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House Oversight Committee subpoenas Ghislaine Maxwell for deposition

UPDATED 10 HR AGO

By Annie Grayer, Kaitlan Collins



Ghislaine Maxwell on October 18, 2016 in New York City. (Sylvain Gaboury/Patrick McMullan/Getty Images/File)

House Oversight Chair James Comer has subpoenaed Jeffrey Epstein's former associate Ghislaine Maxwell for a deposition.

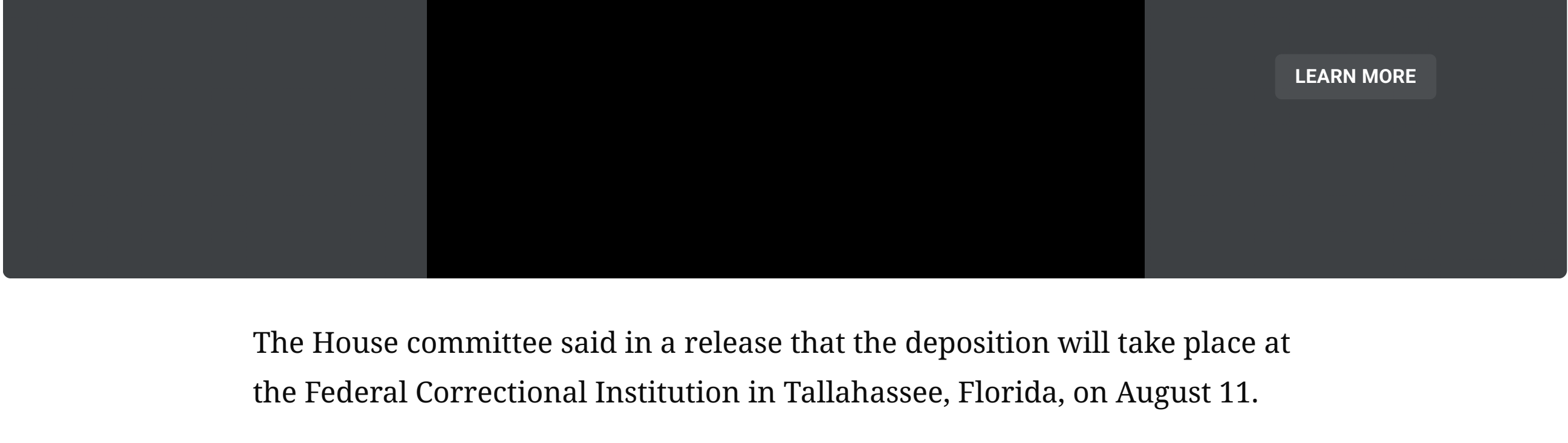
Comer, a Kentucky Republican, told CNN's Manu Raju on Tuesday that it was an open question whether his panel would begin a full-blown probe into the Epstein scandal, saying: "We'll see what she has to say." But he said that Republicans wanted more information released by the Justice Department regardless of where his panel's inquiry goes.

The issuing of the subpoena comes as many congressional Republicans have called for more transparency over the Epstein case.

The Justice Department is also interested in hearing from Maxwell. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche is expected to meet with her Thursday, two people familiar with the meeting told CNN, amid backlash over the administration's handling of files related to Epstein.

Maxwell's attorney David Oscar Markus told CNN that her meeting with the Justice Department will determine how she responds to the congressional subpoena.

"As for the Congressional subpoena, Ms. Maxwell is taking this one step at a time. She looks forward to her meeting with the Department of Justice, and that discussion will help inform how she proceeds," Markus told CNN.



The House committee said in a release that the deposition will take place at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee, Florida, on August 11.

"The Department of Justice is cooperating and will help facilitate the deposition at the prison," a statement from the committee said.

Earlier Wednesday, House Speaker Mike Johnson said he was fully behind Comer's effort to subpoena Maxwell, but raised questions about her credibility.

"Every single one of us are for maximum transparency, and we'll use every power that we have to ensure that that's done," he said.

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"I will note the obvious concern, the caveat that Chairman Comer and I, and everyone has, that can she be counted on to tell the truth? Is she a credible witness? ... I mean, can we trust what she's gonna say? Even if she raises her hand and says that she'll testify under oath? Is that something that can be trusted? You know, that's a reasonable question. Is that credible evidence? I don't know. But we'll have to see."

As for Johnson's comments on Maxwell's credibility as a witness, Markus said, "We understand Speaker Johnson's general concern — Congress should always vet the credibility of its witnesses. But in this case, those concerns are unfounded. If Ms. Maxwell agrees to testify before Congress and not take the 5th — and that remains a big if — she would testify truthfully, as she always has said she would and as she will with Mr. Blanche. The truth should not be feared or preemptively dismissed. No previous prosecutor from the Southern District of New York or elsewhere has had the courage to meet with Ms. Maxwell and ask her these important questions. So we are grateful to Mr. Blanche and his DOJ that they are approaching this with an open mind. That's how our system is supposed to work."

This story has been updated with additional information.



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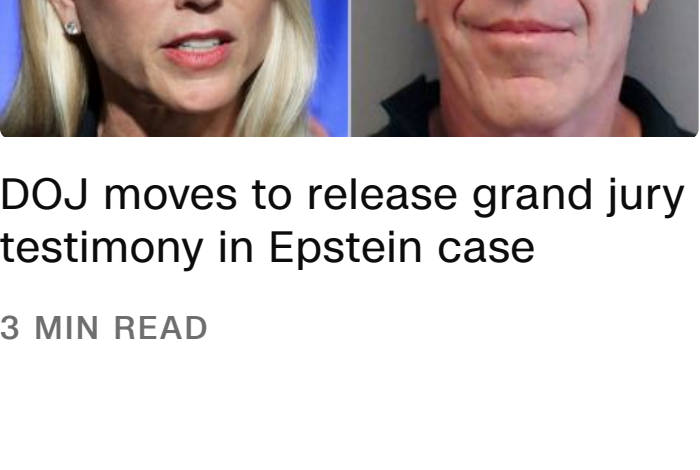
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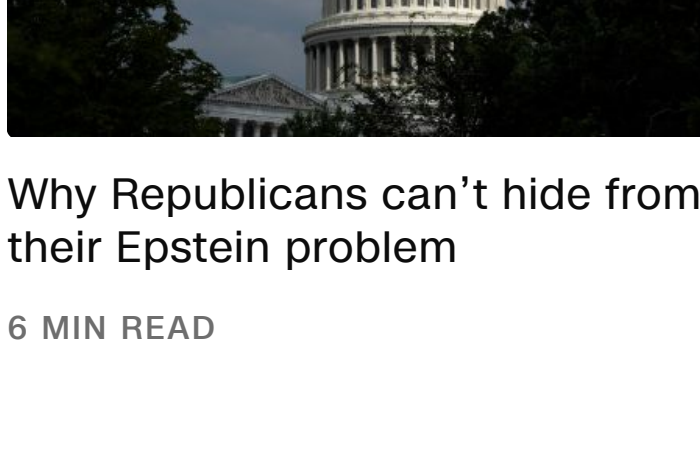
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