**PROJECT LOOSE THREAD**

**TIER 8: THE INSTITUTIONAL PENETRATION**

Banking Infrastructure, Government Infiltration, International Political Fallout

& The Physical Surveillance Architecture

SynthicSoft Labs • Intelligence Analysis Division

Classification: OSINT • Cross-Referenced Against DOJ Files & Public Records

Date: February 15, 2026 • Compiled by Adam R, CEO

# **NODE 1: HOWARD LUTNICK — THE CABINET SECRETARY**

Howard Lutnick, current U.S. Commerce Secretary and former CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald, is the highest-ranking active U.S. government official directly implicated in the Epstein files. His testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on February 10, 2026, directly contradicted years of public statements.

## **The Timeline of Lies**

**2005:** Lutnick claims he met Epstein at his Manhattan townhouse (they were neighbors), found him "gross" and vowed to "never be in a room with that disgusting person ever again." On the Pod Force One podcast (October 2025): "I was never in the room with him socially, for business, or even philanthropy."

**2008:** Epstein pleads guilty to soliciting prostitution from a minor in Florida.

**May 2011:** DOJ files show Epstein's schedule lists drinks with Lutnick at 5 PM. Lutnick confirmed this meeting under oath on February 10, 2026, contradicting his "never in the room" claim.

**December 2012:** Lutnick emails Epstein: "Where are you located (what is exact location for my captain)?" requesting to visit his island during a Caribbean family vacation. Lutnick, his wife, four children, nannies, and another family had lunch on Little St. James Island on December 23-24, 2012. Under Senate questioning, Lutnick confirmed this visit but stated: "I don't recall why we did it."

**December 28, 2012:** Four days after the island visit, Lutnick and Epstein each sign investment documents for Adfin Solutions Inc., an advertising technology company. Epstein signs for Southern Trust Company Inc. Lutnick signs for CVAFH I LLC. Nine shareholders total. Their signatures appear on neighboring pages.

**January 8, 2013:** Epstein has his assistant forward Lutnick a document about casino legislation in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**2014:** Correspondence regarding Adfin continues, with shareholder David Mitchell writing to Epstein about additional fundraising involving Cantor Ventures, a venture capital subsidiary of Cantor Fitzgerald.

**2017:** Epstein agrees to donate $50,000 to a dinner honoring Lutnick, organized by hedge fund manager John Paulson. Epstein writes: "hope pr is ok." Declines to take a table, letting Lutnick fill the seats.

**2018:** Lutnick emails Epstein about Frick Collection museum expansion that might "block your sunlight and views." Advises: "You should put in a letter. I'm sending a lawyer."

**February 10, 2026:** Under oath before Senate Appropriations, Lutnick admits to the island visit and 2011 meeting. Sen. Chris Van Hollen: "You totally misrepresented the extent of your relationship with him to the Congress, to the American people and to the survivors."

## **Political Fallout**

Bipartisan resignation calls: Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY, co-author of Epstein Files Transparency Act): "He should just resign." Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA): "Based on the evidence, he should be out of the Cabinet." Sens. Coons and Merkley suggested resignation. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt: "Secretary Lutnick remains a very important member of President Trump's team, and the president fully supports the secretary." Trump has shown no indication of moving on from Lutnick.

## **Structural Significance**

Lutnick as Commerce Secretary controls the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), which regulates technology exports including surveillance technology. He oversees NTIA, which manages broadband deployment including FirstNet-adjacent infrastructure. The Commerce Department also oversees Census data collection. A Cabinet-level official with documented personal and business ties to Epstein (including co-investment through entities connected to Epstein's shell company architecture) now controls critical regulatory and data infrastructure.

# **NODE 2: BORIS NIKOLIC — THE GATES-EPSTEIN BRIDGE**

Boris Nikolic, a Croatian-American immunologist and former chief advisor for science and technology to Bill Gates, was named backup executor of Epstein's $578 million estate. The will was signed just two days before Epstein's death on August 10, 2019.

