

## Ian Maxwell: ‘Court of public opinion has already convicted my sister Ghislaine, but she is innocent’

In exclusive interview, the socialite’s brother tells how his family are fighting her corner while she awaits trial on trafficking charges

By [Robert Mendick](#), CHIEF REPORTER

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Ian Maxwell insists that his sister Ghislaine is wholly innocent of the charges against her CREDIT: Eddie Mulholland for The Telegraph

Ian Maxwell thumps the arm of his chair. “It makes me damn angry,” he says, in reference to his sister’s plight.

Ghislaine Maxwell has already been incarcerated for 471 days, [held in isolation in a tiny jail cell](#) in Brooklyn, [awaiting trial on sexual abuse and trafficking charges](#) for alleged crimes committed between 20 and 27 years ago. She has already spent far longer in jail than [Jeffrey Epstein](#), the billionaire financier and her former boyfriend.

Mr Maxwell, the big brother of the Maxwell clan, cannot really believe [his family is still in the news](#). Almost never out of it since his father, Robert, was declared 50 years ago by an official report of the Department of Trade and Industry to be unfit to run a publicly listed company.

“This is Succession in spades,” he says, in reference to the award-winning drama series about a media mogul and his family.

‘A family that sticks together’



The Maxwell family in 1990, left to right: Elisabeth, Ghislaine, Robert and Ian CREDIT: Bridgeman Images

On November 5 1991, Robert fell overboard to his death from his yacht Lady Ghislaine, as the pension theft scandal engulfed him.

“Bob Maxwell died 30 years ago and in the same month, Ghislaine is facing her moment of truth,” says Mr Maxwell. “This family has been somehow – the father mostly and now the children – in the news since 1971.”

He reels off the events that have shaped their lives, from his father’s demise to his own fraud trial with younger brother Kevin (they were both acquitted in 1996) and, just as the family is getting on with their lives, then “bang”, he says, his sister is charged.

Mr Maxwell, in his 60s and practically deaf save for the assistance of sophisticated hearing aids, is defiant, running from London the campaign to ensure Ms Maxwell gets a fair hearing in the New York courts.

“This is a family that sticks together,” he says. “Ghislaine has people who love her; people who trust her. This is a family that has been knocked down, gets up, gets knocked down again and then gets up. We are a family that fights for each other and this is a big fight we are in. We are hopeful justice will prevail as it must.”

This week, just over a month before the criminal trial starts, Ms Maxwell and her legal team, finally and officially, were given the names of the women who have accused her of recruiting them as teenage girls for Epstein to sexually abuse them. The charges relate to alleged offences committed [between 1994 and 2004](#).

## Fighting the claims



Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who accused the Duke of York of sexual assault and rape, has separately accused Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell of trafficking her to London and forcing her to have sex with the Queen's son CREDIT: AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

[Virginia Roberts Giuffre](#), the woman who has accused the [Duke of York](#) of sexual assault and rape, is not among the complainants in the Maxwell trial. She has separately, in civil proceedings, accused Epstein and Ms Maxwell of trafficking her to London and forcing her to have sex with the Queen's son. Ms Maxwell settled a defamation claim brought by Ms Giuffre in 2017 after she had accused her of lying and now [Ms Giuffre is suing the Duke](#).

Prince Andrew has always denied the allegation.

At the same time that the legal team has learned the names of the accusers, [the Metropolitan Police](#) said it had re-examined Ms Giuffre's claims and was not opening a full-blown investigation.

"It's an extraordinary situation," says Mr Maxwell. "Neither the UK police nor, it would seem, the US authorities are using the allegations of Virginia Giuffre. They didn't use them as far as I know in the arrest and prosecution of Epstein in 2008 and didn't use it again in 2019 [when Epstein was arrested a second time]."

They are not using Giuffre's testimony in the prosecution of Ghislaine.

"If her claims are strong and true, and there is back-up evidence to support them, why aren't they using them? In my opinion, it speaks volumes as to credibility."

Mr Maxwell cannot believe that Ms Giuffre would make up her claims: "The key thing about it, it seems to me, is she [Ms Giuffre] is at the centre of the whole allegation against Prince Andrew and the defamation case against Ghislaine. So I cannot believe anyone would be so evil as to tell lies about what may have happened that has resulted in my sister being in prison for nearly 500 days and has ruined the life of Prince Andrew. It is just too evil a thought.

