

Is the Epstein Affair a Watershed Moment?

By Charles Hugh Smith - OTM

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We're being told the Epstein Affair is old news, nothing to see here, move along--but I'm not so sure. It could be the opposite of *old news*, a watershed moment in American history.

Watershed moments can be sudden, dramatic events that we all experience as "nothing is the same after this," or long-brewing crises that we only discern were watersheds when looking back.

The Epstein Affair may be the second type of watershed, only recognized in the rear view mirror. In his post [Jeff Epstein, MAGA, and Monopolies](#), Matt Stoller made two noteworthy observations:

1. The MAGA movement--which includes many factions--attached great importance to the Epstein case as the most egregious manifestation of elite abuse of power. To have the files buried yet again only proves the powerful who would be exposed have yet again evaded being held accountable.
2. The scandal isn't what's been hidden, it's that Epstein operated in plain sight.

Naomi Wolf's essay, ["The Network" in the Worlds of the Elites](#), reveals the enormous reach of Epstein's recruitment of elites across the entirety of America's power structure, what I've called since 2007 (see diagram below) *Elites Maintaining and Extending Global Dominance*.

This structure isn't *The Deep State*, it's far larger and just as entrenched, for it's "the sum is greater than the parts" assembly of all of America's elites and elite institutions of *soft and hard power* projection. (Soft power: cultural, institutionalized influence, non-military systems; hard power: military, diplomatic, financial.)

Epstein's operation was an informal hub-and-spoke network of power elites ranging from politics to academia to science to media to Big Tech and beyond.

The French word *engrenages* comes to mind here: commonly translated as gearing, but more appropriately perhaps it also denotes being caught up in gearing that is irreversible due to the design and mechanics of the system, and then being caught up in an inescapable series of events.

In other words, Epstein's hub-and-spoke network wasn't an aberration, it was the optimization of the status quo system. This is the taboo that cannot

be said out loud. Now everyone who is caught up in the gearing is also a participant in an inescapable series of events.

My summary of the Epstein Affair is: *the elites aren't above the law; there is no law.* This is what's being displayed in plain sight, but we recoil at recognizing it, for it means democracy and rule of law are both convenient fabrications deployed to maintain public compliance.

Recall Smith's Neofeudalism Principle #1: If the citizenry cannot replace a kleptocratic authoritarian government and/or limit the power of the financial Aristocracy at the ballot box, the nation is a democracy in name only.

Donald Trump was elected to "drain the swamp," but the Epstein Affair makes it clear that *both of America's political parties are The Swamp.* Neither party did anything but cover up, misdirect or pointedly refuse to expose the Epstein Affair to open air.



I understand many of you are party loyalists, so let's conduct a thought experiment. Consider the central Asian nation of Corruptistan, which is currently experiencing an uncannily similar scandal of a shadowy, well-connected "fixer" who collected \$1.5 billion via 4,000+ wire transfers from unrevealed sources, who ran a vast network of sordid sexual exploitation of minors along with many above-ground influence-peddling schemes connecting elites in various fields.

Nominally a democracy, political power in Corruptistan is traded between two political parties. Neither party has acted to reveal the fixer's network or publicly investigate the sources of his billions and influence.

So what do we call Corruptistan's two political parties other than corrupt shields of systemic corruption? What if "party loyalty" is just another con to

gain compliance for a system whose corruption is so profound that there's nothing left of either democracy or the rule of law?

Perhaps when we look back on the Epstein Affair, we'll understand that it broke the back of Americans' faith in their political and law enforcement institutions. A great many Americans are not party loyalists; they voted for Donald Trump as the independent "outsider" who vowed to clean house, an independent who used one of the parties as a convenient platform.

If even an "outsider" is incapable of cleaning house, then it's hopeless, and if the two parties have failed us, then where do we turn? That is both an open question, and a taboo, for the corporate media is already churning out narrative control about the 2028 election being a "contest" (heh) between flimsy cardboard cutouts of failed ideological covers for systemic corruption.

America's elites aren't above the law; there is no law. But don't say it out loud; it's an unbreakable taboo.