

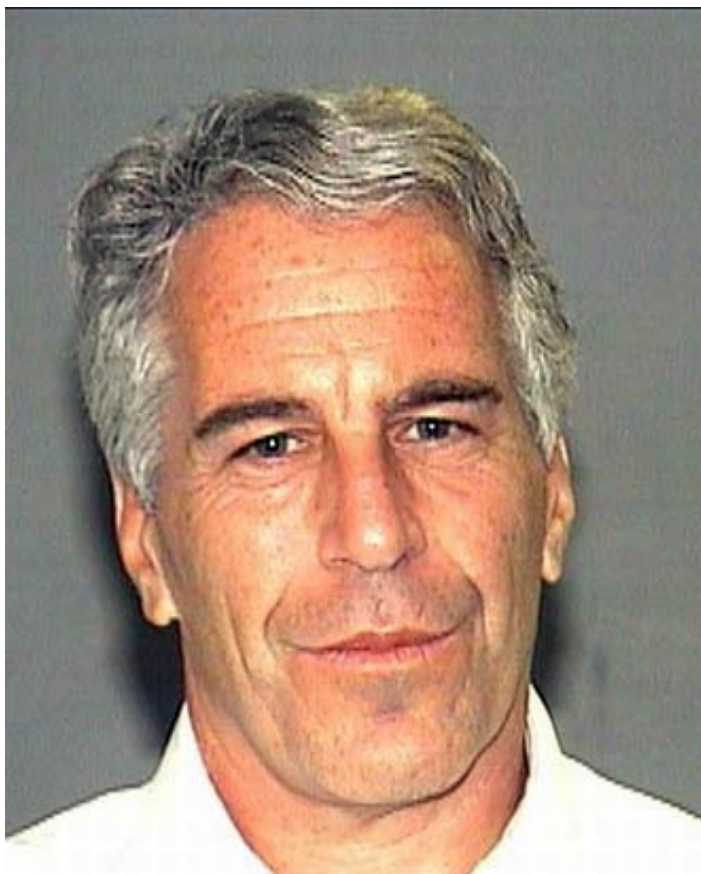
# The Unz Review • An Alternative Media Selection

*A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media*

## American Pravda: Jeffrey Epstein, the Franklin Scandal, Pedophilia, and Political Blackmail • 1h34m

RON UNZ • JULY 28, 2025 • 12,300 WORDS • 319 COMMENTS

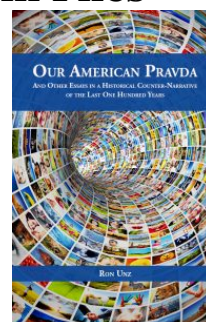
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### The Firestorm Over Trump's Refusal to Release the Epstein Files

Several months ago, the Trump Administration fulfilled one of its campaign pledges and declassified a large batch of JFK Assassination files, finally making them publicly available after sixty-odd years.

Few of these unredacted documents seemed to contain anything new or interesting, with the most dramatic memo being the report that longtime CIA Counter-Intelligence Chief James Jesus Angleton had a very close relationship with the Israeli Mossad, and was believed by some to have assisted Israel in developing its nuclear weapons program. That item quickly went viral on Twitter and was heavily emphasized by [those bloggers](#) discussing the document-dump.



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While these facts were certainly interesting, I hardly regarded them as shocking discoveries. For example, renowned investigative journalist Seymour Hersh had revealed Angleton's extremely close relationship with Israeli intelligence in his 1991 bestseller [The Samson Option](#), while Michael Collins Piper's seminal 1994 book [Final Judgment](#) had fingered Angleton as a likely Israeli asset who had [greatly abetted that country's nuclear weapons development effort](#). Indeed, shortly after Angleton's death more than 37 years ago, [an article in the Washington Post](#) revealed that he had "reportedly aided Israel in obtaining nuclear data." So if certain facts had already been widely known or suspected for more than 37 years, their apparent confirmation in a declassified government document could hardly be regarded as revolutionary.

But the huge wave of renewed public interest in the JFK Assassination prompted Mike Whitney to interview me about that subject. This provided me an opportunity to summarize my previous half-dozen years of investigation in a lengthy piece that soon received quite a lot of readership and attention.

- [How Israel Killed the Kennedys](#)

Ron Unz and Mike Whitney • *The Unz Review* • March 24, 2025 • 11,500 Words

Then earlier this month, Trump reversed himself on his pledge to declassify and release all the government files related to a different high-profile criminal case, and this surprising U-turn provoked an even larger storm of public controversy.

Back in 2019, a mysterious wealthy financier named [Jeffrey Epstein](#) had been arrested on charges of molesting minors and sex-trafficking them to many dozens of America's richest and most powerful individuals, amid widespread suspicions that he had been running a sexual blackmail ring on behalf of a foreign intelligence agency. According to media reports, an enormous trove of sexually-incriminating photographs and videos had been found in the safe of his huge New York City mansion.

Six years ago this Tuesday, soon after Epstein's arrest, I'd published a long article on the case, placing it in the broader context of the crucial role that blackmail seemed to play in secretly controlling many of America's top political leaders.

- [American Pravda: John McCain, Jeffrey Epstein, and Pizzagate](#)

Ron Unz • *The Unz Review* • July 29, 2019 • 6,400 Words

In that piece, I'd [explained](#) that I'd never paid any attention to the wild Epstein stories circulating on the Internet, dismissing them as just too bizarre to possibly be true.

For many years, reports about Epstein and his illegal sex-ring had regularly circulated on the fringes of the Internet, with agitated commenters citing the case

as proof of the dark and malevolent forces that secretly controlled our corrupted political system. But I almost entirely ignored these discussions, and I'm not sure that I ever once clicked on a single link.

Probably one reason I paid so little attention to the topic was the exceptionally lurid nature of the claims being made. Epstein was supposedly an enormously wealthy Wall Street financier of rather mysterious personal background and source of funds, who owned a private island and an immense New York City mansion, both regularly stocked with harems of underage girls provided for sexual purposes. He allegedly hobnobbed on a regular basis with Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew, Harvard's Alan Dershowitz, and numerous other figures in the international elite, as well as a gaggle of ordinary billionaires, frequently transporting those individuals on his personal jet known as "the Lolita Express" for the role it played in facilitating illegal secret orgies with young girls. When right-wing bloggers on obscure websites claimed that former President Clinton and the British Royals were being sexually serviced by the underage girls of a James Bond super-villain brought to life, I just naturally assumed those accusations were the wildest sort of Internet exaggeration.

Moreover, these angry writers did occasionally let slip that the fiendish target of their wrath had already been charged in a Florida courtroom, eventually pleading guilty to a single sexual offense and receiving a thirteen month jail sentence, mitigated by very generous work-release provisions. This hardly seemed like the sort of judicial punishment that would lend credence to the fantastical accusations against him. If Epstein had already been investigated by law enforcement authorities and given the sentence one might expect for writing a bad check, I found it quite unlikely that he was actually the Goldfinger or Dr. No that deluded Internet activists made him out to be.

But once Epstein's arrest and the resulting media coverage confirmed the reality of those astonishing stories, a huge blizzard of political agitation erupted. This became far greater when Epstein was suddenly found dead in his maximum security prison cell, having allegedly committed suicide while the guards tasked with checking his safety had happened to fall asleep and the video cameras monitoring his cell had strangely malfunctioned. Many very powerful people surely breathed a huge sign of relief at Epstein's sudden demise, so all but the most credulous became extremely suspicious at this strange turn of events.

During the half-dozen years since then, the Epstein case and its many conspiratorial elements had become a huge issue in political activist circles, especially those on the far right. Perhaps partly as a consequence, bizarre theories involving networks of elite pedophiles later became the heart of the wildly popular QAnon movement.

Most of the groups and individuals holding those views regarded Donald Trump as their great

hero and paladin, the leader who would defeat those diabolical villains and bring them to justice if he somehow managed to regain the White House, and his promise to release all the Epstein files energized many of his supporters. Leading right-wing influencers in the Trump camp such as Dan Bongino had made the Epstein files one of their signature issues, so Bongino's appointment as Deputy Director of the FBI seemed proof that Trump would soon honor that pledge.

