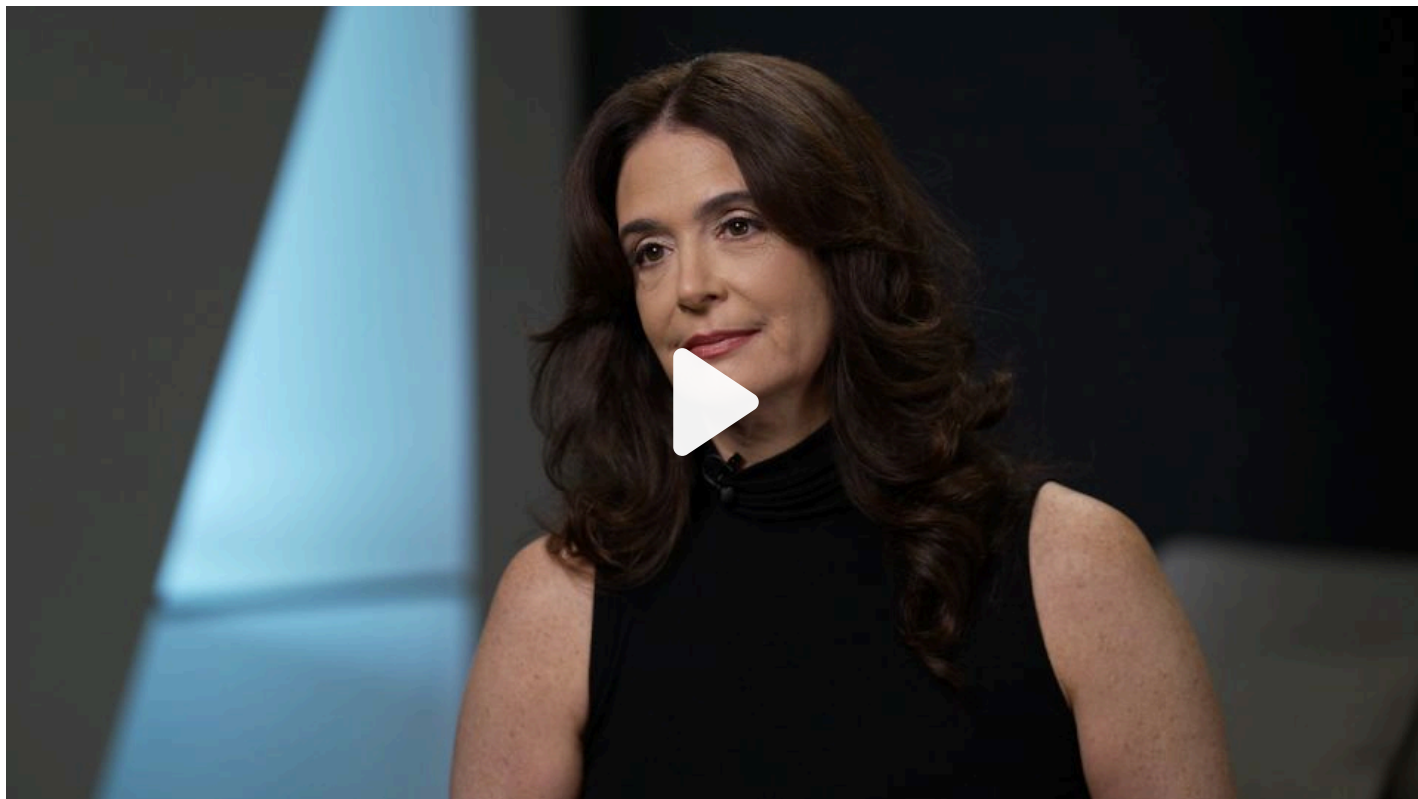


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Former Sports Illustrated swimsuit model says Trump groped her to show off for Jeffrey Epstein

By [Jeremy Herb](#) and [Sunlen Serfaty](#), CNN

🕒 9 minute read · Updated 11:49 PM EDT, Thu October 24, 2024



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Former Sports Illustrated model says she was groped by Trump in 1990s while Epstein watched

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New York (CNN) — A former Sports Illustrated swimsuit model is alleging that former President [Donald Trump](#) groped her in the 1990s, in what she believes was an attempt to show off for Jeffrey Epstein.

