

three federal judges have asked him to stop.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE** Man accused of molesting girls

# Victims want secret deal with billionaire withdrawn

by John Pacenti

Lawyers for alleged sexual assault victims of billionaire Jeffrey Epstein have filed a motion to get West Palm Beach federal prosecutors to withdraw a secret deal not to prosecute him.

The filing comes as the former Palm Beach resident is making headlines in Great Britain for hobnobbing with Prince Edward, who got him clearance to land his private plane at a military base in 2000.

Epstein served 13 months of an 18-month state prison sentence for soliciting sex with a minor. As part of his deal to plead guilty to the state charge, the U.S. attorney's office agreed in 2007 not to prosecute Epstein on federal sex charges, according to court documents filed Monday in federal civil litigation.

The motion is an attempt to kick start 2008 litigation that's been on hold while other civil suits were resolved with confidential settlements on behalf of several underage girls who said they were sexually assaulted by Epstein.

The motion filed with U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra alleges prosecutors violated the Crime Victims Rights



Epstein

## BILLIONAIRE JEFFREY EPSTEIN

**Age:** 58

**Occupation:** Financier

**Homes:** Palm Beach, U.S. Virgin Islands, New York

**Record:** Convicted of solicitation of a minor

**Sentence:** 13 months in prison

Act for Epstein's alleged victims to be informed about the nonprosecution agreement reached by federal prosecutors with Epstein.

"Rather than confer with the victims about this nonprosecution agreement, however, the U.S. attorney's office and Jeffrey Epstein agreed to a 'confidentiality' provision in the agreement barring its disclosure to anyone — including the victims," according to the pleading.

The motion is part of a lawsuit filed against the U.S. government in 2008 by attorney Bradley J. Edwards, an partner with Farmer Jaffe Weissing Edwards Fistos & Lehrman, and University of Utah law professor Paul G. Cassell. They

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# EPSTEIN: Billionaire has ties to England's royal family

represent three alleged Epstein victims in civil actions that resulted in confidential settlements.

The motion cites redacted e-mails between Epstein's attorney and the U.S. attorney's office that indicate prosecutors were interested in reaching an agreement that would "effectively keep the victims from learning what was happening through the press," Edwards wrote in the motion.

Cassell said it "stinks to high heaven" for the Justice Department to be so bullish about prosecuting sex crimes, such as child pornography, and then to cut a "sweetheart deal" with Epstein.

"It certainly raises the suspicion that money and power is a way to buy your way out of serious felony offenses," Cassell said.

The motion asks Marra for a hearing to determine if the Crime Victims Rights

Act was violated and to consider appropriate remedies. Cassell said his clients want the confidential agreement to be nullified.

The motion said Epstein molested more than 30 girls from 2001 to 2007. While he had made Palm Beach his primary home for years, news reports now have him living in his Manhattan mansion.

Epstein has not been able to avoid the spotlight since his release from jail in July 2009.

His criminal case was fictionalized in a scathing episode by the television show *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* in February. The episode ended with federal authorities intervening on behalf of the fictional assailant, who was portrayed as a billionaire who solicited underage girls for massages.

Alicia Valle, spokeswoman for U.S.



Cassell

Attorney Wilfredo Ferrer, said prosecutors have made their position clear on the issue of the Crime Victims Rights Act in Epstein's case. The law "was not violated because no federal charges were ever filed in the Southern District of Florida," Valle said.

Joseph L. Ackerman Jr., Epstein's criminal defense attorney with Fowler White Burnett in West Palm Beach, did not return a call for comment by deadline.

Cassell said Marra could be the first federal judge to rule on when the act applies.

"The government is taking the position that because it never filed an indictment, then the victims never had any rights. We strenuously disagree with that, and we hope to create good law on that subject," Cassell said.

Meanwhile, Epstein has caused an uproar for England's royal family.

Prince Andrew secured permission for Epstein to land his private jet on Dec. 7, 2000, at a military base to visit the Duke of York at Sandringham Palace in Norfolk.

Epstein is alleged to have used his private fleet of planes to fly in underage girls from around the world for sex.

The *Daily Mail* reported Queen Elizabeth called a meeting with her son at Buckingham Palace to explain his relationship with Epstein.

Sarah Ferguson, the former Duchess of York, also has been linked with Epstein. The *Daily Mail* reported flight logs show Epstein flew to the Bahamas in 1988 to meet Ferguson and her daughters, Beatrice and Eugenie, then ages 9 and 10.

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