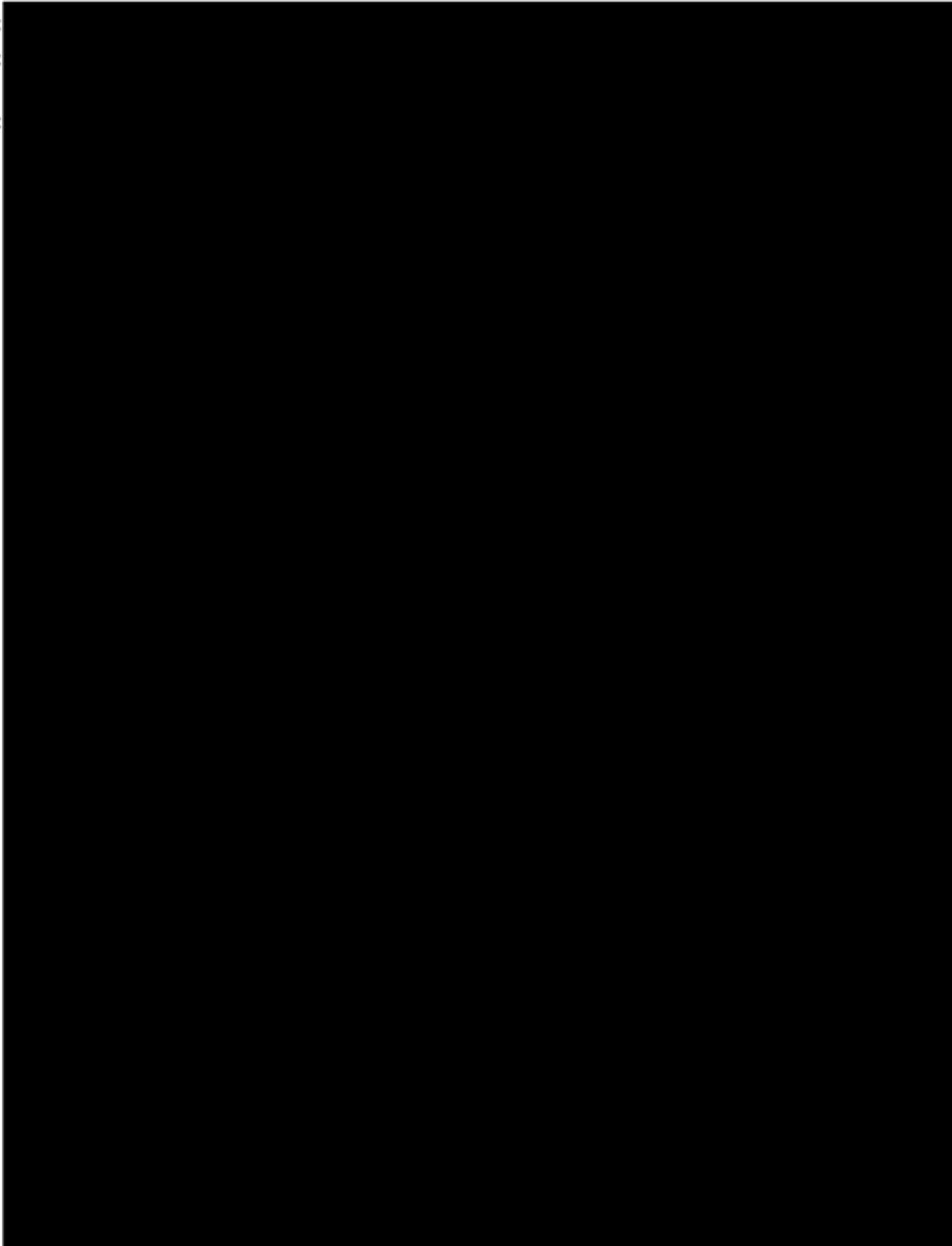


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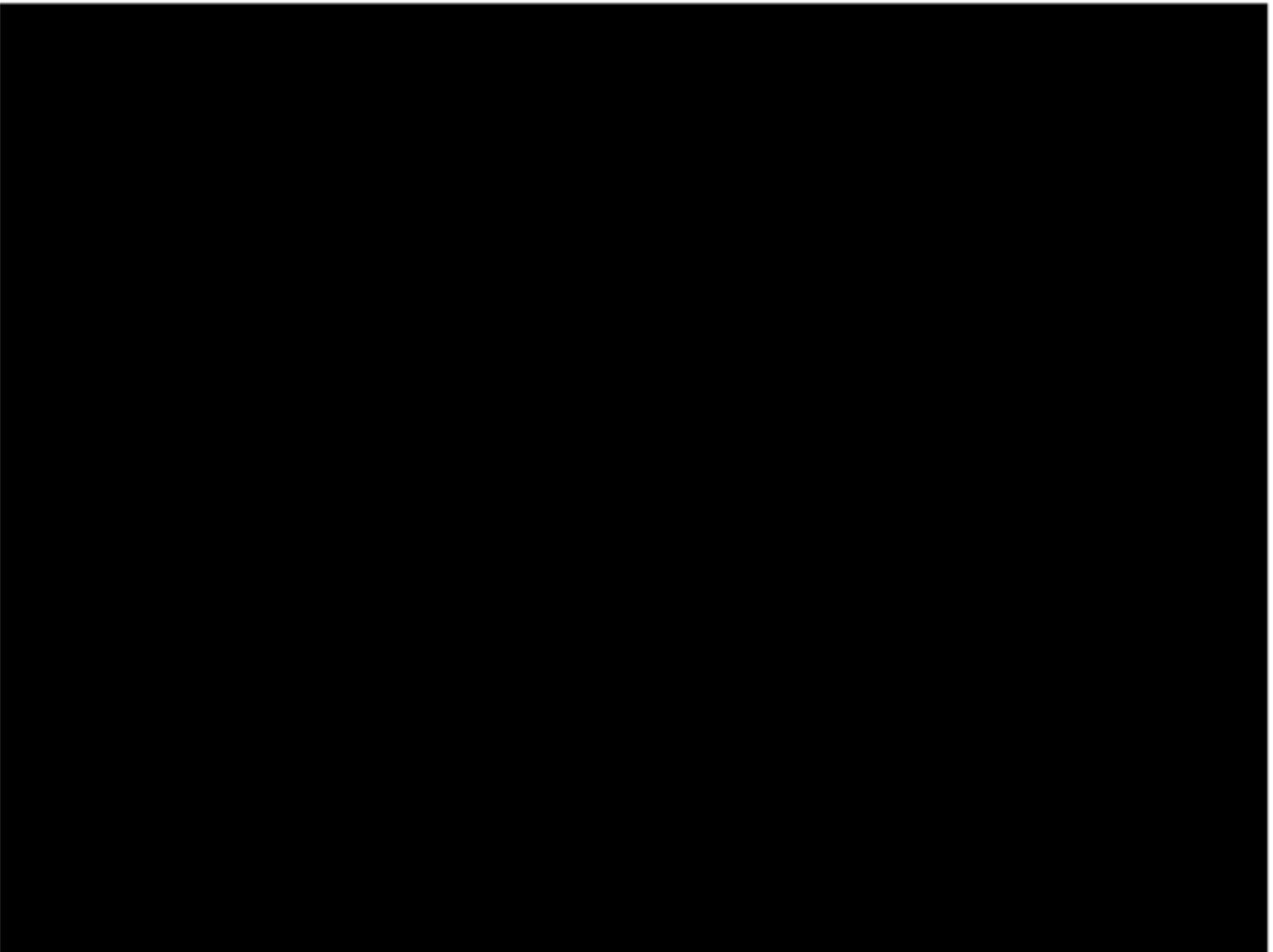