In her first on-camera interview about the allegation, with CNN Thursday, Stacey Williams offered her most detailed public account of the alleged encounter, which she said occurred outside Trump's office in Trump Tower in the early 1990s when she was in her 20s and was briefly dating Epstein. CNN has spoken to three friends of Williams, who each said that she told them about the incident with Trump and Epstein, in 2006, in 2015 and in 2018, respectively.

Williams said that she and Epstein were walking together on Fifth Avenue in New York City in 1993 when Epstein brought her to Trump Tower to see Trump.

Trump greeted them outside his office, she said.

"The second he was in front of me, he pulled me into him, and his hands were just on me and didn't come off," Williams said. "And then the hands started moving, and they were on the, you know, on the side of my breasts, on my hips, back down to my butt, back up, sort of then, you know - they were just on me the whole time. And I froze. I couldn't understand what was going on."

Williams said that Epstein and Trump continued talking while Trump's hands were on her, "looking at each other and smiling." She thought it was possible an assistant to Trump may have come in and out of the room while they were there, but she can't remember for sure.

"I think I probably was trying to smile and go through the motions of being engaged the way you would in a social situation. But it was an out of body experience," she said. "So, I don't know if I spoke, I don't know if I answered questions, I don't know. It was one of the strangest moments of my life."

Not long after the encounter, Williams said she received a postcard from Trump, delivered to her

modeling agency via courier, with a picture of Palm Beach on the front that featured his Mar-a-Lago resort.

“Stacey, Your home away from home. Love, Donald,” the undated postcard read on the back.

The Trump campaign denied Williams’ allegations, noting she shared her story on a Zoom call on Monday evening at a “Survivors for Kamala” event supporting Vice President Kamala Harris’ presidential run against Trump, though the group is unaffiliated with the Harris campaign.

“These accusations, announced on a Harris Campaign call two weeks before the election, are false,” said Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt. “It’s obvious this fake story was contrived by Kamala Harris’ campaign to distract from the deeply concerning and newly unearthed allegations that the Second Gentleman, Doug Emhoff ‘forcefully slapped’ his ex-girlfriend.”

A spokesperson for Emhoff denied claims made in a tabloid report that he assaulted a former girlfriend in 2012.

After the publication of this story, Leavitt argued in an additional statement that the handwriting on the postcard was not Trump’s.

Williams said she met Epstein in the year before the alleged incident when her agent invited her to a dinner in New York, which Epstein also attended. She saw him again that year at a Christmas party hosted by Trump at his Plaza Hotel, where she said that the three of them spoke together. She had met Trump once before, she said, at a taping of Saturday Night Live.

Those close to Williams, including one person who knew Williams as early as the mid-1990s, told CNN that Williams had spoken to them about her past relationship with Epstein. City property records show that a trust associated with Epstein purchased a brownstone just off Fifth Avenue in 1992.

After the Christmas party, Williams said on the Zoom call that Epstein “expressed a lot of interest in me, and we started seeing each other.” She told CNN that they would often go on walks, and that Epstein spoke frequently about “Donald.”

At the time, she said, no one around Epstein – a convicted sex offender who died in jail in 2019 before he could face trial on federal sex-trafficking charges – appeared to have knowledge of his predatory behavior. “I wouldn’t have sat down at that table if I’d known what he was up to,” she said.

Trump and Epstein

When she and Epstein left Trump Tower, Williams said that he was silent while they rode down the elevator. Once they got outside, she said Epstein berated her for allowing Trump to touch her.

Afterward, Williams said she felt a “wave of shame” over what had happened.

“I just had this really sickening feeling that it was coordinated, that somehow the whole thing was – I was rolled in there like a piece of meat for some kind of weird, twisted game. And that just made it even worse. And I just couldn’t think about it, face it, talk about it for a very long time,” she said. “I put it in a little box inside of me, turned the key, locked it.”

She said she saw Epstein one or two times after that before breaking things off. “I realized that there was something very dark and disturbing about him, and finally told him to lose my number and stay very far away from me,” she said.

Williams never spoke to Trump again, she said, and avoided the future president in social situations.

