

Jeffrey Epstein's Friends Sent Him Bawdy Letters for a 50th Birthday Album. One Was From Donald Trump. The leather-bound book was compiled by Ghislaine Maxwell. The president says the letter 'is a fake thing.'

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FULL TEXT

It was Jeffrey Epstein's 50th birthday, and Ghislaine Maxwell was preparing a special gift to mark the occasion. She turned to Epstein's family and friends. One of them was Donald Trump.

Maxwell collected letters from Trump and dozens of Epstein's other associates for a 2003 birthday album, according to documents reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Pages from the leather-bound album—assembled before Epstein was first arrested in 2006—are among the documents examined by Justice Department officials who investigated Epstein and Maxwell years ago, according to people who have reviewed the pages. It's unclear if any of the pages are part of the Trump administration's recent review.

The president's past relationship with Epstein is at a sensitive moment. The Justice Department documents, the so-called Epstein files, and who or what is in them are at the center of a storm consuming the Trump administration. On Wednesday, after angry comments about how the files are a hoax created by Democrats, President Trump lashed out at his own supporters for refusing to let the matter go.

The letter bearing Trump's name, which was reviewed by the Journal, is bawdy—like others in the album. It contains several lines of typewritten text framed by the outline of a naked woman, which appears to be hand-drawn with a heavy marker. A pair of small arcs denotes the woman's breasts, and the future president's signature is a squiggly "Donald" below her waist, mimicking pubic hair.

The letter concludes: "Happy Birthday —and may every day be another wonderful secret."

In an interview with the Journal on Tuesday evening, Trump denied writing the letter or drawing the picture. "This is not me. This is a fake thing. It's a fake Wall Street Journal story," he said.

"I never wrote a picture in my life. I don't draw pictures of women," he said. "It's not my language. It's not my words." He told the Journal he was preparing to file a lawsuit if it published an article. "I'm gonna sue The Wall Street Journal just like I sued everyone else," he said.

Allegations that Epstein had been sexually abusing girls became public in 2006 and he was arrested that year. Epstein died in 2019 in jail after he was arrested a second time and charged with sex trafficking conspiracy.

Justice Department officials didn't respond to requests for comment or address questions about whether the Trump page and other pages of the birthday album were part of the agency's recent documents review. The FBI declined to comment.

The existence of the album and the contents of the birthday letters haven't previously been reported. The album had poems, photos and greetings from businesspeople, academics, Epstein's former girlfriends and childhood pals, according to the documents reviewed by the Journal and people familiar with them.

Among those who submitted letters were billionaire Leslie Wexner and attorney Alan Dershowitz. The album also

contained a letter from a now-deceased Harvard economist, one of Epstein's report cards from Mark Twain junior high school in Brooklyn and a note from a former assistant that included an acrostic with Epstein's name: "Jeffrey, oh Jeffrey!/ Everyone loves you!/ Fun in the sun!/ Fun just for fun!/ Remember...don't forget me soon!/ Epstein...you rock!/ You are the best!"

Epstein was Wexner's money manager at the time. The longtime leader of Victoria's Secret wrote a short message that said: "I wanted to get you what you want... so here it is..." After the text was a line drawing of what appeared to be a woman's breasts. Wexner declined to comment through a spokesman. Wexner's spokesman previously told the Journal that the retail mogul "severed all ties with Epstein in 2007 and never spoke with him again."

Dershowitz's letter included a mock-up of a "Vanity Unfair" magazine cover with mock headlines such as "Who was Jack the Ripper? Was it Jeffrey Epstein?" He joked that he had convinced the magazine to change the focus of an article from Epstein to Bill Clinton. Dershowitz, who represented Epstein after his first arrest, said, "It's been a long time and I don't recall the content of what I may have written."

The book was put together by a New York City bookbinder, Herbert Weitz, according to people who were involved in the process. Weitz, who died in 2020, listed Epstein as a client on his website in 2003.

It isn't clear how the letter with Trump's signature was prepared. Inside the outline of the naked woman was a typewritten note styled as an imaginary conversation between Trump and Epstein, written in the third person.

"Voice Over: There must be more to life than having everything," the note began.

Donald: Yes, there is, but I won't tell you what it is.

Jeffrey: Nor will I, since I also know what it is.

Donald: We have certain things in common, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey: Yes, we do, come to think of it.

Donald: Enigmas never age, have you noticed that?