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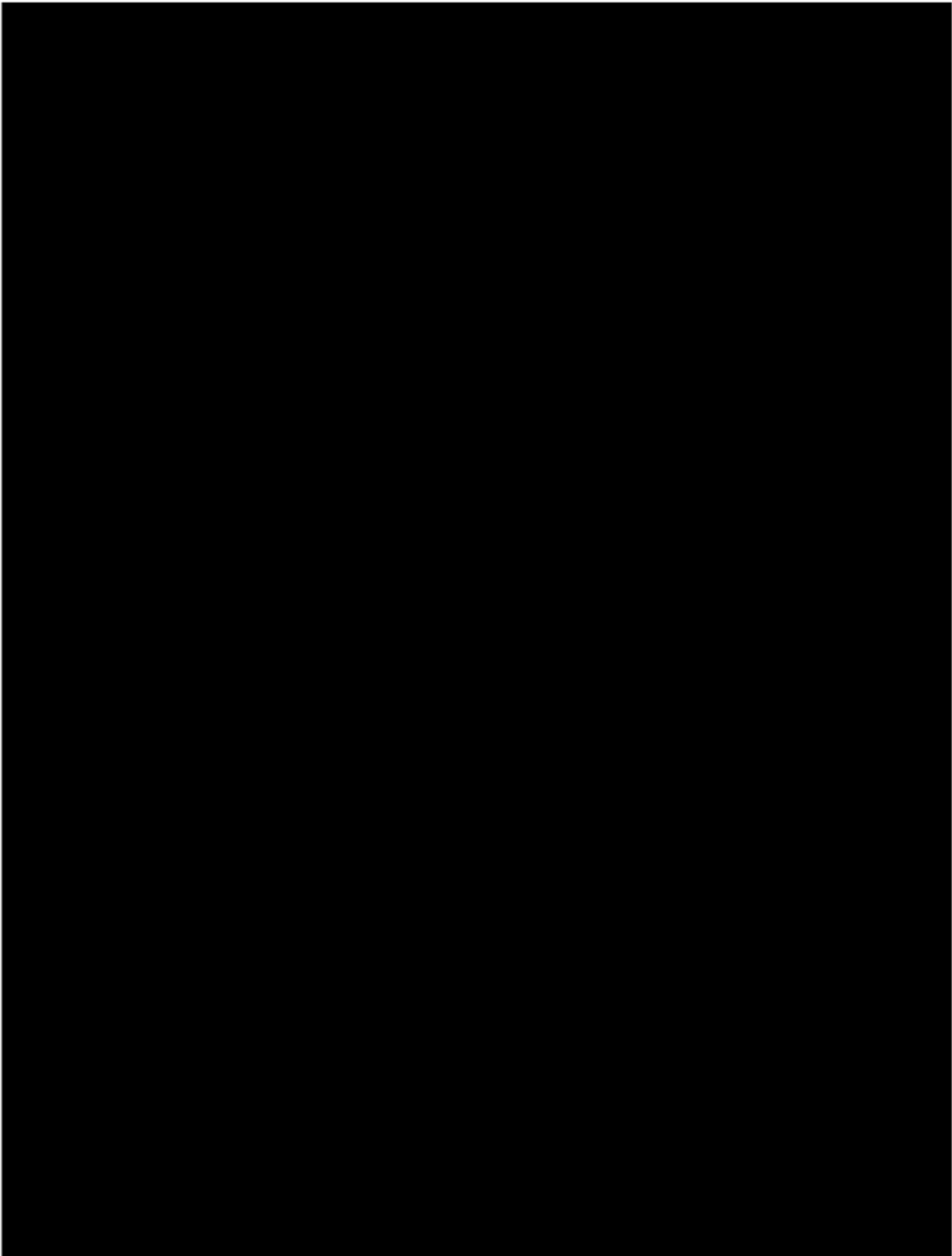
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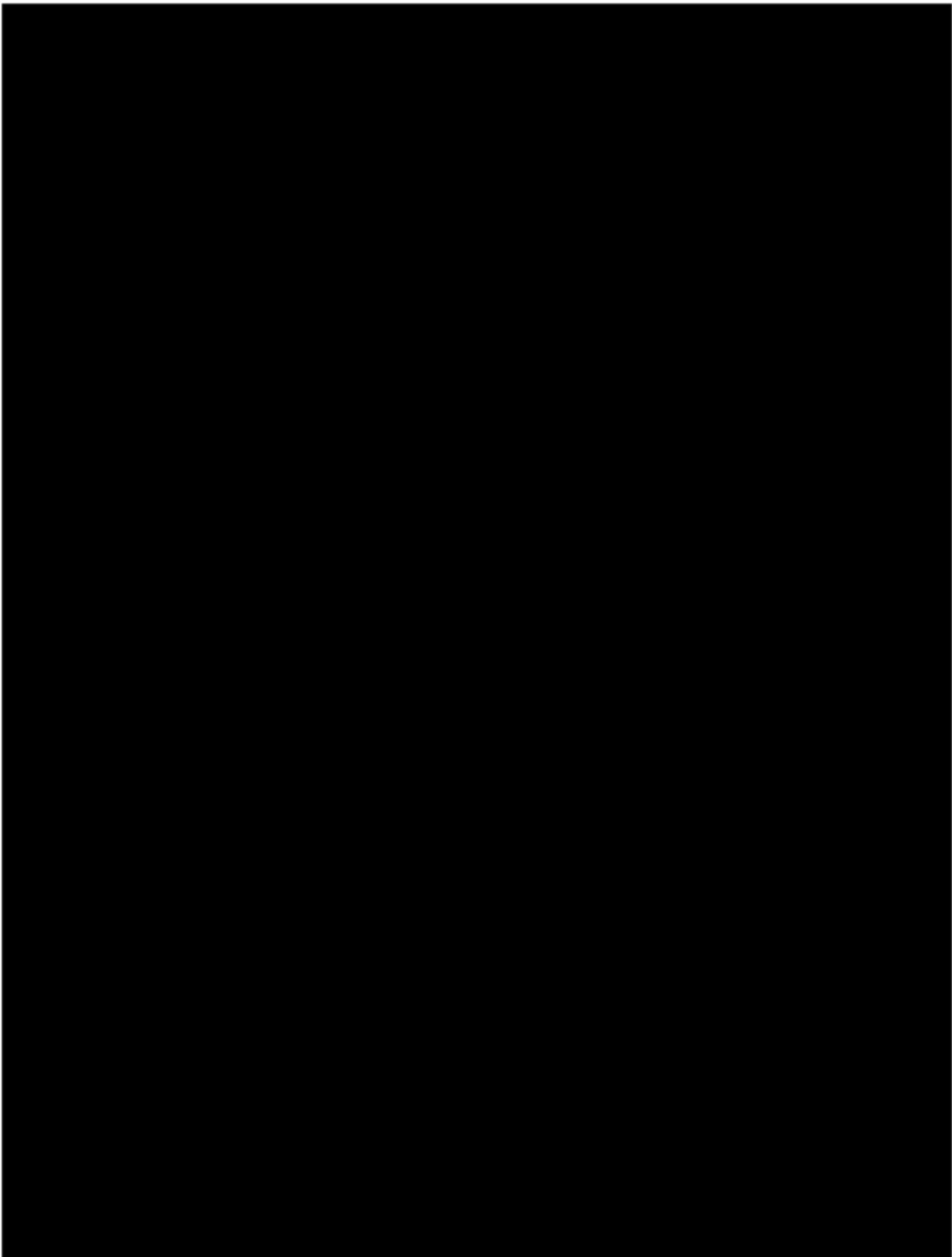
