

UNSEALED

The Reputation Machine

Be seen with Bill Gates. That was always the point.

Unsealed Research Team

2026-03-25

October 2, 2013. An associate sends Jeffrey Epstein a message.¹

“*jeffery all over the post today taht woody alien molested his 7 year old daughter. You said you would be safe and get this crap behind you be seen with bill gates or Tont Blair etc you are always making things worse for yourself*”

That’s the thesis of this entire series in one sentence.

Five articles have documented the machinery — the [flight manifests](#), the [hundred dinners with Woody Allen](#), the [\\$591,000 publicist](#), the [recruitment pipeline](#), the [dinner table that seated Kissinger next to J.J. Abrams](#). This article answers the question none of those could: what was the Hollywood operation *for*?

Be seen with Bill Gates. Celebrities and world leaders were interchangeable reputation shields. Woody Allen, Tony Blair, Bill Gates — all serving the same function. Cover.

The documents don’t just imply this. They spell it out in strategy memos, PR drafts, crisis communications, charity receipts, and tax filings. Reputation laundering wasn’t a side effect of Epstein’s social life. It was the product.

The Media Strategist

Michael Wolff — the journalist who would later write *Fire and Fury* — served as Jeffrey Epstein’s media strategist.

On September 30, 2012, Epstein emailed Wolff with a social calendar that doubled as a credential:²

“*This past week included, julie taymor, woody allen, elon musk, frank gehri, botstein, hillis, bill gates, under sec general u.n. — i need pr help.*”

Seven famous names in one sentence, followed by a request for PR help. Epstein wasn’t bragging. He was presenting the raw material of his rehabilitation campaign to the man he was hiring to shape it.

Wolff delivered. A draft article found in Epstein’s files — thousands of words, never published — paints Epstein as a genius polymath holding court in a windowless dining room, advising “a startling collection of the rich and powerful, slotted in on an hourly basis.” Wolff describes arriving at the mansion and finding police cars blocking the street — not for Epstein, but for “a controversial head of state, also visiting him.”³

Then the line that explains everything:

“It is Bill Gates who began prodding Epstein to begin a process of public rehabilitation.”

Gates wasn’t just a guest. According to Wolff’s own draft, Gates was the *architect* — the man who prodded a convicted sex offender to rehabilitate his public image. The article was Wolff’s contribution to that project. A fawning profile, ready to place, designed to reintroduce Jeffrey Epstein to polite society as a brilliant eccentric rather than a registered predator.

The Charity Vehicle

Reputation laundering needs a tax-deductible address. Epstein’s was called **Gratitude America, Ltd.**

The 501(c)(3) charity’s name tells you everything about its purpose. Epstein described it himself in an email negotiating a \$110,000 grant: *“the supporter is me, so no name necessary. The check will come from Gratitude America, my private foundation — based on the philosophy that too many people complain about the country rather than expressing the thanks it deserves.”*⁴

The \$110,000 went to **Verse Video Education** — a nonprofit run by Lisa New, wife of Larry Summers. The project: filming Woody Allen reading William Carlos Williams poetry for Harvard’s “Poetry in America” course. Epstein gave creative direction on the trailer — *“too much Lisa not enough poetry”* — and routed the check through HBRK Associates, the same shell company that [paid Peggy Siegal’s invoices](#). Richard Kahn at HBRK held the check until Verse Video’s IRS 501(c)(3) approval came through in May 2016.

That was one line item. Gratitude America’s Form 990PF shows **\$580,000** in total grants:⁵

Recipient	Amount
Verse Video Education (Lisa Summers)	\$110,000
Melanoma Research Alliance	\$225,000
Bruce Marsha Moskowitz Foundation	\$100,000
Hasty Pudding Institute	\$50,000
NY Concert Artists	\$50,000
Other charities	\$45,000

Respectable causes. Medical research. The arts. Harvard. The kind of grants that make a donor’s name look clean in a database search.

But the funding told a different story. A WSJ reporter discovered that Gratitude America “got most of its funding from a **\$10 million grant** from a foundation controlled by Leon Black” — the Apollo chairman who visited Epstein’s mansion on the same days as [Woody Allen screenings and \\$10 million wire transfers](#).⁶ The reporter also found that some of Gratitude America’s donations “were never received by the named charities.”