But then three weeks ago, the Trump Administration reversed its position and declared that no additional Epstein files would be released, even suggesting that much of the material didn't actually exist. This naturally produced howls of outrage by Trump's erstwhile supporters. Elon Musk ridiculed Trump in an insulting meme that was viewed more than 63 million times:



With no further Epstein files released, no new facts existed. So I fully stood by the analysis I'd originally presented in my 2019 article. But now that this enormous outpouring of public controversy has returned the issue to the center of national attention, I've decided to expand and extend what I had previously written.

Former *FoxNews* host Tucker Carlson is probably the biggest figure in today's fragmented media landscape and a crucial supporter of Donald Trump. But he and many others like him have strongly denounced the administration's reversal on the release of the Epstein files.

The largest youthful pro-Trump organization is called Turning Point USA, and Carlson happened to give a speech to the huge audience at their annual convention a few days after Trump's decision. He dramatically declared that not a single person he knew in DC doubted that Epstein had been running a blackmail operation on behalf of the Israeli Mossad, and despite that controversial statement his speech drew widespread cheers. This suggests that his remarks—and the positive reaction they attracted—may themselves mark “a turning point” in what had been decades of uniformly pro-Israel sentiments among American conservatives. So ideas once marginalized or considered entirely forbidden may now apparently be freely discussed, sometimes even attracting widespread support, and this may be the most important lasting legacy of the current political firestorm over the Epstein files.

#### [VIDEO LINK](#)

Indeed, given Carlson's words only the most willfully blind could fail to connect such Mossad operations with the unwavering levels of support that Israel has long enjoyed from our members of Congress. Over the last couple of years, nearly the entire rest of the world has come to regard Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as one of modern history's worst war-criminals, now under indictment by the International Court of Justice for his horrific ongoing massacre of Gaza's helpless civilians. But when he has visited Congress, the trained barking seals of that political body have provided him endless standing ovations. Obviously the money and media deployed by the Israel Lobby explain most of this behavior, but the powerful role of blackmail has almost certainly supplemented those factors.

The notion that many of our own elected officials are being ruthlessly blackmailed by a foreign power must surely outrage most patriotic Americans, and the increasing circulation of these ideas may eventually have important consequences. Just a few days after Carlson's remarkable speech, Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, one of the fiercest MAGA partisans in Congress, surprisingly joined with Democrats Reps. Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, two of her most leftwing colleagues, in voting [to cut U.S. funding for Israel](#). This resolution only attracted a handful of supporters, but small cracks in a dam sometimes presage much larger breaks.

Epstein's operation has widely been described [as a Mossad “honeypot,”](#) the term for intelligence projects that use women to ensnare prominent, unsuspecting men in sexual blackmail, but there seemed to be some puzzling aspects to this picture.

Given the enormous scale of Epstein's operation and the decades that it had remained in place, it's difficult to believe that so many wealthy, well-connected individuals could have naively fallen into his clutches. Surely the stories of all his underage girls and the rumors of his hidden cameras would have gotten around. And billionaires strongly interested in such illicit pleasures could easily have arranged these for themselves rather than risking Epstein's blackmail demands.

The answer to this puzzle is an obvious one, though I've only seen it explained by Internet provocateur Andrew Anglin, whose key explanatory phrase was "voluntary blackmail."

He pointed out that the dark, secret forces such as Mossad that control much of American politics would only lend their support to those persons whom they considered fully under their control, and powerful blackmail evidence was the surest means of establishing such control. In effect, those individuals who wanted to advance their careers or gain powerful hidden allies would knowingly use Epstein's services to create a blackmail tape of their illegal sexual activity with underage girls, thereby marking themselves as "safe" recipients of support. **He stated** all of this in his usual crude, insulting style:

So, it's definitely not a "conspiracy theory." Let's make sure we don't get lost here. The government has a lot of information on what certainly and definitely appears to be a "Mossad blackmail ring," which involved people, presumably voluntarily, allowing themselves to be recorded having sex with underage girls.

That's another point to be clear on: you would have to be retarded to do it just because you were horny. Prince Andrew appears to have actually done that, but he also appears to clearly suffer from mental retardation. Normal people who we would be talking about here would knowingly have illicit sex on video for the Mossad to keep so that powerful Jews would know they were loyal and give them promotions...

However, whenever you're talking about a "blackmail ring," you're talking pretty much exclusively about voluntary blackmail. Any kind of systematic blackmail is necessarily voluntary, as you are not going to set up a system of seducing people and tricking them into having sex on video. It has been a thing since forever that criminal gangs require someone to do some crime, such as murder, and then keep some evidence on them. It's just common sense that if you have evidence of someone committing a serious crime, or something that would otherwise destroy their life, you're going to trust them, because no such person is going to betray you.

Anglin may have regarded the point he was making as a totally obvious one, and perhaps that's correct. But I hadn't really considered it myself, nor had I seen anyone else make it in such



explicit fashion.

Over the centuries, many secret societies have similarly inducted their members with extreme initiation rituals, and the traditional mafia supposedly required its candidates to commit a murder in order to become “a made man.” As Anglin [later explained](#), the popular 1973 crime film *Serpico* was based upon real life events, and the corrupt NYC officers it portrayed required all of their colleagues to join them in taking bribes and payoffs, fearing that those who refused might eventually decide to report their illegal activities.

Ironically enough, a sentence [I’d published a decade ago](#) had made exactly that point, and I’d quoted it again in my 2019 Epstein article. But I’d never followed through on the idea nor considered its full implications:

I have sometimes joked with my friends that perhaps the best career move for an ambitious young politician would be to secretly commit some monstrous crime and then make sure that the hard evidence of his guilt ended up in the hands of certain powerful people, thereby assuring his rapid political rise.

Given that no additional Epstein documents had been released, my impression was that little if anything new had come to light in the half-dozen years since his highly suspicious death in prison, so I’d felt [my 2019 analysis](#) remained just as valid today and saw little reason to update it.

During those years, I’d paid relatively little attention to the smoldering Epstein case, and I noticed that [some pundits recently claimed](#) that researcher Ryan Dawson had uncovered some important new information, including a much more comprehensive list of the names of Epstein’s elite clients. So I watched his interview focusing on that subject:

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Unfortunately, I was rather disappointed. He revealed nothing particularly new or interesting, and this included his supposedly comprehensive list of Epstein clients.





About half the names were of individuals obscure to me, and I thought I'd already seen almost all the others mentioned in the media around the time of Epstein's arrest and death. Since Dawson claimed to have produced his list by carefully examining public documents and mainstream journalists had probably done the same at the time, this was hardly surprising.

Others [suggested to me](#) that a former mainstream media journalist named Nick Bryant had long been doing the best work on the Epstein case. Although his name was only vaguely familiar, I discovered that he'd been the one who obtained and released Epstein's black book years before the financier's arrest and death, so this seemed to confirm his important role.

I soon watched Bryant's [hour-long interview](#) with Pulitzer Prize-winning former *New York Times* reporter Chris Hedges, and was very impressed by the information that Bryant provided as well as by his level-headedness on a topic so often filled with wild claims and exaggerations. Others apparently had a similar reaction, and that Bryant interview has now been viewed a million times on YouTube:

#### [VIDEO LINK](#)

Prior to watching Bryant's discussion, I'd had the mistaken impression that Epstein's operation had often been mischaracterized as involving pedophilia and that instead virtually all of his young victims had been slightly under-age girls, generally 15, 16, or 17, recruited to voluntarily provide sexual favors in exchange for small cash payments. These girls generally came from broken homes or other vulnerable situations and Epstein was obviously cruelly exploiting them, but pedophilia seemed a wild exaggeration.

However, Bryant convincingly explained that although a large majority of those used by Epstein fell into that category, apparently a considerable number were in their early teens or even pre-teens, so claims of pedophilia seemed much more justified.

## The Franklin Scandal of the 1980s

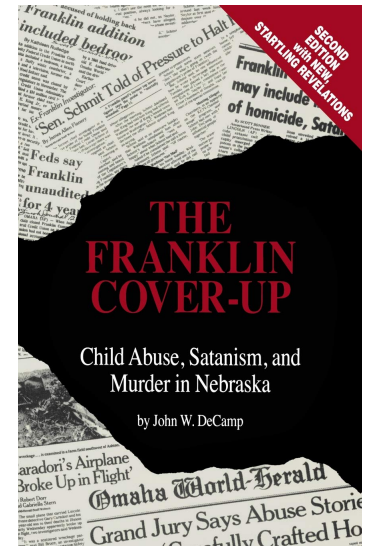
Although Bryant had done important work on the Epstein case, I think he was best known for his books on other scandals of a similar nature, notably the years of effort he had put into investigating a very similar story centered in [Omaha, Nebraska](#) of all places.



