

UNSEALED

The "Cannibal" Chef

Epstein's personal chef worked at a restaurant called "Cannibal." 130 emails read, every word.

Unsealed Research Team

2017

Professional chef, beef jerky obsession, chocolate cream pie recipes — zero coded language in 130 messages

Francis Derby and the “Cannibal” Restaurant: Every Email, Every Word

A forensic review of all 130 messages involving Epstein’s personal chef — the man who went on to work at a restaurant literally named “Cannibal.”

Database: 73,994 email threads from the DOJ Epstein document release **Method:** Every message sent by, sent to, or mentioning Francis Derby was read in full — 130 messages across 101 threads, covering April 2012 to February 2017 **Key finding:** Francis Derby was a legitimate, high-credentialed professional chef whose entire email record consists of menus, food sourcing, kitchen equipment, staff training, and the logistics of feeding a demanding employer across four properties. The “Cannibal” connection is a restaurant name — nothing more.

Why This Report Exists

Viral claims circulating online seized on a detail from the Epstein email archive: Jeffrey Epstein’s personal chef went on to work at a New York restaurant called **Cannibal**. In conspiracy communities, this became evidence of coded language, hidden menus, or worse.

The restaurant is real. [Cannibal Beer & Butcher](#) operated at 113 East 29th Street, Manhattan. It served craft beer, house-made charcuterie, and — wait for it — beef jerky and steak. It was reviewed by the New York Times, featured in Bon Appétit, and listed in Zagat. It closed in 2020 after eight years of normal restaurant operation.

This report reads every email to put the matter to rest.

Part I: Who Is Francis Derby?

Francis J. Derby (fjderby@gmail.com) was hired as Jeffrey Epstein’s personal chef in approximately April 2012. His professional credentials, documented in the emails themselves, include:

- **Personal connection to Thomas McNaughton**, chef/owner of Flour+Water in San Francisco. McNaughton confirmed they “spent time together in Spain” ([EFTA02163500](#))
- **Knowledge of French Laundry and Per Se** standards — referenced blue “French Laundry style” aprons for staff uniforms
- **Truffle sourcing** through the same supplier used by **Daniel Boulud** (Daniel) and **Thomas Keller** (Per Se)
- **Paco Jet operation** for ice cream production — a \$5,000+ professional frozen dessert machine used in Michelin-starred kitchens

- **Sous vide expertise** — taught classes to household staff on immersion circulators and cryovac machines
- **Union Square Greenmarket sourcing** — knew which farmers grew Tri Star strawberries and when they’d arrive

When he left Epstein’s employ in late November 2012, he went to work at Cannibal Beer & Butcher. By 2016, he was running **four restaurants** and was recruited back by Epstein’s team — a negotiation he carefully managed over several months.

This is not a mysterious figure. This is a professional chef with a verifiable career in New York’s fine dining world.

Part II: The Complete Email Record — What 130 Messages Contain

Food and Kitchen Operations (□85% of all messages)

The overwhelming majority of Derby’s correspondence is exactly what you’d expect from a private chef managing kitchens at 9 East 71st Street (Manhattan), Little St. James Island (USVI), and Palm Beach:

Beef jerky — Derby’s signature product for Epstein, who was on a high-protein diet. The jerky operation was industrial-scale:

▮ *“we’ve gone through about 70 pounds of Steak for beef jerky in the last 2 weeks”*
— Francis Derby, August 18, 2012 ([EFTA02162684](#))

Jerky was FedEx’d to Paris, shipped to Little St. James via private plane, frozen in zip-lock bags for transit, and its supply (or absence) was the subject of multiple angry Epstein emails. When Derby was hospitalized for four days, Epstein’s primary complaint was that there was no jerky:

▮ *“I am very very annoyed”*
— Jeffrey Epstein, October 19, 2012 ([vol00009-efta00945754-pdf](#))

Chocolate cream pie — Derby’s other signature, requested repeatedly by Epstein and whose recipe was shared with Karyna Shuliak ([vol00009-efta00529837-pdf](#)).

Ice cream — Made in-house using a Paco Jet: vanilla, chocolate, double dark chocolate (using Maison du Chocolat cocoa powder), with plans for buttermilk/blueberry and roasted strawberry ([EFTA02393646](#)).

Daily menus — Duck, pork chop, key lime tart, steak and eggs (at 2pm, on demand), white

tuna with ponzu sauce, seared red tuna, cottage cheese, ginger drink, muffins, muesli (which Derby had to research — he’d never made it before).

Sourcing — Australian winter truffles, Tri Star strawberries from Union Square Greenmarket, grass-fed beef from a Brooklyn company, Zweigle’s Pop Open frozen hot dogs, elk jerky (rejected at \$39/lb as “very similar to the bison”), Diet Coke in glass bottles (not cans — Epstein insisted on a blind taste test).

Equipment — Immersion circulator, water bath, cryovac machine, dehydrator for jerky and dried fruits, pasta machine for fresh pasta.

