

UNSEALED

Your Pal Donald

A former Treasury Secretary used a convicted sex offender as his primary intelligence source on the sitting president.

Unsealed Research Team

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Five weeks before the 2016 presidential election, Larry Summers — former U.S. Treasury Secretary, former president of Harvard University, former chief economist of the World Bank — sent an email to a convicted sex offender.

The subject line was “Trump.” The message was eight words:

█ *“Jeff. How plausible is idea that trump is real cocaine user? L”¹*

That’s Larry Summers asking Jeffrey Epstein whether the next President of the United States has a drug habit. Not a journalist. Not an opposition researcher. A former Treasury Secretary, writing to a man on the sex offender registry, because he assumed Epstein would know.

And Epstein did respond. Not to the cocaine question directly — but to everything else Summers asked over the next three years. Treasury picks. Cabinet strategy. The mental health of the president. The status of the prosecutor who’d kept Epstein out of prison. Access to the incoming Attorney General.

This is the story of Jeffrey Epstein’s second career: political intelligence broker to the Trump White House.

The Hotline

The cocaine email was not an isolated lapse in judgment. It was the beginning of a pattern that ran from October 2016 through at least April 2019 — a continuous channel in which Larry Summers treated Jeffrey Epstein as his primary source on Donald Trump.

The language tells the story. Summers never asked Epstein *about* Trump the way you’d ask a pundit for analysis. He asked the way you’d ask someone’s close friend:

Date	Summers to Epstein	Source
Oct 2, 2016	“How plausible is idea that trump is real cocaine user?”	1
Dec 7, 2016	“Your pal Donald seems ever worse to me”	2
Jan 29, 2017	“How r u feeling about your pal?”	3
May 28, 2017	“Is Donald still feeling good. R u still plugged in to the show?”	4
Jun 9, 2017	“What’s your current view on your friend Donald?”	5

Date	Summers to Epstein	Source
Jul 8, 2017	“I think your friend is mentally ill.”	6
Mar 7, 2018	“What’s up in trump World?”	7
Apr 14, 2018	“What do u make of latest trump follies?”	8

“Your pal.” “Your friend.” “Plugged in to the show.” Eight times in eighteen months, a former Treasury Secretary solicited political intelligence from Jeffrey Epstein — and the framing never varied. In Summers’ mind, Epstein was Trump’s guy.

Cabinet Kingmaker

Three weeks after the election, Epstein texted Summers with a question no convicted sex offender should be in a position to ask:

▮ *“do you have any suggestions for treasury. ?”⁹*

Summers replied with a detailed policy analysis of every candidate — Romney, Tony James, Larry Fink, Peter Thiel, Jamie Dimon, Jeff Immelt. He asked Epstein: “R they open to democrats?” and “Were they serious re Jamie?”

Epstein rated each one:

▮ *“peter thiel autistic, no global sense. fink pompous and too left. immelt interesting. jes staley/you.”⁹*

A convicted sex offender, three weeks out from a presidential election, rating Treasury Secretary candidates for a former Treasury Secretary. And his top two picks: Jes Staley — who would later be accused of facilitating Epstein’s abuse through JPMorgan — and Larry Summers himself.

“Don’t Be Worried”

Two days after the election, before the cabinet speculation even began, Epstein was already positioning himself as the man who understood the incoming president. He emailed Reid Hoffman — LinkedIn founder, Silicon Valley kingmaker:

“lots to do. . . dont be worried - half of the stuff he said was only to get elected. you;ll see”¹⁰

Epstein reassuring a tech billionaire that Trump wouldn't really do the things he'd campaigned on. The message beneath the message: *I know this man. I can read him. Stay close to me and I'll interpret the new world for you.*

The Acosta Loop

Here is where the access operation gets genuinely disturbing.

Alexander Acosta was the federal prosecutor who gave Epstein his 2008 sweetheart plea deal — the one that let a serial child abuser serve thirteen months of county jail with daily work release. In February 2017, Donald Trump nominated Acosta as Secretary of Labor.

Summers asked Epstein directly:

“How is Acosta stuff affecting you.”¹¹

Think about that sentence. The man who gave Epstein his plea deal just got a cabinet appointment, and Summers' instinct is to ask Epstein how *he* feels about it. Not “is this a conflict of interest.” Not “shouldn't someone investigate this.” How is it *affecting you*.