Omaha's population is just under a half-million, and I've always vaguely assumed it was a rather dull and bland Midwestern city. As a child I had sometimes watched the nature show [\*Wild Kingdom\*](#), sponsored by the [\*Mutual of Omaha\*](#) insurance company and I understood that the city was the home of Warren Buffett, with those two facts exhausting my knowledge. However, several years ago I ordered and read a book that presented Omaha in very different terms.

During the late 1980s, the national media had heavily covered accusations about the [\*Franklin child prostitution ring\*](#) centered in Omaha, but after two grand juries declared the case a hoax, the story had vanished from the headlines. John DeCamp was a conservative Republican who had served sixteen years in the Nebraska Legislature, and in 1992 he published [\*The Franklin Cover-Up\*](#), arguing that all those claims had been entirely true.

According to his account, [\*Larry King\*](#), the local black executive who ran the Franklin Credit Union and was later jailed for embezzling \$40 million in a banking fraud, had spent years supplying young boys and girls to powerful individuals all across the country, including high-ranking political figures in DC. King had procured many of his victims from [\*Boys Town\*](#), the world famous nearby orphanage, and over the years his sexual predation had led to an enormous number of complaints, but all of these had been completely ignored.



King had long been a rising black star in the Republican Party, notably singing the American national anthem at the 1984 Republican National Convention in Dallas. So when his bank collapsed in 1988 due to financial fraud, the story attracted a great deal of attention, after which some of his young alleged victims also came forward and accused him of molestation and sex-trafficking. Nebraska appointed a small legislative committee to look into those charges, with DeCamp and the other members ultimately concluding that the stories were true.

But according to DeCamp, the powerful individuals who had been part of King's pedophilia network launched a massive cover-up operation. Their efforts successfully suppressed the facts, pressured most of the victims into recanting their public testimony, and ultimately managed to have two grand juries declare the pedophilia scandal to be a hoax. DeCamp was firmly convinced otherwise, and published his book to present the contrary case. The inflammatory nature of his accusations was indicated by his subtitle: "Child Abuse, Satanism, and Murder in Nebraska."

Not only did DeCamp describe a bizarre national ring of elite pedophiles, but he claimed that its members included some of Omaha's most prominent figures. The *Omaha World-Herald* was Nebraska's dominant newspaper and its publisher and star society columnist were allegedly pedophiles, as was the chief of the Omaha police department, an important local district judge, and one of the city's billionaire businessmen. According to DeCamp, these powerful individuals

together with their national pedophile allies in DC and elsewhere had successfully covered up the Franklin Scandal, including pressuring most of the young victims into recanting their public testimony, while the main accuser who held fast was convicted of perjury in 1991 and given a long prison sentence.

If I had encountered DeCamp's story a decade or two earlier, I would surely have dismissed it as ridiculous lunacy, a QAnon-type conspiracy before its time. But in the wake of the Jeffrey Epstein revelations and credible accounts of other sex-trafficking rings, my assumed framework of reality had significantly shifted, so I read his account with an open mind. And although I thought that the pedophile conspiracy he described seemed very bizarre, certain elements of it led me to conclude that it might actually be true.

DeCamp himself hardly seemed like a crank from the fringe. As a conservative Republican he had spent many years in elected office, and he opened the book by describing his decades of close friendship with former CIA Director William Colby, stretching back to their years together in Vietnam. According to his account, he convinced Colby that the pedophile stories were probably true, but the spymaster still urged him to abandon his effort, saying that he was up against forces too powerful and too dangerous for him to face. However, DeCamp also claimed that Colby urged him to write and publish his book as an insurance policy, saying that even if it never sold a single copy, its existence would greatly reduce the likelihood that the author would meet with some sort of fatal accident.

Attempts to document the existence of the pedophile ring were certainly complicated by a number of highly-suspicious deaths. For example, DeCamp's Franklin Committee of the state legislature had retained Gary Caradori, an extremely experienced private investigator who ran a large Midwestern firm, and he succeeded in getting four of the alleged victims to testify on-camera, describing the molestations they had suffered across a dozen hours of such eye-witness video recording.

But massive pressure was brought to bear against those victims. A couple of their close family members soon died strange or violent deaths, so most of them recanted their testimony, claiming that they had been coached. With its own publisher and columnist standing accused, the *World-Herald* ran numerous front-page stories denouncing what it called a witch-hunt and claiming that the charges were part of Caradori's organized conspiracy aimed at extracting millions in lawsuit damages and perhaps making him the hero of a lucrative Hollywood movie, so the investigator soon faced the prospect of legal charges and loss of his license.

To protect his reputation, Caradori urgently sought hard evidence that the pedophilia ring had actually existed, and in 1990 he managed to track down one of the photographers employed for blackmail purposes, claiming that he had obtained a trove of the photographic evidence documenting what had happened. But as he flew his small plane back from Chicago to Omaha with the photos he had supposedly obtained, it suddenly disintegrated or exploded in mid-air, killing him and his son who had accompanied him, and his briefcase supposedly containing the photos was never located.

While the NTSB never found any evidence of sabotage or other foul play and ruled the deaths accidental, any reasonable individual would certainly be very suspicious under the circumstances. And with Caradori no longer alive to defend his work and his investigation, the grand jury declared the pedophilia conspiracy a hoax and closed the matter. Caradori and his son are numbered among the fifteen suspicious deaths of individuals associated with the Franklin Scandal that DeCamp describes in Appendix A of his book.

A powerful DC Republican lobbyist named [Craig Spence](#) had allegedly been one of Larry King's main collaborators in the national pedophile operation. In 1989 the *Washington Times* had broken the story of his homosexual prostitution and blackmail ring catering to top Republican officials in the Reagan and Bush Administrations, with Spence even sometimes demonstrating his power and influence by arranging private, midnight tours of the White House for the young call-boys whom he employed. Spence also soon departed this world, with his death ruled a suicide.

A few of those named in this supposed pedophile conspiracy hoax planned legal counter-attacks against their accusers, but their efforts sometimes proved unsuccessful. For example, the influential Omaha society columnist whom DeCamp named as an alleged pedophile began preparing a defamation lawsuit against the legislator. But he abandoned that effort after he was arrested and convicted for sex crimes involving male minors along with possession of a huge stash of child pornography.

Many of the supposed victims who provided the testimony regarding the activities of this alleged pedophile ring were hardly the best sort of witnesses, often being impoverished drug-abusers or suffering mental health problems, conditions that may or may not have been caused by years of sexual abuse. It's easy to imagine that some of their stories were greatly exaggerated or fictional, with one of the leading accusers even diagnosed as suffering from multiple-personality disorder. But after carefully reading DeCamp's text, I strongly believe that at least many of their stories were true.

In 1996 DeCamp published the second edition of his book, which added an entirely new Part II, which increased the length by more than one-third to total well over 400 pages.

At the beginning of this additional section the author mentioned that his book had already sold some 50,000 copies, a figure certainly comparable to a national bestseller. Furthermore, the year after it appeared, Britain's Yorkshire Television decided to produce *Conspiracy of Silence*, an hour-long video documentary on the Franklin Scandal for broadcast by America's Discovery Channel. The documentary team spent months on the project, interviewing many of the key participants, and according to DeCamp, they even verified those statements by extensive use of polygraph exams. Based upon the material they had put together, they believed that their project would win numerous awards.

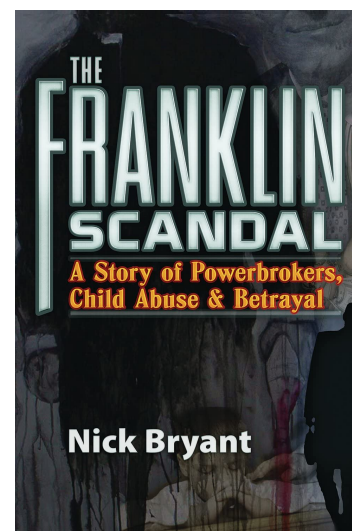
The documentary was scheduled to air nationwide on May 4, 1994 and had been listed in TV Guide, when the Discovery Channel suddenly cancelled its broadcast without explanation. According to DeCamp, major legislation regarding the Cable TV industry was then being debated in Congress, and key politicians warned the executives that if the documentary were aired the consequences to the industry might be very negative, so it was never released but the cable channel instead paid a half-million dollar kill-fee to the British producers.

