case sparked. Soon enough, law enforcement arrested Epstein again. In February 2019, a federal judge ruled the prosecutors had violated the law by keeping victims in the dark about the plea deal, and the Justice Department opened an investigation into Mr. Acosta’s handling of the case to determine whether there was any “professional misconduct.” Due to her investigative journalism, Brown was awarded a George Polk Award in the Justice Reporting category. Dershowitz, nevertheless, thought the series was “fake news and shoddy journalism” according

to a letter he wrote to the administrators of the Pulitzer Prize (Hsu). Despite not being nominated for a Pulitzer, it didn't matter to Brown because she was "aiming for something greater than a Pulitzer: justice" (Briquelet).

In 2015, two members of the ABC News team, Amy Robach and Jim Hill, were able to convince Virginia Roberts Giuffre, previously mentioned above, to do an interview. Giuffre had been in hiding for twelve years, but she believed that this ABC interview would attract attention to the crimes committed by Epstein. Robach and her news crew interview Giuffre on record about her allegations against Epstein and others involved in his sex trafficking network, including former President Bill Clinton, Alan Dershowitz, and Prince Andrew. However, despite the shocking new revelations, the story was never aired by ABC News due to the network receiving a call from, you guessed it, Alan Dershowitz. Dershowitz claimed that the network would enhance the credibility of Giuffre, which would not be in his best interest. Later, after Brown exposed Epstein to the public, a video was released by Project Veritas, a right-leaning organization. In the video, ABC News anchor Robach complains to a producer off-air about the network squashing her interview with Giuffre. Robach claims that ABC refused to run the story because the allegations against Prince Andrew would jeopardize their access to the British royal family. Robach was referring to the desire of the network to interview Kate Middleton and Prince William. In response to the video, Robach released a statement on behalf of ABC News, saying that she was "caught in a private moment of frustration" (Coaston).

In July 2019, Epstein was finally arrested again at a New Jersey airport, but under two new federal charges, sex trafficking and sex trafficking conspiracy. Epstein was facing up to a 45-year prison sentence if convicted. And, since there were new victims, prosecutors didn't have to worry about double jeopardy. According to the indictment, Epstein recruited girls as young as



14 to his Palm Beach and Manhattan residence. It was also reported that some of Epstein's "associates" may have been involved; for example, they were responsible for facilitating his sexual abuse towards underage girls, such as contacting victims and scheduling their sexual encounters. In their investigation, the police discovered that Epstein used his private island, Little St. James, for sex trafficking. Occasionally, workers at the airstrip in St. Thomas would see Epstein, and they would always be joking, "how many kids are on board this time?" (Aguirre). It is alleged that Epstein brought girls as young as 11 or 12 to his island. On one occasion, a 15-year-old girl attempted to swim away after being sexually abused, but Epstein captured her along with confiscating her passport.

To defend himself, Epstein hired a team of lawyers and private investigators to get the charges dropped. This team worked to intimidate or discredit the victims who came forward and the authorities working on the case. One of Epstein's lawyers, Alan Dershowitz, was a famous criminal lawyer, and he had also helped Epstein back in 2007. Recently, multiple victims have alleged that Dershowitz was involved with the sexual abuse allegations with Epstein, but Dershowitz has repeatedly denied these allegations. Along with Dershowitz, Epstein's wife, Ghislaine Maxwell, was also involved. Maxwell was federally charged with sex trafficking conspiracy and sex trafficking of a minor; currently, she is awaiting trial in a jail in New York. If convicted, Maxwell could potentially face up to a 35-year prison sentence (bbc.com). Prosecutors have accused Maxwell of recruiting girls as young as 14 in Palm Beach, Florida.