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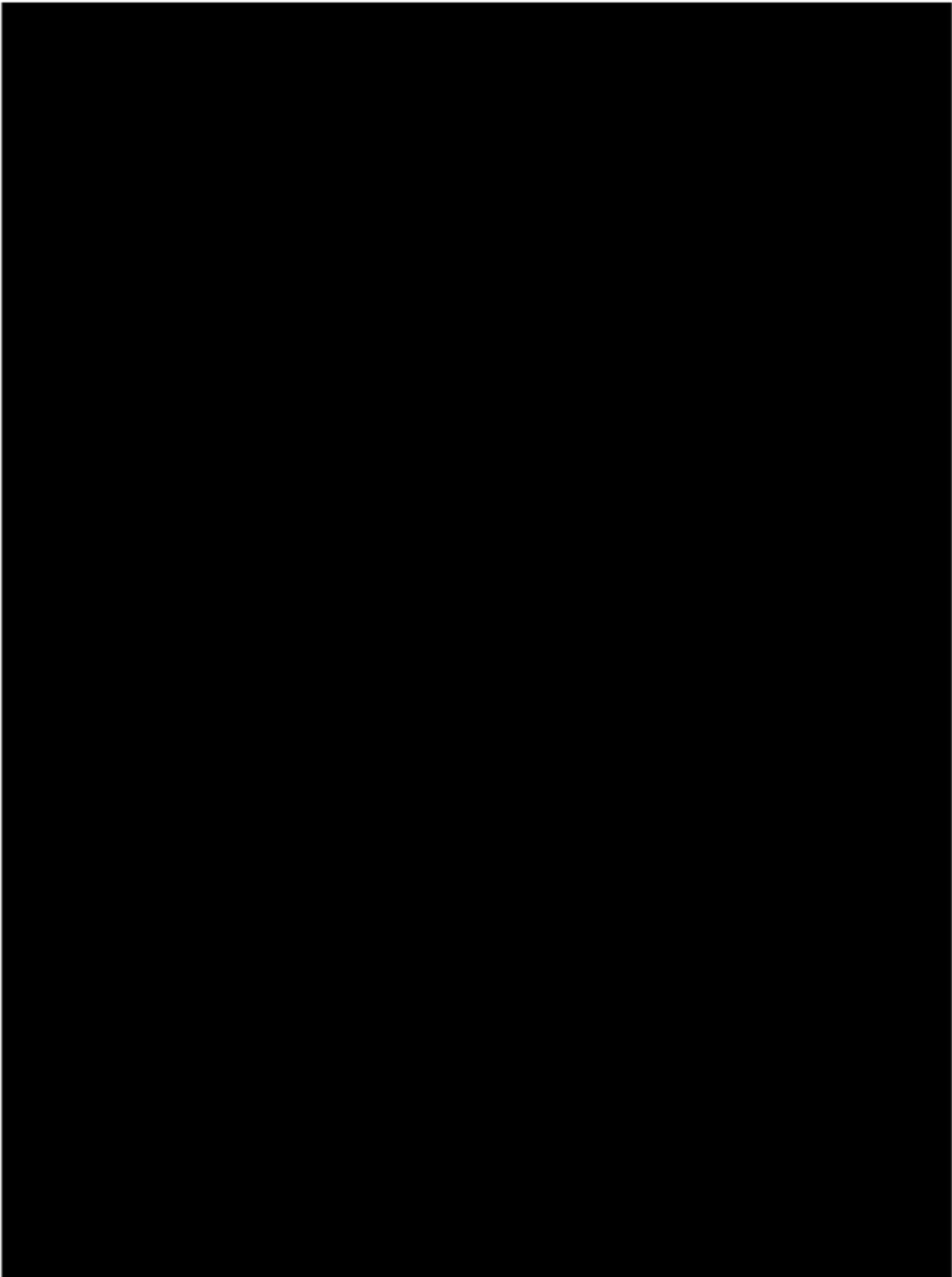
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