A nearly completed version of the documentary was eventually leaked and may now be conveniently watched on YouTube, though the copy I located has only accrued fewer than 500 views. Given the complexity of the story and the length of DeCamp's book, this somewhat unpolished documentary version may be the most convenient means of gaining an easy introduction to the story. I certainly found the lengthy, on-camera interviews of many of the key participants quite convincing, and I think that others will have the same reaction.

#### [VIDEO LINK](#)

The publication of the DeCamp book and the British documentary together stirred up a great deal of discussion on the Internet, and a few years later this came to the attention of Nick Bryant.

Prior to his freelance writing career, Bryant had spent many years [publishing academic journal articles](#) dealing with disadvantaged children and child abuse, and he became fascinated with this story that had provoked so much popular interest while being completely shunned by the media. After ordering and reading the DeCamp book and watching a DVD of the unpolished Yorkshire Television documentary, he decided to undertake a major investigation of the issue. Originally intending to write one or more lengthy articles for national magazines, he instead ultimately devoted seven years of research to producing [The Franklin Scandal](#), first published in 2009 and running more than 600 pages, with over 100 of those containing copies of the documentation he uncovered during his research.



Having been quite impressed by Bryant's demeanor in his long interview on the Epstein case with Hedges, I ordered and carefully read his book, and found the additional material it added to the story of the Franklin Scandal quite convincing. Bryant seemed an honest and careful journalist, with several books and many academic articles to his credit, and I very much doubted that any of his material consisted of flat-out lies or deliberate deceptions. And if his statements were accurate, there seemed a near-certain likelihood that the Franklin Scandal indeed consisted of the large-scale national pedophile ring as had been claimed, with the

investigation ultimately suppressed by some of the very powerful people implicated, including those at the national political level in DC.

Much of his material was obviously parallel to that already provided in the earlier DeCamp book, though fleshed out with far greater amounts of research and also telling the detailed stories of a number of other major victims of the longstanding child trafficking operation.

Some of the items Bryant reported were quite striking. For example, at one point the local billionaire involved in the pedophilia ring and his attorneys had considered seeking immunity from prosecution from the FBI in exchange for his testimony. But according to the sworn affidavit of Sen. Loran Schmit, who chaired the Nebraska legislative committee on the Franklin Scandal, they reported that the FBI agents had rejected their offer in rather dramatic terms, telling them and their client “Keep your head down, or you’ll get it blown off, your mouth shut and talk to no one.” I assume that they told the story to Schmit and his fellow legislators in order to reduce the likelihood that the wealthy businessman might later meet with a fatal accident.

We were also told that after Gary Caradori’s light plane mysteriously exploded in mid-air, killing him and his young son, a large team of FBI agents immediately descended upon his offices with a subpoena, seizing “any and all” evidence and documentation related to the Franklin Scandal he had been investigating, along with any information regarding off-site safe deposit boxes or other storage facilities that could hold such materials. Furthermore, Caradori’s very high profile death quickly prompted many potential witnesses to decide that silence was the safest policy.

During 1990, a federal grand jury had concluded that the pedophilia ring was a “carefully crafted hoax” and sentenced one of the 21-year-old accusers to up to twenty-five years in prison for perjury. The *Omaha World-Herald* greatly trumpeted that result as a vindication and Bryant fully recognized that this verdict was a leading reason that so many people and media outlets dismissed the story. As a result, he devoted more than 100 pages to an exhaustive blow-by-blow reconstruction of the case based upon a trial transcript, explaining how the grand jury had been manipulated in that severe miscarriage of justice, and although I found his account rather dull, I also considered it reasonably convincing.

Taken as a whole, I think these two lengthy books and the British documentary make a very strong and convincing case that the claims of a massive national child prostitution ring described as the Franklin Scandal were largely true. And because that ring provided its services to many very powerful people in DC, elements of the government and the FBI were then enlisted to suppress the investigation and produce a cover-up, probably deploying lethal means to do so, just as former CIA Director William Colby had originally warned his friend John DeCamp.

## **Whitney Webb and *One Nation Under Blackmail***



When the Epstein case exploded into the national headlines during 2019, one of the young independent journalists who most heavily covered it was Whitney Webb, and I remember reading many of her long articles on that topic.

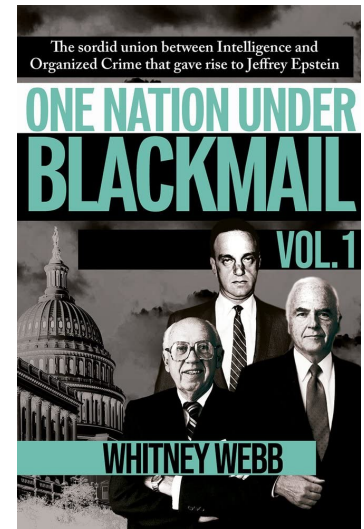
A couple of years later, she drew upon all that research together with a great deal of related material and published [One Nation Under Blackmail](#), a fairly comprehensive treatment of that general topic that became so long it was eventually released as two separate volumes, together running well over 900 pages, both of which I read immediately after their release. Her coverage included the Franklin Scandal, but given the very broad sweep of her narrative history, that particular case only rated a few pages.

Our standard political science and history textbooks describe the official nature of our American government and its constitutional system, including the important roles of political parties and a free press, perhaps sometimes even admitting that powerful lobbies and financial donations exercise an outsize influence never envisioned by our Founding Fathers. But Webb's many hundreds of pages make it unmistakably clear that at least for the last one hundred years or so, the sordid role of blackmail, often tied to organized crime or intelligence agencies, has also played an important, hidden role in our system of governance.

Given my very wide reading on that topic, the bulk of her information was already somewhat known to me, but many important elements were not, and having such an enormous amount of material all gathered together in one set represents a very useful resource, especially given the more than 3,000 reference endnotes she includes. I think her copiously documented two volume set would be an extremely useful supplement to the standard reading list of many introductory courses on U.S. government.

Although the title of Webb's set focused on blackmail, her subtitle describing the "sordid union between Intelligence and Organized Crime" probably more accurately reflects the contents. Webb's introduction focused on the activities of Jeffrey Epstein as being the factor that inspired her writing project, but she apparently decided that his story could only properly be understood within the context of earlier events of a somewhat related nature. That discussion of the origin and rise of organized crime in America became the subject of her sprawling first volume, running nearly 550 pages.

Each chapter was focused around a general topic, and these were loosely grouped in chronological order, with one of the earliest covering the appearance and rise of organized crime in the wake of Prohibition. She explained that the more sophisticated gangs and bootleggers sometimes supplemented their bribery with blackmail as a means of protecting their lucrative operations from law enforcement agencies. The Canadian Bronfman family earned vast sums by providing illicit booze to their American middlemen, and Webb suggested that they may have later sometimes protected their reputation by lethal means.

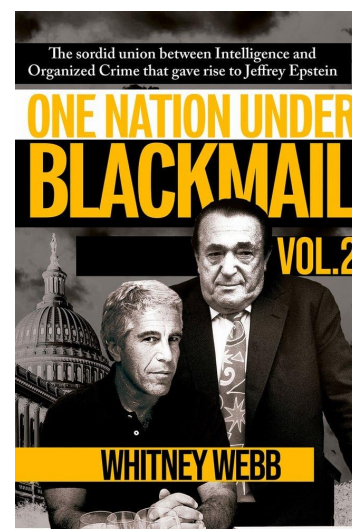


Although our heavily Jewish Hollywood had traditionally portrayed American organized crime as overwhelmingly an Italian or Sicilian phenomenon, this was actually far from accurate, and at least at its higher levels, Jewish mobsters were probably more dominant. These Jewish crime networks were obviously very experienced in breaking or circumventing laws, and Webb went on to explain the crucial role they played in the postwar creation and arming of the State of Israel.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, homosexuality was deeply reviled, and hard evidence of the closeted lives of many of our most powerful figures was sometimes used to influence or control them. Those vulnerable to these pressures certainly included J. Edgar Hoover, the decades-long head of the FBI, as well as Cardinal Francis Spellman, whose very tight control over the Catholic archdiocese of New York City made him an immensely powerful figure in our nation's largest metropolis.

During the early 1950s, Sen Joseph McCarthy's meteoric anti-Communist crusade made him one of the most powerful political figures in America, and contrary to many other researchers Webb seems to believe that his hidden sexual preferences fell into the same category, as was certainly the case with his top aide, Roy Cohn. After McCarthy's fall, Cohn went on to spend decades as one of the most powerful attorneys in NYC, with much of his influence derived from the huge quantities of blackmail he successfully harvested.

In many cases, large portfolios of mutual blackmail evidence effectively cancelled each other out. Thus, during the 1950s Hoover's files on the many mistresses of CIA Director Allen Dulles was countered by the latter's evidence of the former's homosexuality, leading to an uneasy balance of power between the top leaders of those two rival intelligence agencies.



Webb's first volume covers an enormous number of major crime and corruption scandals of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, some of which—like Iran-Contra and BCCI—received a great deal of media coverage at the time, but most of which did not.

Having devoted her first volume to what might be considered the American pre-history of the Jeffrey Epstein case, the financier and his blackmail ring became the central focus of her shorter second volume, which covered his activities in a great deal of detail, as well as those others in his close orbit such as the Maxwells and Leslie Wexner. So this is probably one of the most comprehensive such treatments currently available in print.

## **The Dark History of Sen. John McCain**

Although Webb's two-volume set on the role of blackmail in American politics covered a vast multitude of examples, most of these were relatively obscure and I was surprised that she

seemed to omit some of the most important cases.

For example, the name “John McCain” never once appeared in her sprawling 900 pages of text, and Barack Obama was only glancingly mentioned in a couple of sentences. Yet as I had emphasized in an article a couple of years ago, those two men were probably among the most severely compromised figures in modern American political history, so much so that I had characterized their 2008 battle for the White House as being a case of “mutually-assured political destruction”:

- [\*\*American Pravda: Mutually-Assured Political Destruction\*\*](#)

Ron Unz • *The Unz Review* • September 18, 2023 • 7,700 Words

In particular, Webb must surely be aware of the McCain story, which is one of the most heavily documented for any major political figure. Perhaps as a young independent journalist, she was reluctant to delve into the very troubled waters around such a powerful and important public figure, someone so greatly beloved and protected by our entire mainstream media.

But I regarded the case as such an indicative example that I had actually opened [\*\*my long 2019 Jeffrey Epstein article\*\*](#) by describing the stark contrast between McCain’s public persona as promoted by the media and the true facts found in his long career:

The death of Sen. John McCain last August revealed some important truths about the nature of our establishment media.

McCain’s family had released word of his incurable brain cancer many months earlier and his passing at age 81 was long expected, so media outlets great and small had possessed all the time necessary for producing and polishing the packages they eventually published, and that was readily apparent from the voluminous nature of the tributes that they ran. The *New York Times*, still our national newspaper of record, allocated more than three full pages of its printed edition to the primary obituary, and this was supplemented by a considerable number of other articles and sidebars. I cannot recall any political figure other than an American president whose passing had ever received such an enormous wealth of coverage, and perhaps even some former residents of the Oval Office might have fallen short of that standard. Although I certainly didn’t bother reading all of the tens of thousands of words in the *Times* or my other newspapers, the coverage of McCain’s life and career seemed exceptionally laudatory across the mainstream media, liberal and conservative alike, with scarcely a negative word appearing anywhere outside the political fringe.

On the face of it, such undiluted political love for McCain might seem a bit odd to those who have followed his activities over the last couple of decades. After all, the *Times* and most of the other leading lights of our media firmament are purportedly liberal and claim to have become vehement critics of our disastrous Iraq War and

other military adventures, let alone the calamitous possibility of an attack upon Iran. Meanwhile, McCain was universally regarded as the leading figure in America's "War Party," eagerly supporting all prospective and retrospective military endeavors with gleeful fury, and even making his chant of "Bomb, Bomb, Bomb Iran" the most widely remembered detail of his unsuccessful 2008 presidential campaign. So either our major media outlets somehow overlooked such striking differences on an absolutely central issue, or perhaps their true positions on certain matters are not exactly what they seem to be, and merely constitute elements of a Kabuki-performance aimed at deceiving their more naive readers.

Even more remarkable were the discordant facts airbrushed out of McCain's history.

As the winner of the Pulitzer Prize and two George Polk awards, the late Sydney Schanberg was widely regarded as one of the greatest American war correspondents of the twentieth century. His exploits during our ill-fated Indo-Chinese War had become the basis of the Oscar-winning film *The Killing Fields*, which probably established him as the most famous journalist in America after Woodward and Bernstein of Watergate fame, and he had also served as a top editor at *The New York Times*. A decade ago, he published [his greatest expose](#), providing [a mountain of evidence](#) that America had deliberately left behind hundreds of POWs in Vietnam and he fingered then-presidential candidate John McCain as the central figure in the subsequent official cover-up of that monstrous betrayal. The Arizona senator had traded on his national reputation as our best-known former POW to bury the story of those abandoned prisoners, permitting America's political establishment to escape serious embarrassment. As a result, Sen. McCain earned the lush rewards of our generous ruling elites, much like his own father Admiral John S. McCain, Sr., who had led the cover-up of [the deliberate 1967 Israeli attack on the U.S.S. Liberty](#), which killed or wounded over 200 American servicemen.

As publisher of *The American Conservative*, I ran Schanberg's [remarkable piece](#) as a cover story, and across several websites over the years it has surely been read many hundreds of thousands of times, including a huge spike around the time of McCain's death. I therefore find it rather difficult to believe that the many journalists investigating McCain's background might have remained unaware of this material. Yet no hints of these facts were provided in any of the articles appearing in any remotely prominent media outlet as can be verified by searching for web pages containing "McCain and Schanberg" dated around the time of the Senator's passing.

- [John McCain and the POW Cover-Up](#)

Sydney Schanberg • *The American Conservative* • May 25, 2010 • 8,200 Words

Schanberg's journalistic stature had hardly been forgotten by his former colleagues. Upon his death a couple of years ago, the *Times* ran [a very long and glowing obituary](#), and a few months later I attended the memorial tribute to his life and career held at the *New York Times* headquarters building, which included more than two hundred prominent journalists mostly from his own generation, some of the highest rank. *Times* Publisher Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. gave a speech describing how as a young man he had always so greatly admired Schanberg and had been mortified by the unfortunate circumstances of his departure from the family's newspaper. Former Executive Editor Joseph Lelyveld recounted the many years he had worked closely with the man he had long considered his closest friend and colleague, someone whom he almost seemed to regard as his older brother. But during the two hours of praise and remembrance scarcely a single word was uttered in public about the gigantic story that had occupied the last two decades of Schanberg's celebrated career.

This same blanket of media silence also enveloped the very serious accusations regarding McCain's own Vietnam War record. A few years ago, I drew upon the *Times* and other fully mainstream sources [to strongly suggest](#) that McCain's stories of his torture as a POW were probably fictional, invented to serve as a cover and an excuse for the very real record of his wartime collaboration with his Communist captors. Indeed, at the time our American media had reported his activities as one of the leading propagandists of our North Vietnamese foes, but these facts were later flushed down the memory-hole. McCain's father then ranked as one of America's top military officers, and it seems likely that his personal political intervention ensured that the official narrative of his son's wartime record was transmuted from traitor to war-hero, thereby allowing the younger McCain to later embark upon his celebrated political career.

- [John McCain: When "Tokyo Rose" Ran for President](#)

Ron Unz • *The Unz Review* • March 9, 2015 • 4,200 Words

The story of the abandoned Vietnam POWs and McCain's own Communist propaganda broadcasts hardly exhaust the catalog of the major skeletons in the late Senator's closet. McCain was regularly described by reporters as being remarkably hot-headed and having a violent temper, but the national press left it to the alternative media to investigate the real-life implications of those rather suggestive phrases.

In a September 1, 2008 *Counterpunch* expose [later published online](#), Alexander Cockburn reported that interviews with two emergency room physicians in Phoenix revealed that around the time that McCain was sucked into the political maelstrom of the Keating Five Scandal, his wife Cindy was admitted to her local hospital suffering from a black eye, facial bruises, and scratches consistent with physical



violence, and this same situation occurred two additional times over the next few years. Cockburn also noted several other highly suspicious marital incidents during the years that followed, including the Senator's wife appearing with a bandaged wrist and her arm in a sling not long after she joined her husband on the 2008 campaign trail, an injury reported by our strangely incurious political journalists as being due to "excessive hand-shaking." It's an odd situation when a tiny leftist newsletter can easily uncover facts that so totally eluded the vast resources of our entire national press corps. If there were credible reports that Melania Trump had repeatedly been admitted to local emergency rooms suffering from black eyes and facial bruises, would our corporate media have remained so uninterested in any further investigation?

