

JEFFREY EPSTEIN IS ABOUT TRUMP'S FAILING ABILITY TO COMMAND ATTENTION

The bubbling Jeffrey Epstein scandal is about two things: the underlying scandal and any ties Trump has to it, and the way it has disrupted Trump's normal super power ability to command and direct attention.

His attack on Rosie O'Donnell yesterday shows that his ability to direct the attention of the left remains undiminished and makes clear why this power is so important to Trump.

Trump's attack on the comedian, just hours before his latest inept intervention in the Epstein matter, came in the wake of a number of stories – the NYT story describing that key National Weather Service positions were vacant when the flood hit, the CNN report on a three day delay that Kristi Noem caused in the search and rescue, reports on Kerr County's refusal to accept a Dem-funded early warning system that Rayne wrote up here, the NYT story describing how Noem *cut off* funding to a call center while it was fielding calls from survivors – holding Trump's Administration or Republicans accountable for exacerbating the impact of the flood.

When Trump tweeted that Rosie O'Donnell "is a Threat to Humanity" and claimed to be considering stripping her citizenship (she lives in Dublin but as far as I know does not yet have Irish citizenship), that post circulated wildly among journalists and the left, sometimes with commentary about how grave a threat it was that Trump would even make such threats (which he has no *legal* power to carry out).

But the people who gaped at his unfiltered tweet did *not* explain, much less link, the background.

Trump attacked O'Donnell as predictions she made on TikTok last Sunday, which the right wing has been trying to dismiss by shaming her, were being confirmed by those press reports.

What a horror story in Texas – the flash floods in Texas. The Guadalupe River. 51 missing. 51 dead, more missing. Children ... at a camp. And you know when the President guts all the warning systems and the, uh, weathering [sic] forecast abilities of the government, these are the results that we're going to start to see on a daily basis, because he's put this country in so much danger by his horrible, horrible decisions and this ridiculously immoral bill that he just signed into law. As Republicans cheered. As Republicans cheered. People will die as a result and they've started already. Shame on him. Shame on every GOP sycophant who's listening and following the disastrous decisions of this mentally incapacitated POTUS.

Rosie O'Donnell made a powerful *moral* critique of Trump, and as that critique was bearing out, he responded to it by asserting to have power over her, power he doesn't have. And rather than focusing on or even *mentioning* that moral critique – or even continuing to focus on the many ways the Trump Administration *did* exacerbate the flood – those who disseminated his tweet gaped in horror at his spectacular display of power, without identifying it as an attempt to avoid being held accountable.

Whether or not the US can restore democracy depends heavily on the success that Trump's critics have in tying his failures to disasters like Kerr County. It depends on their ability to remain laser-focused on holding him accountable for the disasters his actions predictably cause. And Trump squelched the words of one prescient critic with a tweet. He did so with the willful cooperation of data mules on the left.

Trump's ability to command and direct attention – his ability to rupture context and redirect attention to his own claims of authority – is his super power. It is how he has attained and remained in government; it is how he has beat back scandals that would have doomed others.

And that super power has been failing him as his DOJ and FBI reversed course on past fevered promises to disclose everything about the Epstein scandal.

That's what, I have tried to argue, has always been missing from reporting on this exchange: how badly Trump flubbed a role, suppressing coverage by bullying a journalist, that is second nature to him.

Pam Bondi sets out to answer two questions from a journalist about Epstein. She's actually good at this performed competence and had Trump just let her answer he might have avoided all the backlash. But Trump interrupts. He stumbles over delivery of the name, Jeffrey Epstein, as if he is trying to perform disgust, but it sounds hollow. He asks a question – "are you still talking about Jeffrey Epstein" – that feigns ignorance of both the importance of the Epstein scandal to his base, to say nothing about how much his chosen aides, Bondi, Dan Bongino, and Kash Patel, have themselves never shut up about Epstein. Trump almost regains his footing when he complains that the journalist isn't focused on Texas or "this" (huh? what is "this"?); Trump almost regains his footing by bullying a journalist, an easy trope for him. But then he tries to perform disgust again – "this creep" – and like the earlier mention of his friend, Epstein's name, "creep" sounds forced, a badly delivered performance. Trump tries a familiar stance again – "I can't believe you're asking a question about Epstein" – but this was a question about a release Bondi's own DOJ orchestrated. He ends with feigned outrage, accusing the journalist of "desecration." The whole performance lacked energy, exacerbated by the slurring Trump exhibited throughout the

event.

What is a normal ploy from him – attacking journalists to bully them out of covering things – simply failed. The great Realty TV Show Star flubbed his part, as devastating as if his voice squeaked when declaring “You’re fired,” back in the day.

Both in content and performance, his bid to shut down this line of questioning made him look vulnerable, not strong. It raised questions rather than silencing them.

