The mysterious deaths of Jeffrey Epstein’s friends

A modelling scout joins a long line of deceased insiders linked to the late sex offender, stoking theories of foul play and a cover-up

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On Monday, Daniel Siad, a 69-year-old modelling scout, was found dead in his home in suburban Paris by a female guest. The woman, 28, tried giving him CPR, but could not resuscitate him. It might seem like an open-and-shut, if tragic, case were it not that Siad was closely linked to the late sex offender, Jeffrey Epstein, and was under investigation for human trafficking.

Siad is the latest in a string of Epstein associates to die in distinctly mysterious circumstances. His demise was reported as cardiac arrest, but the woman staying with him claimed he hadn’t shown any signs of illness and had boasted of his healthy lifestyle. The Nanterre prosecutor’s office has since opened an investigation into Siad’s death, and has ordered a post-mortem examination to determine his cause of death, reigniting the conspiracy theories surrounding the Epstein case and fears of a cover-up, initially prompted by Epstein’s own suspicious death in custody in August 2019.

Epstein was awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges when he was found dead in his cell. Peculiarly, the two guards assigned to watch him (following an earlier suicide attempt) reportedly fell asleep and didn’t check on him for three hours. Simultaneously, the cameras in front of his cell apparently malfunctioned. In February, Dr Michael

Baden, a pathologist who was present during Epstein's post-mortem examination, told The Telegraph that, in his opinion, Epstein's death "was most likely caused by strangulation pressure rather than hanging".
The US Department of Justice ruled in 2023 that there were "job performance failures" by prison officials, but that Epstein had died by suicide. Yet many remain convinced there was foul play involved, given the threat Epstein potentially posed to numerous powerful individuals.

The 'link in the chain'

What is not in question in this murky affair is Siad's close relationship with the late sex offender. His name appeared thousands of times in the Epstein files over the course of a decade, strongly suggesting a role in Epstein's vile schemes. Siad travelled the world searching for women to work as models, but it also appears he was on the hunt for his friend.

Daniel Siad appeared thousands of times in the Epstein files Credit: US Department of Justice

Siad sent Epstein photos of women and their measurements, and arranged meetings for them with Epstein. In one email to Epstein, he wrote (in badly spelt English): “In This busyness I feel like fisherman some time I cache quick, some time no fish.” Epstein, meanwhile, wired Siad payments for expenses incurred during these scouting trips, and sent querying emails saying: “Wht about new girls?” Siad emphasised the women’s youth. One reply reads: “26 but she look 18.”

Henry Samuel, who interviewed Valdson Vieira Cotrin, Epstein’s former butler, for The Telegraph, says Cotrin told him Siad was “as important as Ghislaine Maxwell” in arranging for women to visit Epstein in Paris. Siad had professed ignorance of Epstein’s crimes, telling CNN: “I trusted him, I believed this guy is a professional person.” However, one victim, Anya* told the BBC earlier this month that Siad had introduced her to Epstein in “a complete set-up”, calling Siad “essentially a professional trafficker”.

Siad was himself accused of rape and human trafficking by Ebba Karlsson, a former Swedish model, earlier this year. She claimed he had scouted her in her home town of Stockholm in 1990, when she was 20, then raped her in France. Siad denied her allegations and his lawyer said he wanted to give his version of events in court, but it wasn’t to be. Karlsson told Agence France-Presse on Wednesday that Siad’s death was “very frustrating”, explaining: “He was very close to being arrested. We worked so hard for this, trying to have justice.” Lawyers for Karlsson accused the Paris prosecutor’s office of “scandalous” inaction. The office has defended its investigation, which it said did not provide enough evidence to justify arresting Siad. But another former model, who gave a deposition to police as part of the investigation, told the BBC that, with Siad’s death, vital information about Epstein had been lost. She said: “An important link in the chain has just vanished into thin air.”

The same could be said for the numerous deceased people who operated in Epstein's malevolent orbit. In 2014, Alfredo Rodriguez, another former butler of Epstein's, died aged 60 from cancer. Infamously, Rodriguez was caught by an FBI sting trying to sell Epstein's "little black book" for $50,000 (£38,000). It reportedly contained details of Epstein's victims, as well as his celebrity friends and associates – prosecuting lawyers called it "the Holy Grail". According to court papers, Rodriguez claimed he had stolen the book as insurance, fearing Epstein would make him "disappear".

The detective, the police chief and the banker

In 2018, Joe Recarey, the Palm Beach detective who had led an investigation into Epstein in the mid 2000s, died after a "brief illness", aged 50. Recarey and Michael Reiter, a police chief, had previously alleged they were under political pressure to drop the case. Recarey said he had to take different routes driving to work, or swap vehicles, because he was being tailed. He told the Miami Herald: "I was concerned about my kids because I didn't know if it was someone that they hired just out of prison that would hurt me or my family."

Joe Recarey, the Palm Beach detective who led an investigation into Epstein, died after a 'brief illness' in 2018 Credit: Emily Michot/Getty Images

Then, in 2019, Thomas Bowers, a 55-year-old banker, reportedly hanged himself in his beachside Malibu home. His former employer, Deutsche Bank, had taken on Epstein as a client in 2013. In 2020, the company paid a $150m fine to settle New York charges, admitting it made a "critical mistake" in working with the registered sex offender.

The Hollywood producer

The dark Epstein world claimed another victim in 2020 as Steve Bing, a Hollywood producer, died by suicide, aged 55, by jumping from his 27th-floor luxury condo in Los Angeles. Bing had previously been in a relationship with Elizabeth Hurley, resulting in a pregnancy – for which he denied paternity until a DNA test established he was the father of her son, Damian. Bing had a history of drug addiction, and sources told TMZ that he had grown depressed while isolating during Covid.

