

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED ON BEHALF OF GHISLAINE MAXWELL

**GHISLAINE MAXWELL SUES ALBIN MICHEL PUBLISHERS
FOR VIOLATING HER LEGAL RIGHT TO THE PRESUMPTION OF
INNOCENCE**

Paris, 21 April 2021

Ghislaine Maxwell has launched a legal action in the Paris Courts against Albin Michel publishers for gross violation of the presumption of her innocence in their book *L'île de tous les vices* (Vice Island) written by Jean-Gabriel Fredet and published on 3 March 2021.

The book, a so-called investigation into the Epstein case (as characterised by its publishers), calls into question not only the role of Jeffrey Epstein, now deceased, but also, wrongly, that of Ms. Maxwell about whose conduct explicit and damaging allegations are made as well as implied throughout the book that are unsubstantiated and frequently fabricated, leading readers to infer her unquestionable guilt.

This is especially serious as the book refers to matters currently being prosecuted in criminal proceedings in the United States in which Ghislaine Maxwell is the defendant, although she has not been convicted on any charge and has pleaded not guilty to all allegations.

Speaking on her behalf, Ms Maxwell's lawyer, Olivier Laude commented: *"The publication of this book by Albin Michel constitutes an unacceptable attack on the presumption of innocence of Ms. Maxwell. Given the imminence of her criminal trial, to present her as already guilty - which this book does - is as repugnant as it is irresponsible"*.

The presumption of innocence is a fundamental right enshrined in universal texts: these include Article 11 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 6 of the 1950 European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms and Article 48 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights of 2000.

Although not cited explicitly in the Constitution of the United States, the presumption of innocence is widely held to follow from the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments.

In France, the right to the presumption of innocence is also enshrined in the Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights of 1789, and article 9-1 of the Civil Code, which states:

"Everyone has the right for the presumption of innocence to be respected. Where a person is, prior to any conviction, publicly presented as guilty of matters under judicial investigation, the judge may not only compensate the damage suffered, but also take all necessary measures, such as the insertion of a correction or the dissemination of a press release, in order to stop the violation of the presumption of innocence, and this at the expense of the person, or persons, responsible for that violation."

It was on this legal basis that Ghislaine Maxwell decided to bring her case before the *tribunal judiciaire de Paris* and therefore delivered a writ to Albin Michel publishers on 15 April 2021. A hearing is scheduled on 19 May 2021.

Ms. Maxwell has asked the French judges to find that the presumption of innocence to which she is entitled has been seriously affected and to order immediate appropriate redress, including: (i) the pulping of all extant copies of *Vice Island*, (ii) the deletion, in any future editions, of all the passages violating her entitlement to the presumption of innocence, (iii) the addition of a cover book band, in any future editions, attesting to the presumption of innocence she is entitled to, and (iv) the publication of a court-ordered press release.

In addition, Ms. Maxwell is seeking that Albin Michel publishers be ordered to pay her damages for the prejudice suffered.

Commenting on the damages and ancillary relief demanded by his client, Mr. Laude added: *“the violation in such an egregious fashion of the fundamental right to the presumption of innocence to which Ms. Maxwell is entitled calls for Albin Michel publishers to be made an example of, as much for their own flagrant breach of the law as to deter other media owners in France and indeed around the world from believing they can proceed thus with impunity against her or other persons in similar circumstances.”*

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Press Enquiries:

Yves-Paul Robert

PLEAD

29, avenue Hoche , 75008 Paris T. +33 (0)1 58 47 92 14 E. contact@plead.fr