

The CIA, Mossad, and Epstein: Unraveling the Intelligence Ties of The Maxwell Family

By Alan MacLeod - MintPress News

With speculation mounting that Trump could pardon her, MintPress profiles the family of convicted sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell. From her media baron father, who acted as a high-level spy for Israel, her sister, working to push Tel Aviv's interests in Silicon Valley, her brothers, who founded a dubious but highly influential anti-Islamic extremism think tank, and nephews in influential roles at the State Department and White House, the Maxwell clan have wide-ranging ties to U.S. and Israeli state power. This is their story.

Releasing Ghislaine, Burying the Epstein Files

Speculation is growing that Ghislaine Maxwell could soon be freed. Despite campaigning on the promise to release the Epstein Files, there are increasing signs that the Trump administration is considering pardoning the world's most notorious convicted sex trafficker.

Last month, Trump (who contemplated the idea in his first term in office) repeatedly refused to rule out a pardon, stating to journalists that "I'm allowed to do it." Just days later, Maxwell was transferred across states to a minimum-security facility in Bryan, Texas—a highly unusual practice. Neither women convicted of sex crimes nor those with more than 10 years remaining on their sentences are generally permitted to be transferred to such facilities. The move sparked equal measures of speculation and outrage.

The decision to relocate Maxwell came after somebody—potentially a source within her team itself—began leaking incriminating and embarrassing evidence linking Trump to Epstein. This included a birthday card Trump sent Epstein, featuring a hand-drawn nude woman, accompanied by the text: "Happy Birthday—and may every day be another wonderful secret." For years, Maxwell aided her partner Jeffrey Epstein in trafficking and raping girls and young women, creating a giant sex crime ring in the process. Epstein's associates included billionaires, scientists, celebrities, and politicians, including President Trump, whom he considered his "closest friend."

In 2021, two years after Epstein's mysterious death in a Manhattan prison, Maxwell was found guilty of child sex trafficking offenses and was subsequently sentenced to 20 years in prison. The news that Trump may soon free such an infamous criminal sent shockwaves through his base and drew charges of blatant corruption from the media. "Is there any reason to pardon Ghislaine Maxwell except to buy her silence?" ran the headline of one article in The Hill. Meanwhile, Tim Hogan, senior Democratic National Committee adviser, denounced what he claimed was a "government cover-up in real time." "Donald Trump's FBI, run by loyalist Kash Patel, redacted Trump's name from the Epstein files—which have still not been released," he said.

Robert Maxwell: Media Tycoon and Israeli Operative

While many of Ghislaine Maxwell's crimes have come to light, less well-known are her family's myriad connections to both the U.S. and Israeli national security states. Chief among these are those of her father, disgraced media baron and early tech entrepreneur, Robert Maxwell. A Jewish refugee fleeing Hitler's occupation of his native Czechoslovakia, Maxwell fought for Britain against Germany. After World War II, he used his Czech connections to help funnel arms to the nascent State of Israel, weapons that helped them win the 1948 war and carry out the Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of nearly 800,000 Palestinians.

Maxwell's biographers, Gordon Thomas and Martin Dillon, write that he was first recruited by Israeli intelligence in the 1960s and began buying up Israeli tech corporations. Israel used these companies and their software to carry out spying and other clandestine operations around the globe. Maxwell amassed a vast business empire of 350 companies, employing 16,000 people. He owned an array of newspapers, including The New York Daily News, Britain's Daily Mirror, and Maariv of Israel, in addition to some of the world's most influential book and scientific publishing houses.

With business power came political power. He was elected to the U.K. parliament in 1964 and counted U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev among his closest friends. He used this influence to advance Israeli interests, selling Israeli intelligence-gathering software to Russia, the U.S., the U.K., and many other countries. This software included a secret Israeli backdoor that allowed the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, to tap into classified information gathered by governments and intelligence agencies around the world.

At the same time, it was expanding its espionage capabilities, Israel was developing a secret nuclear weapons program. This project was exposed by Israeli peace activist Mordechai Vanunu, who, in 1986, leaked evidence to the British press. Maxwell—one of Britain's most powerful press barons—spied on Vanunu, passing photographs and other information to the Israeli Embassy—intelligence that led to Vanunu's international abduction by Mossad, and his subsequent imprisonment.

