

The Thinning

Notes from Inside the Veneer



JOSHUA STYLMAN

FEB 16, 2026



619



250



148

Share



My kid came home from school the other day and told me the Epstein files are lunchroom conversation. Not among teachers (at least that they're aware of), but among students in the hallways, between classes.

What a crazy thing for a child to be talking about. I mean think about that - casually discussing whether the people who run the world have been raping and trafficking other children.

My son was telling me this the way he'd tell me about the all-star game and I'm standing in my kitchen trying to figure out what to even say. Because the weight that - what it means that it's entered the consciousness of our children - is so large. The gap between the world we thought we lived in and the one that actually exists has become so thin that even teenagers can now see through it. And yet, that's what we are.

Anyone close to me knows that I've been railing about our fake reality for the years. That the politicians, the entertainers, the captains of industry, the media, the philanthropists - some of them, most of them (all of them?) - have been looting and pillaging the place. Literally. And now our kids are learning it too.

As strange a journey as that's been, I've had time to process this at my own pace. I've spent the last few years going super deep on this stuff. Most of my free time has been spent working with my study group (mostly my closest friends, along with a few researchers) finding source materials, sitting with it, trying to build some kind of framework to grok. Most people haven't had that luxury. They're receiving all this information at once, like drinking from a firehose, with no context. Meanwhile, the "news" - which ignored all this for years despite a mountain of evidence - chops up a hundred partisan takes in real time.

What makes it so overwhelming - and what many people, especially normies, will likely still miss - is that Epstein isn't a one-off sicko who got caught. Pull that thread and the whole tapestry unravels. His network touches *everything*. Ghislaine Maxwell's father, Robert Maxwell, built a [publishing empire](#) through Pergamon (interestingly, the [biblical name for Satan's throne](#)) - controlling the textbooks

shaped what generations of students learned about history, science, and the world. Leon Black - who paid Epstein \$170 million and has been accused of sexual abuse at Epstein's home - founded Apollo Global Management, the private equity giant that acquired the parent company of Lifetouch, the company that photographs [25 million American schoolchildren](#) every year. Schools are [canceling picture day right now](#) because parents are starting to hear about the connection.

It's endless. The same network reaches into the pharmaceutical architecture that shaped the Covid response. There's an email in the files - forwarded directly to Epstein's personal Gmail in March 2015 - with the subject line "Preparing for pandemic includes a draft agenda for a Geneva meeting and a discussion about how to 'co-brand' with the WHO" through co-branding. The sender (still anonymous, at least) signs off: "I hope we can pull this off." Four years before Covid. Pretty eerie, huh?

From: [REDACTED] >
To: Jeffrey Epstein <Jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Preparing for pandemics
Date: Fri, 20 Mar 2015 08:33:39 +0000
Attachments: 18032015_Geneva_meeting_on_pandemics_Agenda.docx; ATT00

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED] >
Date: March 19, 2015 at 17:28:43 GMT+1
To: [REDACTED] >
Cc: [REDACTED] >, [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]>
Subject: Preparing for pandemics

[REDACTED]

Please find attached a draft agenda for the meeting on preparing for pandemics, as requested.

Let's discuss next steps, for example how to officially involve the WHO and ICRC (i.e. co-branding).

Best regards, and I hope we can pull this off!

[REDACTED]

[Source: Epstein Files, EFTA00654215](#)

[Sayer Ji laid out more receipts in an excellent, if not horrifying, X thread last year](#) detailing how offshore vaccine funds, financial instruments papered with legal protections not even a legitimate advisor would ever need, Gates "specifically requesting" a registered lobbyist to serve as his science advisor's representative.

The same fingerprints are all over the [tech we use](#), [the shows we watch](#), [the financial systems](#) that decide what's even possible for the rest of us. And that's before you get into what the files reveal about [Epstein's investments in genetics](#), AI, and reproductive science - shell companies claiming to do "DNA analysis" that have labs and no scientists, millions of dollars routed to Harvard's evolutionary dynamics program, and Epstein's permanent unsupervised access to genetics research facilities. I've [written about this before](#) and absolutely plan on doing a follow up soon.