"I cannot imagine someone would tell such lies. It is too unconscionable. What I think seems evident is that she was deeply confused. She seems to me to be a very, very confused lady."

But he is in no doubt of the seriousness of her claims: "Prince Andrew has effectively been cancelled as a result of these allegations."

'My sister is not some socialite flibberty gibbet'



Ian Maxwell recalls meeting Epstein only once, at a dinner in Florida, where they lived, in about June 1996 CREDIT: Eddie Mulholland for The Telegraph

The deep, deep worry for Team Maxwell is that in the court of public opinion, Ms Maxwell is already convicted. They are trying to turn the tanker around in the face of a high-profile FBI press conference, broadcast around the world, when she was [arrested at her secluded farmhouse](#) – or secret hideout, depending on how it is spun – in New Hampshire in July 2020.

Mr Maxwell insists his sister is wholly innocent, and that while she was close to Epstein for a number of years, they lived in separate homes and their lives “compartmentalised” so that she

was unaware, and certainly not involved, in his predatory sexual behaviour, in which he abused scores of young women and teenage girls.

When Epstein was first arrested in 2008 (he was subsequently jailed after a controversial plea bargain, serving just 388 days in prison), Mr Maxwell says his sister's name "was never mentioned in all the police reports made against him".

He adds: "Her name is not mentioned in the grand jury. The police officer who gathered these statements, Joe Recarey, who has since sadly died, but his testimony is alive and he was asked these questions. Did he name her? No. Did her name feature in the grand jury? No.

"But here we are six weeks from trial, and it just seems to me that some focus on some of the truths in this case need to occur. This needs investigating because it hasn't been given any real aeration. It hasn't. All this has been in the public domain, but it's not the narrative. The narrative is all women must be believed. Epstein was a monster, but Epstein is now dead.



“So Ghislaine is the monster and she’s a woman makes her doubly a monster. And she’s the daughter of Bob Maxwell makes her trebly a monster.”

Mr Maxwell recalls meeting Epstein only once, at a dinner in Florida, where they lived, in about June 1996. Both he and Kevin had flown to the US shortly after being acquitted of fraud following an eight-month trial at the Old Bailey.

“By then, it was my sense their relationship was moving on. They didn’t live together. They never lived together. She had her place and he had his place. She didn’t have a key to his door.”

Mr Maxwell makes it clear he had “absolutely” no idea of her having any of the sexual proclivities of which she is accused: “Ghislaine is painted as some socialite flibberty gibbet. But it is impossible to have been a child of Bob Maxwell and Elisabeth Maxwell and be a flibberty gibbet. Ghislaine is friends of presidents. She went to Oxford.”

## Countdown to the trial

Jeffrey Epstein, the former lover of Ghislaine Maxwell, was found dead in his prison cell in 2019 while awaiting trial CREDIT:

Television Stills

With six weeks to trial, Ms Maxwell continues to languish in the Metropolitan Detention Centre in Brooklyn. Bail, despite an offer of nearly \$30 million surety, has been denied three times.

It is an abuse of her human rights, says her brother, who insists that should she be found guilty, Ms Maxwell will campaign for improved rights for those held in custody in the US while awaiting trial. She is on constant suicide watch, a hangover from the failure of prison guards to prevent Epstein killing himself in jail while awaiting trial in August 2019.

“There is an obvious abuse of human rights,” says Mr Maxwell.

“The right to the presumption of innocence, the right really to due process, including the ability to defend yourself properly.”

The prosecution case will last somewhere between two to four weeks before Ms Maxwell, if she agrees, will take the witness stand, her chance to make her case to a jury that she hopes will be uninfected by all the terrible publicity that has preceded the trial.

In Britain, strict laws prevent cases being played out before a trial begins. The US, with its politicised court processes, is very different.

Ms Maxwell may, or may not, walk free. But inevitably, she will spend her 60th birthday, which falls on Christmas Day, in prison. The big question is, where will she be for her 61st and beyond? The jury is out on that one.