With each development since – the clash between Dan Bongino and Bondi over who would take the fall first revealed in reports of Bongino’s pouty refusal to go to work on Friday, the persistent backlash from some of the loudest voices among his Twitter mob, leading up to Trump’s lengthy tweet yesterday – Trump’s command of attention has slipped.

While folks finally recognized that something is failing in Trump’s normal ability to command attention, this time, by gaping at the length of this tweet, if you look closer, the tweet was even more delightfully ill-conceived.



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump · July 12, 2025, 5:21 PM

Original Post

What's going on with my "boys" and, in some cases, "gals?" They're all going after Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is doing a FANTASTIC JOB! We're on one Team, MAGA, and I don't like what's happening. We have a PERFECT Administration, THE TALK OF THE WORLD, and "selfish people" are trying to hurt it, all over a guy who never dies, Jeffrey Epstein. For years, it's Epstein, over and over again. Why are we giving publicity to Files written by Obama, Crooked Hillary, Comey, Brennan, and the Losers and Criminals of the Biden Administration, who conned the World with the Russia, Russia, Russia Hoax, 51 "Intelligence" Agents, "THE LAPTOP FROM HELL," and more? They created the Epstein Files, just like they created the FAKE Hillary Clinton/Christopher Steele Dossier that they used on me, and now my so-called "friends" are playing ~~them~~ ~~down~~. Why didn't these Radical Left Lunatics release the Epstein Files? If there was ANYTHING in there that could have hurt the MAGA Movement, why didn't they use it? They haven't even given up on the John F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King, Jr. Files. No matter how much success we have had, securing the Border, deporting Criminals, fixing the Economy, Energy Dominance, a Safer World where Iran will not have Nuclear Weapons, it's never enough for some people. We are about to achieve more in 6 months than any other Administration has achieved in over 100 years, and we have so much more to do. We are saving our Country and, MAKING AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, which will continue to be our complete PRIORITY. The Left is imploding! Kash Patel, and the FBI, must be focused on investigating Voter Fraud, Political Corruption, ActBlue, The Rigged and Stolen Election of 2020, and arresting Thugs and Criminals, instead of spending month after month looking at nothing but the same old, Radical Left inspired Documents on Jeffrey Epstein. LET PAM BONDI DO HER JOB — SHE'S GREAT! The 2020 Election was Rigged and Stolen, and they tried to do the same thing in 2024 — That's what she is looking into as AG, and much more. One year ago our Country was DEAD, now it's the "HOTTEST" Country anywhere in the World. Let's keep it that way, and not waste Time and Energy on Jeffrey Epstein, somebody that nobody cares about. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Both right wingers and journalists have, I think correctly, conceived the purpose as an attempt to alleviate pressure on Pam Bondi.

What's going on with my "boys" and, in some cases, "gals?" They're all going after Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is doing a FANTASTIC JOB!

[snip]

LET PAM BONDI DO HER JOB — SHE'S GREAT!

But even there, Trump starts pathetically, by claiming that "my 'boys' and, in some cases, 'gals?'" are leading the attack on Bondi. This attack, on "Blondi," is being led by Laura Loomer, and suggesting that she's following Trump's "boys" on this betrays a reluctance to go after Loomer directly.

The defense of Kash Patel (right wingers correctly noticed that Bongino gets no mention) is secondary.

Kash Patel, and the FBI, must be focused on investigating Voter Fraud, Political Corruption, ActBlue, The Rigged and Stolen Election of 2020, and arresting Thugs and Criminals, instead of spending month after month looking at nothing but the same old, Radical Left inspired Documents on Jeffrey Epstein.

That mention builds on the drop dead stupidity of this post – one so stupid that even *Benny Johnson* noticed it.

For the first time ever, Trump claimed that the Epstein files were made up by Democrats – all Democrats, serially.

Why are we giving publicity to Files written by Obama, Crooked Hillary, Comey, Brennan, and the Losers and Criminals of the Biden Administration, who conned the World with the Russia, Russia, Russia Hoax, 51 “Intelligence” Agents, “THE LAPTOP FROM HELL,” and more? They created the Epstein Files, just like they created the FAKE Hillary Clinton/Christopher Steele Dossier that they used on me, and now my so-called “friends” are playing right into their hands.

To be fair, this is not an *entirely* new ploy. Last year, Trump explained his hesitation to release the Epstein files based on a claim that “it’s a lot of phony stuff with that *whole* world.”

I guess I would. I think that, less so, because, you know, you don’t want to affect people’s lives if it’s phony stuff in there because it’s a lot of phony stuff with that *whole* world.

Even then, he was preparing a defense that if something in there implicated him, it was phony, fake, fraudulent.