McCain had first won his Arizona Congressional seat in 1982, not long after he moved into the state, with his campaign bankrolled by his father-in-law's beer-distributorship fortune, and that inheritance eventually elevated the McCain household into one of the wealthiest in the Senate. But although the Senator spent the next quarter-century in public life, even nearly upsetting George W. Bush for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination, only in late 2008 did [I learn](#) from the *Times* that the Phoenix beer-monopoly in question, then valued at around \$200 million, had accrued to a man whose lifelong business partner [Kemper Marley](#) had [long been deeply linked to organized crime](#). Indeed, close associates of that latter individual had been [convicted by a jury of the car-bomb assassination](#) of a Phoenix investigative crime reporter just a few years before McCain's sudden triumphal entrance into Arizona politics. Perhaps such guilt-by-association is improper, but would our national press-corps have remained silent if the personal fortune of our current president were only a step or two removed from the car-bomb assassins of an inquisitive journalist who died while investigating mobsters?

As I gradually became aware of these enormities casually hidden in McCain's background, my initial reaction was disbelief that someone whose record was so deeply tarnished in so many different ways could ever have reached such a pinnacle of American political power. But as the media continued to avert its eyes from these newly revealed facts, even those disclosed in the pages of the *Times* itself, I gradually began to consider matters in a different light. Perhaps McCain's elevation to great American political power was not *in spite* of the devastating facts littering his personal past, but *because* of them. As [I wrote](#) a few years ago:

Today when we consider the major countries of the world we see that in many cases the official leaders are also the leaders in actuality: Vladimir Putin calls the shots in Russia, Xi Jinping and his top Politburo colleagues do the same in China, and so forth. However, in America and in some other Western countries, this seems to be

less and less the case, with top national figures merely being attractive front-men selected for their popular appeal and their political malleability, a development that may eventually have dire consequences for the nations they lead. As an extreme example, a drunken Boris Yeltsin freely allowed the looting of Russia's entire national wealth by the handful of oligarchs who pulled his strings, and the result was the total impoverishment of the Russian people and a demographic collapse almost unprecedented in modern peacetime history.

An obvious problem with installing puppet rulers is the risk that they will attempt to cut their strings, much like Putin soon outmaneuvered and exiled his oligarch patron Boris Berezovsky. One means of minimizing such risk is to select puppets who are so deeply compromised that they can never break free, knowing that the political self-destruct charges buried deep within their pasts could easily be triggered if they sought independence. I have sometimes joked with my friends that perhaps the best career move for an ambitious young politician would be to secretly commit some monstrous crime and then make sure that the hard evidence of his guilt ended up in the hands of certain powerful people, thereby assuring his rapid political rise.

- [\*\*American Pravda: John McCain, Jeffrey Epstein, and Pizzagate\*\*](#)

*The Hidden History of John McCain*

Ron Unz • ***The Unz Review*** • July 29, 2019 • 6,400 Words

## **The Powerful Role of Blackmail in American Politics**

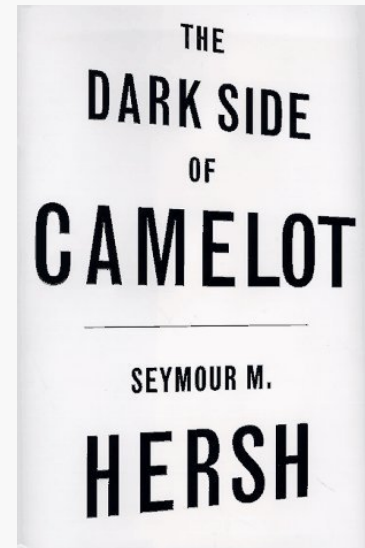
I was also quite surprised to see that Webb's two volumes never once mentioned the names of Barney Frank or Dennis Hastert, two of the most powerful members of Congress, whose stories would have fit so naturally into her central narrative. And while she included a handful of references to President Lyndon Johnson, she never provided a hint of the sexual blackmail that he had apparently employed to force himself upon John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential ticket, an achievement that subsequently elevated him to the presidency after Kennedy's 1963 assassination in Dallas.

Meanwhile, I had heavily emphasized the implications of these important historical cases [in my own 2019 article](#):

In physics, when an object deviates from its expected trajectory for inexplicable reasons, we assume that some unknown force has been at work, and tracing the record of such deviations may help to determine the characteristic properties of the latter. Over the years, I've increasingly become aware of such strange ideological deviations in public policy, and although some are readily explained, others suggest the existence of hidden forces far beneath the surface of our regular political world.

This same situation may have occurred throughout our history, and sometimes the reasons for political decisions that so baffled contemporaries eventually came to light decades later.

In *The Dark Side of Camelot*, famed investigative reporter Seymour Hersh claimed that secret blackmail evidence of JFK's extra-marital affairs probably played a crucial role in having his administration overrule the unanimous verdict of all top Pentagon advisors and award the largest military procurement contract in U.S. history to General Dynamics instead of Boeing, thereby saving the former company from likely bankruptcy and its major organized-crime shareholders from devastating financial losses. Hersh also suggests that a similar factor likely explains JFK's last-minute reversal in the choice of his Vice President, a decision that landed Lyndon Johnson on the 1960 ticket and placed him in the White House after Kennedy's 1963 assassination.



As [I recently mentioned](#), Sen. Estes Kefauver shifted the focus of his 1950s Organized Crime Hearings after the Chicago Syndicate confronted him with the photographs of his sexual encounter with two mob-supplied women. A decade later, California Attorney-General Stanley Mosk suffered much the same fate, with the facts remaining hidden for over twenty years.

Similar rumors swirl around events much farther back in history as well, sometimes with enormous consequences. [Well-placed contemporary sources](#) have claimed that Samuel Untermyer, a wealthy Jewish lawyer, purchased the secret correspondence between Woodrow Wilson and his longtime mistress, and that the existence of that powerful leverage may have been an important factor behind Wilson's astonishingly rapid rise from president of Princeton in 1910 to governor of New Jersey in 1911 to president of the United States in 1912. Once in office, Wilson signed the controversial legislation establishing the Federal Reserve system in 1913 and also named Louis Brandeis as the first Jewish member of the U.S. Supreme Court despite the public opposition of nearly our entire legal establishment. Wilson's swiftly changing views on American involvement in the First World War may also have been influenced by such personal pressures rather than solely determined by his perceptions of the national interest.

Without naming any names, since 2001 it has been difficult to avoid noticing that one of the most zealous and committed supporters of the Neocon party-line on all Middle Eastern foreign policy matters has been a leading Republican senator from one of the most socially-conservative Southern states, a man whose rumored personal inclinations have long circulated on the Internet. The strikingly-sudden reversal of this individual on a major policy question certainly supports these

suspicious. There have also been several other such examples involving prominent Republicans.

But consider the far different situation of Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, who in 1987 became the first member of the Congress to voluntarily admit that he was gay. Not long afterward, a notorious scandal erupted when [it was revealed](#) that his own DC townhouse had been used by a former boyfriend as headquarters for a male-prostitution ring. Frank claimed to have had no knowledge of that sordid situation, and his liberal Massachusetts constituents apparently accepted that excuse, since he was resoundingly reelected and went on to serve another 24 years in Congress. But surely if Frank had been a Republican from a socially-conservative district, anyone possessing such evidence would have totally controlled his political survival, and with Frank spending several years as Chairman of the very powerful House Financial Services Committee, the value of such a hold would have been enormous.

This demonstrates the undeniable reality that what constitutes effective blackmail material may vary tremendously across different eras and regions. Today, it is widely accepted that longtime FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover lived his life as a deeply-closeted homosexual and there seem to be serious claims that he also had some black ancestry, with the secret evidence of these facts probably helping to explain why for decades he stubbornly refused to admit the existence of American organized crime or focus his G-men on efforts to uproot it. But in today's America, Hoover would have proudly proclaimed his sexuality and racial ancestry in a *New York Times Magazine* cover-story, rightly believing that they greatly enhanced his political invulnerability on the national stage. There are lurid rumors that the Syndicate possessed secret photos of Hoover wearing a dress and high-heels, but just a few years ago Rep. Mike Honda of San Jose [desperately placed](#) his eight-year-old transgendered grand-daughter front-and-center in his unsuccessful attempt to win reelection.

