

The Palm Beach Post

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Unseal the Epstein deal

A rich, middle-aged Palm Beacher who preyed on girls almost 40 years younger already has received too many breaks from the system. He doesn't deserve another.

In July 2008, at the age of 55 and after paying the equivalent of a small country's gross domestic product in legal fees, Jeffrey Epstein escaped federal charges and pleaded guilty in state court to a pair of charges related to his luring five girls — ages 14 to 17 — to



Epstein

his house. The girls undressed and massaged him in return for \$200 to \$300. He's serving only 18 months in the Palm Beach County Jail, and he's serving only nights. And now he wants just one more favor.

When Epstein entered his state plea, the terms of his federal deal were sealed from the public. That violated normal procedures. Attorneys for some of the victims, who have filed civil lawsuits, want that plea deal unsealed, probably because the details would help their cases.

But given the nature of this case, there's also a public interest. One condition of the federal plea, for example, was that he take the state deal. That's why *The Post* also is seeking to have the file unsealed. Epstein's lawyers,

Palm Beach sex offender deserves no more breaks.

of course, want it kept secret. Last week, a Palm Beach County judge set a hearing for June 25.

Epstein attorney Jack Goldberger claims that the file should stay sealed to protect the "orderly administration of justice" and "protect a compelling government interest." Oh, and third parties might get hurt. The compelling interest is Epstein's, and there is no privacy issue since the victims themselves are making the request.

Palm Beach police spent 11 months investigating Epstein, only to see then-State Attorney Barry Krischer kick the case to a grand jury. Mr. Krischer backed off when one of Epstein's gold-plated attorneys, Alan Dershowitz, announced that some of the victims had posted MySpace comments about their alcohol and marijuana use.

Epstein's "best" defense has been that he didn't know the girls were underage. "How he verified that," Mr. Goldberger said, "I don't know." Investigators found a high school transcript in Epstein's house. He didn't know? The public should know what Jeffrey Epstein did, and what the system did for him.