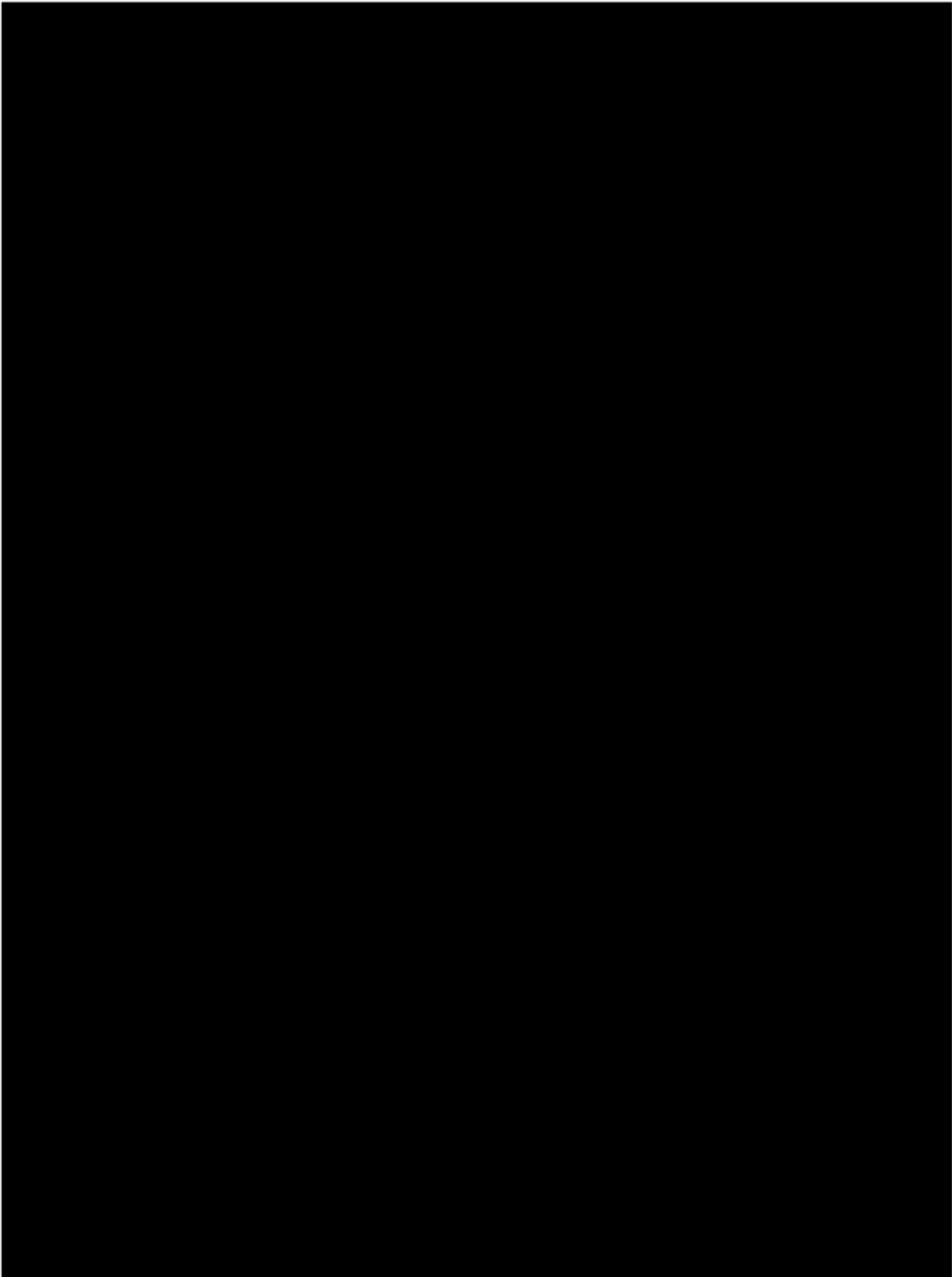
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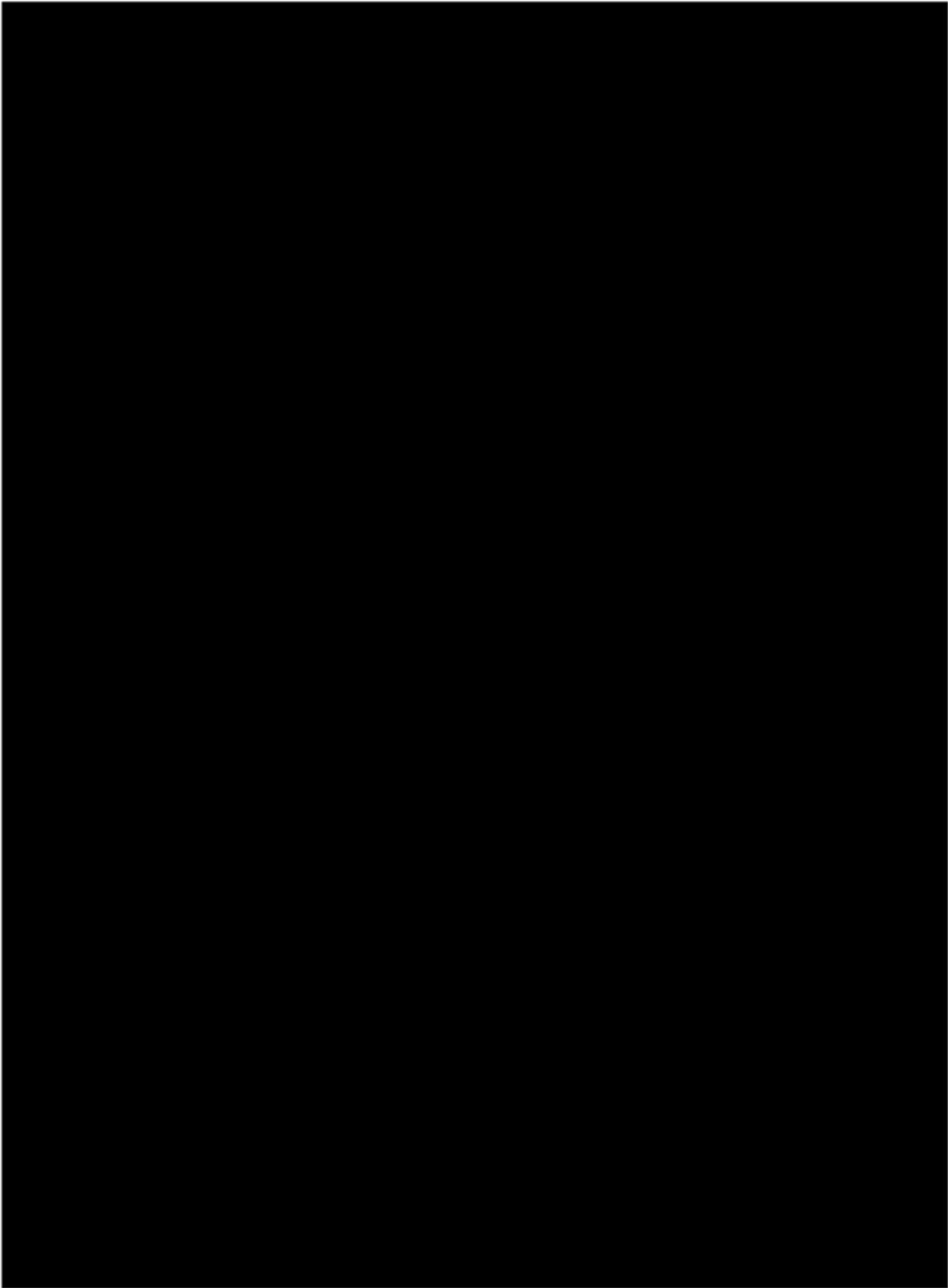












