

House Oversight Committee seeks testimony from prison guard on duty when Jeffrey Epstein died

Tova Noel was working the night when authorities said that the notorious sex offender killed himself in his jail cell and said she believed she was the last person to see him alive.



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House committee in Epstein case calls for testimony of prison guard working night of his death

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By Dareh Gregorian

The House Oversight Committee [is seeking to interview](#) a former federal prison guard who has said she believes she is the last person to have seen [Jeffrey Epstein](#) alive.

The committee asked for testimony from [Tova Noel](#) as part of its investigation into the late sex offender after documents released by the Justice Department suggested she was googling her notorious inmate shortly before he was found dead in his cell.

“Due to public reporting, documents released by the Department of Justice, and documents obtained by the Committee, the Committee believes you have information that will assist in its investigation,” Rep. James Comer, R-Ky. and the chair of the committee, [wrote Noel in a letter Friday](#). Comer asked that she sit for a transcribed interview with the committee on March 26.

Noel, an Army veteran who had previously worked as a mail carrier, was working at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York as a correctional officer for the Bureau of Prisons on the morning in 2019 when Epstein was found dead in his cell. New York City’s [medical examiner called his death a suicide](#).

Noel and her partner that night, Michael Thomas, were supposed to be checking on Epstein, who was awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges and had previously attempted suicide, every 30 minutes.

Both admitted to not making those checks to investigators, and were charged with falsifying records that said they had. The criminal charges were [later dropped](#) under the terms of a deferred prosecution agreement that required community service and cooperation with a Justice Department inspector general review of the circumstances of Epstein’s death.

Prosecutors had said the pair were surfing the net and sleeping during the eight-hour period when they were supposed to be making their checks, and records released under the Epstein Files Transparency Act showed that Noel had allegedly searched online about the “latest” on Epstein shortly before his body was found on the morning of Aug. 10, 2019.

Noel was asked about the search during a 2021 interview with the DOJ inspector general’s office. Asked if she remembered looking up information on Epstein, she said, “No. I don’t remember doing that.”

She said the webpage that loaded when the computer was turned on often had news about the politically connected financier, but she hadn’t actively looked him up that morning.

“Does it surprise you to hear that, you know, internet searches would show that that’s what you were doing from 5:42 to 5:52 a.m. on August 10, 2019?” Noel was asked.

“Yeah,” she responded, because “it wouldn’t be accurate.”

A [forensic report](#) on the prison computers released by the Justice Department showed she twice searched "latest on Epstein in jail" at the times she was asked about. At 5:53, she searched "latest on omar amararat," another inmate at the jail who was awaiting sentencing on [fraud charges](#).

At 6:17 a.m., she searched for "law enforcement discounts," the review said.

Epstein was found dead in his cell at about 6:30 a.m.

Asked who the last person was to see him alive, Noel said, "I would guess me."

In an interview earlier this week with [Fox News](#), Comer said the committee wanted to ask Noel about the internet search and about money transfers she was receiving around that time, including one for \$5,000 that a bank had flagged as being suspicious.

"That's a mystery there, and that's something that, according to the DOJ documents, they never looked into, never asked her about," Comer said.

"No one is accusing her of any wrongdoing, but we have a lot of questions about Epstein," he added.

Attorneys who represented Noel in the falsifying records case did not immediately respond to a request for comment. 



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