

## Just how much is sex offender Jeffrey Epstein worth? He's not saying

*The multimillionaire also is fighting orders to release his income tax returns, and surrender his passport.*

By **JANE MUSGRAVE**

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

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WEST PALM BEACH — With a mansion in Palm Beach, a penthouse in Manhattan, a ranch in New Mexico and an island near the Caribbean, there's never been any doubt that convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein is rich.

But how much is he really worth?

That question looms large in civil lawsuits more than a dozen women have filed seeking millions from the 57-year-old financial manager for sexually abusing them when they were as young as 14.

But so far, despite a judicial order, Epstein has refused to divulge any information about his net worth other than to say its upwards of \$50 million.

Attorneys representing some of the women told a federal judge today that such a vague assertion isn't good enough particularly when they plan to eventually ask juries to punish Epstein for assaulting them when they were young teens.

"The punishment for someone worth \$50 million is different that for someone worth \$2 billion," said attorney Bradley Edwards, adding that many believe Epstein's net worth is in the billions, not millions.

U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra agreed.

Hoping to break the logjam that has produced nothing but paper-stuffed court files, Marra asked Epstein's attorneys to meet with those representing the women and offer a more definitive number.

After a roughly half-hour closed door meeting, Epstein attorney Robert Critton said they tentatively agreed to do so. They are to tell the women's attorneys by Wednesday. But he asked that it remain secret.

If they don't release a number to the women's attorneys, Epstein could be forced to turn over his income tax returns. Magistrate Linnea Johnson has ordered him to do so.

Like virtually ever other request made or question asked, Epstein has refused to give up his returns, citing his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

Attorney Michael Pike, who also represents Epstein, said it isn't because his client has lied on his taxes.

Rather, he said reading from a motion he filed with the court, releasing the returns "could have the potential to provide a link in a chain of information or lead to other evidence or witnesses that would have a risk of furthering an investigation against Mr. Epstein." He declined to elaborate.

Epstein is also fighting Johnson's order to turn over his passport and to let the government release information they gathered against him as part of his criminal prosecution.

As part of a plea deal that was to spare his victims the trauma of both criminal trial and extended civil litigation, he pleaded guilty to procuring a minor for prostitution and soliciting prostitution. He was released from the Palm Beach County jail in July after serving 13 months of an 18-month sentence.

Since then, he has answered few questions from the women's attorneys. His repeated invocation of the Fifth Amendment is frustrating, attorneys representing the women said.

"I guess the way he lived his life just about everything could incriminate him," Edwards said.

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