Jeffrey: As a matter of fact, it was clear to me the last time I saw you.

Donald: A pal is a wonderful thing. Happy Birthday —and may every day be another wonderful secret.

'Jeffrey enjoys his social life'

When he turned 50, Epstein was already wealthy from managing Wexner's fortune and was socializing with Trump, Clinton and other powerful people. He often entertained at his Manhattan townhouse, Palm Beach, Fla., home and private Caribbean island.

A spokesman for Clinton referred to a 2019 statement that former President Clinton had cut off ties more than a decade before Epstein's second arrest and didn't know about Epstein's alleged crimes.

Epstein and Trump spent time together in the 1990s and early 2000s and were photographed at social events, including with Maxwell and Melania Trump. A 1992 tape from the NBC archives shows Trump partying with Epstein at his Mar-a-Lago estate; Trump is seen pulling a woman toward him and patting her behind.

Trump, along with others including Clinton, also appeared several times on flight logs for Epstein's private jet.

A 2002 New York magazine profile of Epstein quoted Trump. "I've known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy," Trump said.

"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."

Both men said that they subsequently had a falling-out. Trump has said their friendship ended before Epstein pleaded guilty to procuring a minor for prostitution in 2008, served time in a Florida jail and registered as a sex offender.

When Epstein was arrested again in 2019, Trump said he hadn't talked to Epstein for about 15 years. "I knew him like everybody in Palm Beach knew him," Trump said in the Oval Office at that time. "I was not a fan of his, that I can tell you."

Trump's spokeswoman told the Journal in 2023 that Trump had banned Epstein from his Mar-a-Lago club at some point in the past, without elaborating.

Maxwell, a British socialite, was convicted in 2021 of helping Epstein's sex-trafficking and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Maxwell didn't respond to a letter requesting an interview sent to her in prison. Arthur Aidala, an attorney who

represented Maxwell, said, "At this point, she is focused on her case before the Supreme Court of the United States."

The FBI's Epstein files

Epstein's associations with Trump and many powerful people have been well documented . There remain questions about what the FBI possesses about Epstein and his well-connected friends. In 2019, the FBI confiscated evidence from Epstein's properties in the U.S. Virgin Islands and New York.

Earlier this week, after the Journal sought comment from the president about the letter, Trump told reporters at the White House that he believed some Epstein files were "made up" by former Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden and former FBI Director James Comey.

He said that releasing any more Epstein files would be up to Attorney General Pam Bondi. "Whatever she thinks is credible, she should release," Trump said.

Allegations that bureaucrats covered up Epstein's connections with participants in his trafficking scheme were fanned by people now in top roles in the Trump administration, including FBI Director Kash Patel and his deputy, Dan Bongino.

In June 2024, Trump was asked in a Fox News interview whether he would release the Epstein case files. The Republican presidential candidate initially responded, "Yeah, I would." But he also expressed some reservations. "You don't want to affect people's lives if it's phony stuff in there, because it's a lot of phony stuff with that whole world. But I think I would."

Soon after she was confirmed as attorney general, Bondi said she was preparing to release new Epstein files. In late February, Bondi announced the release of "Phase 1" of the documents. But the material contained few new revelations, drawing criticism from right-wing influencers.

Bondi initially blamed the FBI's New York office for withholding information and promised to release the remaining documents after redacting the victim's names. Patel also said, "There will be no coverups, no missing documents and no stone left unturned." They tasked hundreds of FBI employees to review the materials and prepare them for release. The issue took on new life in June when Elon Musk, amid a public feud with Trump, alleged that the FBI was withholding documents from the Epstein case because Trump was in the files.

"The truth will come out," Musk wrote on X on June 5. He later deleted the message and said he regretted some of his comments.

On July 7, the Justice Department backtracked on Bondi's pledge to release more Epstein files. The Justice Department said that after an "exhaustive review" it had found no "incriminating client list" or additional documents that warrant public disclosure.

Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee demanded this week that Republican Chairman Jim Jordan hold hearings on the Trump administration's handling of the Epstein files and, if necessary, subpoena Bondi, Patel and Bongino.

At a cabinet meeting on July 8, Trump criticized a reporter for asking about Epstein. "Are people still talking about this guy, this creep?" Trump said. "That is unbelievable. Do you want to waste the time?"

That same day, Musk wrote on X: "How can people be expected to have faith in Trump if he won't release the Epstein files?"

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