Epstein Suicide Inquiry Grows: Roughly 15 Jail Workers Are Subpoenaed

NYT

By Azi Paybarah, William K. Rashbaum, and Danielle Ivory

8/22/19

The warden and the head of the federal Bureau of Prisons have been reassigned. Two employees accused of sleeping on the job and falsifying records have been placed on administrative leave.

Now, roughly 15 employees at the Metropolitan Correctional Center where Jeffrey Epstein killed himself in his jail cell have been subpoenaed as the criminal investigation into the events around his suicide intensifies, according to a prison official and a person with knowledge of the matter.

The subpoenas, issued in recent days by federal prosecutors in Manhattan, are the latest sign of the heightened scrutiny over the suicide of the high-profile detainee at the chronically understaffed federal jail.

The United States attorney general, William P. Barr, whose Justice Department oversees the Bureau of Prisons, has complained about “serious irregularities at this facility.” On Wednesday he went further, telling reporters in Dallas, “unfortunately, there have been some delays because a number of the witnesses were not cooperative.”

The suicide of Mr. Epstein, 66, a wealthy financier who had been accused of sexually abusing dozens of girls, has put pressure on Mr. Barr to explain how such a prominent defendant was left unsupervised long enough to hang himself.

It was unclear which employees had received subpoenas, but Mr. Barr said on Wednesday that a number of witnesses at the jail were requiring union representation and lawyers before they would agree to interviews.

Eric Young, the president of the union that represents federal prison workers, disputed Mr. Barr’s claim that jail employees had been uncooperative. He said the Justice Department had been unwilling to grant immunity to workers.

“The Justice Department would like employees to waive away their minimum constitutional right to representation,” Mr. Young said in an interview on Thursday. “That’s what they consider to be a cooperative employee.”

The two staff members in the special housing unit where Mr. Epstein was held — 9 South — are accused of falsely recording in a log that they had checked on Mr. Epstein every 30 minutes, as was required. But Mr. Epstein, who had been removed from suicide watch after apparently trying to kill himself on July 23, had not

been checked on for about three hours, several law enforcement and prison officials with knowledge of the matter have said.

