



AP NEWS

Maxwell's brother says US prosecutors seeking to 'break' her

By DANICA KIRKA November 26, 2021



The brother of a British socialite charged with helping Jeffrey Epstein exploit underage girls says her prosecution is “the most over-hyped trial of the century,” designed to break a woman targeted by authorities desperate to blame someone for the late financier’s crimes.

Ghislaine Maxwell continues to have the backing of her family, and a family member will be in court at all times to show support, Ian Maxwell said in an interview ahead of the trial, which is set to begin Monday in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan.

This is “the most over-hyped trial of the century without a doubt,” Ian Maxwell told the Associated Press. “This is designed to break her; I can’t see any other way to read it. ... And she will not be broken because she believes completely in her innocence and she is going to give the best account she can.”

Prosecutors allege Ghislaine Maxwell, 59, groomed girls as young as 14 to have sex with Epstein and lied about her knowledge of his crimes when she testified in an earlier case. She has been in custody for almost 17 months, after Judge Alison J. Nathan repeatedly denied requests for bail.

Prosecutors held a press conference when they announced the charges against Maxwell, saying she lured young girls into a trap that she and Epstein had set for them.

“Ms. Maxwell chose to blatantly disregard the law and her responsibility as an adult, using whatever means she had at her disposal to lure vulnerable youth into behavior they should never have been exposed to, creating the potential for lasting harm,” FBI Assistant Director William Sweeney said at the time.

But Ian Maxwell says his sister is being blamed by U.S. authorities who are intent on holding someone responsible for Epstein’s crimes.

Epstein killed himself in jail in 2019 before he could face trial.

“This is not quite a put-up job, but nonetheless has been cobbled together so that Ghislaine is made to face the charges that Epstein never faced,” Ian Maxwell said.

Ghislaine Maxwell is the youngest of the late media mogul Robert Maxwell’s nine children. The tycoon was once one of the richest men in Britain, but that wealth evaporated after he drowned in 1991 and investors discovered he had siphoned hundreds of millions of pounds from employee pension funds to prop up his empire.

The children supported each other after Robert Maxwell died and Ian and his brother were charged with financial crimes related to their father’s actions. Both were acquitted.

Now they are rallying around Ghislaine, who dated Epstein and was his frequent companion on trips around the world.

The family continues to demand that Maxwell be released on bail, arguing that the conditions of her detention are tantamount to torture and prevent her from assisting her defense attorneys.

The six remaining siblings this week asked the United Nations to investigate Ghislaine Maxwell's "inhumane" treatment.

Ian Maxwell says his sister is in "effective isolation" at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, where she is being held in a 6- by 9-foot (1.8- by 2.7-meter) cell that has no natural light and is equipped with a toilet and a concrete bed. She is unable to sleep because she is watched around the clock by four guards and 10 cameras due to unwarranted concerns that she is a suicide risk, he said.

Earlier this month, a judge again refused to let Epstein's former girlfriend trade her jail cell for home detention, citing the serious nature of the charges and her risk of flight.

"The denial of bail is wholly inappropriate," Ian Maxwell said. "Some very famous, infamous people were granted bail as most recently the killer of George Floyd, a murderer. John Gotti, another murderer, a mobster. Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, Bernie Madoff. These are all men, of course, who got bail. Ghislaine is a woman who somehow doesn't get bail."

Americans who are interested in justice should be worried, because anyone could be accused of a crime and be held under the same conditions, he said.

"The authorities are feeling under pressure ... because they lost (Epstein) and they're feeling under the public's pressure, and that combination of pressure is keeping Ghislaine inside," her brother said. "But it still doesn't make it right."