Still, the claim that Democrats – Obama, Hillary, John Brennan, and Jim Comey (who is not a Democrat, or at least wasn't when this all happened) – created the Epstein files would normally be a reasonable ploy, given the disinformation he has long used to sustain loyalty. He attempted to tie the Epstein files to things he has trained his rubes to believe were hoaxes – the legal adjudications that Trump's top aides lied to cover up his ties to Russia and false claims about what 51 spooks said about the Hunter Biden laptop – as well as an actual hoax (the Steele dossier) that he has blamed on Democrats rather than the Russians who larded it with allegations that closely match real things only the Russians knew.

These things – Russia Russia Russia – are a foundational element of his tweets (and one of the things data mules disseminate without debunking, thereby reinforcing as unquestioned). This was an attempt to add one more element, as he added the spook letter and Hunter Biden laptop after Russia Russia Russia was already established as his foundational disinformation.

So this might have been a reasonable attempt to discredit the Epstein files, the things he anticipated claiming were "phony" last year. Except you don't attempt this after years of treating it as credible.

Worse still, you don't do that and then immediately ask the question that MAGAs have long used to reassure themselves that Trump wasn't in the Epstein files.

Why didn't these Radical Left Lunatics release the Epstein Files? If there was ANYTHING in there that could have hurt the MAGA Movement, why didn't they use it?

Why didn't they, indeed?

Again, *even Benny* has seen the problem with this, and he is painfully stupid!

The reason Trump's claims that the Russian investigation and the spook letter and the Steele dossier are hoaxes have succeeded is because they were made public, often with the involvement of Democrats. But if Democrats – even Hillary, whose spouse flew on his plane! – larded the Epstein files with things damaging Trump, right wingers' biases dictate that the left would have released it.

Before Trump's claims that these were fabricated, the logic made sense to right wingers: Democrats didn't release the files because there's nothing about Trump in them. But if the left allegedly fabricated them along with the Russian investigation and the spook letter, which Trump has falsely claimed were fabricated in an attempt to hurt Trump, then they would have released them.

Furthermore, he would order Kash to *include* the Epstein files among the witch hunts on which he wants FBI to focus. Instead, he's arguing that Kash doesn't have time to investigate this alleged hoax targeting him because he is too busy investigating other fabricated claims of a hoax, his desperate attempt to find some way to sustain the claim that he's not a loser beaten by Joe Biden in 2020.

The entire post collapses in on itself. *Even Benny sees this!*

And that's before something else Trump attempted. Trump told his rubes – a huge cross-section of which is QAnon adjacent – that nobody cares about Jeffrey Epstein.

Let's keep it that way, and not waste Time and Energy on Jeffrey Epstein, somebody that nobody cares about.

Crazier still, when he first attempted this complaint, he used a phrase that is bound to fuel conspiracists.

“selfish people” are trying to hurt it,
all over a guy who never dies, Jeffrey
Epstein

Jeffrey Epstein never dies?!?! Did you really say that? About a guy whose circumstances of death are a key part of this conspiracy theory? Hell, the most unhinged Epstein conspiracists (including a good number of Trump supporters) question *whether* he did die. And you just wrote down that Jeffrey Epstein never dies?!?!

Trump’s supporters are in a cult. But many of them are also in the QAnon cult. And for those for whom the QAnon cult came first or remains predominant, telling them that “nobody cares about” Jeffrey Epstein ruptures the unity between Trump and them, because he is attacking one of their foundational beliefs. It’s like telling devout Christians that Jesus never walked the Earth. You have just assailed a foundational belief of those who believe – as proven by Epstein – that pedophiles control the powerful. So long as Trump flirted with QAnon conspiracies, he and his rubes shared that foundational belief; yesterday, he assailed it.

(Both Phil Bump and Mike Rothschild addressed what happens when you betray the trust of conspiracists back when Bongino first affirmed that Epstein killed himself; their descriptions really anticipated what we’re seeing this week.)

There certainly are questions about what aspects of Trump’s sustained fondness for Epstein remain in files that once might have been on Pam Bondi’s desk before they weren’t and never had been, according to Bondi. It’s certainly likely that something in them explains the failure of Trump’s super power here, his inability to deliver his long-practiced lines, first of bullying a journalist, then claiming Dems implicated him in a hoax.

But the reason *why* his super power is failing doesn’t matter so long as it does continue to fail, especially given that Epstein conspiracies

were always non-falsifiable and Trump's conflicting stories make them all the more so. Unless something drastically changes, every attempt Trump makes to squelch this focus will only exacerbate the growing cognitive dissonance his rubes have. And the underlying Epstein scandal is so spectacular – so unquestionably a case of injustice to the victims – that even feckless Dems have the means of keeping it at the forefront.

Trump survives based on that super power, on his ability (as he succeeded in doing with the Rosie O'Donnell tweet) to dodge accountability by distracting away from it.

If that super power starts to fail, though, so will his ability to avoid accountability.