The subpoenas seek testimony from the jail employees and are part of an inquiry being conducted by the F.B.I., prosecutors with the Southern District of New York and investigators from the New York office of the Department of Justice's inspector general, said a person with knowledge of the investigation, who asked to remain anonymous because he was not authorized to speak on the matter. It was unclear whether the subpoenas also sought records or other materials.

The New York City medical examiner determined that Mr. Epstein's Aug. 10 death was a suicide by hanging. Still, that has not quashed unfounded conspiracy theories that claim other people may have played a role in silencing Mr. Epstein, whose social circle included celebrities, academics and powerful politicians.

A decade ago, Mr. Epstein served 13 months in a Florida jail and registered as a sex offender after pleading guilty to state prostitution charges under a highly criticized agreement that, at the time, shielded him from federal prosecution.

He was arrested in July by F.B.I. agents and New York police detectives at Teterboro Airport and charged with federal sex trafficking following renewed interest in his case.

The Justice Department has announced high-level staffing changes since Mr. Epstein's suicide.

The acting director of the Bureau of Prisons, Hugh Hurwitz, was reassigned on Monday, and the warden of the Manhattan jail, Lamine N'Diaye, was transferred to an office in Philadelphia.

The Metropolitan Correctional Center and other federal prisons across the country have been dealing with rising levels of violence and other safety problems as the Trump administration, in its quest to shrink the government, has curtailed prison hiring, according to an investigation by The New York Times last year.

Some prisons, including the Manhattan jail, have been so pressed for guards that they have forced teachers, nurses, cooks and other support staff members to step in. One of the staff members who was guarding Mr. Epstein when he died was not a regular correctional officer, but instead worked in the business office, according to three prison officials.

Staffing shortages existed before Mr. Trump took office, but a governmentwide hiring freeze imposed just days into his administration pushed the Bureau of Prisons's employment into free-fall. The freeze was lifted elsewhere in April 2017, but remained in place at the bureau for several more months.

The Bureau of Prisons employs 15,012 correctional officers nationwide, down from 16,623 in December 2016, according to data provided by the agency.

At the Manhattan jail, there are 111 officers, down from 137 at the end of 2016. There are currently 17 vacant positions for correctional officers at the jail, according to the Bureau of Prisons.

The last suicide at the Manhattan jail before Mr. Epstein's was in 2006, according to the bureau.

Paris prosecutor opens inquiry into whether Epstein committed crimes in France

Reuters

By Simon Carraud

8/23/19

The chief prosecutor in Paris has opened a preliminary inquiry to determine whether late U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein committed any sex crimes on French territory or against any underage French victims, prosecutor Remy Heitz's office said in a statement on Friday.

Epstein was arrested on July 6 in New Jersey after his private jet landed on a flight from Paris, where he had a residence on Avenue Foch, one of the French capital's most exclusive addresses in the 16th District near the Arc de Triomphe.

He pleaded not guilty to U.S. charges of sex trafficking involving dozens of underage girls as young as 14.

Lawyers who represented Epstein in his U.S. criminal case could not immediately be reached for comment. A spokesman for federal prosecutors in Manhattan declined to comment on the French investigation.

Epstein died on Aug. 10 in his jail cell in Manhattan at the age of 66. An autopsy report concluded he had hanged himself.

Epstein's death at the federal jail triggered multiple investigations. It prompted U.S. Attorney General William Barr to criticize "serious irregularities" at the facility, and to remove the acting chief of the federal Bureau of Prisons.

Barr has said that the criminal investigation into any possible co-conspirators of Epstein would continue.

Earlier this month, French gender equality minister Marlene Schiappa had called on authorities to open an investigation.

Epstein, a registered sex offender who once socialized with President Donald Trump and former President Bill Clinton, pleaded guilty in 2008 to Florida state charges of unlawfully paying a teenage girl for sex. He was sentenced to 13 months in a county jail, a deal widely criticized as too lenient.

jeffrey Epstein's Death Creates Legal Morass for His Accusers

WSJ

By Nicole Hong

8/23/19

Jeffrey Epstein's death leaves behind a messy legal battle over his multimillion-dollar estate.

Since the financier's suicide earlier this month, at least six women have filed lawsuits in New York seeking compensation for what they say is the damage caused by years of sexual abuse by Mr. Epstein. More suits are expected.

The claims could result in a protracted pursuit of Mr. Epstein's assets for many of his accusers. Mr. Epstein's will was filed last week in the U.S. Virgin Islands, spurring immediate questions about how his assets will be collected and distributed.

Court papers accompanying Mr. Epstein's will showed his estate to be worth at least \$577 million. The value of his art, antiques and other personal property remains subject to appraisal. In a financial disclosure filed last month, Mr. Epstein listed properties in New York, New Mexico, Florida, Paris and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Plaintiffs' lawyers have already raised concerns about whether Mr. Epstein hid any assets that aren't listed in his will. In a 2010 lawsuit, lawyers for Mr. Epstein's accusers alleged that he transferred assets to prevent creditors from locating them. The suit was settled.

Further complicating the process, the women seeking compensation are navigating estate-law procedures and statutes of limitations in different states. Some lawyers are discussing ways to avoid a competitive free-for-all in which alleged victims race to the courthouse to obtain a judgment.

“The federal courts handling these cases will be critical and should have the power to make sure that these victims are not left in limbo for years while Epstein’s associates’ profit,” said Roberta Kaplan, a lawyer representing one of Mr. Epstein’s accusers.

Mr. Epstein was found dead in a Manhattan jail cell Aug. 10, while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges stemming from what federal prosecutors alleged was a yearslong scheme to procure and sexually abuse dozens of girls. He had pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Epstein’s lawyers didn’t respond to a request for comment.

To process the claims against his estate in an orderly manner, some plaintiffs’ lawyers have raised the possibility of a victim compensation fund, similar to the one set up by the Roman Catholic Church to pay victims of clergy sex abuse.