On August 10, 2019, while awaiting trial, Epstein was found unresponsive in his cell and later pronounced dead. The New York City Chief Medical Examiner, Barbara Sampson, performed the autopsy, and she concluded that Epstein had died of suicide by hanging himself. However, the family of Epstein hired a private pathologist, Michael Baden, to conduct an

autopsy, and he suggested that Epstein died from homicide rather than suicide. Since Epstein fractured his hyoid bone, it indicates that his neck trauma may have been associated with “both strangulation and hanging” (Wamsley). The mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of Epstein have been under public scrutiny, and many believed Epstein was murdered. Immediately after Epstein’s death, many social media users began spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories, and even mainstream media took part in this, which added fuel to the fire. Nevertheless, since Epstein never got his day in court, the public will never know the extent of the horrific crimes committed by Epstein and the co-conspirators who were involved.

When the public first heard about the Epstein story, many people, including myself, thought it was too outlandish to be true. Nobody could imagine an ultra-rich and influential person was behind one of the largest underage sex trafficking rings in American History. The public was also unable to grasp that government officials were responsible for covering up the horrendous crimes committed by Epstein and silencing victims, especially during the wake of the #MeToo Movement. Obviously, from the new revelations about Epstein, the public now knows that the story was indeed true. A pivotal question you might be asking yourself is, how was Epstein able to get away with it? To answer this question, we must examine another story called the Franklin Scandal. This scandal was about an alleged child prostitution ring in Omaha, Nebraska, that attracted significant public and political interest from 1988 until the late 1990s. Although a state grand jury concluded the sexual abuse allegations to be a “carefully crafted hoax”, the scandal is believed to be true by many, especially considering recent events. There are many parallels between Epstein and the Franklin Scandal, such as financial crimes, underage victims, sexual blackmail, corruption, and mysterious deaths. Ultimately, covering the Franklin Scandal will help you answer the question mentioned above.

In June 1988, a federal investigation was launched against Larry King for embezzling funds from a local credit union formed to help the poor in Omaha, Nebraska. At the time, he was considered the fastest-rising black American star in the Republican Party. King also rubbed elbows with just about everyone in the Republican Party, especially the elite members. There was around \$38 million missing from the financial records, and he was the prime suspect due to being the manager of the local credit union (Robbins). A sub-committee was formed to investigate the embezzled money, and they discovered new revelations about the case. Supposedly, King was getting children that had fallen through the cracks, usually from foster homes, and flying them from “coast to coast” to be sexually abused by prominent figures, such as politicians and businessmen. Social services had known about the underage sex trafficking network, and they went to both state and federal law enforcement; however, authorities just ignored the accusations they made. When the Senate was informed about the revelations, they hired the best private investigator they knew of, Gary Caradori.

Throughout his investigation, Caradori found more victims and he collected 21 hours of videotaped victim testimony, which was given to both state and federal law enforcement. In total, Caradori found 60 victims who were involved with the sex trafficking network. Caradori also found another pimp, Craig Spencer, who was a powerbroker and lobbyist within the Republican Party living in Washington, DC. Spencer would frequently throw parties at his home, and apparently, there were hidden cameras spread throughout his property, which were for audio-visual blackmail. In 1990, Caradori took his 8-year-old son to an MLB game in Chicago. While in Chicago, he met with an alleged child and blackmail photographer involved with the sex trafficking network, Rusty Nelson. Although Nelson was not the most trustworthy person, they spent much time together, and Nelson also had critical evidence. Nelson had given photos to

Caradori of the pedophilic exploits of King and other well-known people. Unfortunately, when Caradori left Chicago to fly back to Nebraska, his plane inexplicably broke up over Lee County, Illinois. Caradori and his son both died. The NTSB, National Transportation and Safety Board, determined that the plane “broke up in flight [mid-air]” on a clear and sunny day; however, they were never able to conclude what caused this mysterious crash (Campbell). Furthermore, the photos that would have implicated the involvement of King were not found in the wreckage.