\$10 million from Leon Black’s foundation. A separate \$10 million self-to-self donation flagged by FinCEN. And a \$15,000 grant to the Elton John AIDS Foundation — which was actually an Oscar party ticket for [Peggy Siegal](#), purchased through a charity to conceal the buyer.

The Set

April 21, 2015. Lesley Groff sends Epstein his daily schedule.⁷

■ 5:30pm — Appt w/Leon Black

8:00pm — Mr. Soderbergh, director of “*The Knick*,” to film an actress walking out of the front doors of 71st and into a horse drawn carriage

Steven Soderbergh’s TV series literally used the front doors of a convicted sex offender’s Manhattan mansion as a set. Leon Black visited at 5:30pm. The film crew arrived at 8pm. Same house. Same evening.

The Knick was a period medical drama on Cinemax. The exterior shots of 9 East 71st Street — the same address where [Bobby Slayton got free apartments](#), where [Barry Josephson asked about a 16-year-old](#), where [Woody Allen screened Hitchcock’s *Psycho*](#) — appeared on millions of television screens without a footnote.

That’s not a dinner party or a social lure. That’s the physical infrastructure of reputation laundering — a building so normalized by celebrity traffic that a legitimate film production used it as a location without anyone stopping to ask whose front doors those were.

The Crisis Team

By summer 2017, Epstein had upgraded from a media strategist to a full crisis communications operation — [Hiltzik Strategies](#), the same firm that managed Harvey Weinstein’s PR.

On August 5, 2017, Matthew Hiltzik sent Epstein a document marked “Privileged and Confidential” titled “**JE Story Outline**.”⁸ It was a rehabilitation playbook, section by section:

Personal — Brooklyn origins, math teacher at Dalton, Bear Stearns partner. The biography of a self-made genius.

Accepting Responsibility — “Share true story of what happened in 2005-2006. Acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility for hiring prostitutes, masseuses, *all of age.*” The reframing was baked in: not girls, prostitutes. Not minors, “all of age.” Not predation, *bad judgment.*

Philanthropic Efforts — Harvard. MIT. Arizona State. AI Symposium. “Provide validators from HIGH LEVEL ORGS.”

Then the kill shot. The names who would publicly vouch for a convicted sex offender:

■ **Third Party Validators:** - Bill Gates - Eva Dubin - James Watson - Former White House Counsel, Kathy Ruemmler

A separate Q&A document expanded the list. Epstein was asked: “*Who are third-party validators who would speak on your behalf?*”⁹

■ “Henry Rosovsky, former United States Secretary of the Treasury and President Emeritus of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, Bill Gates, Leon Black, former White House Counsel, Kathy Ruemmler; former Governor of New Mexico Bill Richardson, Lawrence Krauss and Noam Chomsky.”

Two former Treasury Secretaries. A Nobel laureate. A former governor. Obama’s White House Counsel. The chairman of a \$500 billion private equity firm. A world-famous linguist. These names weren’t casual character references. They were assets listed in a formal PR strategy document, ready for deployment in the rehabilitation of a registered sex offender.

The Parallel

That name — Weinstein — kept surfacing in the same infrastructure.

Peggy Siegal simultaneously served Epstein and Weinstein. Hiltzik Strategies simultaneously served Epstein and Weinstein. The same publicist brokered Oscar party access using a photo of Bill Gates to lobby Harvey Weinstein’s viewing party. Two predators’ rehabilitations running on parallel tracks through the same machinery.

When the Weinstein scandal broke in October 2017, Epstein didn’t comment publicly. He sent Woody Allen’s wife a New Yorker article titled “How Men Like Harvey Weinstein Implicate Their Victims in Their Acts.”¹⁰ No message. Just the link.

His lawyers discussed the unfolding scandal: “*I think it gets pretty bad — and a little bit worse every day.*”

The concern wasn't moral. It was operational. If Weinstein's machinery collapsed, Epstein's ran on the same parts.

