

**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT OF SARAH RANSOME TO BE READ AT THE
SENTENCING OF GHISLAINE MAXWELL**

It has been a long journey to bring Maxwell to justice. Sadly, the accurate count of victims will never be known. My book "Silenced No More" chronicles it as a "journey to hell and back". Although I have escaped the hellish trap set by Epstein, Maxwell and others, I continue, now 17 years later, to suffer from the horrific trauma it caused.

I came to New York at age 22, wanting to start my life over after an incredibly abusive relationship. I hoped to attend FIT and work in the fashion industry.

Soon after arriving, I met an Epstein/Maxwell recruiter named Natalya Malyshev in a club. She befriended me and, soon after that, arranged for me to meet Jeffery. She described him as a kind philanthropist who could help me get into FIT and provide much-needed support, something which was alien to me.

Over the next seven to eight months, I became, against my will, nothing more than a human sex toy with a heartbeat and soul for the entertainment of Epstein, Maxwell and others. Sometimes I was subjected to sexual predation multiple times per day, both in his New York mansion and on his private island St. Little James in the US Virgin Islands. On one visit to the island, the sexual demands, degradation and humiliation became so horrific that I tried to escape by attempting to jump off a cliff into shark-infested waters, but was caught by Maxwell and company moments before jumping. At the time, the extremely risky escape seemed more appealing than being raped one more time.

As the evidence at the trial of Ms. Maxwell proved, and my own experience confirms, Maxwell was Epstein's right-hand woman. She was the manager of several recruiters and many

others who provided the means and cover for Epstein's predation. In several instances, Ghislaine by her own hand, forced me into Epstein's room to be raped.

Epstein and Maxwell were masters at finding young, vulnerable girls and young women to exploit. Upon targeting a vulnerable girl/young woman, they would ingratiate themselves to her, giving her compliments and small gifts, telling her how special she was. They would tell her that Epstein was a very wealthy, generous man whose primary purpose was to help the less fortunate. He and Maxwell were sophisticated, worldly adults with deep ties to important people, world leaders and institutions who could give her the lifeline she needed to make her dreams reality.

However, soon after lulling me and others into a false sense of comfort and security, they pounced, ensnaring us in their upside-down, twisted world of rape, rape and more rape. Like Hotel California, you could check into the Epstein-Maxwell dungeon of sexual hell, but you could never leave. Ghislaine by her own hand, forced me into Epstein's room to be raped.

The manipulation, intimidation, and emotional abuse used to control the victims took many forms. In my case, Epstein and Maxwell used my damaged upbringing, naivety, lack of a long-term Visa, lack of education and my desire to go to FIT to manipulate and ensnare me.

Once ensnared, to pacify and keep me, they told me that I was exceptionally intelligent and that I had real potential to be someone and something in life; that my dreams of making my family one day proud of me were achievable; and that Epstein and Maxwell's strong ties to FIT could make this happen. With their help, my admission was almost assured.

“But”, there was always a "but". First, I had to write my application, which I did; but Maxwell had to review it and conveniently always found fault. Then another, "but", I needed to lose 30 pounds because I was a "piglet" (Maxwell's numerous degrading descriptions of me). Epstein and

Maxwell put me on a strict Atkin's diet while simultaneously sending me to a psychiatrist who prescribed anti-depressants (among other drugs I did not need) that caused weight gain.

It was a classic no-win situation, and they knew it, precisely what human traffickers seek. I never lost the weight, my application was never good enough, and it never got submitted.

I thank Almighty God that, in 2007, I managed to escape the horror by fleeing for my life to the UK.

Since then, I have been coping with the daily all-consuming fear that someday Epstein and Maxwell would harm me, my loved ones and my family, as Epstein repeatedly told me would happen, if I ever dared to leave.

I frequently experience flashbacks and wake up in a cold sweat from nightmares reliving the awful experience. I am hypervigilant, experience dramatic mood changes, and avoid certain places, situations and people. I will sometimes start crying uncontrollably and without apparent reason. I have worked hard with several mental health professionals who have diagnosed me with extreme symptoms of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, PTSD, and tendencies to self-harm.

Despite my earnest effort, I have not realized my God-given potential professionally or entered healthy personal relationships. I have never married and do not have children, something

I always wished for, even as a little girl. I shy away from strangers and have difficulty making new friends because I fear they could be associated with Epstein, Maxwell and the enablers.

To this day, I attend AA meetings, but I have had numerous relapses and know that only by the grace of God do I continue to live. I have attempted suicide twice since the abuse—both near-fatal.

Last year, I travelled internationally to New York to attend Maxwell's trial. That was both therapeutic and traumatizing. It was therapeutic to hear the testimony of the four-brave victim-witnesses, whose experiences paralleled my own, to know that I was not alone and that our story was finally being told for the world to hear. But it was also traumatizing to relive the experience, and flashbacks and the nightmares have increased.

I am grateful that the jury believed the victims and returned a guilty verdict. But a question still tears at my soul – After all of this, how can the manager of this enormous sex trafficking conspiracy involving so many co-conspirators that snared 100's if not 1,000s of vulnerable girls and young women over three decades continue to maintain her innocence? Who and what institution enabled this sex trafficking ring to continue. Why haven't the institutions and important people that enabled them been exposed and brought to justice? Reflecting on it, I know the answers to my questions.

Maxwell is today the same woman I met almost 20 years ago – incapable of compassion or common human decency. Because of her wealth, social status, and connections, she believes herself beyond reproach and above the law. Sentencing her to the rest of her life in prison will not change her, but it will give other survivors and I a slight sense of justice and help us as we

continue to work to recover from the sex-trafficking hell she perpetrated. She will never, ever hurt another young woman or child in this lifetime. For that, I am sure.

As for the important, high-profile enablers – governmental institutions, politicians, and very wealthy friends of Epstein/Maxwell here and abroad – so far their stature and power have protected them. I hope that one day they will be exposed, and we will be able to say that the United States truly is governed by the rule of law and not by powerful people.

To Ghislaine I say, "You broke me in unfathomable ways. But you didn't break is my spirit, nor did you dampen my internal flame that now burns brighter than ever before!"