After a two-year investigation, two grand juries were formed. The state grand jury covered the sexual abuse allegations, while the federal grand jury covered the embezzlement allegations. In the federal grand jury, multiple officers, including King, were indicted on embezzlement charges. However, in the state grand jury, it was determined the sexual abuse allegations were baseless after a two-and-a-half-month trial. And, two victims, Alisha Owens and Paul Bonacci, who refused to recant their statements were indicted on perjury charges. At the age of 21, Owens was looking at a prison sentence of 9 to 25 years, but she ended up only serving four years in prison. John DeCamp, Owens’s attorney, noted: “he could not think of a single case in the history of the US legal system in which a person with no prior criminal record was sentenced to 25 years of prison” (Campbell). And, to make it worse, Owens was placed in solitary confinement for two years of her prison sentence, more than any woman in Nebraska history. Bonacci was able to avoid any prison sentence. Interestingly, Bonacci knew about a 12-year-old boy, Johnny Gosch, who disappeared from Des Moines, Iowa, in 1982. Bonacci remembers being forced to sexually abuse Gosch, and he described details about Gosch that were unreported to the media.

Despite the controversy surrounding the Franklin Scandal, many of the mainstream media outlets simply ignored the allegations for a few reasons. First, the allegations were so outrageous

that the media concluded that they were not newsworthy. Secondly, the allegations implicated too many influential and powerful people. However, one person decided to investigate the scandal, and eventually wrote a book to explain it called *The Franklin Scandal Cover-up: Child Abuse, Satanism, and Murder in Nebraska*. Ironically, this person was John DeCamp, Alisha Owens's attorney. DeCamp was a decorated Vietnam War veteran, and he was even responsible for initiating Operation Baby Lift during the war, which evacuated 2,800 orphaned Vietnamese children. And, from 1971 to 1987, he served as a Republican Senator for the state of Nebraska. DeCamp personally knew many of the people involved with the scandal, including Larry King. Originally, DeCamp was skeptical of the scandal. However, after discovering Paul Bonacci's diary, DeCamp quickly changed his mind. Bonacci recorded countless disturbing sexual abuse experiences that dated back to the late 1970s. After authenticating the diary, DeCamp became involved with investigating the scandal, defending the victims, and exposing the cover-up.

In his book, DeCamp exposes everything about the Franklin Scandal, and how it was a cover-up by the government and the press. Since DeCamp was actively involved, he provided details about the cover-up that were not publicly known. With the press, DeCamp singled out one newspaper, *Omaha World-Herald*. The CEO of the newspaper was Harold Andersen, and he was good friends with Larry King. Furthermore, Andersen helped raise money for the Franklin Credit Union, including \$600,000 for renovations (Taamu). In one of Alisha Owens's testimonies, she accused Andersen and Peter Citron, a columnist at the *Omaha World-Herald*, of sexually abusing multiple underage boys at one of Larry King's sex parties. Citron, believe it or not, pleaded no contest to two felony charges of fondling underage boys, and he received a 3 to 8-year sentence for sexual assault in 1990 (Taamu). Both Andersen and Citron worked tirelessly to discredit every victim that came forward with their newspaper. DeCamp speculated that

Andersen could have been working as an intelligence agent due to his ties with prominent figures across the globe. Before DeCamp published his book, he talked to one of his old friends, William Colby, who was head of the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA. According to DeCamp, Colby told him to get as far away from this scandal as he could because he could end up getting himself and his family murdered. Ultimately, DeCamp decided to publish the book, and it became widely popular, especially among conspiracy theorists.

The parallels between the Franklin Scandal and Epstein are uncanny, and the two stories tell us a lot about elite members of society. Prominent individuals, such as Larry King and Epstein, took advantage of children and used them for their nefarious purposes. And, they had complete immunity from virtually every institution, including the press, police, FBI, CIA, and DOJ. Both of them, especially Larry King, used the press to discredit victims, manipulate public opinion, and ignore overwhelming evidence. Who exactly pulls the strings for the press when it comes to these stories? In addition, from what we have seen in these two stories, grand juries could easily be swayed and used for cover-ups. Although difficult to admit, some government officials use their power for ulterior motives. We will probably never know the truth behind Epstein, whether he was an intelligence agent, the extent of his sex trafficking network, the conspirators involved, and the corrupt institutions that let him get away with his crimes. Thankfully, we get closer to discovering the truth due to courageous and hardworking investigative journalists.

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