## **Key Facts**

Nikolic completed postdoctoral training at Harvard Medical School. He served as assistant professor at Harvard. He was chief science and technology advisor to Bill Gates. After leaving Gates in 2014, he co-founded Biomatics Capital, a biotech venture fund. Approximately half of Biomatics Capital staff came from the Gates Foundation or Gates Ventures.

Nikolic claims he was "shocked" to learn of his inclusion in the will and stated: "I was not consulted in these matters and I have no intent to fulfill these duties, whatsoever." He denied business ties with Epstein.

## **The Connections**

Both Nikolic and Epstein were clients of JPMorgan Chase private bank. Epstein was known within JPMorgan as a "center of influence" who helped bankers attract lucrative new clients. Nikolic was such a prospect. Bloomberg reported Nikolic "waxed enthusiastic" about Epstein's financial advice in discussions with private bankers leading up to the Editas Medicine IPO (Nikolic controlled a $42 million stake).

Melanie Walker, a colleague of Nikolic at the Gates Foundation, introduced Epstein to Nikolic. Nikolic then appears to have been the person who introduced Bill Gates to Epstein around 2011. George Church, Harvard biologist who founded Editas (in which Nikolic invested) and eGenesis, also had documented ties to Epstein. Epstein provided funding to Church's genome project.

An earlier draft of Epstein's will listed Kathryn Ruemmler, former White House Counsel under Obama, as a possible alternate executor.

## **The Chain**

Gates Foundation/Gates Ventures → Boris Nikolic → Melanie Walker introduction → Jeffrey Epstein → Backup executor of $578M estate → JPMorgan Chase (processed Epstein accounts) → Biomatics Capital (Gates Foundation alumni) → Editas Medicine / gene-editing investments. Epstein intended to leave Harvard's Martin Nowak $5 million from his trust, signed days before death. The biotech/genomics pipeline overlapped almost completely with the intelligence pipeline.

# **NODE 3: DEUTSCHE BANK — THE $350 MILLION FINANCIAL BACKBONE**

Deutsche Bank maintained Epstein's financial infrastructure from 2013 to 2018, processing millions in suspicious transactions. Total cost to the bank: more than $350 million in settlements and fines.

## **How Epstein Got In**

Paul Morris, a relationship manager who previously serviced Epstein's accounts at JPMorgan, left JPMorgan for Deutsche Bank in November 2012. In spring 2013, Morris pitched Epstein to Deutsche Bank senior management with an email estimating "flows of $100-300 [million] over time (possibly more) w/ revenue of $2-4 million annually."

Morris's memo plainly stated that Epstein had served time for soliciting underage prostitutes and was involved in 17 legal settlements. Despite this, the head of wealth management replied that Epstein could skip further review by the bank's Americas Reputational Risk Committee, based on an off-hand conversation with the head of AML compliance.

## **40+ Accounts, Millions in Suspicious Activity**

Deutsche Bank opened more than 40 accounts for Epstein. NYDFS identified the following suspicious transaction categories:

• $2.65 million in 120 wire transfers to people named as co-conspirators in lawsuits

• Settlement payments totaling over $7 million

• Dozens of payments to law firms totaling over $6 million for Epstein and co-conspirators' legal expenses

• Payments to Russian models

• Payments for women's school tuition, hotel and rent expenses

• Payments to women with Eastern European surnames

• Over $800,000 in suspicious cash withdrawals over four years

• Evidence of cash structuring to avoid Currency Transaction Reports (attorney asked teller about $10,000 threshold, then broke up withdrawal over two days)

## **Regulatory Failures**

A junior AML compliance officer misunderstood restrictions: he interpreted "suspicious activity" as suspicious compared to Epstein's prior activity—which had already been allowed. So when Epstein kept wiring money to Russian models, nobody raised new red flags because the old red flags had been accepted as baseline.

