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CC: Darren Indyke [REDACTED]
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Top aide of Jeffrey Epstein prosecutor Acosta: We acted with integrity

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Palm Beach multimillionaire Jeffrey Epstein is a free man, despite sexually abusing dozens of underage girls according to police and prosecutors. His victims have never had a voice, until now. By [Emily Michot](#) | [Julie K. Brown](#)

A former top prosecutor involved in the Jeffrey Epstein sex case is defending his old boss, Alexander Acosta, whose decision to craft a secret plea deal with the wealthy New York hedge fund manager has come under federal scrutiny.

In his first public comments on the 10-year-old case, Jeffrey H. Sloman — who at the time was second in command under Acosta at the U.S. Attorney's Office in

Miami — said prosecutors resolved the case based on the facts and evidence, and what he called “legal impediments,” including the belief that many of Epstein’s teenage victims were too “terrified” to cooperate in the case.

“Given the obstacles we faced in fashioning a robust federal prosecution, we decided to negotiate a resolution,” said Sloman, now in private practice. “We did not reach this decision lightly and it came only after significant and often rancorous internal debate.”



Jeffrey Sloman, who was second-in-command to then-U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta when the latter was deciding whether to prosecute Jeffrey Epstein, says the office handled the case properly. Aixa Montero Holt

In a [lengthy opinion piece](#) submitted to the Miami Herald Editorial Board, Sloman alleges that the attacks on Acosta’s role in the controversial case are politically driven by critics who failed to raise significant issues when Acosta was nominated and confirmed as the U.S. secretary of labor in 2017.

Sloman’s comments come two weeks after the Justice Department announced it had opened an investigation over whether there was prosecutorial misconduct in the case involving Epstein, who ran a sex pyramid scheme from his Palm Beach estate that targeted scores of underage girls from 2001 to 2006.

About 30 members of Congress demanded the probe following a Miami Herald series of stories, [“Perversion of Justice,”](#) that detailed how federal prosecutors, led

by Acosta, stitched together an unusual immunity deal that allowed Epstein to escape what could have been a life sentence in federal prison.



U.S. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta has been criticized for the plea deal he worked out with Jeffrey Epstein. Acosta was U.S. attorney for Southern Florida at the time. Alan Diaz

Instead, Epstein — whose friends included President Donald Trump, former President Bill Clinton and other politically connected people — was allowed to quietly plead guilty to prostitution charges in state court. He served 13 months in the county jail, where he was allowed liberal work release privileges rarely given to sex offenders in Florida and barred by the Palm Beach Sheriff's Department's own rules.

He was released in 2009, but his victims — who were 13 to 16 years old at the time — are still fighting more than a decade later to have his non-prosecution agreement overturned.

In his op-ed, Sloman called Acosta “an outstanding public servant ... at risk of becoming collateral damage in Washington's latest polarized conflagration,” adding, “I won't let it happen without first being heard.”

Jeffrey Epstein apologizes, but not to his victims

Jeffrey Epstein, a multimillionaire who molested dozens of underage girls, and is suspected of trafficking countless other girls around the world, issued a public apology Tuesday. It was not to the victims of his abuse, but to one of their lawyers.

“As additional details about Epstein’s crimes have emerged, it is clear to me that we should have pushed for much harsher terms,” Sloman wrote. “That said, some have mistakenly suggested that our office kowtowed to Epstein’s high-priced defense lawyers or, worse, that his lawyers corrupted or intimidated us into submission. ... Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Sloman did not directly address the chief complaint brought by Epstein’s victims, who are now in their late 20s and early 30s. Those who spoke to the Herald said they felt betrayed by federal prosecutors, who sealed the non-prosecution agreement from public view so that they wouldn’t find out about it before he was sentenced. It would be almost a year before they were successful in having it unsealed. By then, it was too late to try to derail it.

They allege, in a federal lawsuit filed against the government, that prosecutors deliberately kept the deal secret — in violation of federal law — to prevent them from appearing at Epstein’s sentencing to possibly undo the deal. Nor did Sloman address why prosecutors also gave immunity to a number of Epstein’s co-conspirators, who have never been identified.

“They cut a deal which they have to know was a failure,” said Marci Hamilton, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania and executive director of Child USA, which advocates for children’s civil liberties. “They kept it secret and they didn’t charge the co-conspirators. The horror of this is if you don’t hold all the ‘Johns’ accountable, then it doesn’t stop. This case involved multiple girls, multiple men, multiple recruiters, multiple times and he recruited girls to get other girls. That’s a trafficking organization.”

