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# Jeffrey Epstein's lawyers highly 'skeptical' of suicide ruling, say he wasn't 'despairing, despondent' before death

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- A defense lawyer for Jeffrey Epstein on Tuesday expressed deep skepticism that the wealthy financier died by hanging himself in a Manhattan federal jail while awaiting trial on child sex trafficking charges, as a medical examiner has ruled.
- Epstein, 66, was a former friend of Presidents Donald Trump and Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew and other celebrities, whom he entertained at his luxurious residences in Manhattan, Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Authorities and accusers have said that Epstein sexually abused young girls and women at those properties, and that his misdeeds were abetted by a number of conspirators, none of whom has ever been charged.



Kris Connor | Getty Images

Reid Weingarten

A defense lawyer for Jeffrey Epstein on Tuesday expressed deep skepticism that the wealthy financier died by hanging himself in a Manhattan federal jail while awaiting trial on [child sex trafficking charges](#), as a medical examiner has ruled.

The injuries suffered by Epstein are "far more consistent with assault" than suicide, the lawyer, Reid Weingarten, told Judge Richard Berman in U.S. District Court in Manhattan during a hearing.

Weingarten cited the defense's own medical sources. Broken bones were found in Epstein's neck during an autopsy after he died Aug. 10.

Such fractures are somewhat more common in cases of strangulation than in hanging.

Weingarten told the judge that when he and other defense attorneys spoke to Epstein shortly before his death "we did not see a despairing, despondent, suicidal person."

Weingarten's comments came during a proceeding where prosecutors were seeking the dismissal of child sex trafficking charges against the Epstein as a result of his death.

More than 20 alleged victims of Epstein spoke or had statements read during the hearing.

Another Epstein lawyer, Martin Weinberg, told Berman that the defense team had prepared a "significant" motion to dismiss the case, and that the lawyers were not approaching the case with a "futile, defeatist attitude."

Weingarten said Berman had a "pivotal role to find out what happened."

"We want the court to help us find out what happened," Weingarten said.

"We're skeptical of the certitude" of the finding of suicide by hanging by the New York City medical examiner, the lawyer said.

There are "significant doubts" regarding "the conclusion of suicide," Weingarten said.

But Maurene Comey, a federal prosecutor, told Berman that Epstein's death was already the subject of "an ongoing and active grand jury investigation."

"It is not the purview, respectfully, of the court to conduct an investigation into uncharged matters," Comey said.

The focus of the hearing, she added, should be to allow Epstein's accusers to be heard "and to bring this case to a close."

However, Epstein's lawyers argued that there was legal precedent for the court to investigate Epstein's death.

And some of the victims' lawyers also suggested that a court-led investigation might be appropriate.

"If there is jurisdiction ... it would increase the confidence" to have the court "oversee the investigation," said Gloria Allred, the high-profile attorney who introduced new alleged victims of Epstein at the hearing.

Epstein, 66, was a former friend of Presidents Donald Trump and Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew and other celebrities, whom he entertained at his luxurious residences on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, Palm Beach, Florida, and on a private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands.