

Epstein victim and Trump accuser living in fear of retaliation, relative says

Trump administration faces an escalating controversy over handling of 'Jane Doe 4' documents in Epstein files.

A woman known as Jane Doe 4 in the **Jeffrey Epstein** files is “staying off the grid” and lives in fear of retaliation from the Trump administration amid an escalating controversy over its handling of her case, according to a family member.

“Trauma is brutal. Chronic trauma destroys,” said the relative, who described the woman’s life as layers of abuse dating back to early childhood. “She’s coping as best she can.”

The woman had four interviews with FBI agents in 2019 that keep resurfacing in the Epstein sex-trafficking scandal. **She made unproven allegations** she was abused by the New York financier in the 1980s, then sexually assaulted by Donald Trump, when she was between 13 and 15 years old. The White House has called her allegations “completely baseless” and “backed by zero credible evidence”, a claim it said was supported by the fact that the Biden administration’s justice department knew about the allegations but “did nothing with them”.

She is one of the only alleged Epstein victims to have directly accused Trump, and irregularities in the justice department’s handling of her case files have now become a rallying point for critics of the acting attorney general, Todd Blanche, who is the US president’s nominee for permanent appointment.

A federal judge in Washington last week gave Blanche until 2 July to produce unredacted versions of files the justice department has already released, or provide an explanation for why it cannot produce the unredacted records. The Department of Justice was also ordered to release interview notes related to Jane Doe 4’s allegations. The decision was part of a civil case against Blanche brought by journalist Katie Phang.

Late Friday, the justice department's number three official, Stanley Woodward, gave notice he will join the case. "They really, really don't want these documents released," tweeted Brendan Ballou, a lawyer for the Public Integrity Project, who is representing Phang.

 Todd Blanche, the acting US attorney general, was Trump's former personal attorney. Photograph:  ABACA/Shutterstock

Alleged Epstein victims and supporters want Blanche, the president's former personal attorney, to explain why about 2.5m other records of unknown importance were deemed "duplicative" or legally protected by Blanche and never released.

 "It should not be Jane Doe 4's responsibility to keep coming forward," Sky Roberts, the brother of deceased Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre, who has become a leading victims advocate, told the Guardian.

 "She's already given her testimony to the FBI. It should be Justice's responsibility to take that evidence and press forward," he said.

 Judge Emmet Sullivan's order to comply with the Epstein Transparency Act was "a real win" for victims, former prosecutor and legal commentator Joyce Vance wrote on  Substack.

The handling of Jane Doe 4's case file has been controversial since the justice department rushed to comply with a law passed by Congress in November, and signed into law by Trump, requiring release of all documents related to Epstein and his associate, **Ghislaine Maxwell**. Epstein died in jail in an apparent suicide in August, 2019, and Maxwell is serving 20 years at a minimum-security prison in Texas, where she was transferred after two interviews with Blanche.

Blanche was in charge of compliance, according to answers the fired attorney general Pam Bondi gave to the House oversight committee. He directed a hastily assembled team of 500 reviewers and led decisions about document handling.

In several waves, the justice department uploaded more than 3m documents into a database that was fraught with problems. Victim names were exposed, as well as compromising photographs, and the justice department promised to correct mistakes.

Retracted without explanation were potential co-conspirators and names of friends who wrote to Epstein about young women.

A huge document release in January included the formal FBI “302” report of one Jane Doe 4 interview, along with a numerical identifier for her case. She had called into the FBI’s Epstein hotline after his arrest in July 2019, and the agency deemed her account worthy of further investigation. Around the same time, the woman’s confidante called into the hotline separately to report what she knew about Jane Doe 4.

Journalists at NPR and elsewhere used the woman’s case file number to discover other missing records. Under pressure, the justice department in March released three additional interviews with Jane Doe 4, which included her fuzzy memory of an alleged 1980s encounter with Trump after she said Epstein introduced her in New York or New Jersey.

The justice department still has not released handwritten interview notes from the sessions with Jane Doe 4.

Only reporters from The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina, have reviewed the notes, citing an unnamed source. The agent’s scribbles include names of a few high school friends who might be able to verify some aspects of Jane Doe 4’s account, but not the alleged incident with Trump, the news outlet reported.

The transparency law gives few reasons for withholding documents and forbids keeping them from being withheld “on the basis of embarrassment, reputational harm or political sensitivity”.

The FBI never brought charges against any individual in connection to Jane Doe 4’s allegations and there is no indication the FBI investigated Jane Doe 4’s claims after concluding its interviews in August 2019, when Trump was serving his first term as president. The woman cut off her FBI contact, telling agents she believed she was being followed, according to the FBI report of the final interview.

Her relative declined to disclose her current whereabouts.

The attorney who represented her during two FBI interviews said he never received follow-up calls from the two female agents or copies of their 302 reports, which he said

are usually provided to defense counsel. The Guardian is not naming the attorney, who practices in a small family firm, or his location to protect the alleged victim's identity. The attorney said his mission was protecting his client against possible criminal charges as she answered FBI questions about referring friends to a man she knew only as "Jeff", who she said was visiting a luxury property near her family's home in Hilton Head, South Carolina. The woman told agents she told a few friends on the beach about an older man who could supply drugs and liquor.

In 2020, a Jane Doe joined a **lawsuit** against Epstein's estate with allegations and biographical details that match those in the FBI interviews. She later dropped her claims. In March, oversight committee members questioned Epstein's accountant and lawyer, who are co-administrators of Epstein's estate, about any payment to the alleged victim directly from the estate. The woman's claim with a special fund for Epstein victims was denied, but one of her attorneys told the Post and Courier she had received a settlement from the estate.

Accountant Richard Kahn at first acknowledged a settlement, then after conferring with his attorney, said he could neither confirm nor deny any payment.

Blanche faces what are expected to be contentious confirmation hearings later this summer before the Senate judiciary committee.