Establishing such a fund at this early stage would require the consent of Mr. Epstein’s estate, according to Kenneth Feinberg, an attorney frequently hired to administer victim-compensation funds, including for those affected by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the Catholic Church scandal. A federal judge also could force the estate to do so as the litigation progresses, some alleged victims’ lawyers said.

Mr. Epstein’s estate might wish to set up such a fund as a way to quickly resolve the claims and move on, Mr. Feinberg said.

Compensation funds typically set rules for who is eligible to file for claims, including whether the victims needed to have been underage at the time of the abuse and how far back in time the claims can go. A third party would determine the evidence needed to prove the allegations and calculate a formula for payouts, which often depend on the frequency and nature of the abuse.

Women who don’t wish to participate in the fund could still pursue their own litigation in court.

The lawsuits in New York against Mr. Epstein’s estate have moved ahead under a state law that went into effect last week and extended the statute of limitations for survivors of child sexual abuse to sue their abusers. It included a one-year period to file claims that have already expired.

The statute of limitations could pose a problem, however, for any women who wish to file lawsuits in other states. Federal prosecutors have accused Mr. Epstein of operating a sex-trafficking enterprise from at least 2002 to 2005, although a lawsuit filed against him this week contained allegations from as recently as 2012.

No lawsuits were pending against Mr. Epstein by alleged victims at the time of his death. In three prior lawsuits filed by women, Mr. Epstein paid a total of \$5.5 million to settle them, according to court filings. Other suits against him and his associates also ended in settlements for undisclosed amounts.

Mr. Epstein signed his will on Aug. 8, two days before he was found dead in jail. The will directed that his assets be placed in a trust, whose beneficiaries haven’t been made public. His closest relative is his brother, Mark Epstein.

The will named Darren Indyke and Richard Kahn, two longtime associates of Mr. Epstein, as the estate’s executors who are responsible for locating his assets and distributing them.

The two executors had earlier each hired criminal-defense lawyers in response to the investigation by Manhattan federal prosecutors into Mr. Epstein’s alleged sex-trafficking enterprise, according to people familiar with the matter.

Lawyers for Mr. Indyke and Mr. Kahn declined to comment.

Another avenue for the women to receive compensation could open if the government tries to seize Mr. Epstein's assets. To do so under a process known as civil forfeiture, federal prosecutors would have to prove to a judge or jury that it was more likely than not Mr. Epstein used his properties and other assets to facilitate his alleged sex-trafficking operation.

After Mr. Epstein's death, the Justice Department vowed to keep investigating the allegations against him, and federal agents last week searched his property in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Any evidence collected could be used in a civil forfeiture against his assets.

If the properties are successfully forfeited and sold, the Justice Department could set up its own fund allowing women to petition for claims.

French officials probing whether Jeffrey Epstein committed sex crimes there

NY Post

By Natalie Musumeci

8/23/19

An investigation has been launched into whether Jeffrey Epstein committed any sex crimes on French territories or against any French minors, the chief prosecutor in Paris said Friday.

Remy Heitz said in a statement the preliminary probe was opened based on "elements transmitted" to his office and "exchanges with American authorities, competent in the so-called Epstein affair."

The investigation involves information concerning girls 15 years old and older, according to the statement.

Charges that are being eyed include rape of minors 15 years old and older, sexual aggression and criminal association with a view of committing crimes.

Two French secretaries of state called for the opening of the probe this month.

Epstein, 66, hanged himself in his cell at Manhattan's Metropolitan Correctional Center on Aug. 10 as he was awaiting trial on federal sex-trafficking charges.

The disgraced financier and convicted pedophile was busted on July 6 in New Jersey after his private jet landed on a flight from Paris where he had an apartment on Avenue Foch in the city's posh 16th District.

Barr Seized on Epstein Case as Doubts Mounted About Justice Dept.

NYT

By Katie Benner

8/23/19

Attorney General William P. Barr was at home in his study, working on a speech, when the call came from his chief of staff: Jeffrey Epstein, the financier accused of sex trafficking who had connections to an array of political power players, had died in federal prison.

Mr. Barr immediately knew that he would be engulfed in a scandal. The prison had promised to keep Mr. Epstein under constant surveillance until he could be tried on charges of sexually abusing dozens of underage girls. With his accusers now robbed of their day in court, the Justice Department, which oversees the Bureau of Prisons, looked incompetent at best. And as Mr. Barr scrambled for answers, unfounded conspiracy theories took root, casting an additional pall over the matter and threatening the public's faith in the department.

Over multiple briefings an hour, Mr. Barr spent that Saturday angrily grilling his deputies. He directed the F.B.I. to investigate Mr. Epstein's apparent suicide and the department's inspector general to look for lapses in protocol. After the Bureau of Prisons confirmed the death and the F.B.I. inquiry that morning, Mr. Barr issued a statement, surprising officials who believed the bureau would have the last word. "Mr. Epstein's death," he said, "raises serious questions that must be answered."

Attorneys general rarely follow up on inmate deaths, but Mr. Barr has continued to bird dog the investigation into how one as high-profile as Mr. Epstein could have died in federal care, evidence of how serious the matter is for the Justice Department. This account of his search for answers is based on interviews with six people involved in the investigation into Mr. Epstein's death, most of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal department discussions.

Mr. Barr is personally overseeing the four federal inquiries into the matter and is briefed on them multiple times a day. In less than two weeks, he suspended the two prison employees who guarded Mr. Epstein the night he died, transferred the warden and found a new permanent director for the Bureau of Prisons. He stayed apprised of the autopsy and was alerted that the coroner would officially rule the death a suicide. And federal prosecutors in New York have subpoenaed more than a dozen prison officials and employees as the fast-moving investigation into Mr. Epstein's death intensifies.

