

Ghislaine Maxwell 'scapegoated' for crimes of Jeffrey Epstein, claims her brother

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Maxwell a 'scapegoat' for Epstein, her brother claims

Ghislaine Maxwell has been "scapegoated" for the crimes of her ex-boyfriend Jeffrey Epstein and "was not given a fair trial", her brother has told Sky News.

The British former socialite was this week found guilty of recruiting underage girls to be sexually abused by Epstein, who killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

Ian Maxwell described himself as "angry" at the "flawed" trial his sister had faced and said her guilty verdict was a "tremendous blow and disappointment". "Without doubt she made a terrible, terrible judgement about Jeffrey Epstein - but that is not a crime," he told Sky News.

Mr Maxwell added Ghislaine "must obviously profoundly regret that relationship" with Epstein. He insisted he was not blaming the victims, or gaslighting them, and that he "damn well" had "empathy" for the women.

"Why would I do that... they clearly had a terrible experience," he said.

"I accept that these accusers were victims of Jeffrey Epstein. What I do not accept is that they were victims of Ghislaine Maxwell."

Mr Maxwell also played down the prospect of his sister "flipping" to now help prosecutors, as has been speculated she might. "We know, because the prosecution has said, that they have never made her any offer and she has never made them any offer," he said. "I don't think that's going to change. I don't know what Ghislaine has to say about anyone else. Her position is that she did not participate or was aware of these terrible activities.

"So her logical position must be that's to be continued, and therefore why is she suddenly going to start producing names and who knows what? So I don't think that's going to happen."

Confirming his family's intent to appeal Ghislaine's verdict, Mr Maxwell predicted their efforts would be successful and his sister would be "vindicated".

"The man who was not on trial and should have been on trial - but escaped the ability of the prosecution to put him on trial because they lost him on their watch, which everyone has conveniently forgotten about - could not be tried," he said of Epstein.

"And therefore they had to find someone who could be tried. They chose Ghislaine Maxwell. They were perfectly entitled to do that. "But the position the defence has taken - and that I continue to take - is that she was scapegoated in a process that was flawed from the start and she was not given a fair trial and she has not had justice."

Mr Maxwell described himself as a "rational man" and said he was "very far from deluded", but added there was "another side to the story". "That story is that you cannot have a trial where the defence and the defendant have their hands tied behind their backs," he said.

"Quite literally - Ghislaine has been shackled into court, out of court, for 18 months.

"Shackled physically, shackled mentally, shackled in every possible way, whilst everyone has been shooting at her from the sides. She's had no capacity to shoot back."

Mr Maxwell suggested that Ghislaine might be in danger in jail, while he also claimed her treatment while in pre-trial custody meant she did not have the ability to properly consider taking the stand in court in her own defence.

"Ghislaine had to think, 'I might be here for six days or seven days... and then having a very, very fierce cross-examination'," he said.

"And I'm eating one piece of cheese a day, one apple and some water. And I'm having light shone in my eyes every 15 minutes throughout the trial, throughout the night'.

"How are you supposed to take the stand in your defence and be sharp as a tack and able to deal with this in those circumstances?"

"That's why I'm saying the process was flawed. It was designed to break her, it broke her."

Ghislaine's guilty verdict came before a civil lawsuit against Prince Andrew is due to be considered by judges in the US next week.

Virginia Giuffre, formerly Virginia Roberts, has accused the Queen's second son of forcing her to have sex more than two decades ago when she was under 18 at the London home of Ghislaine, and abusing her at two of Epstein's homes.

Mr Maxwell said Andrew had been "very mistaken" to conduct a 2019 TV interview about the accusations against him, and said the Duke of York had not "helped himself". But he added that Andrew had "really suffered" by having been "completely cancelled in his official role" as a member of the Royal Family.

"He's entitled to be believed and let's see how that turns out," Mr Maxwell said.