

MUCH OF TODD BLANCHE'S PERCEIVED COVER-UP IS ACTUALLY INCOMPETENCE

Something hilarious happened this week.

On Tuesday, Trump's White House got Marc Caputo to write a credulous column platforming their laughable claims that they're not responsible for how chaotic the release of the Epstein files has been, that the whole Epstein thing is *just unfair* to poor Donald Trump. Caputo's column – the dutiful repetition of even ridiculous claims – is a read of Trump's own perception of the challenge before him.

But before Caputo got to Trump's flimsy excuses and the more damning detail – that the White House had taken over DOJ's Xitter account – he started with his headline scoop: He allowed his sources to claim that the pain of this release will last one more week (that is, a week from Tuesday).

Only one more week.

***Scoop: Trump
administration
expects Epstein
files release could
last another week***

The Trump administration estimates it has about one week to go – and as many as 700,000 more pages to review – before it finishes releasing all the Jeffrey Epstein files.

[snip]

▪ *This will end soon,"
another official said.*

*"The conspiracy theories
won't."*

Imagine putting that prediction in writing!

The prediction lasted less than a day.

Even at the time, CNN was reporting that SDFL's US Attorney's Office has just solicited "volunteers" to work over the holiday to make this a one-week story.

The Justice Department's leadership asked career prosecutors in Florida to volunteer over the "next several days" to help redact the Epstein files, in the latest Trump administration push toward releasing the hundreds of thousands of photos, internal memos and other evidence around the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

A supervising prosecutor in the Southern District of Florida's US Attorney's Office emailed the entire district office on Tuesday – two days before Christmas – announcing an "emergency request from the [Deputy Attorney General's] office the SDFL must assist with," according to a copy of the email reviewed by CNN. "We need AUSAs to do remote document review and redactions related to the Epstein files," the email said.

Then, DOJ explained why they needed the volunteers: they (claim they) just discovered a million more pages.



U.S. Department of Justice
@TheJusticeDept



The US Attorney for the Southern District of New York and the FBI have informed the Department of Justice that they have uncovered over a million more documents potentially related to the Jeffrey Epstein case. The DOJ has received these documents from SDNY and the FBI to review them for release, in compliance with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, existing statutes, and judicial orders. We have lawyers working around the clock to review and make the legally required redactions to protect victims, and we will release the documents as soon as possible. Due to the mass volume of material, this process may take a few more weeks. The Department will continue to fully comply with federal law and President Trump's direction to release the files.

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This thing won't be done in a week or even a month. And the people smoking Caputo need to understand that's partly due to Todd Blanche's incompetence, and partly due to the stuff that is a cover-up.

You're likely to disagree with this opinion, because conventional wisdom on the left holds that the chaos of the Jeffrey Epstein releases *to date* reflects an attempted cover-up. But the chaos we're seeing in the Jeffrey Epstein release is not (yet), primarily, a cover-up – though DOJ is flouting the law in ways that will create further scandal that may be entirely unrelated to protecting Donald Trump.

What you're seeing is incompetence – frankly, the same incompetence we've seen from day one on Trump's efforts to corral the Epstein conspiracy theories which his followers thrive.

Consider the things that have been identified as evidence of an imagined cover-up:

- Documents from a civil lawsuit published to docket at different times, adopting different standards of redaction, and therefore revealing accusations against Trump in just one of them
- Documents from a civil

lawsuit adopting reversible redaction

- The handwritten letter claiming to be from Epstein to Larry Nasser purportedly written just before Epstein's death

These actually *could be* readily explainable (and, indeed, all three fit one of the five rules on how to read Epstein files that Ankush Khardori offered on the day of the release – understand what kind of files you're reading, and the biases people harbor or lies people will tell). For example, if DOJ had released the files with an inventory of the kinds of things the release would include, and the known reliability issues with various kinds of documents, then people might have been prepared to treat the claims made in civil suits with some skepticism. If DOJ had released the alleged Epstein letter with FBI's own analysis of it, it would have persuaded people that the letter is a fake, if it is.

But DOJ did not do that.

Instead, Todd Blanche sat for a softball interview with Kristen Welker in which he did the following:

- Falsely claimed that the delay in responding arose from any concern for the survivors
- Guaranteed that all mention of Trump would be unredacted
- Alluded to the real reasons for overredaction, which Welker of course ignored
- Repeated his past bullshit excuses for letting Ghislaine Maxwell lie to his

face with impunity before getting moved to Club Fed and getting a puppy

- [Unrelatedly, but still problematically, falsely claimed politicized prosecutions did not involve Trump]

The key answer here was Blanche's claim that DOJ needs to redact for reasons other than protecting victims.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, you're talking about protecting the victims. The law directed the Justice Department to "release internal DOJ communications including emails, memos, meeting notes concerning decisions to charge, not charge, investigate or decline to investigate Epstein or his associates." That's the crux of what many of the victims or the survivors say they want to see. Why wasn't that information prioritized in the first release, Mr. Blanche?

DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL TODD BLANCHE:

Well, first of all it was. And there are numerous documents released on Friday that address what you just quoted from, from the statute that address internal communications within the Department of Justice and internal communications between law enforcement and the Department of Justice. But it's for the same reason. Because many of those internal communications talk about victims. Many of those internal back and forths between prosecutors and law enforcement talk about victims and their stories. And that has to be redacted. And by the way, everybody expects us to redact that. So the same complaints that

we're hearing yesterday and even this morning from Democrats and from others screaming loudly from a hill about lack of production on Friday, imagine if we had released tons of information around victims? That would be the true crime. That would be the true wrong. And if anybody out there, I heard Congressman Raskin, the Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, releasing statements accusing Attorney General Bondi, Director Patel and myself of not doing our jobs. If they have an issue with me protecting victims, they know how to get a hold of me. But we're not going to stop doing it.

[snip]

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Let's delve more deeply into the redactions. Is any information about President Trump redacted in any of the files that have or will be released?

DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL TODD BLANCHE:

No. Not unless it's supposed to be redacted under the law, which means victim information **or any sort of privilege like attorney-client privilege**. But I have no reason to believe that the lawyers that are working on this case were talking about President Trump. Because he had nothing to do with the Epstein files. He had nothing to do with the horrific crimes that Mr. Epstein committed. And so I don't expect there will be anything redacted. But the short answer is we are not redacting information around President Trump, around any other individual involved with Mr. Epstein. And that narrative, which is not based on fact at all, is completely false. [my emphasis]

There are several problems for Todd Blanche's claim that there are *other* reasons that DOJ can redact information – he mentions attorney-client privilege, but that could quickly expand to executive privilege (indeed, elsewhere in the interview he asserts he'll never share his communications with Trump) or deliberative. The files are also being released with every DOJ identity redacted, including Audrey Strauss and Geoffrey Berman. That may have the temporary advantage, for DOJ, of hiding who was complicit in the sweetheart deal in 2007 and which real champions of the victims, like Maureen Comey, Trump fired right in this middle of this release.

The problem for Blanche is that judges have already ruled (in unsealing grand jury materials) that the transparency law supersedes other protections.

The Act requires disclosure of *Epstein* grand jury materials by requiring disclosure of "all unclassified records, documents, communications, and investigative materials." *Id.* "All" is crystal clear and should be afforded its "ordinary, common-sense meaning." ... (where Congress was aware of a category and did not exclude the category from the statute, that category is covered).

And so Congress will go to Richard Berman and argue that by withholding privileged or deliberative documents or even prosecutors' names, DOJ is not complying with the law, and they'll have precedent on their side.

Shit, Trump will be lucky if this only goes on for another month and not twelve.

The question Welker did not ask but should have is why DOJ is stuck doing this at the last minute if the FBI conducted an even bigger review of the files back in March. Why is DOJ in a mad rush to protect survivors now? Why wasn't DOJ protecting survivors in March?

And the answer to that question is that, obviously, that earlier review was focused not on victims but on a political calculation: would the release of pictures of Bill Clinton in a public hotel pool in Brunei (which is what got released last week) outweigh the damage of files implicating Trump and his friends (starting with Les Wexner who was named as a potential co-conspirator in some documents already released), and that the conclusion of that earlier review, in July, was that this could not be weaponized like everything else, and so Trump *and Todd Blanche personally* attempted to pressure Congress to prevent this release at all costs but failed, which is why they're stuck doing a second last minute review after the earlier one in March.

And eventually, all that – including whatever lists they made in March that Blanche probably hopes to shield under claims of privilege – should be ripe for release under the law. The incompetence of this first release will lead to iterative later releases.

Which brings us to the excuses Caputo platformed. As he describes, everyone is just *exasperated*, because how dare people take top Trump supporters like Charlie Kirk and Jack Posobiec and Benny Johnson and Kash Patel and Dan Bongino seriously when they focus on these files?

Behind the scenes: There's a palpable sense of exasperation and annoyance in the administration about all of the headlines pertaining to Trump and Epstein and the inability to explain everything and just get the disclosure done.

- *"It's a combination of extreme frustration at everything: at what Congress did, at our response to it, and a*

concern that it won't go away," an official said.

- *"There's also a little bit of indignation at the media – that this wasn't even a story for years and years. And now, not only is it a story, but the top of many news pages on a given day."*

How dare Trump's trolls make this a huge story?!?!?!?!?

This remains the problem with Blanche's actions and everyone else's. They're misunderstanding that this is the scandal they rode in on.

They *can't* just rely on past tools – like weaponization, like focusing on Clinton (as Trump attempted in his most recent wail about Epstein).

Because the Epstein scandal exists not because of anything Jamie Raskin or Ro Khanna did. The Epstein scandal exists because the conspiracism of it is the core of Trump's power. Epstein conspiracy theories were always non-falsifiable (which I wrote about [here](#) and [here](#) and a bunch of other places).

And by attempting to bulldoze Congress on the big issues – on DOJ's own prerogatives – Todd Blanche is only going to make things worse by creating new scandals.