His death was also surrounded by controversy, similar to Epstein's. In 1991, his lifeless body was found in the ocean, in what authorities ruled a bizarre accident whereby the tycoon had fallen from his luxury yacht. To this day, his children are split on whether they think he was murdered. The rumours that Maxwell had, for decades, been acting as an Israeli "superspy" were all but confirmed by the lavish state funeral he received in Jerusalem. His body was interred at the Mount of Olives, one of the holiest sites in Judaism, the spot from which Jesus is said to have ascended to heaven.

Virtually the entirety of elite Israeli society—both government and opposition—attended the event, including no fewer than six living heads of Israeli intelligence organizations. President Chaim Herzog himself performed the eulogy. Also speaking at the event was Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who stated that "Robert Maxwell has done more for Israel than can today be said."

In the United Kingdom, however, he is remembered less fondly. A man with a fearsome reputation, Maxwell ruled his media business with an iron fist, in a similar vein to Rupert Murdoch (another individual with extremely close links to Israel). After his death, it transpired that he had stolen more than \$500 million from his employees' pension fund to bail out other failing companies in his empire, leaving many of his workforce's retirement plans in tatters. As the newspaper, The Scotsman, remarked ten years later in 2001:

If [Maxwell] was despised in life, he was hated in death when it emerged he had stolen 440 million [pounds] from the pension fund of Mirror Group Newspapers. He was, officially, the biggest thief in British criminal history."

Isabel Maxwell: Israel's Woman in Silicon Valley

Even before it had been published, Isabel Maxwell—Robert's daughter and Ghislaine's older sister—managed to obtain a copy of Thomas and Dillon's biography. She immediately flew to Israel, The Times of London reported, where she showed it to a "family friend" and deputy director of Mossad, David Kimche. These actions did little to beat the book's central

allegation that her father was indeed a high-level Israeli “superspy.” Isabel has enjoyed a long and successful career in the tech industry. In 1992, along with her twin sister, Christine, she founded a company that developed one of the internet’s first search engines. After the pension scandal, however, she and her siblings shifted their focus to rebuilding every facet of their father’s collapsed business empire. The sisters sold the search engine, netting enormous profits.

As Israeli outlet Haaretz noted, in 2001, Isabel decided to dedicate her life to advancing the Jewish State’s interests, vowing to “work only on things involving Israel” as she “believes in Israel.” Described by former MintPress journalist and investigative reporter Whitney Webb as “Israel’s back door into Silicon Valley,” she has transformed herself into a key ambassador for the country in the tech world.

“Maxwell created a unique niche for herself in [tech] as a liaison between Israeli companies in the initial development stages and private angel investors in the U.S. At the same time, she helps U.S. companies interested in opening development centers in Israel,” wrote local business newspaper, Globes. “She lives intensively, including innumerable flights back and forth between Tel Aviv and San Francisco,” it added.

Israel is known to be the source of much of the world’s most controversial spyware and hacking tools, used by repressive governments the world over to surveil, harass, and even kill political opponents. This includes the notorious Pegasus software, used by the government of Saudi Arabia to track Washington Post journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, before assassinating him in Türkiye.

Isabel built on her father’s political connections. “My father was most influential in my life. He was a very accomplished man and achieved many of his goals during his life. I learned very much from him and have made many of his ways my own,” she said. This included developing intimate ties to a myriad of Israeli leaders, including Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak, one of Jeffrey Epstein’s closest associates. During the 2000s, she was a regular participant at the Herzliya Conference, an annual, closed-door gathering of the West’s most senior political, security and intelligence officials, in addition to being a “technology pioneer” at the World Economic Forum.

She was also placed on the board of the Israeli government-funded Shimon Peres Center for Peace and Innovation and the American Friends of the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies, two organizations closely associated with those former Israeli prime ministers. In 2001, she became the CEO of iCognito, taking the job, in her words, “because it [the company] is in Israel, and because of its technology.” The technology in question was aimed at keeping children safe online—highly ironic, given that her sister was actively trafficking and abusing minors throughout that period.