The hardest part for most people to understand is that these aren't separate, unrelated stories. They're all scaffolding on a larger infrastructure built over decades, maybe longer. The people in those files aren't peripheral to the systems that run our lives. They *are* the systems that run our lives and shape our reality.

My buddies and I have a theory that most people are afraid to go [full retard](#). Their mental models can't stretch past what [Prussian schooling and Rockefeller medicine taught them](#) to think. They never learned how to consider something without necessarily believing it - and that's by design. You can't sit in no man's land or You can't say "well, the pharmaceutical industry is captured but the financial system is fine" or "the intelligence agencies are corrupt but the media is trustworthy."

That's half-retard-land. Once you see that one part of it is a mirage, intellectual honesty demands you question the whole thing. And when you do, when you actually follow that logic all the way, any reasonable person must conclude that it's all interwoven. The same people, the same money, the same networks. All of it.

Imagine trying to take all of that in at once. And, whether you believe some or what's being presented, it's just so much to take in.



ajeeeeboghareeb

@SamjhNai

X.co

So 9/11 was orchestrated, Biden di
in 2019, covid was preplanned, Al
Qaeda & ISIS are US/Israrel's asse
the elite that rule the world are a
bunch of devil worshipping
pedophiles & cannibals but we're ju
supposed to carry on with our 9-5'
like nothing is wrong?

•••

I haven't written in a while. Between family, friends, work - life's been full. Bu
also been trying to zoom out. Still paying attention, still tracing the threads, b
to observe without absorbing (not always successfully). Trying to understand t

framework - what happened, what's happening now, where it's headed - while maintaining some semblance of calm and normalcy. That's harder than it sounds.

My crew has meticulously studied things like [MKUltra](#), [institutional capture](#), [consciousness manipulation](#). The deeper you go, the more you start to see how intertwined it all is. The old joke about a small cabal running the world starts less silly. As ridiculous as that may sound, if you pull back the layers and look, a mind-numbing amount of evidence pointing in that very direction. My research suggests that they always have - at least within the so-called history we've been living in, which is its own can of worms that I'll save for another day.

Controlled opposition or useful idiots, and half the time the people themselves know which one they are. The prevalence of mind control among the people talking about mind control is one of the darker ironies of this whole thing. Even within the free speech movement, the paranoia is real, and it's corrosive. I'm not an insider, but I've met enough people in this space to see the pattern - everyone suspects everyone else of being an op. Maybe that's healthy, actually. It keeps us from the complacency that was built in while this was all being built.

For what it's worth, I'm less interested in the heroes and villains - though I do think they matter - and more in understanding the game itself. One of the hardest things for me to come to terms with is that even the bad guys tell us the truth. These are honorable ghouls we're dealing with. Some believe it's part of their weird religion, and you believe in such things. I know I do. Friends who've studied this for decades and they're compelled to disclose - that by telling us, even obliquely, they believe they've gained our implicit consent, and thus they're absolved of the karmic debt. I've written [extensively about predictive programming](#). It's very real. In fact, Academy Award-winning filmmaker Roger Avery [said it plainly on Rogan last week](#) in a way most people in that industry never would.

Over the last few weeks, the files started dropping. Aside from my kids talking it, my phone started ringing - people who wrote me off five years ago, started talking about this stuff in more mainstream channels. Now they're reaching out: "What's going on?" "What do you think about all this?"

People who spent years with their fingers in their ears are pulling them out - not because they suddenly became brave, but because the evidence has gotten loud enough that ignoring it became harder than facing it. There's a tentative quality to it, like people testing the ice on a frozen pond. But they're stepping onto it.

● ● ●

Last year I wrote a piece called [Fractured Realities](#) about how identical evidence produces completely incompatible worldviews. The same event but with different movies playing inside everybody's head, and every person feels their version of the truth.

I've never seen a better example of that than what's happening right now with the Epstein Files. Ask a hundred people what's happening and you'll get a hundred different answers.

It's Trump finally going down.

No... it's the Democrats finally being exposed.

No... it's a limited hangout, controlled release.

No... it's a distraction from the real operation.

No... it's the Great Awakening.

No... the redactions prove they're protecting their own.

My Q friends (yes, I have Q friends) tell me these are controlled releases of documents the public can't metabolize - slow drips because the full truth would break society.

twisted logic to that I can't totally dismiss. But I also can't embrace a framework requires trusting that the same unseen power structures responsible for the cc are now engineering the disclosure out of benevolence. That's a pretty big ask opinion.

Meanwhile everybody's so locked into their own reality tunnels that they're missing something genuinely significant is happening and the usual boxes aren't big enough to hold it.

This isn't just an information war, it's a perception war and the difference matters. The Epstein files just dropped into a population that's already been shattered into a billion different realities - and every single one of those realities feels real to the person experiencing it depending on their upbringing, media diet and cognitive environment. The fragmentation isn't a side effect of the disclosure, it's the whole point. It is a control mechanism. How can you build a proper coalition to organize against something when most people can't even agree on what they're seeing?

● ● ●

[Whitney Webb's One Nation Under Blackmail](#) should have blown this whole thing up when it was published. Instead, the people who already suspected this stuff got a mountain of proof while polite society waved it away. More recently, Webb's been making an argument that should stop everyone cold - she calls Palantir the new Epstein.



Her argument is simple: you don't need hidden cameras and honeypot operations, a guy with a plane and an island when you have access to everyone's digital life: their histories, communications, financial transactions, every tweet they replied to or liked. You don't need Jeffrey Epstein when you have total digital surveillance. Blackmail doesn't require a handler anymore. The data is the leverage.

This hypothesis maps to one of the big takeaways from my [MKUltra series](#) - the smartphone is the new handler. The device in your pocket monitors your emotional state, anticipates your taste and desires, spoon feeds you targeted content mapping your predispositions to keep you engaged - and often enraged. What MKUltra achieved through crude chemical intervention and trauma-induced dissociation, social media and smartphones now do during most of our waking hours. The handlers have gone away; it just got an upgrade that's far more efficient and leaves less room for error.

The honeypot and the algorithm are just different generations of the same control system - one runs on leverage over individuals, the other runs on leverage over everyone.

Webb takes it even further. If the smartphone is the handler, Palantir is the agent.

running the whole operation. It's a privatized continuation of DARPA's Total Information Awareness program - so scandalous that Congress defunded it, and it just... reemerged as a private company with government contracts. Peter Thiel, Palantir's founder, has extensive documented connections to Epstein. The current President of the United States is Peter Thiel's protege. Just take a moment to consider the possible implications.

My friend Debbie Lerman has been [tracking the military-corporate apparatus](#) of Covid through Operation Warp Speed. It's not hiding anymore - it's being celebrated. Tech execs getting military commissions. Half a trillion in AI surveillance built on emergency powers. They stopped pretending it didn't exist. And yet most people don't know or have been so desensitized to it they don't do anything about it.

So think about it this way. What if the Epstein revelations aren't the system breaking down? What if they're the old system being made obsolete? Digital is always more efficient. Why pay for the labor when the algorithm does it for free? The old technology is being discarded - either way - but I'm not sure what's coming in their place.

I think the most important question is: Why are they telling us now?

● ● ●

The possibility I find most fascinating and least provable - that something is so much deeper. Not the lame politics that sits at the surface layer but something underneath.

Everyone can feel it. Whatever your framework, whatever virtue flag you wave, there is a frequency change that defies categorization.

But I have to consider the possibility that my friends and I - who sit around connecting dots, recognizing patterns, seeing through the veil - may not be as

we would like to think.