“Even though I didn’t talk about it, I do remember that I thought there was any chance he was going to be somewhere, I wouldn’t go,” she said. “It affected me on a on a deep level. I was humiliated.”

She received the Palm Beach postcard signed by Trump and delivered via courier not long after the encounter, though she’s not sure when because her fan mail often piled up at her modeling agency. The postcard manufacturer told CNN that the postcard was likely from the 1990s but did not have records for when it went out of circulation.

Williams’ account of Trump groping her adds to a lengthy list of women who have alleged, since he ran for president in 2016, that he groped, kissed or assaulted them. Trump has repeatedly denied the allegations. One of Trump’s accusers, E. Jean Carroll, won two defamation lawsuits against Trump over the past two years over the former president’s comments disparaging her and denying her rape allegations.

Trump has also long sought to publicly distance himself from Epstein, since he first faced charges related to inappropriate sexual conduct with underage girls in the mid-2000s. There are photographs and videos of the two together in the 1990s and 2000s.

In 2002, Trump told New York Magazine, “I’ve known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy,” adding that Epstein “likes beautiful women as much as I do.”

In July 2019, Epstein was charged with sex trafficking minors, and he died by suicide in a New

York jail cell a month later. After Epstein was charged, Trump told reporters that he did not know about his misconduct.

“I was not a fan of Jeffrey Epstein,” Trump said. “And you watched people yesterday saying that I threw him out of a club. I didn’t want anything to do with him. That was many, many years ago. It shows you one thing: that I have good taste. OK?”

Keeping it quiet

Williams told CNN that she did not tell anyone about her allegations at the time they occurred.

When Trump announced his run for president in 2015, one of Williams’ friends said she went to her house and saw that Williams had put the postcard on her kitchen countertop. Williams told the friend to turn the postcard over, where she saw Trump’s message and signature. Williams then told her that Trump had groped her.

Williams said that she found the postcard in a pile of mementos she’d kept from her modeling days. She did not remember telling friends about the incident, she said, until around 2015 when Trump announced he was running for president.

A person close to Williams said she did not tell her husband, whom she married years after the alleged incident, what had happened. This source said she did share that she had known Epstein years previously.

Williams said she did not believe she shared anything with him about the episode with Trump and Epstein, though she did share some details of her time in the New York modeling world in the 1990s. “He knew I suffered a lot,” she said.

“I prided myself on being kind of tough and fighting back, and that was the one time I didn’t, and I think that’s honestly why I locked that and buried it more than anything else,” Williams said.

A decision to come forward

During Trump’s 2016 campaign, Williams said she chose not to come forward in part for family considerations. After the #MeToo movement in 2017, she said she began to find avenues to begin discussing it. Williams spoke off-the-record to a podcast in 2019 about Epstein, including raising the allegation about Trump, according to a producer of the podcast.

Williams has also posted occasionally on social media accounts in 2020 and 2024 about some

of the details of the incident, though her social media accounts are no longer public.

The former model says that it was a participation in a documentary about the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue that ultimately pushed her to speak out in a more public way. She was interviewed for the documentary in 2022, where she referenced the incident with Trump, though she didn't mention him by name.

That documentary premiered this past weekend. Williams said when she was informed recently that her comment about "the former president" would be included, that prompted her to decide to share her story in a more public way.

"You want to be really, really ready, and I wasn't," she said of coming forward earlier. "I think there's an evolution to contending with your abuse, or these types of incidents, and it doesn't happen overnight."

Williams said she's been a Democratic supporter since high school, and she's been engaged as a Democratic volunteer for decades. Williams also has worked on climate and energy issues, including with a "Clean Tech for Obama" group, which was separate from his campaign, she said. Williams has not spoken with the Harris campaign, according to a spokesperson.

While the election is less than two weeks away, Williams argued that her decision to speak out now was not driven by the presidential campaign, but by the timing of the documentary's release.

At the same time, she made clear on the "Survivors for Kamala" call her feelings about Trump's presidential campaign – and said that she hoped others would be inspired by her story not to support him.

"The thought of that monster being back in the White House is my absolute worst nightmare," she said.

This story has been updated with additional comment from a Trump campaign spokeswoman.

CNN's Scott Glover contributed to this report.

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