Isabel was a much more serious and accomplished individual than Ghislaine. As Haaretz noted:

While her younger sister, Ghislaine, makes the gossip columns after breakfasting with Bill Clinton or because of her ties with another close friend, Britain’s Prince Andrew, Isabel wants to show photos taken of herself with the grand mufti of Egypt, or with Bedouin in a tent, or of visits to a Gaza refugee camp.”

In 1997, Isabel was appointed president of the Israeli tech security firm, Commtouch. Thanks to her connections, Commtouch was able to secure investment from many of the most prominent players in Silicon Valley, including Bill Gates, a close associate of both the Maxwell family and Jeffrey Epstein himself.

Christine Maxwell: Funded by Israel?

Isabel's twin sister, Christine, is no less accomplished. A veteran of the publishing and tech industries, she co-founded data analytics firm Chiliad. As CEO, she helped oversee the production of a massive "counterterrorism" database that the company sold to the FBI during the height of the War on Terror. The software helped the Bush administration crack down on Muslim Americans and tear down domestic civil liberties in the wake of 9/11 and the PATRIOT Act. Today, she is the leader and co-founder of another big data corporation, Tectonic Insight.

Like her sister and father, Christine has a close relationship with the State of Israel. She is currently a fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), where, her biography states, She works to promote innovative academic research that leverages enabling technologies to empower proactive understanding and combatting the great dangers of contemporary antisemitism, and enhancing the ongoing relevance of the Holocaust for the 21st century and beyond."

ISGAP's board is a who's who of Israeli national security state officials. This includes Natan Sharansky, former Minister of Internal Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, and Brigadier General Sima Vaknin-Gil, the former Chief Censor for the IDF and Director General of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Diplomacy. Also on the board is Jeffrey Epstein's lawyer, Alan Dershowitz.

The think tank was a key player in the U.S. government's decision to repress the 2024 Gaza protests on university campuses nationwide. The group produced reports linking student leaders with foreign terrorist organizations and promoted dubious claims about a wave of anti-Semitism washing over American colleges. It met frequently with both Democratic and Republican leaders, and urged them to "investigate" (i.e., repress) the leaders of the demonstrations.

ISGAP has continually warned of foreign influence on American campuses, producing reports and holding seminars detailing Qatar's supposed stranglehold over the U.S. higher education system, and linking that with growing anti-Israel sentiment among America's youth. Yet if ISGAP wished to investigate other foreign government influence operations, it would not have to look far, as its own funds overwhelmingly come from a single source: the Israeli state. In 2018, an investigation found that Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs (then headed by Brigadier General Vaknin-Gil herself) channeled \$445,000 to ISGAP, a sum representing nearly 80% of its entire revenues for that year. ISGAP failed to disclose that information to either the public or the federal government.

At the height of the concern over foreign interference in American politics, the news barely registered. Since then, the Israeli government has continued to bankroll the group to the tune of millions. In 2019, for example, it approved a grant of over \$1.3 million to ISGAP. Thus, in her role as a fellow at the organization, Christine Maxwell is the direct beneficiary of Israeli government cash.

Third Generation Maxwells: Working In the US Government

While Robert Maxwell's daughters were close to state power, some of the family's third generation have taken up positions within the U.S. government itself. Shortly after graduating from college, Alex Djerassi (Isabel Maxwell's only son) was employed by Hillary Clinton on her 2007-2008 presidential campaign. Djerassi drafted memos, briefings, and policy papers for the Clinton team and helped prepare her for more than 20 debates.

The Clinton and Maxwell families are closely intertwined. Ghislaine vacationed with Hillary's daughter, Chelsea, and appeared prominently at her wedding. Both she and Jeffrey Epstein were invited multiple times to the Clinton White House. Long after Epstein was jailed, President Bill Clinton invited Ghislaine to an intimate dinner with him at an exclusive Los Angeles restaurant.

Although she failed in her bid for the White House, President Obama named Hillary Clinton as his Secretary of State, and one of her first actions was to appoint Djerassi to her team. He quickly rose in the ranks, becoming Chief of Staff at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. In this role, he specialized in developing the United States' policy towards Israel and Iran, although he also worked on the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and accompanied Clinton on visits to Israel and the Arab world.

