



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on February 19, 2026

Protecting Sex Predators: The Sordid Reality of the Global Power Elite

"No one, including the President of the United States, should be able to cover up crimes against children." — [James Talarico](#)

Nearly 30 years after the first complaints were filed, the Epstein files remain a masterclass in how the ruling class shields its own.

We are long past the point for partisan excuses and institutional gaslighting.

The question is no longer whether Jeffrey Epstein — the hedge fund billionaire/convicted serial pedophile and sex trafficker — committed [monstrous crimes against young girls](#), many of them children.

We know he did.

What remains unresolved is something far more troubling.

We know that Epstein [did not act alone](#).

A decision by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals allowing thousands of pages of Epstein-related documents to be unsealed referenced allegations involving "[numerous prominent American politicians, powerful business executives, foreign presidents, a well-known Prime Minister, and other world leaders](#)."

That alone should have been enough to trigger full transparency.

Instead, nearly [30 years after the first complaints against Epstein were filed](#), the full truth remains obscured.

And that is the real scandal.

Because this was never simply about Epstein. It was about the system that made Epstein possible.

The Epstein files should have been a moral bright line — an issue so morally reprehensible and widely condemned as to cut through partisan politics.

Instead, it has become part of the three-ring circus that is governance in America today.

This is [not a minor incident involving minor players](#), nor can it be confined to one political party or one political era.

This is about the darkness at the heart of the American police state: a system built to shield the powerful from justice.

Epstein did not sidestep accountability because he was clever. He sidestepped accountability because he was protected.



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Power protects power.

Epstein was aided, abetted and protected by [a cross-section of political, corporate and societal classes](#) here in the United States and abroad. He cultivated relationships across politics, finance, academia, entertainment, and global power circles. His [social network](#) spanned parties, ideologies, and continents.

While mere association is not tantamount to guilt, these associations speak volumes about how power operates according to its own rules.

As Rep. Thomas Massie warned Attorney General Pam Bondi, who has been at the forefront of the Trump administration's effort to slow-walk the release of the Epstein files: "[This is bigger than Watergate](#). This goes over four administrations. You don't have to go back to Biden. Let's go back to Obama. Let's go back to George Bush. This cover-up spans decades, and you are responsible for this portion of it."

[If it looks like a cover-up](#), smells like a cover-up, and appears to benefit the same entrenched interests, we have every right — indeed, a civic and moral duty — to demand greater transparency.

For years, the Epstein case has stood as a grotesque emblem of the depravity within the global power elite: a sex trafficking ring operated not only for Epstein's personal pleasure but also [for that of his friends and business associates](#) — billionaires, politicians, and celebrities.

If Epstein exposed the rot at the top, the broader landscape of child sex trafficking reveals how deep and systemic that rot truly runs.

The numbers alone are staggering.

Child sex trafficking — the buying and selling of women, young girls and boys for sex, some as young as 9 years old — has become big business in America. It is one of the [fastest growing criminal operations](#) and the second most-lucrative commodity traded illegally after drugs and guns.

[Adults purchase children for sex at least 2.5 million times a year](#) in the United States.

It's not just young girls who are vulnerable to these predators, either. [Boys account for over a third of victims in the U.S. sex industry](#).

Who buys a child for sex?

[Otherwise ordinary men](#) from all walks of life. But then there are the so-called *extraordinary* men — like Epstein and his associates — with wealth, connections, and protection who are allowed to operate according to their own rules.

These men skate free of accountability because the [criminal justice system panders to the powerful, the wealthy and the elite](#).

While Epstein's [alleged crimes are heinous](#) enough on their own, he is part of a larger narrative of how a culture of entitlement becomes [a cesspool and a breeding ground for despots and predators](#).

Nor is this culture of impunity confined to billionaires and political elites.

Across the country, law enforcement officers have been caught running sex trafficking rings, abusing women and girls in their custody, or [exploiting their badge to coerce sex](#).

From Louisiana to Ohio to New York, officers have been [arrested for trafficking underage girls, assaulting vulnerable women, and raping detainees](#) — often shielded by unions, prosecutors, or a blue wall of silence.



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This is how the system works, protecting the untouchables — not because they're innocent, but because the system has made them immune.

And this is why this case was never just about one man.

As Piotr Smolar writes for *Le Monde*, "Epstein was [the most striking face of a two-tier system of justice](#), one that provided a privileged path for the powerful."

We see this pattern everywhere.

Abuse of power — and the ambition-fueled hypocrisy and deliberate disregard for misconduct that make those abuses possible — works the same whether you're talking about sex crimes, government corruption, or the rule of law.

Give any one person — or government agency — too much power and allow them to believe that they are entitled, untouchable and will not be held accountable for their actions, and those powers will be abused.

We can agree to disagree about many things, but America should have zero tolerance for child sex trafficking.

At some point, moral outrage must give way to moral clarity.

The Trump administration's cover-up is unacceptable. The selective redactions of non-victims' names and faces are unacceptable. The [removal of files](#) by biased administration operatives is unacceptable.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), a constitutional republic cannot survive a protected class.

If the Epstein files force us to think and act differently about anything, let it be this: the rule of law cannot be a one-sided weapon used against the powerless. It must require that the powerful be held just as accountable for their abuses as anyone else.

About John & Nisha Whitehead:

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