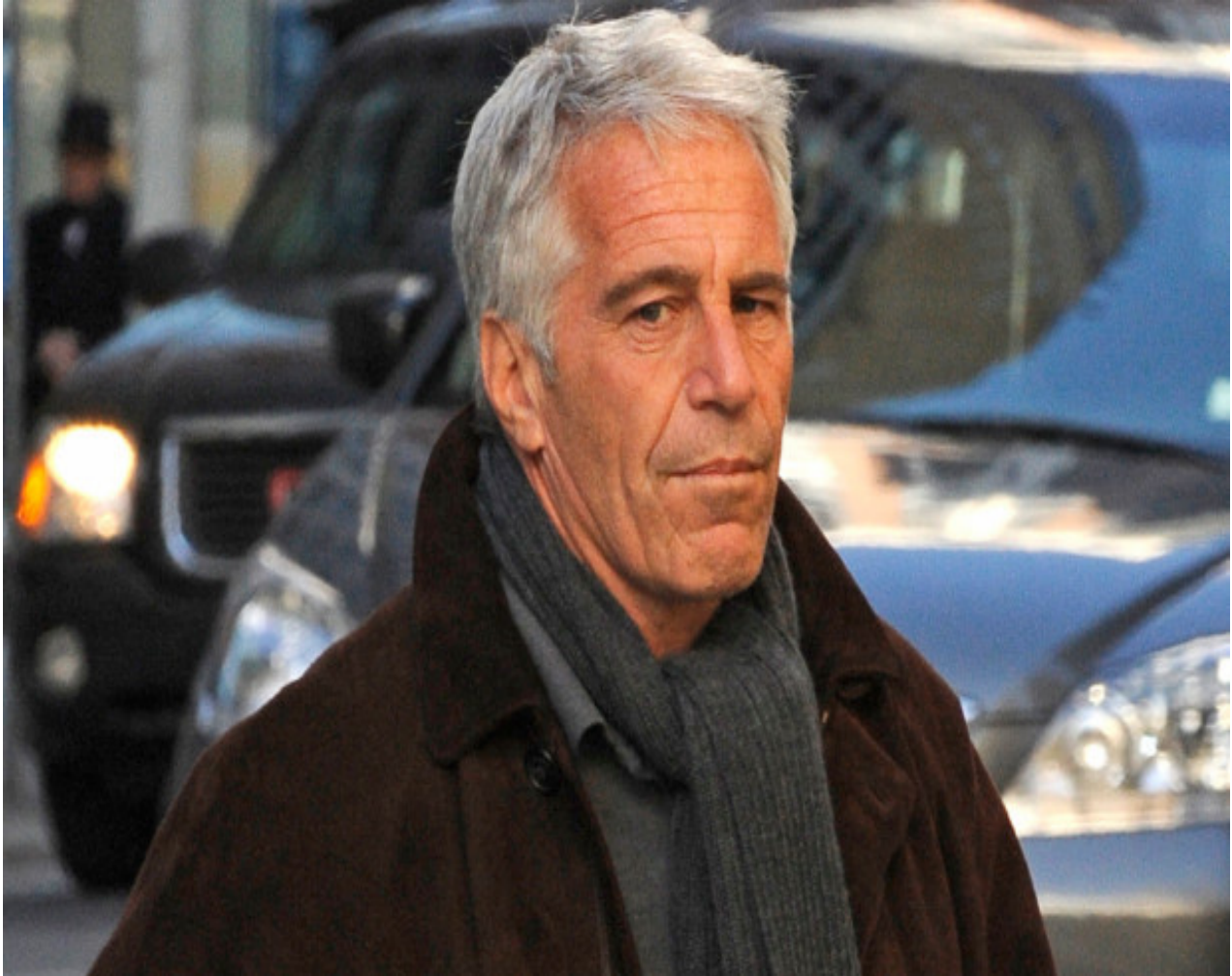


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Jeffery Epstein Found Dead In Cell, Suicide Suspected

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Jeffery Epstein, the billionaire with deep ties in the U.S. Virgin Islands facing charges of sex trafficking involving dozens of underage girls, was found dead in his cell, multiple U.S. and international news media organizations, including BBC and ABC News, have reported.

Mr. Epstein, 66 years old, was being held pending trial at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan. He was arrested on July 6 at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey as he was returning from Paris on his private jet. He faced a maximum sentence of 45 years in prison.

Mr. Epstein owns a mansion on an island in the U.S. Virgin Islands that he also owns, called Little Saint James. Charges against Mr. Epstein also allege that his USVI home was part of the sex trafficking operation.

He was a former asset manager who had been friends with a number of high profile individuals, including Former President Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew, President Donald Trump, among other world leaders and influential businesspeople.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Mr. Epstein had sought to be released from jail and put under house arrest in his Manhattan apartment pending trial. Judge Berman denied his request for bail, saying Mr. Epstein posed too great a danger to the community. Mr. Epstein's lawyers appealed the decision.

WSJ, citing a person familiar with the matter, said his death doesn't end the investigation, and that other people who participated in the alleged sex-trafficking scheme could still be charged.

Attorney General William Barr said in a statement he was "appalled" to learn of the apparent suicide.

"Mr. Epstein's death raises serious questions that must be answered," Mr. Barr said.

Mr. Barr was "livid" to learn about Mr. Epstein's death, telling staffers he is determined to get to the bottom of what happened, a person familiar with the matter said, WSJ said.

About two weeks ago, officials moved Mr. Epstein to a suicide-watch unit after he was found unconscious in his cell with marks on his neck.

Mr. Epstein had recently been taken off suicide watch, a person familiar with the matter said.

Mr. Epstein had been held at a Manhattan jail, the Metropolitan Correctional Center, that has housed high-profile inmates such as Mexican drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. The facility has drawn criticism from staffers, union officials, inmates and attorneys for substandard conditions and a lack of basic amenities, such as books, for inmates, WSJ said.

Officials with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, who administer the jail, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Mr. Epstein's death.

This is a developing story...