As I've written about before, Alice Bailey (founder of the [Lucifer Trust](#), later [re-named to the Lucis Trust](#), and was essential to the formation of the UN) [wrote about](#) [“externalization of the hierarchy”](#) almost 70 years ago - hidden structures of power becoming visible because the conditions of the age demanded it. She specified the year things would come to light.

Thus a great and new movement is proceeding and a tremendously increased interplay and interaction is taking place. This will go on until A.D. 2025. During the years intervening between now and that date very great changes will be seen taking place, and at the great General Assembly of the Hierarchy as usual every century—in 2025 the date in all probability will be set for the first stage of the externalisation of the Hierarchy. The present cycle (from now until that date) is called technically "Stage of the Forerunner". It is preparatory in nature, testing in its methods, and intended to be revelatory in its techniques and results. You can see therefore that Chohans, Masters, initiates, workers, disciples, disciples and aspirants affiliated with the Hierarchy are all at this time passing through a cycle of great activity.

[Source: Alice Bailey, Externalization of the Hierarchy, page 281](#)

The [architects of these systems](#) didn't hide the plan. They published it. What if the plan was always designed to thin at this particular moment? What if the “awakening” is itself part of the architecture? They always tell us, remember?

The pattern recognition that makes us feel smart might itself be a pattern that was always anticipated.

I don't say that to breed nihilism and I'm certainly not what some would call nihilistic. I say it because intellectual honesty demands it. Whether what's happening is organic awakening or managed disclosure, I have no clue. But it's clear that institutional trust is collapsing across every domain simultaneously. The [engine of reality](#) I've been writing about is still running but seemingly losing its grip. On



The part I can't resolve, even for myself is... what if the red pill was always par movie? What if the community of people "waking up" (myself included) is just layer of managed perception? Is this all just [The Second Matrix](#) in motion - th isn't the illusion, the trap is the feeling of having escaped it? Are they telling u because we're figuring it out - or because they're winning, and disclosure is wl winning looks like?

I don't know. Truly.



What I (think I) know is that the playbook hasn't changed. The same people h by [Palantir's ICE surveillance](#) cheered for vaccine passports - which were lead the same digital gulag - just a few years earlier. Principles seem to be fungible depending on who's in charge.

We are now being shown that at the highest levels of government and industry have been trafficking, raping, and torturing children. When people realize wh: "Pizzagate" actually was - not the cartoon version the media used to discredit the real pattern underneath - the ground is going to shift again.

If the evidence is becoming very difficult to dismiss - and it is - then literally e other cause falls by the wayside. Everything else feels frivolous in comparison. that has to be the point somehow - [the division isn't a side effect](#) of a broken s it's the governing infrastructure of a functioning one.

What's being revealed isn't just crimes. It's the failure mode of a civilization th reckon with truth without turning it into content, team identity, or spectacle.



I don't know what's happening. Not fully. Nobody does. I actually believe that one of the biggest weaknesses one can have in a perception war.

But I can tell you what I see.

The world feels different than it did just five years ago. The term conspiracy theory has gone from a pejorative to a badge of honor. Imagine living through everything we've lived through and thinking the powerful people in the world don't conspire that as citizens it's not our right - or even duty - to theorize about it? Like most people, I'm sure I live inside my own bubble, however, I do think the shift is real.

Maybe the friends who went quiet didn't stop talking to me because they didn't want to hear me anymore. Maybe I was just exhausting and they didn't want to hear it. They were probably wrong. Still, I kept wondering from their perspective. What would it mean if the stuff I've been sharing was right? What would the implications be to them and their lives? That burden was too much for many. Well now, some of them are paying attention. The evidence is simply too overwhelming to look away anymore.

I suspect that shift - from fear to curiosity - is the story. Or at least a story. The change in consciousness, happening in real time, in people I know.

I can't tell you where it leads. Are we watching the old world die so something new can emerge? Or are we watching a controlled demolition that clears the ground for something worse? I go back and forth on this daily. Hourly, sometimes. These are the most interesting times in human history, and nobody alive knows which one it is.