That a tabloid-ready scandal could present any danger to Mr. Barr, one of the most politically shrewd and influential Trump cabinet members, speaks to the swirl of unresolved questions surrounding Mr. Epstein's short time in prison and the intense public interest in the case, itself fueled by how poorly the department handled an earlier sex trafficking investigation into Mr. Epstein and by the conspiracy theories about the financier's powerful acquaintances, including President Trump and former President Bill Clinton, that festered even before he died.

"Bill's skill set is to doggedly get to the bottom of facts and makes decisions based on them," said Paul T. Cappuccio, a key adviser to Mr. Barr when he first served as attorney general under President George Bush. "For anyone to try to draw anything more political or conspiratorial from this situation seems unfounded."

Mr. Barr's close handling of the case also underscores the toll that a nearly three-year war on the Justice Department's credibility — waged chiefly by Mr. Trump when he attacked the Russia investigation — has taken. Mr. Barr has publicly defended the coroner's ruling of suicide, even as some of the public and Mr. Epstein's own lawyers reject it. And in the wake of Mr. Epstein's death, the president amplified a baseless conspiracy theory that his political enemies were involved.

"Public confidence in the independence and integrity of high-profile federal criminal investigations is giving way to wild-eyed conspiracy theories propagated by the president himself," said Christopher Hunter, a fellow at the Atlantic Council and former F.B.I. agent and prosecutor who served in the Obama and Bush administrations.

Before Mr. Epstein died, Mr. Barr seemed to have put his greatest initial challenge as attorney general behind him. He had delivered the Mueller report on Russia to the public, one of the most politically divisive Justice Department investigations since Watergate. Accusations that he misrepresented the findings to benefit Mr. Trump had begun to fade from the public consciousness, and much of official Washington had moved on to new outrages and concerns.

Mr. Epstein's death prompted an unexpected challenge to Mr. Barr's credibility. The Justice Department has faced accusations that it mishandled an earlier investigation into the financier by making a deal in 2008 that

allowed Mr. Epstein to elude federal charges and serve prison time from his office. It also shielded his six known co-conspirators. That deal led to the resignation last month of the labor secretary, R. Alexander Acosta, who had brokered the agreement while serving as United States attorney in Miami.

To quell renewed furor over the deal, the Justice Department opened an internal review. Prosecutors in Manhattan had also opened a new sex trafficking investigation, but Mr. Epstein's connections with powerful figures all over the world prompted skepticism that charges would ever be filed. Even Mr. Barr had chance ties to Mr. Epstein: His old law firm, Kirkland & Ellis, had worked with Mr. Epstein on the Miami deal, and decades earlier, Mr. Barr's father had hired Mr. Epstein to teach at Dalton, the elite private school in Manhattan.

But in July, Manhattan prosecutors charged Mr. Epstein with sex trafficking, putting the financier behind bars while he awaited trial. Thirty-three days later, Mr. Epstein, 66, was found dead in his cell.

From the moment he learned that Mr. Epstein had killed himself, Mr. Barr has been largely consumed by the inner workings of the prison where Mr. Epstein was housed, the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan.

Mr. Barr knew that Mr. Epstein — a high-profile and politically connected prisoner — could pose a problem, especially after he was found unconscious in his cell last month in a possible suicide attempt. But within a week, prison officials determined that he could be taken off suicide watch, and they assured the Justice Department that he would be monitored around the clock and be placed with a cellmate, whose presence could deter self-harm.

It is not clear whether “appropriate oversight from Justice Department leadership was brought to bear before Epstein committed suicide to make sure that the Bureau of Prisons was meeting its responsibilities,” said David Laufman, a former Justice Department official.

“The attorney general or the deputy attorney general's office should have communicated directly and forcefully with bureau leadership to ensure that it was dedicating maximum resources and oversight to prevent Epstein from doing harm to himself,” Mr. Laufman said.

After Mr. Epstein killed himself, Mr. Barr moved to quell doubt that the department would seek justice.

He immediately determined that prison employees and the warden had broken protocol several times. Mr. Epstein's cellmate had been removed. The employees overseeing him had stopped their regular checks into his cell the night he died, even though prison supervisors and officials knew that he was to be constantly watched. And the prison had yet to officially determine whether he had earlier tried to commit suicide.

Mr. Barr put on leave the two employees who were responsible for watching over Mr. Epstein the night he died and moved the warden, Lamine N'Diaye. And when he asked Kathleen Hawk Sawyer last Friday to return to run the Bureau of Prisons — a job he had appointed her to in 1992, during his first stint as attorney general — she was impressed by the amount of detail he had gathered about Mr. Epstein's death and the conditions at the prison where he died, according to a person with knowledge of the conversation who was not authorized to share details.

Ms. Sawyer told Mr. Barr that she took the job in large part because she believed she would have Mr. Barr's support to make difficult decisions necessary to address the Epstein case and the bureau's continuing struggles with staff and funding shortages, prison violence and workplace discrimination issues at its 120 facilities, according to the person.

Mr. Barr has not shied away from publicly commenting on the Epstein case. Two days after the suicide, Mr. Barr said that “serious irregularities at this facility” demanded “accountability,” and that the Justice Department would pursue Mr. Epstein's co-conspirators.

On Wednesday, Mr. Barr defended the coroner's report, saying that he had seen nothing to contradict it. And he said that the department could soon “report to Congress” a fuller picture of those irregularities and that the

results had been delayed by witnesses who would not speak without union and legal representatives.

Mr. Barr unfairly painted the jail employees as uncooperative, said Eric Young, the president of the union that represents federal prison workers, adding that the department has refused to grant immunity to workers involved in the Epstein inquiry, which he said was typical in similar federal investigations.

But even as Mr. Barr closes in on a definitive account of the failings that led to Mr. Epstein's suicide, questions remain. The Bureau of Prisons has not yet said whether security cameras in the cell block showed anyone entering and leaving Mr. Epstein's cell in the hours before he died. And it is still not clear why the prison broke promises to regularly check on Mr. Epstein and keep him with a cellmate.

