

**Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by
William F. Sweeney Jr.
Assistant Director in Charge
FBI New York Field Office
Jeffrey Epstein Arrest
July X, 2019**

Preserving the innocence of children is one of the most important, if not most important responsibilities we carry as adults. Purposefully failing children, in any way, is not an option.

And yet there are some in society who have chosen to blatantly disregard this responsibility, using whatever means they have at their disposal to lure children into a life of which they should never be exposed.

As we allege today, Jeffrey Epstein is one of those people.

At approximately 5:30 Saturday evening, we arrested him at Teterboro airport in New Jersey without incident. Epstein has been charged with one count each of sex trafficking and sex trafficking conspiracy.

For at least a four year period, covering the entirety of 2002-2005, he is alleged to have sexually exploited and abused dozens of minor girls at his homes in New York City and Palm Beach, Florida.

The girls were recruited in a variety of ways, usually by employees of Epstein and sometimes by fellow victims.

- The victims typically received hundreds of dollars in cash.

The estimated dozens of victims were as young as 14 years old at the time of recruitment.

- Children who provided Epstein massages while they were nude or partially nude.
- Children who were asked to engage in direct and indirect sex acts for money.
- Children who were enticed to do all of this at the hands of a man more than or nearly three times their age.

Those who have been victimized by child sexual predators are frequently haunted by memories of these crimes well into adulthood, and often for the rest of their lives. They bear the burden of someone else's criminal behavior.

Too often, adults in our society have turned a blind eye to the type of criminal behavior alleged here – we have seen the excuses;

- The ignorance of many who don't even bother to understand that this behavior is a persistent scourge on our society's vulnerable youth, and the willful blindness as to who the real villains are in this type of outrageous crime.
- The villains are the adult perpetrators. Not the children. Victims of child sex trafficking come from all walks of life;

they are our neighbors, our students, young adults looking for help, vulnerable foster children – the list goes on and on.

To the victims who may be listening or get word of today's charges – the team standing here before you represents FBI Special Agents, NYPD detectives, analysts, victim specialists and prosecutors who make it their mission to listen to every individual who has been exploited; and to advocate for the most vulnerable among us.

As an FBI Special Agent, and the head of this office, I have the privilege to represent and stand among many who make it our mission to put child predators behind bars where they belong; regardless of the predator's perceived power, wealth or connections.

Today I'm asking everyone to take a good look at this man. If you've been victimized by him in any way, or if you are somebody who has any additional information about his alleged illegal behavior, we want to hear from you.

- Whatever age you are now
- Whatever age you were then
- And no matter when or where the incident or incidents took place

The number to call is 1-800-CALL-FBI.

I would like to take a moment to speak directly to the victims. Your bravery might just empower others to speak out about crimes committed against them. It's important to remember, there never was, nor will there ever be, an excuse for this kind of behavior. We know that reliving these events can be brutal. We are here to work side by side with you as you go through this process. You should know in the eyes of the FBI – you come first.

Many thanks, as always, to our partners from the Southern District of New York. Our partnership with the NYPD on this case and so many others has been phenomenal. Thank you also to the professionals at the Customs and Border Patrol and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey who assisted us with Epstein's arrest.

Last but not least, I extend my sincere thanks to the FBI New York Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force for your hard work on this investigation. The public should know that to be on this taskforce, you must volunteer. The work is agonizing, but it is one of the most noble missions our agencies engage in – and like everything else we do it together. Thank you.

###