While at the State Department, he served as the U.S. government representative to the Friends of Libya and the Friends of the Syrian People Conferences. These were two organizations of hardline, hawkish groups working towards the overthrow of those two governments, and their replacement with U.S.-friendly regimes. Washington got what it wanted. In 2011, Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi was overthrown, killed and replaced by Islamist warlords. And last December, longtime Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, fled to Russia and was replaced by the founder of al-Qaeda in Syria, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani.

Djerassi was later appointed an associate at the U.S.-government-funded think tank, the Carnegie Endowment for Peace. While there, he again specialized in Middle East policy, his bio noting that he "worked on matters relating to democratization and civil society in the Arab world, the Arab uprisings, and Israeli-Palestinian peace." Today, he works in Silicon Valley.

While Djerassi's fortunes were tied to the Clinton faction of the Democratic Party, his cousin Xavier Malina (Christine Maxwell's eldest son) backed the right horse, working on the Obama-Biden 2008 presidential run. He was rewarded for his good work with a position in the White House itself, where he became a Staff Assistant at the Executive Office of the President. Like his cousin, once his time in office was over, Malina also secured a position at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace before pursuing a career in the tech world, working for many years at Google in the Bay Area. He currently works for Disney.

While the actions of parents and grandparents should not determine the careers of later generations, the fact that two individuals who come from a multi-generational family of unrepentant spies and operatives of a foreign power secured positions at the center of the U.S. State is at least worthy of note.

The Maxwell Brothers: From Bankruptcy to Counterterrorism

Much of the Maxwell clan is most influential in American and Israeli politics. However, brothers Ian and Kevin also hold considerable sway over affairs in their native Great Britain. Although being acquitted of charges over widespread allegations that they helped their father, Robert, plunder over \$160 million from his employees' pension fund, the brothers kept a low profile for many years. Kevin, in particular, was known for little more than being Britain's largest-ever bankrupt, with debts exceeding half a billion dollars.

However, in 2018, they launched Combating Jihadist Terrorism and Extremism (CoJiT), a controversial think tank pushing for a far more invasive and heavy-handed government approach to the question of radical Islam. In his organization's book, "Jihadist Terror: New Threats, New Responses," Ian writes that CoJiT was set up to play a "catalyzing role in the national conversation," and to answer "difficult questions" arising from the issue. Judging by

the content of the rest of the book, this means pushing for even more extensive surveillance of Muslim communities.

Within Britain, CoJiT was a highly influential organization. Its editorial board and contributors are a who's who of high state officials. Individuals participating in its inaugural conference in London in 2018 included Sara Khan, the government's Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism, and Jonathan Evans, the former Director General of MI5, Britain's domestic intelligence agency.

Like so many Maxwell projects, CoJiT appears to have wrapped up its affairs. The organization has not updated its website or posted anything on its social media channels since 2022. In fairness, in the past few years, the brothers have had other priorities, leading the campaign to free their sister Ghislaine from prison, insisting that she is entirely innocent. In a manner reminiscent of Robert Maxwell, however, it appears that Kevin may have failed to pay the defense team; in 2022, Maxwell's lawyers sued him, seeking unpaid fees of nearly \$900,000.

The Infamous Mr. Epstein

For years, Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein ran a sex trafficking ring that exploited hundreds of girls and young women. They were also connected to vast networks of the global elite, including billionaire business owners, royalty, star academics, and foreign leaders, among their closest acquaintances, leading to intense speculation about the extent of their involvement in their many crimes.

It is still unclear when Epstein first met with the Maxwells, with some alleging that he was recruited into Israeli intelligence by Robert Maxwell. Others state the relationship only began after Robert's death, when he saved the family from penury following its financial problems.

Only one month after his 2019 arrest, Epstein was found dead in his New York City prison cell. His death was officially ruled a suicide, although his family has rejected this interpretation. Perhaps the two most powerful individuals in Epstein's circle of confidants were Presidents Bill Clinton and Donald Trump. Clinton, already infamous for the numerous accusations of sexual misconduct against him, is known to have flown at least 17 times on Epstein's private jet, nicknamed the "Lolita Express," and was accused by Epstein victim, Virginia Giuffre, of visiting Little St. James Island, the multimillionaire's private Caribbean residence, where many of his worst crimes took place.

