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Epstein paid three women \$5.5 million to end underage-sex lawsuits

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Jeffrey Epstein, a former Palm Beach resident, pleaded guilty in Palm Beach County Circuit Court in 2008 to two prostitution-related charges in connection with having teenage girls give him sexual massages. (Uma Sanghvi / The Palm Beach Post)

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Jeffrey Epstein

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Attorney Brad Edwards

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Jeffrey Epstein, a former Palm Beach resident, pleaded guilty in Palm Beach County Circuit Court in 2008 to two prostitution-related charges in connection with having teenage girls give him sexual massages. (Uma Sanghvi / The Palm Beach Post)

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Attorney Jack Scarola

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By

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Ending years of speculation about how much Palm Beach billionaire [Jeffrey Epstein](#) paid young women who claimed he used them as sex toys, court documents filed last week show he shelled out \$5.5 million to settle lawsuits with three of more than two dozen teens who sued him.

Responding to requests from Epstein's attorneys in a complex lawsuit that was spawned by the sex scandal, attorney Bradley Edwards said the politically-connected 64-year-old convicted sex offender paid more than \$1 million to each of the three women Edwards represented.

Identified in court papers only by their initials or pseudonyms because of the nature of the allegations and their youthful ages, L.M. was paid \$1 million, E.W. \$2 million and Jane Doe \$2.5 million, Edwards said of the settlements he negotiated with [Epstein](#) to end the lawsuits.

Jack Goldberger, one of Epstein's criminal defense attorneys, on Tuesday declined comment on the revelations, citing confidentiality agreements that were part of the settlements. For the same reason, he declined to say whether Epstein paid similar amounts to settle roughly two dozen lawsuits filed by other young women against [Epstein](#), claiming he paid them for sex when some were as young as 14 years old.

Attorney Jack Scarola, who is representing Edwards, said his client was compelled to divulge the confidential settlements to answer questions posed by Epstein's attorneys. "Brilliant move on their part," he said.

Even if Epstein's attorneys hadn't opened the door, Scarola said the information would have likely come out. He says the information will help him undermine Epstein's claims that Edwards "ginned up" the allegations to help his former law partner, imprisoned and disbarred Fort Lauderdale lawyer Scott Rothstein, perpetuate a \$1.2 billion Ponzi scheme.

The revelations of the settlements came as part of an ongoing lawsuit that started as a dispute between Epstein and Rothstein, both billionaires.

A year after Epstein in 2008 pleaded guilty to solicitation of prostitution and procuring a minor for prostitution, he sued Rothstein and Edwards, claiming they trumped up the allegations of sexual molestation to perpetuate the Ponzi scheme.

Rothstein was sentenced to 50 years in prison in 2010 after admitting he had built his wildly successful law firm by forging the names of federal judges and others to persuade investors he had negotiated settlements in lawsuits against high-profile people. Investors were told they could get a cut of the cash.

One of the high-profile people Rothstein used to lure investors was Epstein, according to a lawsuit West Palm Beach attorney Robert Critton filed on Epstein's behalf. According to the lawsuit, Rothstein told investors Epstein, a money manager, had agreed to settle the lawsuits with the teens for \$200 million — a claim Critton described as "a complete fabrication."

After Epstein dropped the lawsuit in 2012, Edwards turned the tables on him. Edwards accused Epstein of filing the lawsuit maliciously to punish him for representing the young women. Although Edwards was a partner in Rothstein's now defunct firm, Scarola claims Epstein had no evidence Edwards was involved in the Ponzi scheme. Federal prosecutors successfully charged other attorneys and members of the firm, but Edwards was never implicated, Scarola said in the malicious prosecution lawsuit.

The revelations about the money Epstein paid to three of the young woman came last week in documents filed for a hearing Tuesday in preparation for a December trial on the lawsuit.

Attorney Tonja Haddad Coleman, who represents Epstein, on Tuesday sought a delay of the trial, in part, because she claimed she has been unable to talk to her client since his estate on his private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands was devastated last month by Hurricane Irma. "I've had no ability to communicate with Mr. Epstein," she said.

Pointing out Epstein's enormous wealth and his private jet, Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Donald Hafele rejected her request. While saying he didn't want to appear insensitive to those victimized by the storm that hammered the Caribbean

and roared through South Florida, he said Coleman offered no proof, such as an affidavit from Epstein, to shore up her claims.

Still, Hafele gave Coleman extra time to respond to various motions that he will have to decide before the case goes to trial.

Despite Scarola's insistence that Edwards had nothing to do with Rothstein's Ponzi scheme, Coleman said the evidence indicates otherwise. Why else would he try to depose Epstein's well-known friends, such as now President Donald Trump, former President Bill Clinton and illusionist David Copperfield, she asked. He used the celebrities as a draw, she said.

"The Epstein cases were used to fleece money and defraud investors," she said.

Edward's malicious prosecution case has been difficult for both sides because both Epstein and Edwards have refused to answer questions. As he did in the civil lawsuits, Epstein has invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when questioned by Scarola. Edwards has claimed that much of the information Epstein is seeking is protected by attorney-client privilege.

The malicious prosecution lawsuit is one of two hotly-contested lawsuits that continue to pit Edwards against Epstein. Edwards also is suing the U.S. attorney's office, claiming it violated the federal Crime Victims Rights Act when it negotiated a non-prosecution agreement with Epstein.

Only after federal prosecutors agreed to drop their investigation of Epstein, did he agree to plead guilty to two prostitution charges in Palm Beach County Circuit Court. In federal court records, prosecutors claim one of the key reasons they agreed to drop their case was Epstein's agreement to settle lawsuits filed against him by dozens of his underage victims.

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