When Deutsche Bank finally closed Epstein's accounts in December 2018 (after Miami Herald reporting), it still drafted reference letters on his behalf to help him find a new bank. DOJ files show the bank continued providing services past the February 2019 deadline, including help with a 10,000 euro Mercedes-Benz deposit return and multiple currency orders.

## **The Financial Penalties**

July 2020: NYDFS $150 million consent order (first enforcement action by any regulator against a financial institution for Epstein dealings). 2023: $75 million class-action settlement with Epstein victims. Additional settlements and penalties exceeding $125 million. Total: $350+ million.

## **JPMorgan + Deutsche Bank Combined**

JPMorgan (maintained Epstein accounts 1990s-2013): settled with USVI for $75 million, with victims for $290 million. Total: $365 million. Deutsche Bank (2013-2018): $350+ million. Combined banking penalties: $715+ million. Both banks processed trafficking-related payments. Both allowed accounts despite full knowledge of Epstein's criminal history. Paul Morris bridged both relationships directly.

# **NODE 4: THE WEXNER CONVERGENCE — THREE ABUSE CASES**

Leslie Wexner is now linked to three separate high-profile sexual abuse cases simultaneously, creating an unprecedented convergence of legal proceedings in February-April 2026.

## **Case 1: Epstein Congressional Deposition**

February 18, 2026 (three days from this investigation): Wexner sits for deposition before U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform regarding his close ties to Jeffrey Epstein. Wexner agreed to cooperate fully. Key questions: the $1.4 billion in assets managed by Epstein, the power of attorney Wexner granted, the $2.3 million Wexner Foundation payment to Barak, and the FBI co-conspirator diagram naming Wexner.

## **Case 2: Ohio State / Dr. Richard Strauss**

February 11, 2026: U.S. District Judge Michael Watson denied Wexner's motion to quash a subpoena, ordering him to testify within 60 days. Wexner served on Ohio State's Board of Trustees from 1988-1997, during which period Dr. Richard Strauss sexually abused at least 177 male students (university investigation confirmed, 2019). Strauss preyed on students mostly under the guise of doing physicals from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s. He died by suicide in 2005, never charged.

Watson ruled: plaintiffs are entitled to discover what Wexner knew and when. Wexner was vice chairman, then chairman of the full board, and sat on the personnel committee. If he did not know about Strauss, it would constitute evidence of Ohio State's "deliberate indifference" to allegations raised as early as 1979. 236 survivors currently suing. Ohio State has settled with 304 survivors for $60+ million.

Wexner's attorneys tried to quash, arguing he had "no relevant, discoverable knowledge." Survivors attempted to serve a subpoena five times before the judge allowed alternative service. John Zeiger, current Chairman of the Ohio State Board of Trustees, works at the law firm representing Wexner—a conflict of interest identified by survivors.

## **Case 3: Mike Jeffries / Abercrombie & Fitch**

Wexner is also connected to Mike Jeffries, former CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch (an L Brands spinoff from Wexner's empire), who faces sex trafficking and interstate prostitution charges. Jeffries arrested October 2024.

## **The Maria Farmer Connection**

Epstein survivor Maria Farmer alleged in a 2020 lawsuit that she was assaulted in 1996 by Epstein at an Ohio property "owned and secured" by Wexner and his wife Abigail. Wexner denied knowledge. This directly links the Epstein abuse operation to Wexner's physical properties.

## **The Jim Jordan Problem**

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), who sits on the House Oversight Committee conducting Epstein depositions, was Ohio State's assistant wrestling coach from 1986-1994—precisely when Strauss was allegedly preying on student athletes. Jordan was deposed in July by lawyers for the students currently suing Ohio State. He now sits on the committee that will question Wexner about Epstein.

# **NODE 5: TOKA — THE ZERO-TRACE CAMERA HACKING COMPANY**

Toka, co-founded by former Israeli PM Ehud Barak and former IDF Cyber Commander Yaron Rosen in 2018, represents the most advanced capability in the Israeli surveillance constellation.