Steve Bing, pictured with Elizabeth Hurley in 2001, shared social circles with Epstein Credit: Jim Ruymen/Reuters

Bing had also moved in the same high-rolling social circles as Epstein. In 2008, Gawker, a celebrity blog, named both as members of Bill Clinton's "billionaire boys' club". After Bing's death, Carrie Mitchum, the aunt of Bing's late girlfriend, Allexanne (who died of an overdose the previous year), claimed in a Facebook post that, although Bing wasn't that close to Epstein, Allexanne had convinced Bing to "make a statement via his attorneys telling what he did know" about the sex offender.

The cellmate who knew too much?

Suspicions deepened about Epstein's own demise when, in 2021, Efrain "Stone" Reyes, his final cellmate, died in his mother's Bronx apartment after reportedly contracting Covid. Reyes, 51, who had been jailed on drug charges, was transferred to a private prison on Aug 9 2019, leaving Epstein alone in his cell. The next day, Epstein was found dead.

According to Reyes's lawyer, Marlon Kirton, Reyes had got along well with his cellmate. Kirton said the only reason Reyes didn't want to be transferred was "the relationship that he built up with Mr Epstein", adding: "I think my client's presence stabilised Mr Epstein."

The modelling agent who never made it to trial

The Epstein-related death toll continued to mount with three more strange casualties in 2022. Jean-Luc Brunel, a 76-year-old French modelling agent, met an eerily similar end to Epstein – he too was found hanged in his cell, in a Paris prison. He was being held on suspicion of the rape and trafficking of minors, but he denied any wrongdoing. Brunel had co-founded MC2 Model Management in the US with funding from Epstein, and prosecutors suspected Brunel of transporting and housing young women for the sex offender.

Jean-Luc Brunel, pictured with Ghislaine Maxwell, was accused of procuring women for Epstein Credit: AFP

Virginia Giuffre, one of Epstein's accusers, had alleged she was forced into sex with Brunel. After his death, she posted on Twitter: "I'm disappointed that I wasn't able to face him in a final trial to hold him accountable."

The extravagant mentor

That same year, Epstein's mentor, Steven Hoffenberg, was found dead, aged 77, in his Connecticut apartment. He had previously served 18 years in prison, as well as paying a $1m fine and $463m in restitution, for what the Securities and Exchange Commission called "one of the largest Ponzi schemes in history".

Hoffenberg met Epstein in 1987 and gave his new protégé a $2m loan. They travelled together on Hoffenberg's private jet and enjoyed an extravagant lifestyle. But the relationship seemingly soured when Hoffenberg claimed Epstein was involved in his investor Ponzi scheme, although Epstein was never charged. In 2016, Hoffenberg (who discovered Christianity in prison) sued Epstein, calling him the "architect of the scam", in what he characterised as an attempt to recoup money for the scheme's victims.

Steven Hoffenberg, a mentor to Epstein, was found dead in his Connecticut apartment in 2022 Credit: Ron Galella/Getty Images

Hoffenberg's body was found in August 2022 in an advanced state of decomposition. Police estimated he had been dead for about a week, and, following a post-mortem examination, said that he had died of natural causes. He was discovered after Maria Farmer, another Epstein accuser, raised the alarm. She had struck up an unlikely friendship with Hoffenberg, who, according to Farmer, felt ashamed for trusting Epstein and taking him under his wing.

The 'implausible' suicide

The third 2022 death was Mark Middleton, who met a particularly grisly fate. While serving as a special assistant to Bill Clinton, Middleton had facilitated access to the White House for Epstein, who visited at least 17 times between 1993 and 1995. Middleton also flew on Epstein's private jet, the so-called "Lolita Express".

Middleton, 59, was found dead at a heifer ranch in Arkansas, apparently after taking his own life. He was hanging from a tree with an extension cord looped around his neck, and a shotgun wound to the chest – a Stoeger 12-gauge coach shotgun was discovered nearby. Theodore Brown, the coroner, noted Middleton's history of depression and ruled that he had taken his own life, but this shocking and rather puzzling scene caused widespread speculation.

One former business associate of Middleton's was unconvinced, telling RadarOnline: "He knows nothing about guns. He hated guns. He couldn't have tied a noose to save his life. The man couldn't change a light bulb by himself [...] His death scenario is completely implausible to everybody that knew him."

The high-profile politician

In 2023, Bill Richardson, the former governor of New Mexico and US ambassador to the United Nations, died in his sleep in his

Massachusetts summer home, aged 75, with no cause of death given. He, too, had Epstein associations. As revealed in 2019, he had been named in the civil suit between Giuffre and Maxwell, with Giuffre alleging Richardson was among the high-profile men to whom she was sexually trafficked by Maxwell and Epstein.

Bill Richardson was named by Virginia Giuffre as one of the high-profile men to whom she was trafficked by Epstein Credit: Paul J Richards/Getty Images

Notably, Epstein had contributed $50,000 to Richardson's governor campaign in 2002, and flight logs showed Richardson travelled with Epstein and three of his victims from the British Virgin Islands to the US Virgin Islands in 2011. A spokesman for Richardson said he did not know Giuffre and had never seen Epstein in the presence of young or underage girls.

Of course, Giuffre herself then tragically died aged 41, in 2025, at her Australian home, reportedly after taking her own life. But her father, Sky Roberts, questioned that explanation, telling Piers Morgan: "Somebody got to her."

Now, with Siad too meeting a troubling end, suspicions will only grow. It seems that for Epstein's friends, as well as those who tried to defy him, this macabre affair is far from over.