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My sister Ghislaine was denied justice

The whole system was designed to convict, not to find the truth

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There is a cartoon doing the rounds this week that shows two women having a drink. One says to the other 'My dream is to travel back in time'. Her friend replies 'Just book a ticket to the USA'. No doubt the cartoonist had in mind the topical issues of the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe vs Wade and its striking down New York's law requiring 'proper cause' to carry guns in public.

But it could equally apply to a federal court's decision this week to impose a 20-year sentence of imprisonment on a 60-year-old woman, my sister Ghislaine. This cruel sentence arises from her conviction at trial six months ago and follows two years of incarceration in the medieval Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn.

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Based on a manifestly flawed judicial process, the sentence is a genuflection by a politically appointed judge to a mob whipped up by an embarrassed attorney general, William Barr, who was denied Epstein when he died on his watch. Following his death, Ghislaine became a replacement for Epstein.

The conviction and sentence will be the subject of appeal to an independent tribunal where it can only be hoped that a more dispassionate consideration of the many legal issues the defence has contested throughout this case will find a more sympathetic ear. The evidence is clear that Ghislaine believed herself to be free of guilt. Had she even suspected that she might be arrested she would have fled beyond the reach of the US legal system to France, of which she is a citizen, from where she would have fought to clear her name.

Her good reputation was eviscerated following her arrest in a TV spectacular, a

press conference organised by the FBI and Barr's Department of Justice. Denied bail, it left my sister guilty in the eyes of the world months before the trial itself began.

The judicial process that followed had one objective and that was to convict her. Professional accusers, who have made millions of dollars, were allowed free rein to make vicious statements that would have been struck down for contempt of court in the UK. Significant exculpatory evidence was excluded from presentation to the jury as one pre-trial defence motion after another was denied. Highly contentious judicial directions to the jury during the trial itself were proceeded with despite strenuous defence objections. We also know of course that at least one juror, by his own admission, lied on the jury form and improperly swayed a hung jury in favour of conviction. Granted immunity from prosecution in the subsequent inquiry, he could say whatever he wanted to paint his unworthy actions in a favourable light.

The whole process stinks from beginning to end; Barr's victimisation of Ghislaine would not be tolerated in Britain. Huge sums of money are involved. Victims of Epstein have shared more than \$125 million (£100 million), herded along by a connected coterie of lawyers who have scooped at least \$60 million (£50 million). The accusers who appeared at Ghislaine's trial received \$13.5 million (£11 million) but her principal accuser Virginia Giuffre, who did so much to sway global public opinion against Ghislaine, has never had her credibility nor her unsubstantiated accusations tested in court.

What Ghislaine said about Jeffery Epstein in her statement at her sentencing applies equally to my sister: 'the impact on all those who were close to him has been devastating. And today, those who even knew him briefly or never met him but were associated with someone who did have lost relationships, jobs, and had their lives derailed'. We, her family, will never stop fighting for justice and I believe that eventually Ghislaine will get her life back through proper due process that so far she has been denied.

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