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Ex-Epstein worker faces obstruction charges

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A former employee of sex-scandal-plagued Jeffrey Epstein has been charged with obstruction of justice after the employee allegedly withheld critical information from federal agents — an expansive list of Epstein victims and witnesses — as investigators probed the Palm Beach financier for sexual exploitation of minors.

According to an FBI agent's affidavit, Alfredo Rodriguez offered to later sell the information for \$50,000 — Rodriguez calling it the "Holy Grail" or "Golden Nugget" — to a government witness, who is not named in the affidavit.

The affidavit does not refer to Epstein by name, either.

In early November, an undercover FBI agent was sent in to make the buy from Rodriguez. Rodriguez, born in 1954, had told police that he worked for Epstein as a butler, chauffeur, chef and houseman, sometimes picking up and cleaning sex toys left behind after Epstein finished his encounters with the underage girls.

According to the affidavit, Rodriguez met the undercover agent and produced a small bound book and several sheets of legal paper, which he told the agent he had taken from Epstein's home while employed there in 2004 and 2005. Rodriguez then began counting his \$50,000 payoff.

He was stopped, detained on the spot and questioned by agents, according to the affidavit.

Rodriguez told agents of witnessing nude girls whom he believed to be underage at Epstein's pool area, of knowing that his former employer was having sex with underage girls, and of viewing underage pornography on computers in Epstein's home.

Special Agent [REDACTED] wrote that later review of the papers and book Rodriguez handed over revealed information "that would have been extremely useful in investigating and prosecuting the case, including names and contact information of material witnesses and additional victims."

"Had those items been produced in response to inquiries of state law enforcement officers or the Special Agents, their contents would have been presented to the federal grand jury," [REDACTED] wrote.

The information allegedly withheld by Rodriguez may have been a tipping point in the controversial probe of Epstein. Federal prosecutors ended up striking an extraordinary deal with Epstein and his top-flight lawyers: agreeing to recall grand jury subpoenas if Epstein pleaded guilty to prostitution-related felonies in state court, which he ultimately did.

Epstein received an 18-month jail sentence. He served 13 months and was allowed to leave the jail most waking hours of the day.

An attorney for Rodriguez, Assistant Federal Public Defender Dave Brannon, declined to comment on his behalf.

An unnamed government witness mentioned in the affidavit is likely one of the attorneys representing women in a gaggle of current civil lawsuits against Epstein.

The affidavit outlines how the unnamed witness had deposed Rodriguez, who denied having documents, then received a call from Rodriguez later offering to sell for \$50,000 the "Holy Grail."

"Rodriguez explained that the information contained hundreds of additional victims and their phone numbers from diverse geographic locations including New York, New Mexico and Paris," according to the affidavit.

Rodriguez is scheduled to be arraigned in federal court Monday.

Also in the affidavit are the reasons Rodriguez cited to the unnamed witness for why he withheld the lists from

investigators: He considered it his property and should be compensated for it, and he feared the target of the federal investigation, Epstein, would make him disappear or otherwise harm him.

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