Staff Management and Training (□10%)

Derby wrote training manuals, organized cooking classes (sous vide “Meat Class,” egg preparation, market shopping trips), sourced uniforms, and coordinated with household staff including:

- **Lyn Fontanilla** — NYC house manager who handled buying/stocking
- **Brice Gordon** — Little St. James island operations
- **Sarah Kellen** — Epstein’s primary assistant, Derby’s main scheduling contact
- **Lesley Groff** — Executive assistant
- **Jojo** — Driver/assistant
- **Renata** — Staff member who made ginger tea
- **“M”** — Staff member who made muffins daily

Workplace Dynamics (□5%)

The emails reveal a controlling employer dynamic consistent with other accounts of Epstein’s household:

- Derby was berated for rotten figs (they were ripe, not rotten — he explained fig biology), plastic food containers (Epstein found the “presentation” unacceptable), missing muffins, and insufficient jerky supply
 - When Derby was hospitalized for four days, Epstein demanded discharge papers as proof
 - Staff expressed explicit fear of Epstein’s reactions: “I wonder if you should tell him... I feel like you possibly should but am always wary to give advice in case he gets upset”
 - Derby prepared food for three days for Epstein’s arrival, but no one told Epstein he was there — Epstein got burgers instead and Derby was blamed
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Part III: The “Cannibal” Reference — All 8 Hits

The word “Cannibal” appears in 8 messages in the archive. All 8 are OCR duplicates of the same email chain:

“Francis has time to come tomorrow to show me how to make it!!! Jerky class anyone? He will also bring you a taste of his new jerky recipe from the restaurant. And sends a warm hello. **He is working at a restaurant called Cannibal and cooks... wait for it... Beef Jerky and Steak!** He has time at 3pm tomorrow if this is okay with you.”
— Staff member, May 4, 2013 (EFTA01798318)

Epstein’s reply: “yes”

That’s it. A former employee landed a job at a restaurant with an edgy name, and a staff member thought the coincidence with his jerky expertise was funny. The “wait for it” is the punchline — Derby, the jerky guy, is now at a restaurant called Cannibal making... beef jerky.

Part IV: Guest List Intelligence

While Derby’s emails contain zero suspicious content, his food logistics inadvertently document who was at Epstein’s properties and when:

Date	Guest	Location	Source
May 28, 2012	“ Sultan ” (dinner guest)	NYC townhouse	vol00009- efta00542375
Jun 9, 2012	Jes Staley and wife Debra	Little St. James	EFTA02309121
Aug 5, 2012	10-person dinner party (Tim Zagat helped book)	San Francisco	EFTA02163500
Aug 20, 2012	Bill Gates (dinner or lunch)	NYC/property	EFTA02162453
Oct 25, 2012	Nathan Wolfe (4:30pm visit)	Palm Beach	EFTA02156472

Date	Guest	Location	Source
Nov 5-6, 2012	Ghislaine Maxwell (2 consecutive days)	NYC 71st St	EFTA02316963

Derby's food prep schedules confirm Epstein's travel patterns across NYC, Palm Beach, Little St. James, and international destinations (Paris, San Francisco).

Part V: Catherine Derby — A Different Person

The database search also returned 5 messages from **Catherine Derby** (catherinederby@hotmail.com) — a completely separate individual from Francis. Catherine was a former assistant/staffer who was abruptly cut off in September 2007 after raising an unspecified concern:

▮ *"I raised my concern about what was going on... My phone was then turned off by GM"*
 — Catherine Derby, September 9, 2007 (358c100fced1d996befb78de9965de13)

"GM" is Ghislaine Maxwell. Catherine was financially dependent on Epstein's organization, couldn't afford to stay in NYC, couldn't return to Iowa, and couldn't start her planned Colorado business. Epstein replied with gaslighting:

▮ *"your e mails seem out of context and character.. you were neither fired as you last emails suggest, your phone was not turned off"*

Catherine Derby's experience — raising a concern, being instantly cut off, losing financial support, and being told it didn't happen — is consistent with documented patterns in Epstein's household. She is not the chef. She shares only a surname.

Part VI: What the 130 Messages Show

What is documented:

1. Francis Derby was a professional chef with verifiable connections to New York's top culinary establishments
2. His entire email record consists of food preparation, sourcing, equipment, menus, staff training, and workplace logistics

3. The "Cannibal" reference is 8 copies of one email about his new job at a real Manhattan restaurant
4. Epstein's household was characterized by controlling behavior, fear of his reactions, and micromanagement of food presentation
5. Derby's food logistics incidentally document visits by Jes Staley, Bill Gates, Nathan Wolfe, and Ghislaine Maxwell

What is not documented:

- Zero coded language in any of the 130 messages
- Zero double entendres or suspicious word choices
- Zero references to minors, abuse, or criminal activity
- Zero unusual financial arrangements
- Zero anything beyond a chef doing his job

The "Cannibal" restaurant conspiracy theory does not survive contact with the primary sources. Every email has been read. There is nothing here.

Report generated from forensic review of all 130 messages involving Francis Derby in the Epstein email archive. Every message was read in full by three parallel analysis passes. All EFTA references link to original documents on this site.