The decades have certainly softened the effectiveness of many forms of blackmail, but pedophilia still ranks as an extremely powerful taboo. There seems to be a great deal of evidence that powerful organizations and individuals have successfully managed to suppress credible accusations of that practice for very long periods of time unless some group with substantial media influence chose to target the offenders for unmasking.

The most obvious example is the Catholic Church, and the failings of its American and international hierarchy in that regard have regularly made the front pages of our leading newspapers. But until the early 2000s and the breakthrough reporting of the *Boston Globe* as recounted in the Oscar-winning film *Spotlight*, the Church had routinely fended off such scandals.

Consider also the remarkable case of British television personality [Sir Jimmy Savile](#), one of his country's most admired celebrities, eventually knighted for his public service. Only shortly after his death at age 84 did the press begin revealing that he had probably molested many hundreds of children during his long career. Accusations by his young victims had stretched back across forty years, but his criminal activities had seemingly been protected by his wealth and celebrity, along with his numerous supporters in the media.

There is also the intriguing example of Dennis Hastert. As the longest serving Republican Speaker of the House in U.S. history, holding office during 1999-2007, Hastert was third in line to the Presidency and even ranked as our nation's top Republican elected official during some of that period. Based upon my newspaper readings, he had always struck me as a rather bland and ordinary individual, with journalists sometimes even strongly hinting at his mediocrity, so that I occasionally wondered just how someone so unimpressive could have risen to such extremely high national office.

Then a few years ago, he was suddenly thrust back into the headlines, arrested by the FBI and charged with financial crimes relating to what apparently had been his past history of abusing young boys, at least one of whom had committed suicide and with the federal judge who sent him to prison [denouncing him as "a serial child molester" at sentencing](#). Perhaps I've led an overly sheltered life, but my impression is that only a tiny sliver of Americans have had a long record of child molestation, and all things being equal, it seems rather unlikely that someone of such a background but who possesses no other great talents or skills would rise to near the absolute top of our political heap. So perhaps not all things were otherwise equal. If some powerful elements held the hard evidence that placed a particular elected official under their total control, making great efforts to elevate him to Speaker of the House would be a very shrewd investment.

At times the unwillingness of our national media to see major stories in front of their very noses reaches ridiculous extremes. During the summer of 2007, the Internet was ablaze with claims that Sen. John Edwards, a runner-up in the 2004 Democratic presidential primaries, had just fathered a child with his mistress, and those reports were backed by seemingly-credible visual evidence, including photos showing the married senator holding his new-born baby. Yet as the days and even the weeks went by, not a whiff of this salacious scandal ever reached the pages of any of my morning newspapers or the rest of the mainstream media although it was a top conversation topic everywhere else. Eventually, the *National Enquirer*, a notorious gossip tabloid, scored [a journalistic first](#), by receiving a Pulitzer Prize nomination for breaking the story that no other outlet seemed willing to cover. Would our media have similarly averted its eyes from a newborn baby Trump coming from the wrong side of the bed?

Over the years, it has become increasingly obvious to me that nearly all elements of



our national media had quite often been willing to enlist in a “conspiracy of silence” to minimize or entirely ignore stories of major public importance and tremendous potential interest to their readership. I could easily have doubled or tripled the number of such notable examples I provided above without much effort. Moreover, it is quite intriguing that so many of these cases involve the sort of criminal or sexual misbehavior that would be ideally suited for blackmailing powerful individuals who are less likely to be vulnerable to other influences. So perhaps many of the elected officials situated at the top of our democratic system merely reign as political puppets, dancing to invisible strings.

- [\*\*American Pravda: John McCain, Jeffrey Epstein, and Pizzagate\*\*](#)

*The Role of Blackmail in Politics*

Ron Unz • **The Unz Review** • July 29, 2019 • 6,400 Words

## **The Suppressed Pedophilia Scandal of Pizzagate**

I was much less surprised that Webb’s two volumes omitted any mention of [\*\*Pizzagate\*\*](#), perhaps the most shocking and heavily suppressed sexual scandal of recent decades, so touchy a topic that even few alternative journalists have ever been willing to discuss it.

But a couple of weeks ago Tucker Carlson interviewed Darryl Cooper for nearly three hours on the Jeffrey Epstein story, and to their tremendous credit, the last portion of that show discussed the Pizzagate Scandal in considerable detail. I think this may have been one of the very rare times that shocking story had been brought before a national audience since 2016.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

[\*\*The final section\*\*](#) of my own 2019 article had similarly been devoted to Pizzagate:

When one seemingly implausible pedophilia scandal has suddenly jumped from obscure corners of the Internet to the front pages of our leading newspapers, we must naturally begin to wonder whether others might not eventually do the same. And a very likely candidate comes to mind, one that seemed to me far better documented than the vague accusations being thrown about over the last few years against a wealthy financier once given a thirteen-month jail sentence in Florida a decade earlier.

I don’t use Social Media myself, but near the end of the 2016 presidential campaign, I gradually began seeing more and more Trump supporters referring to something called “Pizzagate,” a burgeoning sexual scandal that they claimed would bring down Hillary Clinton and many of the top leaders of her party, with the

chatter actually increasing after Trump was elected. As near as I could tell, the whole bizarre theory had grown up on the far-right fringe of the Internet, with the utterly fantastical plot having something to do with stolen secret emails, DC pizza parlors, and a ring of pedophiles situated near the top of the Democratic Party. But given all the other strange and unlikely things I'd gradually discovered about our history, it didn't seem like something I could necessarily dismiss out of hand.

At the beginning of December, a right-wing blogger produced a lengthy exposition of the Pizzagate charges, which finally gave me some understanding of what was actually under discussion, and I soon made arrangements to republish his article. It quickly attracted a great deal of interest, and some websites pointed to it as the best single introduction to the scandal for a general audience.

- [Pizzagate](#)

Aedon Cassiel • *The Unz Review* • December 2, 2016 • 3,100 Words

A couple of weeks later, I republished an additional article by the same writer, describing a long list of previous pedophilia scandals that had occurred in elite American and European political circles. Although many of these seemed to be solidly documented, nearly all of them had received minimal coverage by our mainstream media outlets. And if such political pedophile rings had existed in the relatively recent past, was it so totally implausible that there might be another one simmering beneath the surface of today's Washington DC?

- [Precedents for Pizzagate](#)

Aedon Cassiel • *The Unz Review* • December 23, 2016 • 6,200 Words

Those interested in the details of the Pizzagate Hypothesis are advised to read these articles, especially the first one, but I might as well provide a brief summary.

John Podesta had been a longtime fixture in DC political circles, becoming chief of staff to President Bill Clinton in 1998, and afterward remaining one of the most powerful figures in the Democratic Party establishment. While serving as chairman of Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, his apparent carelessness with the password security of his Gmail account allowed it to easily be hacked, and tens of thousands of his personal emails were soon published on WikiLeaks. A swarm of young anti-Clinton activists began scouring this treasure-trove of semi-confidential information, seeking evidence of mundane bribery and corruption, but instead they came across some quite odd exchanges, seemingly written in coded language.

Now use of coded language in a supposedly secure private email account raises all sorts of natural suspicions regarding what might have been under discussion, with the most likely possibilities being illegal drugs or sex. But most of the references didn't seem to fit the former category, and in our remarkably libertine era, in which political candidates compete for the right to be Grand Marshal at an annual Gay

Pride Parade, one of the few sexual activities still discussed only in whispers would seem to be pedophilia, with some of the very strange remarks possibly hinting at this.

The researchers also soon discovered that his brother Tony Podesta, one of the wealthiest and most successful lobbyists in DC, had extremely odd tastes in art. Major items of his very extensive personal collection seemed to represent tortured or murdered bodies, and one of his favorite artists was best known for paintings depicting young children being held captive, lying dead, or suffering under severe distress. Such peculiar artwork obviously isn't illegal, but it might naturally arouse some suspicions. And oddly enough, arch-Democrat Podesta had long been a close personal friend of former Republican House Speaker and convicted child-molester Dennis Hastert, welcoming him back into DC society after his release from prison.