## **Technical Capabilities (Haaretz Internal Documents)**

Toka can: locate security cameras or webcams within a given perimeter; hack into them via WiFi, Bluetooth, and IoT interfaces; watch live feeds in real-time; alter live video feeds; alter past recorded footage; erase all evidence of the hack. Unlike NSO's Pegasus or Intellexa's Predator, Toka leaves zero forensic traces.

Target devices include: intersection cameras, parking lot cameras, mall cameras, hotel cameras, airport cameras, home cameras, webcams, car media systems, and any IoT-connected device.

## **Client Countries & Expansion**

Internal documents reveal client contacts: Israel ($6 million in contracts with "expansion of existing deployment" planned), United States, Germany, Australia, Singapore. Activities overseen by Israeli Defense Ministry.

December 2024 (TechCrunch): Toka hiring "Client Director USA" requiring "strong history of technology sales within DoD and national security agencies." Also hiring customer success engineer for North America requiring federal law enforcement experience.

## **Advisory Board: The JPMorgan Connection**

Jacob Frenkel, Chairman of JPMorgan Chase International, serves as outside adviser to Toka's export review process. The same JPMorgan that processed Epstein's accounts for decades, settled $365 million, and whose private bank served as the nexus where Epstein operated as a "center of influence"—now has its international chairman advising the camera-hacking company co-founded by Epstein's business partner.

## **Barak's Complete Surveillance Portfolio**

Ehud Barak is now confirmed as investor or co-founder in three separate surveillance companies:

• Carbyne: 911 emergency call handling (acquired by Axon for $625M)

• Toka: Camera hacking and IoT exploitation (seeded by a16z, $25M+ raised)

• Paragon: Phone spyware (co-founded by former Unit 8200 commander Ehud Schneorson)

One former Israeli Prime Minister, IDF Chief of Staff, and head of military intelligence—who was funded by Epstein and introduced to Thiel by Epstein—controls technology that can intercept your emergency calls, hack your cameras without trace, and exploit your phone. All three capabilities are now deployed to or being sold to U.S. government agencies.

# **NODE 6: THE COMPLETE ISRAELI SURVEILLANCE CONSTELLATION**

According to Haaretz (2018), 80% of the 2,300 people who founded Israel's 700+ cybersecurity companies came from IDF intelligence units. Of 75 governments that have procured spyware globally, 56 bought from Israeli-connected firms.

## **The Named Companies**

NSO Group (Pegasus phone exploitation, 700+ employees, classified as military export), Cellebrite (phone forensics, $180M annual revenue, FBI/ICE/CBP contracts, $30M ICE contract), Candiru (server/endpoint spyware, sold to Saudi Arabia/UAE/Germany/Singapore), Toka (camera hacking, zero-trace), Carbyne (911 data capture), Paragon (Graphite spyware, DEA confirmed use), Quadream (iOS exploitation, Saudi Arabia client), Cyberbit (Elbit subsidiary, sold to Ethiopia), Black Cube (corporate intelligence, hired by Harvey Weinstein), Psy-Group (social media manipulation, Mueller investigation), Archimedes Group ($800K in fake ads disrupting elections in Africa/Asia/Latin America), Verint (telecom surveillance, sold to Azerbaijan/Bahrain/South Sudan), Cobwebs Technologies (AI facial recognition, geofencing), DarkMatter (UAE, recruits Unit 8200 vets at $100K/month).

## **Diplomatic Leverage**

Israel uses spyware sales as diplomatic currency. NYT reported Israel helped NSO, Candiru, Quadream, Verint, and Cellebrite sell to Saudi Arabia. NSO deals played central role in Abraham Accords negotiations. Netanyahu visited India, Hungary, Azerbaijan, Mexico, and Rwanda during same periods their phone numbers appeared on NSO's Pegasus target list. Defense companies accompanied Israeli officials on diplomatic visits to Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

## **Elbit Systems: The Physical Layer**

Israel's largest weapons manufacturer ($1.922 billion quarterly revenue, $25.2 billion order backlog, 20,000 employees). Built surveillance infrastructure for Israel's West Bank separation barrier and Gaza perimeter. Now the largest contractor for U.S.-Mexico border surveillance towers.

