

Did Jeffrey Epstein “Belong to Intelligence?”

In 2008, billionaire asset manager Jeffrey Epstein’s lawyers negotiated a very favorable plea bargain in Florida, under which he served a mere 13 months in jail — in his own private wing, with 12 hours of daily “work release” — on a single charge of soliciting prostitution from a minor (the FBI had identified 40 alleged victims of sexual predation on his part).

Epstein’s in jail again, this time in New York, on charges of sex trafficking and conspiracy to traffic minors for sex. Again, prosecutors allege at least 40 victims.

A prospective 41st casualty of the case, perhaps not an undeserving one, is Alexander Acosta. As US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Acosta negotiated that sweetheart 2008 plea agreement. Now he faces calls for his resignation as US Secretary of Labor.

How did the plea agreement come about? For an easy explanation, look to a (supposed) exchange between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway in the 1920s:

Fitzgerald: The rich are different from you and me.

Hemingway: Yes, they have more money.

More money buys more formidable lawyers (in Epstein’s case, Alan Dershowitz and Ken Starr). More money usually means friends with more money, and with the influence that goes with having more money. It’s just a fact of life that more money sometimes means getting away with — or at least getting off easier for — things would put you or me in jail for a long, long time.

But another possibility rears its ugly head. In an article for *The Daily Beast*, investigative journalist Vicky Ward quotes a former senior White House official, in turn quoting Acosta’s response to questions about Epstein during his interview with President Donald Trump’s transition team:

“I was told Epstein ‘belonged to intelligence’ and to leave it alone.”

Yes, we’re getting that quote at third hand. Unfortunately, yes, it sounds plausible.

Suppose you were a wealthy and influential man with wealthy and influential friends — not just celebrities, but business moguls and politicians — from around the globe.

Suppose you held wild sex parties on your private island and invited those wealthy and influential friends, even ferrying some of them to the island on your personal Boeing 727

airliner.

Suppose those wild sex parties included the presence, voluntary or coerced, of young (perhaps illegally so) women.

That's pretty good extortion material, isn't it?

Now suppose a government intelligence agency offered to protect you from prosecution for your escapades — perhaps by leaning on a federal prosecutor to make the matter go away with minimal punishment — in return for that extortion material?

Is that how things happened? Your guess is as good as mine. But if so, it would be far from the first time that innocent men, women and children have been sacrificed to the false idol of “national security.”

Since World War Two, the United States has built itself into a “national security state” which recognizes no ethical or legal constraints. It's doesn't exist to protect the American public. It exists to protect itself. And, too often, it protects the predators among us.