

FBI redacted Trump’s name in Epstein files for privacy

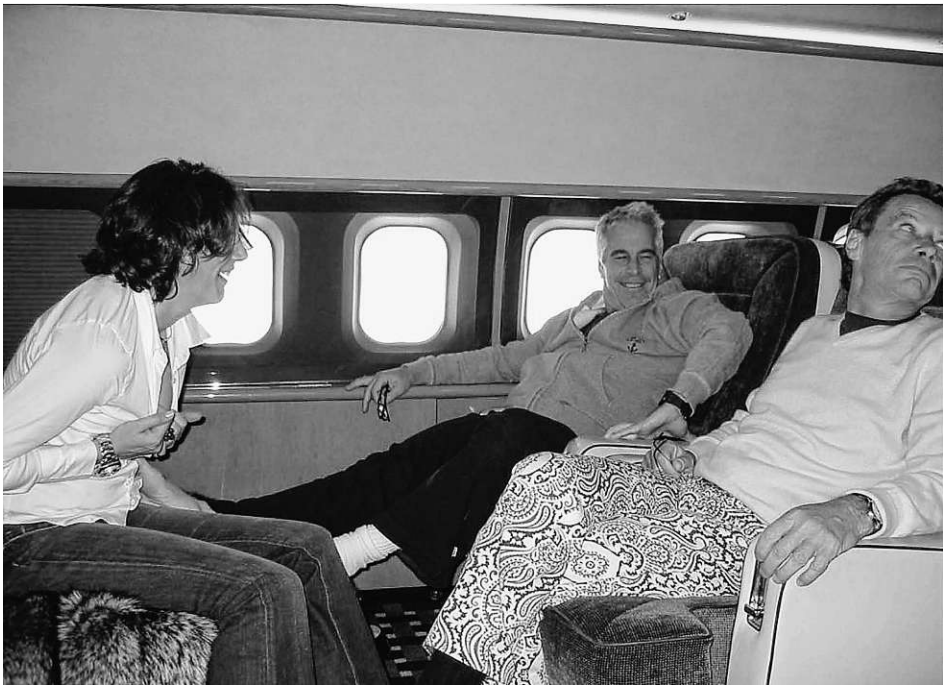
BY JASON LEOPOLD
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The Federal Bureau of Investigation redacted President Donald Trump’s name and those of other high-profile individuals from government files related to Jeffrey Epstein, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The redactions were made by a team of FBI employees tasked with reviewing the Epstein files for potential public release. The names were withheld under privacy protections because those individuals, including Trump, were private citizens when the federal investigation into Epstein began in 2006, the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The appearance of a person’s name in the documents does not indicate they were under investigation or even accused of wrongdoing.

The review was part of a broader effort sparked by Trump’s campaign promise to “declassify” files related to Epstein, which his MAGA base has long requested. In March, FBI



The U.S. attorney’s office released images during the trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, left, who was convicted on federal charges relating to accusations in the sexual exploitation of girls with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, middle. At right is Jean-Luc Brunel.

Director Kash Patel directed his special agents from the New York and Washington field offices to join the bureau’s FOIA employees at the agency’s sprawling Central Records Complex in Winchester, Virginia, and another building a few miles away.

Responding to public pressure, FBI personnel were instructed to search

for and review every single Epstein-related document and determine what could be released. That included a mountain of material accumulated by the FBI over nearly two decades, including grand jury testimony, prosecutors’ case files, as well as tens of thousands of pages of the bureau’s own investigative files on Ep-

stein.

It was a herculean task that involved as many as 1,000 FBI agents and other personnel pulling all-nighters while poring through more than 100,000 documents, according to a July letter from Sen. Dick Durbin to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The employees re-

viewed the records using the Freedom of Information Act as their guide for deciding what information should be withheld. That alone isn’t uncommon. In the FOIA, Congress established nine exemptions as a way to balance the public’s right to know against the government’s need to protect sensitive interests, such as national security, official deliberations, ongoing law enforcement proceedings or privacy. When such competing interests arise in non-FOIA matters, those exemptions are often applied even if the exact language set forth in the FOIA statute doesn’t appear in the final record.

While reviewing the Epstein files, FBI personnel identified numerous references to Trump in the documents, the people familiar with the matter said. Dozens of other high-profile public figures also appeared, the people said.

In preparation for potential public release, the documents then went to a unit of FOIA officers who applied redactions in accordance with the nine exemptions. The people familiar with the matter said that Trump’s name, along with other high-

profile individuals, was blacked out because he was a private citizen when the federal investigation of Epstein was launched in 2006.

Last month, the DOJ and the FBI concluded that “no further disclosure” of the files “would be appropriate or warranted.”

Epstein avoided federal sex-trafficking charges in 2008 when he agreed to plead guilty to state charges in Florida for soliciting prostitution. In July 2019, following an investigation by the Miami Herald that also scrutinized the integrity of the government’s probe, Epstein was indicted on federal charges of sex trafficking of minors. A month later, he died by suicide in his jail cell, federal law enforcement authorities said, while awaiting trial.

A White House spokesperson would not respond to questions about the redactions of Trump’s name, instead referring queries to the FBI. The FBI declined to comment. The Justice Department did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

In a statement Friday after Bloomberg first reported the redactions, Durbin said that Trump “has the power to unilaterally help fix this by consenting to the release of his name in the files to the public to fulfill the promises of Attorney General Bondi that the public would see the ‘full Epstein files.’ ”

FROM PAGE 1A

TRUMP

goods-trade surpluses with the U.S.

Some of those were expected, such as a 25% levy on Indian exports that Trump announced this week on social media. Others included charges of 20% on Taiwanese products and 30% on South African goods. Thailand and Cambodia, two countries that were said to have struck a last-minute deal, received a 19% duty.

Other details are still forthcoming, including so-called “rules of origin” to decide which products are transshipped, or routed through another country, and thus would face higher rates, a senior U.S.

official said. A decision will be made in the coming weeks, according to the official.

In a separate order, Trump followed through on his threat to hike tariffs on exports from Canada, one of the U.S.’s largest trading partners, from 25%. That change excludes goods that are covered under the North American trade pact he negotiated in his first term.

That stood in contrast to the 90-day extension Mexico received to negotiate a better agreement.

The lower 10% rates are expected to apply to a wide range of mostly

smaller- and medium-sized economies that Trump showed little interest in bargaining with.

The senior U.S. official said there is no date yet when revised auto tariff rates would be implemented. Trump has announced deals with the European Union, Japan and South Korea to lower duties on their vehicle exports to 15% from the general rate of 25%.

One big exception from this week’s deadline is China, which faces an Aug. 12 deadline for its tariff truce with the U.S. to expire. The Trump administration has signaled that is likely to be extended. No final decision has been made but the recent U.S.-China talks in Stockholm were positive, the official said.

FROM PAGE 1A

VOTERS

Sedgwick County election office or drop it at one of the county’s drop-off boxes.

Here’s a list of drop boxes in Sedgwick County open this primary election:

- Wichita Public Library Alford Branch, 3447 S. Meridian
- Maize City Hall, 10100 W. Grady
- Park City City Hall, 1941 E. 61st St. North
- Edgemoor Park Recreation Center, 5815 E. Ninth St.
- Orchard Park Recreation Center, 4808 W. Ninth St.
- Linwood Park Recreation Center, 1901

S. Kansas

- Sedgwick County Courthouse, 525 N. Main

HOW DO I FIND MY ELECTION DAY POLLING PLACE?

If you’re waiting until Election Day to vote, be sure to check ahead of time to see where your designated polling place is located.

You can do so by entering your first and last name and date of birth in the Kansas Secretary of State’s VoterView website. From there, you can see your up-to-date voter registration, your polling

place for the next election and a sample ballot.

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday.

WHAT’S THE WEATHER FORECAST ON ELECTION DAY?

The National Weather Service’s forecast for Wichita shows a sunny day with a high of around 89 degrees on Tuesday.

WHERE CAN I FIND CANDIDATE INFORMATION?

The Eagle’s stories on all the races on the ballot can be found on our website at <https://www.kansas.com/news/politics-government/election>.

You can also follow The Eagle’s comprehensive coverage of the primary election there Tuesday night.

FROM PAGE 3A

HOUSING

cremental development, such as residents adding smaller units to their existing homes.

Building permit data suggests that Wichita has already been trending in a Strong Towns-friendly direction, which prioritizes adding housing to the urban core over sprawling suburbs. Most home building still takes place in the city’s suburban-like ZIP codes, but building there has dropped significantly in most places.

While more additions would help, Longhofer said cheap land limits the Strong Town’s approach in Wichita.

“You don’t want to discourage that sort of thing,” he said. “But where that makes the most sense is in communities where land values are incredibly high.”

There’s also a downside to letting neighborhoods become too diverse in housing styles. Too many inconsistencies can undercut a neighborhood’s home values and stability over time, Longhofer said.

“When we complain about NIMBYism – which I’m a big complainer of NIMBYism – we do actually have to recognize there are reasons it came about, and that’s one of the pieces that is at tension with the proposals that he (Marohn) had,” Longhofer

said.

Indeed, officials such as Labrum, the director of the building department, see a place for zoning restrictions at a time when they’re being rolled back in other places.

In 2009, the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, began a series of policy changes to promote housing that culminated with it becoming the first major U.S. city to stop limiting certain residential areas to single-family homes. Montana is pursuing its own regulatory changes to create the conditions for more housing to be developed to meet high demand and stave off rapidly rising housing costs.

Labrum worries though that too little zoning could be a legal nightmare. Accessory dwelling units can be great when done right, but what happens when they are not?

“I get nervous when we talk about just removing restrictions, but I really support and want to do those things,” Labrum said.

FILLING THE MISSING MIDDLE

No one foresees a population boom on Wichita’s horizon. But Longhofer said two other trends can increase housing demand in a slow-growing city.

“One of them is that



The home that Natalie and Alex Beauchamp bought needs work, but Alex says he’s grateful that they found it.

average household size continues to decrease over decades,” he said.

Between the 2000 and 2020 censuses, Longhofer noted, the average household size declined from about 2.6 people per household to about 2.5.

“That doesn’t sound like a big difference,” Longhofer said, but the change means you need more structures to house the same amount of peo-

ple.

“The other thing that people often fail to take into account is the obsolescence of older housing stock,” Longhofer said.

But developers haven’t been building new units to replace deteriorating or aging housing. When new-home construction flatlined as an outgrowth of the 2008 financial crisis, it left a gap in housing supply that Wichita is

having trouble re-stocking. Right now, it’s very difficult for a new-home builder to construct something that sells for less than \$350,000.

“The least expensive of the new-home market that’s being built often ends up becoming the middle-market, existing home five, 10, 15 years later,” Longhofer said.

To fill the missing middle, the community will have to get a housing product built that wasn’t constructed the first time around, as it was in the past.

“When we think about the housing challenges that we have now, especially in the middle-market homes, it’s the homes that we didn’t build – from about 2008 to at least 2015, but even going closer to 2020 – it’s those homes that we weren’t building,” Longhofer said. “Those would be those middle-market homes that are not available in the existing home market now.”

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Feeling the pressure to find a new place to settle into in Wichita, the Beauchamps initially settled on a house that needed a layout change. They kept looking, though, just in case it fell through. Then, they toured a three-bed, two-and-a-half-bath house on a quiet east Wichita cul-de-sac.

In late May, it became their home.

The house had been on the market for 78 days, more than double the average listing length in Wichita. Built in 1992, its previous owners listed it for \$249,000 – more than \$50,000 over its taxed value.

The Beauchamps purchased it for \$230,000, unfazed by the bright blue facade that may have chased off other buyers. It’s not their favorite color either. But Natalie Beauchamp said they’ll repaint it. The property is also missing a fence for the dog that Alex Beauchamp hopes to eventually have. The basement spaces need work. New kitchen cabinets could be in order.

But they’ve crossed a threshold so many in this city haven’t. It’s a change that, even among the packing of boxes and moving of dressers, Alex Beauchamp felt grateful for.

“It’s surreal,” he said. “Like when you walk outside and look around at a beautiful sunset.”

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