And Epstein's team was monitoring the information environment in real time. Internal communications show active SEO tracking: *"none of the negative stuff shows up under bill Clinton's google... hopefully this will have the same course as the woody Allen piece 2 months ago."*¹¹

They were watching search results for the names in their orbit — Clinton, Allen — and celebrating when negative stories dropped off the first page. Reputation laundering isn't just what you do at dinner parties. It's what shows up when someone types a name into a search bar.

The List

The FBI knew who the operation touched. An internal memo titled "Names in JE file" lists every individual who returned **positive case hits** in the Epstein investigation.¹²

The full list:

█ *Donald Trump* (one identified victim claimed abuse but ultimately refused to cooperate) *Prince Andrew* · *Jes Staley* · *Leon Black* · *Glen Dubin* ***Harvey Weinstein*** · *Bill Clinton* · *Alan Dershowitz* ***David Copperfield*** · *Les Wexner* · ***Jean Luc Brunel*** ***Naomi Campbell*** · ***Chris Tucker*** · *Larry Summers* ***Kevin Spacey*** · *Didier* · *Bill Gates*

Seventeen names. Positive case hits. And seven of them are entertainment-connected — the names bolded above. The full cast of this series.

Spacey flew every leg of the Africa trip. **Tucker** brought his son to a sex offender's home. **Campbell** texted Epstein directly and flew on his jet with Clinton. **Wexner** sold Epstein a Manhattan mansion for \$20 and ran the Victoria's Secret pipeline used to recruit victims. **Brunel** ran the modeling agency Epstein financed. Weinstein shared Epstein's publicist and crisis PR firm.

The "No hit" column had three names: Adnan Khashoggi, Reid Hoffman, Piers Morgan. Out of twenty people the FBI checked, only three came up clean.

Everyone else — the celebrities, the moguls, the billionaires — returned positive hits in the FBI's own case file. The same names that filled **the dining room**. The same names Wolff listed in his draft article as proof of Epstein's legitimacy. The same names Hiltzik planned to deploy as "Third Party Validators."

The reputation machine worked exactly as designed. It took a convicted sex offender and surrounded him with enough famous, powerful, respectable people that the conviction became a footnote — an awkward past tense in a present-tense social calendar. It worked so well that Steven Soderbergh filmed a TV show at his house. It worked so well that the crisis PR plan listed a Nobel laureate and two former Treasury Secretaries as character witnesses. It worked so well that \$580,000 in charitable grants went out under a name that meant *thank you, America* — funded by a billionaire who visited the same mansion on the same days as the sex offender’s Hollywood friends.

The associate who wrote that email in October 2013 understood everything. *Be seen with Bill Gates or Tony Blair*. Get the crap behind you. Stop making things worse.

Epstein didn’t listen. He kept making things worse — kept hosting dinners, kept filming TV shows at his front door, kept sending Weinstein articles to Woody Allen’s wife. The machine kept running because the machine was the point. And every name on the guest list, every grant from the charity, every premiere ticket brokered by the publicist, was a moving part in the same operation: making Jeffrey Epstein look like someone worth knowing instead of someone worth investigating.

It worked for ten years after his first conviction. Then the FBI came back with a list.

*This is the series closer for **Epstein & Hollywood**. The full series: [Every Leg of the Flight](#) | [One Hundred Dinners](#) | [The Red Carpet Fixer](#) | [“16 Thank You Very Very Much”](#) | [The Dining Room](#).*

Sources & Documents

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2. **Hollywood Research Dossier** — Epstein to Wolff: “This past week included, julie taylor, woody allen, elon musk... i need pr help.” September 30, 2012. [View](#) □
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6. **EFTA00009962** — WSJ reporter: Leon Black’s foundation gave \$10 million to Gratitude America. Some donations never received by named charities. [View](#) □
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8. **EFTA02640159** — Hiltzik Strategies: “JE Story Outline.” Third Party Validators including Bill Gates. August 5, 2017. [View](#) □
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 12. **EFTA00161528** — FBI internal memo: “Names in JE file.” Full positive case hits list. [View](#) □