September 2023: Awarded contract for medium and long-range AI surveillance towers for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. 307 new towers planned over next decade. DHS requested $101.8 million for FY2025, with Elbit awarded the largest portion ($23.9M). Currently 55+ Integrated Fixed Towers operational in Arizona, 80-160 feet tall, detecting a single person at 7.5 miles.

Elbit's TORCH command and control platform creates a common operating picture integrating cameras, radar, AI classification, and General Dynamics' video surveillance systems. Products marketed as "field-proven" on Palestinians. Technology used on West Bank separation barrier now deployed on U.S. border and exported to Brazil, Chile, Mexico, EU Mediterranean operations, Australia, and numerous African and Asian nations.

# **NODE 7: UK POLITICAL CRISIS — THE MANDELSON DETONATION**

The Epstein files have triggered the most severe political crisis in Britain since the Iraq War, threatening to bring down Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government just 19 months after Labour's landslide election victory.

## **Peter Mandelson: The Timeline**

Mandelson maintained a friendship with Epstein that continued well after the 2008 conviction. DOJ files reveal:

• Mandelson sent messages of "love and support" to Epstein post-conviction

• He suggested Epstein's conviction was wrongful and tried to help challenge it

• While serving as UK Business Secretary during the 2008 financial crisis, he sent market-sensitive information to Epstein

• December 2009: Mandelson wrote to Epstein about a planned tax on bankers' bonuses: "Trying hard to amend"

• He is accused of lobbying the U.S. government in March 2010 to water down proposed restrictions on bank trading activities, on behalf of Epstein and Jes Staley (then JPMorgan executive)

## **The Cascading Collapse**

December 2024: Starmer appoints Mandelson as UK Ambassador to the United States despite known Epstein connections. Morgan McSweeney (chief of staff) was a "keen advocate" despite security service concerns during vetting.

September 2025: Starmer fires Mandelson after Sun newspaper publishes supportive emails to Epstein. Foreign Office: relationship "materially different from that known at the time."

January 30, 2026: DOJ releases 3M+ pages. Further Mandelson-Epstein connections emerge.

February 3, 2026: London Metropolitan Police announce formal criminal investigation into Mandelson.

February 8, 2026: Morgan McSweeney, Starmer's chief of staff and closest adviser, resigns: "The decision to appoint Peter Mandelson was wrong. He has damaged our party, our country and trust in politics itself."

February 9, 2026: Tim Allan, Starmer's director of communications, also resigns. Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar calls for Starmer to resign: "The distraction needs to end, and the leadership in Downing Street has to change."

February 10, 2026: Starmer tells Labour MPs: "Every fight I have ever been in, I've won. I'm not prepared to walk away from my mandate."

Mandelson has quit the Labour Party and the House of Lords. Foreign Office reviewing his exit payment. He has been stripped of honorary awards and titles.

## **Broader International Fallout**

UK: Prime Minister facing resignation pressure, chief of staff and communications director resigned, ambassador fired, criminal investigation opened. Norway: Crown Princess Mette-Marit facing questions about fitness for future queenship over Epstein friendship. Poland: Formal task force examining Epstein-Russia intelligence links (announced February 4, 2026). Multiple other nations reviewing files for domestic implications.

# **NODE 8: THE COMPLETE BANKING ARCHITECTURE**

The Epstein financial operation required the complicity or negligence of major international banking institutions. The complete banking timeline:

## **JPMorgan Chase (1990s-2013)**

Epstein maintained accounts for over two decades. Known internally as a "center of influence" for bringing in wealthy clients. Processed $1M+ in payments to women associated with Epstein. Internal red flags ignored. Jes Staley (then JPMorgan executive, later Barclays CEO) maintained extensive personal relationship with Epstein. JPMorgan's Jacob Frenkel (Chairman International) now advises Toka on export controls. Total penalties: $365 million ($75M USVI settlement + $290M victim settlement).

