

digestible book. While this book is clearly intended for parents facing alienation, professionals interested in becoming “alienation-aware” will find this book edifying. Further, family therapists, general psychiatrists, child and adolescent psychiatrists, and forensic clinicians stand to benefit from this book’s unique perspective, the authors’ practical experience, and the invitation to explore stereotypes and subjective judgments that affect family relationships. The references cited also can serve as a guide to general study of the subject. Forensic clinicians seeking detailed protocols and extensive evidence-based research will need to access resources beyond this book. With that said, clinicians will benefit from reading this book for exposure to the concept of parental alienation and for the authors’ insights in the developing field.

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Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich: Sexual Assault Survivors and the Justice System

Directed by Lisa Bryant. Original Release Date: May 27, 2020 on Netflix. Based on *Filthy Rich: A Powerful Billionaire, the Sex Scandal that Undid Him, and All the Justice that Money Can Buy: The Shocking Story of Jeffrey Epstein*, by James Patterson, John Connolly, and Tim Malloy. New York: Penguin Random House; 2016.

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Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich, a four-episode miniseries available on Netflix, is based on the true-crime story by best-selling author James Patterson (of *Along Came a Spider* fame), co-written by John Connolly and Tim Malloy. The series describes the shocking story of a charismatic billionaire who was able to quietly create a sex-trafficking pyramid scheme to indulge in his predilection for sexual activity with underage girls. The series also attempts to explain how the

enigmatic Epstein became so wealthy in the first place. James Patterson had been Epstein’s neighbor in Palm Beach, Florida, and became interested in researching his story after he saw Epstein walking carefree in Manhattan with two beautiful young women on his arm about a decade after being convicted of soliciting prostitution and procuring a minor for prostitution in Palm Beach. The coincidence of a best-selling crime fiction author brushing up against a notorious criminal is reminiscent of true-crime writer Ann Rule’s best-seller, *The Stranger Beside Me*, about Ted Bundy, who had been Rule’s co-worker at one time.

Since Epstein’s mysterious death in Manhattan’s Metropolitan Correctional Center (a federal detention facility) in August 2019, there have been various television and podcast portrayals of Epstein’s sexual and legal history. *Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich* takes a unique approach by describing in depth many of his survivors’ stories and also examines the ways the law consistently worked in his favor because of his excessive wealth.

After an appropriate warning to the audience, the first episode begins with a videotape of a seemingly confident Jeffrey Epstein being interviewed during a 2012 deposition. He was residing on the Virgin Islands at the time but maintained several other homes. During the deposition clip, Epstein invoked his Fifth Amendment right multiple times, declining to answer questions of any value to the plaintiff’s case.

In 2003, Vicky Ward wrote a piece for *Vanity Fair*, *The Talented Mr. Epstein*, a play on words of Patricia Highsmith’s *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, a story about a charming psychopath who gets away with everything.¹ Ward was tasked by her editor to write a “society piece” uncovering the mystery around Epstein’s wealth and business relationship with Mr. Leslie Wexner, owner of The Limited and Victoria’s Secret. In *Filthy Rich*, Vicky Ward explained that at that point, Jeffrey Epstein was tied to major public figures, including Prince Andrew, Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, defense attorney Alan Dershowitz, and British heiress Ghislaine Maxwell (whom he had dated). In her research, Ward inadvertently learned about Epstein sexually abusing underage girls. She describes that she was not allowed to publish this content because the allegations were adamantly denied by Epstein and he had not yet been convicted of any crimes.

Several survivors told their stories in the series. It became apparent that some of them were “imperfect victims” (as many victims are), meaning that they

had something in their past that they may have not been proud of, often due to their life circumstances. We previously described the notion of imperfect victims in the discussion of the Netflix series *Unbelievable*.² The Epstein series describes that girls invited to Jeffrey Epstein's home were often promised \$200 for providing a massage and would then feel guilty that they may have played a part in their own molestation. Katheryn Stamoulis, PhD, described as an "adolescent sexuality psychologist," is featured in the first episode and describes that she profiled Epstein without interviewing him. She said that he targeted girls who were "so vulnerable" and she explained that "sexual predators like Jeffrey Epstein" find girls who are in need of something and then exploit them by promising to fulfill that need if they do something for him. She referred to Epstein as a "brilliant narcissistic billionaire."

Some of the tactics described were similar to the grooming tactics depicted in the HBO documentary *Leaving Neverland* about Michael Jackson.³ A unique aspect of Epstein's alleged offending included a human trafficking pyramid scheme where he paid school-age girls to bring him their friends. Adults allegedly also procured young girls for him, although no other adults had been prosecuted for these alleged crimes at the time of this writing. (Since this piece was submitted, however, Ghislaine Maxwell was arrested in New Hampshire for her role in these alleged events.).

Patterson's book references a 2011 *Law and Order: SVU* episode entitled "Flight," where a powerful wealthy man (played by Colm Feore) is "given" an underage French model as a birthday present for a "massage" and allegedly raped her. Key details in common between the episode and the Epstein case, as pointed out in another Vanity Fair article, include the "millionaire-plus status," the assaults on younger women who were recruited by others to give him massages, and the important famous people who attended his parties.⁴

The Netflix series describes that Jeffrey Epstein used his power and money to sexually exploit young girls and then to exploit the criminal and civil justice system for years, with the tacit cooperation of the justice system and other powerful and wealthy people. The Netflix series discusses how an FBI investigation was thwarted in 2006, and reports by various investigators in the Palm Beach Police Department were also discounted. In 2008, Epstein's attorneys, including Alan Dershowitz (who was also accused of sexual

activity with a minor), negotiated a plea deal for an 18-month sentence in a minimum security facility with Alexander Acosta, the top federal prosecutor in Miami at the time and, more recently, Trump's former labor secretary.⁵ While in the minimum-security facility, Epstein was allowed private security and work-release, which permitted him to leave the jail for up to 10 hours per day. Epstein's victims were not notified of the deal; their frustrated and dismayed attorneys found out after the fact. In 2019, the bi-partisan Courtney Wild Crime Victims' Rights Reform Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives, named after one of Epstein's many survivors.⁶ In addition, as of June 25, 2020, more than 100 alleged victims of sexual abuse are expected to file claims that the "Epstein Victim's Compensation Fund" will pay out of Epstein's estate (estimated at approximately \$630 million).⁷

Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich reveals important insights for forensic psychiatrists dealing with trauma, sexual assault survivors' guilt and difficulty reporting, reactions to trauma, manipulation of the justice system by the powerful, and the ways in which the law can fail survivors of sexual abuse.

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