Acosta has not commented since 2011, when he defended his decisions in a publicly issued letter that can be found in the federal court file. In it, he described what he called a “yearlong assault” on prosecutors by Epstein’s “army of legal superstars,” including Roy Black, Kenneth Starr and Alan Dershowitz, among others. In four long paragraphs, Acosta detailed how defense attorneys relentlessly worked to manipulate the negotiation process, often frustrating prosecutors.

“They would obtain concessions as part of a negotiation and agree to proceed, only to change their minds, and appeal the office’s decision to Washington,” Acosta wrote, adding that their tactics included delving into the private family lives of individual prosecutors in an effort to discredit them and get them removed from the case.

Wrote Sloman: “The Herald’s ‘Perversion of Justice’ series presented a heartrending portrait of Epstein’s victims and made a strong case that he should have gone to jail much longer, but never explained or substantiated its accusation that we schemed with Epstein’s lawyers.”

The Herald's series quoted a trove of letters and emails between prosecutors and Epstein's defense team that showed that Epstein's lawyers were allowed to dictate the terms of each deal that they drew up, and prosecutors repeatedly backed down on deadlines. The lead prosecutor, Marie Villafañá, amid the negotiations wrote to Epstein lawyer Jay Lefkowitz: "I thought we had worked very well together in resolving this dispute. ... I feel that I bent over backwards to keep in mind the effect that the agreement would have on Mr. Epstein."

Where are they now? The biggest players in the Jeffrey Epstein case

The girls who were abused by Jeffrey Epstein and the cops who championed their cause remain angry over what they regard as a gross injustice, while Epstein's employees and those who engineered his non-prosecution agreement have prospered.

The email chain also shows that prosecutors sometimes communicated with the defense team using private emails, and that their correspondence referenced discussions that they wanted to have by phone or in person so that there would be no paper trail, the Herald found. At one point, Acosta met privately with Lefkowitz, who came from the same Washington, D.C.-based law firm, at a Marriott hotel in West Palm Beach, the emails showed. It was at that meeting, the records show, when Acosta agreed to keep the deal secret.

The correspondences also show that Sloman sought several times to have Epstein's victims notified about the deal, as required under the Crime Victims Rights Act. But after Epstein's lawyers aggressively objected and appealed to Acosta, it never happened.

Sloman, however, insisted that Epstein's lawyers' aggressive defense had no bearing on the office's decision to set aside what court records show was a 53-page federal indictment it had prepared against Epstein. Sloman said the facts dictated that Epstein should plead guilty to what he called "a crime in state court that reflected his true conduct," adding that the case was "at heart, a local sex case."

"It is a gross mischaracterization to describe this as a local sex case," said lawyer Jack Scarola, a representative of several of Epstein's then-underage victims. "There was ample evidence that Epstein was operating on a large international scale. The involvement of the federal government was a consequence of evidence that children were crossing national and state borders for the purpose of prostitution."

At the time that the case was closed, FBI investigators had identified nearly 40 victims — and more were coming forward — who said they had been molested or sexually assaulted by Epstein and some of his co-conspirators. One of those victims, Courtney Wild, told the Herald that she brought at least 60 girls to his waterfront

Palm Beach estate over time. She wanted Epstein prosecuted — and was willing to testify — but prosecutors never gave her the chance, she told the Herald.

In addition, FBI records show that agents had traveled to New York and New Mexico to interview other possible victims, the Herald found. The non-prosecution deal that was struck was filed under seal. The result was that no one — not even the judge — would know the full scope of Epstein’s crimes and how many victims were involved.

Acosta, who now heads a federal agency with oversight of international child labor laws and human trafficking, was personally involved in the negotiations, records, letters and emails show.

AG nominee Barr pledges to look into handling of Epstein case

Sen. Ben Sasse questioned attorney general nominee William Barr about the Jeffrey Epstein case on January 15, 2019, getting the nominee to commit to having the Department of Justice look into the handling of that case if confirmed.

By C-SPAN

Sloman reiterated Acosta’s earlier contention that most of Epstein’s victims wouldn’t cooperate.

“So somehow, had Epstein been a child molester of one or two victims, then they would have prosecuted him?” said Wild’s attorney, Brad Edwards, in an interview with the Herald for its series published in November. “But because he molested hundreds of victims and some of them wouldn’t testify, then they are saying, ‘we can’t prosecute.’ How absurd is that argument?”

Edwards tried unsuccessfully to block the plea deal in federal court. In 2008, days after Epstein was sentenced, he filed an emergency order, alleging that the agreement was illegal because it violated the Crime Victims’ Rights Act, which grants crime victims certain rights, including the right to confer with prosecutors and be notified of a plea deal. The lawsuit is still pending a decade later.

“There is a reason for the Crime Victims Rights Act — so that prosecutors don’t preempt a victim’s ability to speak for themselves about a proposed plea bargain,” Scarola said. “Here, the decision was being made secretly for them.”

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