Furthermore, some of the rather suspiciously-worded Podesta emails referred to events held at a local DC pizza parlor, greatly favored by the Democratic Party elite, whose owner was the gay former boyfriend of David Brock, a leading Democratic activist. The public Instagram account of that pizza-entrepreneur apparently contained numerous images of young children, sometimes tied or bound, with those images frequently labeled by hashtags using the traditional gay slang for underage sexual targets. Some photos showed the fellow wearing a tee-shirt bearing the statement "I Love Children" in French, and by a very odd coincidence, his possibly assumed name was phonetically identical to that very same French phrase, thus proclaiming to the world that he was "a lover of children." Closely connected Instagram accounts also included pictures of young children, sometimes shown amid piles of high-value currency, with queries about how much those particular children might be worth. None of this seemed illegal, but surely any reasonable person would regard the material as extremely suspicious.

DC is sometimes described as "Powertown," being the location of the individuals who make America's laws and govern our society, with local political journalists being closely attuned to the relative status of such individuals. And oddly enough, *GQ Magazine* had ranked that gay pizza parlor owner with a strange focus on young children as being **[one of the 50 most powerful people](#)** in our national capital, placing him far ahead of many Cabinet members, Senators, Congressional Chairmen, Supreme Court justices, and top lobbyists. Was his pizza really that delicious?

These few paragraphs provide merely a sliver of the large quantity of highly-suspicious material surrounding various powerful figures at the apex of the DC political world. A vast cloud of billowing smoke is certainly no proof of any fire, but only a fool would completely ignore it without attempting further investigation.

I usually regard videos as a poor means of imparting serious information, being far less effective and meaningful than the simple printed word. But the overwhelming

bulk of the evidence supporting the Pizzagate Hypothesis consists of visual images and screen shots, and these are naturally suited to a video presentation.

Some of the best summaries of the Pizzagate case were produced by a young British YouTuber named Tara McCarthy, whose work was published under the name of “Reality Calls,” and her videos were viewed hundreds of thousands of times. Although her channel was eventually banned and her videos purged, copies were later reloaded to other accounts, both on YouTube and BitChute. Some of the evidence she presents seemed rather innocuous or speculative to me and other elements were probably based upon her unfamiliarity with American society and culture. But a great deal of extremely suspicious material remains, and I would suggest that people watch the videos and decide for themselves.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Around the same time that I first became familiar with the details of the Pizzagate controversy, the topic also started reaching the pages of my morning newspapers, but in a rather strange manner. Political stories began giving a sentence or two to the “Pizzagate hoax,” describing it as a ridiculous right-wing “conspiracy theory” but excluding all relevant details. I had an eerie feeling that some unseen hand had suddenly flipped a switch causing the entire mainstream media to begin displaying identical brightly flashing neon signs declaring “Pizzagate Is False—Nothing To See There!” I couldn’t recall any previous example of such a strange media reaction to some obscure Internet controversy.

Articles in the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* also suddenly appeared denouncing the entirety of the alternative media—Left, Right, and Libertarian—as **[“fake news” websites promoting Russian propaganda](#)**, while urging that their content be blocked by all patriotic Internet giants such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Prior to that moment, I’d never even heard the term “fake news” but suddenly it was ubiquitous across the media, once again almost as if some unseen hand had suddenly flipped a switch.

I naturally began to wonder whether the timing of these two strange developments was entirely coincidental. Perhaps Pizzagate was indeed true and struck so deeply at the core of our hugely corrupted political system that the media efforts to suppress it were approaching the point of hysteria.

Not long afterward, Tara McCarthy’s detailed Pizzagate videos were purged from YouTube. This was among the very first instances of video content being banned despite fully conforming to all existing YouTube guidelines, another deeply suspicious development.

I also noticed that mere mention of Pizzagate had become politically lethal. Donald Trump had selected Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, as his National Security Advisor, and Flynn's son served as the latter's chief of staff. The younger Flynn happened to Tweet out a couple of links to Pizzagate stories, pointing out that the accusations hadn't yet been actually investigated let alone disproven, and very soon afterward, [he was purged](#) from the Trump transition team, foreshadowing his father's fall a few weeks later. It seemed astonishing to me that a few simple Tweets about an Internet controversy could have such huge real-life impact near the very top of our government.

The media continued its uniform drumbeat of "Pizzagate Has Been Disproven!" but we were never told how or by whom, and I was not the only individual to notice the hollowness of such denunciations. An award-winning investigative journalist named Ben Swann at a CBS station in Atlanta broadcast a short television segment summarizing the Pizzagate controversy and noting that contrary to widespread media claims, Pizzagate had neither been investigated nor debunked. [Swann was almost immediately purged by CBS](#) but a copy of his television segment remains available for viewing on the Internet.



There is an old wartime proverb that enemy flak is always heaviest over the most important target, and the remarkably ferocious wave of attacks and censorship against anyone broaching the subject of Pizzagate seems to raise obvious dark suspicions. Indeed, the simultaneous waves of attacks against all alternative media outlets as "Russian propaganda outlets" laid the basis for the continuing regime of Social Media censorship that has become a central aspect of today's world.

Pizzagate may or may not turn out to be true, but the ongoing Internet crackdown has similarly engulfed topics of a somewhat similar nature but with vastly stronger



documentation. Although I don't use Twitter myself, I encountered the obvious implications of this new censorship policy following McCain's death last August. The senator had died on a Saturday afternoon, and readership of Sydney Schanberg's long 2008 expose quickly exploded, with numerous individuals Tweeting out the story and a large fraction of our incoming traffic therefore coming from Twitter. This continued until the following morning, at which point the huge flood of Tweets continued to grow, but all incoming Twitter traffic suddenly and permanently vanished, presumably because "shadow banning" had rendered those Tweets invisible. My own article on McCain's very doubtful war record simultaneously suffered the same fate, as did numerous other articles of a controversial nature that we published later that same week.

Perhaps that censorship decision was made by some ignorant young intern at Twitter, casually choosing to ban as "hate speech" or "fake news" a massively-documented 8,400 word expose by one of America's most distinguished journalists, a Pulitzer-prize winning former top editor at *The New York Times*.

Or perhaps certain political-puppeteers who had spent decades controlling that late Arizona senator sought to ensure that their political puppet-strings remained invisible even after his death.

- [\*\*American Pravda: John McCain, Jeffrey Epstein, and Pizzagate\*\*](#)

*The Massive Suppression of Pizzagate*

Ron Unz • ***The Unz Review*** • July 29, 2019 • 6,400 Words

There's one final point regarding political blackmail that I've only rarely seen mentioned. Even if blackmail operations are successful at gathering powerful dirt, they can only become effective if those behind the effort also control or influence a significant portion of the media. Facts and evidence themselves are almost useless unless they are combined with a sufficiently powerful distribution channel to promote and publicize them. Thus blackmail operations and media control are intimately connected.

Consider, for example, Sydney Schanberg's devastating expose of John McCain. Despite the enormity of the charges and mountain of evidence assembled by a leading, Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist, the story had absolutely no impact whatsoever on McCain because the media refused to cover it.

Similarly, the Hunter Biden laptop scandal during the 2020 presidential election was totally ignored or dismissed by almost all media outlets, and massively censored by the Tech giants of social media. So a story that probably would have produced a Trump reelection landslide was successfully kept away from almost all swing voters.

During the early 1960s, the American mainstream media carefully ignored the massive evidence of Lyndon Johnson's corruption and criminality until President Kennedy decided to destroy his vice president and drop him from the ticket. Once the Kennedys gave the media a green light and deployed their influence to encourage such coverage, *Life Magazine* produced a massive expose, which was scrapped and suppressed when Kennedy's assassination suddenly put Johnson in the White House, drastically changing the calculus of media influence.

Thus, effective blackmail operations implicitly rely upon access to media power. The close connection between media control and blackmail activity provides an important clue as to the identity of those running the latter operations.

### **Related Reading:**

- [Bibliography](#)
- [American Pravda: John McCain, Jeffrey Epstein, and Pizzagate](#)
- [How Israel Killed the Kennedys](#)
- [John McCain and the POW Cover-Up](#) by Sydney Schanberg
- [John McCain: When "Tokyo Rose" Ran for President](#)
- [Pizzagate](#) by Aedon Cassiel
- [American Pravda: Mutually-Assured Political Destruction](#)