Two years later — March 2019, four months before Epstein's arrest — Summers reported back:

“Talked to Acosta. Reasonable guy.”¹²

A former Treasury Secretary telling a convicted sex offender that he'd had a conversation with the prosecutor who'd engineered his plea deal. Summers was reporting *to* Epstein about Acosta. The information was flowing in the direction you'd expect if Epstein was a client, not a friend.

The Bannon Channel

Epstein wasn't just collecting intelligence. He was brokering connections at the highest level of the Trump operation.

In March 2018, Epstein invited Summers to dinner:

“would you like to come to dinner tomoorw with head of WEF and Bannon?”¹³

The head of the World Economic Forum and Steve Bannon — Trump’s former chief strategist — at Epstein’s dinner table. A former Democratic Treasury Secretary invited to sit across from Trump’s nationalist firebrand. The convicted sex offender was the only person in the room who connected all three worlds.

But the Bannon channel went deeper. In November 2017, Epstein emailed journalist Michael Wolff — who was at that point embedded in the Trump White House writing *Fire and Fury*:

“you should suggest to SB that they talk to Doug Band re uranium 1”¹⁴

Epstein brokering a connection between Steve Bannon and Doug Band — Bill Clinton’s closest aide — on the subject of Uranium One. A convicted sex offender, playing intermediary between the Trump and Clinton orbits on one of the most politically explosive topics of the era.

“Do You Know Bill Barr”

December 6, 2018. Bannon forwarded Epstein an article about the Acosta plea deal coming under renewed scrutiny. Calls were mounting for Acosta’s resignation. Senators were demanding investigations. The walls were closing in on the deal that had kept Epstein free.

Epstein’s response — three words and an institution:

“do you know bill barr. CIA.”¹⁵

William Barr had just been nominated as Trump’s Attorney General. He would be the nation’s top law enforcement official — the person who would ultimately oversee any federal investigation into Epstein. And Epstein was probing Bannon for access to him.

The “CIA” notation is unexplained. Barr’s father, Donald Barr, hired a college-dropout Epstein to teach at the elite Dalton School in 1973. William Barr himself served as CIA’s general counsel. Whether Epstein was referencing Barr’s intelligence background or something else entirely, the intent of the message is unmistakable: he wanted a line to the incoming AG.

Seven months later, Epstein was arrested. He died in a federal detention facility under William Barr’s Department of Justice.

“New Administration People Visiting”

During the presidential transition — December 20, 2016 — Epstein sent an email to Bill Gates:

“*come to visit the island. new administration people visiting*”¹⁶

Jeffrey Epstein, convicted sex offender, owner of Little St. James Island, inviting the richest man in the world to come meet incoming Trump officials on the same island where the FBI had documented years of sexual abuse of minors.

Whether anyone from the Trump transition actually visited is not established in the documents. What is established is that Epstein believed he could use the claim as a lure — and that he felt confident enough to put it in writing.

The Intelligence Broker

Step back and look at the full picture.

From October 2016 through early 2019, Jeffrey Epstein operated as a node in the political intelligence network surrounding the Trump presidency. He didn’t need to visit the White House. He didn’t need to attend rallies or fundraisers. He had something better: a former Treasury Secretary who called him every few weeks to ask about “your pal Donald,” a direct channel to the president’s chief strategist, a line into the journalist embedded in the West Wing, and a former prosecutor-turned-cabinet-secretary whose career he effectively owned.

Epstein assessed Trump as “borderline insane” in private messages.¹⁷ He told Summers that “in the past he was told not to come out of his apt. thats how he got through near personal bankruptcy.”¹⁸ He expressed hope that “someone close to him gets indicted.”¹⁸

This was not a man who admired Donald Trump. This was a man who traded on the *connection* to Donald Trump — selling access, brokering introductions, and positioning himself as the indispensable interpreter between Washington’s old guard and its new one.

Five months before his arrest, Epstein summarized the whole game in a single message to Tom Pritzker:

“*sasse was told im a witness against trump. ? others were told I m a witness against clinton. credibiltiy needs destroying. . unlikely . .)*”¹⁹

A witness against Trump for some. A witness against Clinton for others. Credibility to be destroyed in both directions. And at the center of it all, a smiley face.

This article draws on the [Trump in the Epstein Documents](#) research dossier. Previous in this series: [The Speakerphone Call](#), [Recruited at Mar-a-Lago](#), [Innocent Bystanders](#).

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