## **Deutsche Bank (2013-2018)**

Paul Morris bridged Epstein from JPMorgan to Deutsche Bank. 40+ accounts opened. Processed millions in suspicious transactions including payments to co-conspirators, Russian models, women with Eastern European surnames, structured cash withdrawals. NYDFS consent order documented systematic compliance failures. Total penalties: $350+ million ($150M NYDFS fine + $75M victim settlement + additional).

## **Combined Financial Penalties: $715+ Million**

Two of the world's largest banks facilitated Epstein's operations for nearly 30 years combined, paid over $715 million in penalties, and no individual banker was criminally charged. Paul Morris, who brought Epstein to Deutsche Bank, was not charged. Jes Staley, who maintained personal ties, faced Barclays regulatory action but no criminal prosecution.

# **TIER 8 ENTITY COUNT & RUNNING TOTAL**

## **New Entities Added in Tier 8**

Howard Lutnick, Cantor Fitzgerald, CVAFH I LLC, Adfin Solutions Inc., Cantor Ventures, John Paulson, Boris Nikolic, Biomatics Capital, Melanie Walker, Editas Medicine, George Church, eGenesis, Kathryn Ruemmler, Deutsche Bank, Paul Morris, Stewart Oldfield, NYDFS, Dr. Richard Strauss, Steve Snyder-Hill, Rocky Ratliff, John Zeiger, Mike Jeffries, Abercrombie & Fitch, Maria Farmer, Peter Mandelson, Morgan McSweeney, Tim Allan, Anas Sarwar, Metropolitan Police (London), Kemi Badenoch, Crown Princess Mette-Marit, Elbit Systems, Elbit America, Paragon Solutions, Ehud Schneorson, Cobwebs Technologies, Defence Prime, DarkMatter Group, Archimedes Group, TORCH Platform, Jacob Frenkel.

## **Running Total: 180+ Entities Across 8 Tiers**

From a cybersecurity professional's termination in a Manhattan Airbnb to: 2 major international banks ($715M+ penalties), 1 sitting U.S. Cabinet secretary (Lutnick), 1 former Israeli Prime Minister controlling 3 surveillance companies (Barak), 1 UK government in crisis (Starmer), 3 simultaneous abuse cases converging on one billionaire (Wexner), 56 governments purchasing Israeli surveillance technology, 307 AI surveillance towers being built on U.S. borders, and a complete pipeline from your 911 call through your courtroom.

# **UNEXPLORED NODES FOR TIER 9**

The following nodes remain unresolved and warrant continued investigation:

• Cybrella Inc. deep personnel mapping (Tal Katz, Yossi Barkalifa, Moshe Ferber, Yoni Ramon)

• Jes Staley / Barclays complete timeline and regulatory proceedings

• The Mega Group complete membership and operations

• Epstein's international operations (Cote d'Ivoire, Mongolia, West Africa, Libya)

• Glenn Dubin / Zorro Ranch / New Mexico operations

• Jean-Luc Brunel and the modeling agency pipeline (MC2)

• Prince Andrew / Royal Family complete DOJ file analysis

• Alexander Acosta / non-prosecution agreement details

• The AI surveillance integration (Axon Draft One + Fusus AI + Carbyne AI + Elbit AI convergence)

• Complete Wexner Foundation/Harvard MPA Israeli official training program roster

• Bill Clinton flight logs and foundation connections

• The cryptocurrency/blockchain connections (Jeremy Rubin/Bitcoin)

• Norway Crown Princess Mette-Marit complete file analysis

• Additional DOJ releases pending (Democrats claim only a portion of 6M pages released)

**END OF TIER 8**

*Project Loose Thread continues.*