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Jeffrey Epstein's Society Friends Close Ranks

by [Alexandra Wolfe](#) [Info](#)



Alexandra Wolfe is a former contributing editor to Conde Nast Portfolio. She has written for publications including the New York Times, New York magazine, the New York Observer, and the Wall Street Journal, where she wrote design and lifestyle features for the Weekend Journal section. Before that, she was a reporter at the New York Observer. She is currently working on a book called *American Coddle*, about America's culture of entitlement.

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No, back then Epstein was mid-makeover. He had monarchy in-house and famous faces at his table. Former Bear Stearns CEO James Cayne had just endorsed Epstein on his science foundation's website (which has been since removed). It seemed Epstein had joined the ranks of former President Clinton, director [Roman Polanski](#), and former New York Governor [Eliot Spitzer](#), whose sex scandals faded in comparison with their celebrity. The conventional wisdom among his friends was that Epstein has been victimized by greedy, morally dubious teenage girls and unscrupulous lawyers. "I've never condoned paying for sex, but if the young lady lied about her age it's her own fault," explained one socialite, who along with hedge-fund manager Wilbur Ross and real-estate magnate Leon Black hobnobbed with Epstein at a Southampton movie screening just two months after his release from "community control" in Florida.

Much of Epstein's entrée into New York society can be credited to [Ghislaine Maxwell](#), the superbly well-connected daughter of the late press magnate Robert Maxwell. Epstein started dating her in the 1990s. The romantic relationship ended after a few years, but they have remained close ever since. Last week two victims publicly alleged that Ghislaine procured them for Epstein, one at age 15 from a Mar-a-Lago country club locker room. [REDACTED], now 27, who was Epstein's sexual plaything for several years, told the Mail on Sunday. "Ghislaine sent me to a dentist to have my teeth whitened and I went for Brazilian waxes. He wanted me to look pre-pubescent."

Now, New York friends are suddenly hesitant to talk about Maxwell. "She's a high-end 'fixer'," and so what? they ask. "No one in café society gives a damn that a 15-year-old girl gives massages," says one frequent charity-benefit guest. "She gets people into parties and runs around for a lot of people." As to the fallout from her association with Epstein, he says, "If you're Mike Huckabee it would matter but not if you're Ghislaine Maxwell."

The crowd at the events top publicist Peggy Siegal has organized for Epstein proves the point, at least behind closed doors. "I and many others that know him describe him as brilliant," says Siegal. "His unique mind is what attracts the world's smartest people to his home." Last September, with Siegal's help, Epstein hosted a Break Fast after Yom Kippur. A group of 120 friends brought their children over for a buffet dinner. One attendee, Jonathan Farkas, a New York real-estate heir, has known Epstein for 35 years and visited him while he was in prison. "The side I've been reading about is a side I don't know," he says. Farkas considers Epstein one of the smartest people he knows and often asks him for investment advice. "Unless I've seen it, I don't focus on it," he says.

"From a cerebral and business side he's worshipped," says socialite Debbie Bancroft. "He's incredibly charming and handsome. He's an extraordinary package so I can see why people don't want to believe what they hear. If people come out of jail and are still successful, people are very forgiving, shockingly so."

Renowned scientists whose research Epstein has generously funded through the years also stand by him. Professor Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist and author of *Quantum Man*, has planned scientific conferences with Epstein in St. Thomas and remained close with him throughout his incarceration. "If anything, the unfortunate period he suffered has caused him to really think about what he wants to do with his money and his time, and support knowledge," says Krauss. "Jeffrey has surrounded himself with beautiful women and young women but they're not as young as the ones that were claimed. As a scientist I always judge things on empirical evidence and he always has women ages 19 to 23 around him, but I've never seen anything else, so as a scientist, my presumption is that whatever the problems were I would believe him over other people." Though colleagues have criticized him over his relationship with Epstein, Krauss insists, "I don't feel tarnished in any way by my relationship with Jeffrey; I feel raised by it."

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-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: 03 April 2011 12:36

To: Peter Green
Subject: Re: Daily Beast

I cant open anything that is not underlined in blue sorry Peter i am not good at computer stuff. When are you coming here so i can call [REDACTED] please nothing to [REDACTED] about thsi jonathan