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New House Oversight Files Fuel Scrutiny of Plaskett After Epstein Messages Mirror Her Hearing Exchanges

New Oversight files show Jeffrey Epstein texting comments such as “Chewing?” and “Good work” in apparent real-time alignment with Plaskett’s actions during a 2019 House hearing, renewing scrutiny of her ties and her later return of his campaign donations.

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New reporting is raising fresh scrutiny of Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett after documents suggest a 2019 text exchange with Jeffrey Epstein may have occurred during a House hearing—an exchange that appeared to align with questions she posed to witnesses.

In July 2019, shortly after his arrest on sex trafficking charges, news broke that Delegate Plaskett had received campaign contributions from Jeffrey Epstein. She initially resisted the idea of

returning them, but [quickly reversed course in the face of growing public condemnation.](#)

New reporting from the [Washington Post](#) shows that months prior to the contributions being made public, Congresswoman Plaskett appears to have been engaging in a text conversation with Mr. Epstein during a House of Representatives hearing featuring testimony from Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former personal attorney. The Post has juxtaposed footage from that hearing against timestamped text messages taken from the cache of Epstein files released by the House Oversight Committee this week.

The text messages indicate that Epstein [may have been watching that hearing](#) live. Although the name of the person he was messaging was redacted from the released records, the contours of the conversation bears an odd resemblance to the events unfolding on the House floor. Mr. Epstein asks whether the person on the other end of the text exchange is chewing gum. Ms. Plaskett, in the House, stops masticating. "Not anymore," the unnamed person responds to Mr. Epstein.

At one point, Mr. Epstein mentions "RONA - keeper of the secrets." the unnamed person immediately responds: "Quick I'm up next is that an acronym?"

"That's his assistant," Mr. Epstein replied.

A short time later, on the House floor, Delegate Plaskett asks Mr. Cohen, who is answering questions about persons close to President Trump "what is Ms. Rona's position?"

"Good work," Jeffrey Epstein texted his unnamed conversation partner, shortly after Ms. Plaskett had asked the question.

When she returned his campaign contributions mere months after that hearing, Ms. Plaskett sought to distance herself from Mr. Epstein, explaining the donations by denying personal knowledge of the contributions. "I regret accepting that campaign contribution, but at the time I was unaware that my campaign had received it," she told the Consortium in 2023, shortly after a landmark settlement for the Virgin Islands from the Epstein Estate. Now that it appears that the two may have been close enough to text back and forth, with him potentially providing tips and information which she then used to question a witness during House proceedings, Consortium journalists reached out to the congresswoman for comment.

The statement from Ms. Plaskett's Chief of Staff, Angeline Muckle-Jabbar, did not confirm or deny whether the congresswoman was texting with Mr. Epstein during the hearing.

"Congresswoman Plasket received texts from staff, constituents and the public at large offering advice, support and in some cases partisan vitriol, including from Epstein. As a former prosecutor she welcomes information that helps her get at the truth and took on the GOP that was trying to bury the truth. The congresswoman has previously made clear her long record combating sexual assault and human trafficking, her disgust over Epstein's deviant behavior and her support for his victims."

Jeffrey Epstein's legal troubles resurfaced in 2019, when federal prosecutors in New York charged him with sex trafficking. Epstein pleaded not guilty, but the case never reached trial; he died by suicide in his jail cell in August 2019.

More than a decade earlier, Epstein had been arrested in July 2006 after a grand jury returned a single state charge of soliciting prostitution. That case ultimately led to a highly controversial plea

arrangement two years later, one that shielded him from federal prosecution.

On June 30, 2008, Epstein pleaded guilty to two state felony offenses in Florida—solicitation of prostitution and solicitation of prostitution with a minor. He was sentenced to 18 months in a county facility but was granted work-release privileges, spending nights in a private jail wing and days at his office. He was released after serving 13 months.

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