Shakespeare (who may have just been Bacon and Dee anyway, haha) told us all of this world's a stage four hundred years ago and we treated it like poetry. Every era has been told. *The Truman Show* and *The Matrix*. All the HG Wells books and sci-fi movies.

watched them and thought we were being entertained. Nope, we were being conditioned.



Nowadays, I don't know where most people get their information. I recognize everyone has the same lunatic tendencies as I do - visiting the weird nooks and crannies of the internet, poring through old texts and primary source material. I imagine most people are still getting their information from mainstream media. To admit, it's somewhat validating to see the NYT actually did a piece [questioning Epstein mentioned pizza and grape soda](#) so much in his correspondence. But it gets my spidey sense tingling.

How would we possibly trust [Mockingbird media](#) now, after they blatantly lied about this - and everything else - for as long as I can remember? My bet is citizen journalism is our only hope at finding truth. But then you realize some of the mouthpieces presenting themselves as regular people are anything but. It can be exasperatingly frustrating to mistrust everyone - especially people who seem like the good guys. This is why we need to learn to verify for ourselves, at least as much as we can. The most sophisticated manipulation doesn't lie to you. It gives you truth through a lens that makes you feel smart for seeing what others miss. Our timelines feel true because they were perfectly crafted just for us.

So when my son mentioned the Epstein files to me, something in his voice told me he wasn't scared. He was *clear*. Clearer than the pundits. Clearer than the commentators. Clearer than me, most days. I don't know whether to be horrified or totally proud.

Maybe that's the real story.

Subscribe to Joshua Stylman

Hundreds of paid subscribers

Trying to figure it out, like everyone else...

Upgrade to paid



619 Likes · 148 Restacks

← Previous

Discussion about this post

Comments Restacks



Write a comment...



Debbie Lerman  Debbie Lerman's Substack Feb 16

♥ Liked by Joshua Stylman

Thanks Josh - for the great article and the shout out. If everyone absorbs and interpret story according to their million different perspectives and no perpetrators face any con then all that's left is an even more demoralized and fractured public — a public that will accept but beg for the orderly, safe structure of AI-run everything.

Like you, I don't know what will happen but it feels to me like more of the same, not nec big shift: more resource and power grabs by the global cabal and less ability of the pop decipher, let alone to resist, what is being done to us.

Btw - "black pill" is the new "conspiracy theorist." Imho we should proudly own it.

♡ LIKE (60) 💬 REPLY

15 replies by Joshua Stylman and others



Kavita 🌸 Kavita Feb 16

I appreciate your willingness to be in the Don't Know, as well as asking the most deeply uncomfortable What If's, and also being willing to ask it all aloud.

I'm a 67yo survivor of long-term child sexual assault in the 60's. However manipulated 'unboxing' of the so-called 'Epstein Files' is (and I'm sure there's manipulation aplenty ways), from my POV as a survivor it signals a tectonic shift in consciousness. Even if 'tl for it to be this way (maybe, maybe not).

What I knew to be so (along with at least 1-in-3 other kids) but others couldn't bear to now - somehow - considered at least plausible.

So, yeah - there's a lot to question, to mistrust, to remain skeptical about. Always, not j But that comes with the territory of tolerating things that most people call 'unspeakable' 'unimaginable', 'unfathomable', 'unbelievable' then turn away from.

I understand their sentiments. But living in that bubble carries a kind of passive complicity least being in accord with, those activities. Those crimes.

And guess what? For decades some of us have been saying it *must* be spoken about it's believable (it happens all the time, duh), and it's *totally* fathomable (so many plun depths of harm!), and FFS yes - it is *finally* believable.

So be it.

Thanks for your part in creating a container in consciousness, in social media, and here in which these conversations have become more widely possible.

♡ LIKE (42) 💬 REPLY

2 replies by Joshua Stylman and others

248 more comments...