Trump, arguably, was even closer to the disgraced financier. "I've known Jeff for fifteen years. Terrific guy," he said in 2002, "He's a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side. No doubt about it." Like Clinton, Trump flew on the Lolita Express. Epstein attended his wedding to Marla Maples in 1993, and claimed to have introduced him to his third wife, Melania.

Unfortunately, while Epstein's ties incriminate the entire political spectrum, coverage has often been framed as a partisan issue. A MintPress study of over one year of Epstein coverage on MSNBC and Fox News found that each network downplayed his connections to their preferred president, while emphasizing and highlighting the links to the leader of the other major party. As a result, many in the United States see the affair as an indictment of their political rivals, rather than of the political system as a whole.

There also remains the question of Epstein's links to intelligence, something that has been openly speculated about in the media for decades, even years before any allegations against him were made public. Throughout the 1990s, Epstein's biographer Julie K.

Brown noted, he openly boasted about working for both the CIA and Mossad, although the veracity of his claims remains in doubt. As Britain's Sunday Times wrote in 2000, "He's Mr. Enigmatic. Nobody knows whether he's a concert pianist, property developer, a CIA agent, a math teacher or a member of Mossad." It is possible that there is at least a grain of truth to all of these identities.

Epstein met with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns three times in 2014. Burns would later be named director of the CIA. Burns' proximity to Epstein, however, pales in comparison to that of former Israeli Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Defense Minister Ehud Barak. Between 2013 and 2017 alone, Barak is known to have traveled to New York City and met with the convicted criminal at least 30 times, sometimes arriving at his Manhattan mansion incognito or wearing a mask to hide his identity.

Numerous sources have commented on Epstein's connections to Israeli intelligence. A previous girlfriend and victim of his, referred in court documents as Jane Doe 200 to hide her identity, testified that Epstein boasted about being a Mossad operative and that, after he raped her, she could not go to the police because his position as a spy made her fear for her life.

"Doe genuinely believed that any reporting of the rape by what she believed to be a Mossad agent with some of the most unique connections in the world would result in significant bodily harm or death to her," reads the court filing. Ari Ben-Menashe, a former senior official in Israel's Military Intelligence Directorate, claimed that Epstein was a spy and that he and Ghislaine Maxwell were running a honeytrap operation on behalf of Israel. Four (anonymous) sources told Rolling Stone that Epstein had directly worked with the Israeli government.

Unlike much of the Maxwell family, however, his Israel and intelligence connections are based largely on testimony and unverified accounts. His only known trip to the country was in April 2008, just before his sentencing, a move that sparked fears he would seek refuge there.

Nevertheless, there has been intense public speculation that he could have been working for Tel Aviv. At the Turning Points USA Student Action Summit 2025, former Fox News host Tucker Carlson stated that there is nothing wrong, hateful or anti-Semitic about asking questions about Epstein's foreign connections. "No one's allowed to say that the foreign government is Israel, because we've been somehow cowed into thinking that that's naughty," he said, before expressing his exasperation about the media's silence on the issue.

What the hell is this? You have the former Israeli prime minister living in your house, you have had all this contact with a foreign government, were you working on behalf of the Mossad? Were you running a blackmail operation on behalf of a foreign government?" Carlson's comments drew harsh condemnation from former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. "The accusation that Jeffrey Epstein somehow worked for Israel or the Mossad running a blackmail ring is categorically and totally false. Epstein's conduct, both the criminal and the merely despicable, had nothing whatsoever to do with the Mossad or the State of Israel," he wrote.

"This accusation is a lie being peddled by prominent online personalities such as Tucker Carlson pretending they know things they don't," he added, concluding that Israel was under attack from a "vicious wave of slander and lies."

Whatever the truth about Epstein, it is indisputable that the powerful Maxwell family holds wide-ranging connections to U.S., British and Israeli state power. It is also beyond doubt that if the full story of their activities were ever to reach the public, it would incriminate a significant number of the world's most powerful people and organizations. Perhaps that is why Trump has, in short order, gone from promising to release the Epstein Files to potentially releasing his accomplice.