

Thank you Audrey. Almost one year ago, when our offices stood before you and announced the arrest of Jeffrey Epstein, I stated that preserving the innocence of children is one of the most important, if not most important responsibilities we carry as adults. Too often, adults in our society have turned a blind eye to the type of criminal behavior that we announced then and allege again with today's indictment. The villains in these outrageous crimes are the adult perpetrators - not the children who are our neighbors, students, vulnerable foster children, and young adults seeking support.

Today, we announce the arrest of one of the villains in this investigation. Early this morning, Ghislaine Maxwell was arrested in Bradford, New Hampshire by FBI Special Agents and NYPD detectives from the FBI/NYPD Crimes Against Children Task Force. Our team from New York was assisted by Special Agents assigned to our Boston and Newark, NJ field offices. We have been discreetly keeping tabs on Maxwell's whereabouts as we worked this investigation, and more recently we learned she had slithered away to a gorgeous property in New Hampshire - continuing to live a life of privilege while her victims lived with the trauma inflicted upon them years ago. Ms. Maxwell was arrested without incident.

Like Epstein, Ms. Maxwell chose to blatantly disregard the law and her responsibility as an adult, using whatever means she had at her disposal to lure vulnerable youth into behavior they should never have been exposed to and which creates lasting harm. We allege that from at least 1994 through at least 1997, Ms. Maxwell assisted Jeffrey Epstein's abuse of minor girls by helping recruit, entice, groom and abuse children under the age of 18. She befriended the innocent, attempted to normalize sexual abuse, and worked to put victims at ease, aware the entire time of the abuse which would follow.

When questioned about her conduct in 2016, we allege Ms. Maxwell lied under oath.

I would like to take a moment to speak directly to the victims. There never was, nor will there ever be, an excuse for the criminal behavior you were subjected to. We know that your quest for justice has been met with great disappointment, and that reliving these events is traumatic. When we met, we told you that in the eyes of the FBI – you come first. I would like to thank you for the trust you placed in our investigative teams as we worked to hold the adult perpetrators accountable.

For the many victims of other adult perpetrators who may be listening or get word of today's announcement, the example set by the women involved in this investigation has been a powerful one. They persevered against the rich and the connected and they did so without a badge, a gun or a subpoena – and they stood together. I have no doubt the bravery exhibited by the women involved here has empowered others to speak up about crimes they have been subjected to.

If you are listening today and you are the victim of child sex trafficking, please call 1-800-CALL-FBI or online at tips.fbi.gov. If you are an adult who believes a child is being exploited, or believe a child is exhibiting signs of being exploited – please contact law enforcement. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's website is a great resource for information about the indicators of child sex trafficking. Take a few minutes to educate yourself. Click on The Issues section of that site. Take a moment to learn how to help spot and protect the vulnerable. That website is MissingKids.org.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the FBI New York Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force and the Southern District

of New York prosecutors for your hard work on this investigation. You have quietly and professionally executed our mission as public servants - advocating for the most vulnerable in society and holding perpetrators accountable regardless of their perceived power, wealth, connections or the passage of time. Thank you for putting the victims first.