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Jeffrey Epstein Offers Mansion and Jet as Bond to Avoid Jail Before Trial

Prosecutors have argued that the financier, who is accused of abusing dozens of underage girls, posed “an extraordinary risk of flight.”



Image

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States attorney in Manhattan, announced the indictment on Monday. Credit: Jason Szenes/EPA, via Shutterstock



By **Benjamin Weiser**

July 11, 2019

Jeffrey Epstein, the financier facing sex-trafficking charges in New York, has been described by prosecutors as a man of enormous wealth: He owns a \$77 million mansion on the Upper East Side, a \$12 million estate in Palm Beach, Fla., a private island in the Caribbean and a private jet, they said.

And on Thursday, Mr. Epstein, 66, asked a federal judge to allow him to use some of his wealth to stay out of jail while he awaits trial, filing a detailed bail proposal with the court.

Mr. Epstein asked the court to release him on substantial bond and pledged to put up his palatial Manhattan townhouse and his private jet as collateral. He also proposed he be allowed to remain under house arrest in his Upper East Side house, and said he would agree to electronic monitoring of his location. He said he would surrender his passport and ground his jet.

In addition, his lawyers proposed that Mr. Epstein would hire private round-the-clock security guards who would “virtually guarantee” that he would not flee his house and would show up for court.

A handful of superrich defendants have sought and occasionally obtained, over sharp objections from the government, similar bail provisions that allow them to finance a kind of personal jail rather than being held in a government lockup.

Such bail packages have prompted intense debate about their fairness. The judge in Mr. Epstein’s case, Richard M. Berman, [rejected a similar proposal in 2016](#) from a wealthy Turkish-Iranian gold trader in a money laundering case.

At the time, Judge Berman wrote that the proposal was “unreasonable because it helps to foster inequity and unequal treatment in favor of a very small cohort of criminal defendants who are extremely wealthy.” Prosecutors had said on Monday after the charges were announced that they would ask to have Mr. Epstein held in jail until his trial. They said in court that he posed “an extraordinary risk of flight and danger,” and that he had “nearly infinite means” and “tremendous incentives to use those means to flee prosecution.”

Judge Berman of Federal District Court in Manhattan is scheduled to take up Mr. Epstein’s bail proposal at a hearing on Monday.

Mr. Epstein was arrested Saturday night aboard a private jet at Teterboro Airport after arriving from Paris. He has been detained at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, a high-security facility in Lower Manhattan where accused terrorists, mobsters and, most recently, the Mexican drug lord known as El Chapo, have awaited trial.

If convicted, Mr. Epstein faces up to 45 years in prison on sex-trafficking and conspiracy charges. The [indictment unsealed on Monday](#) by Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States attorney in Manhattan, said that between 2002 and 2005, Mr. Epstein recruited dozens of underage girls to engage in sex acts with him, after which he paid them hundreds of dollars in cash.

The indictment also accused Mr. Epstein of encouraging some of his victims to recruit other underage girls that he could then abuse, and paying his “victim-recruiters” hundreds of dollars for each girl that they brought to him. “In so doing, Epstein maintained a steady supply of new victims to exploit,” the indictment said.