

Meet the Woman Who Stands to Inherit Much of Jeffrey Epstein's Fortune

Karyna Shuliak, 37, is a complicated and unusual figure in the disgraced financier's world who has been trying to blend into obscurity since his death.

•



By [Matthew Goldstein](#) and [Sharon Otterman](#)

The young dentist was smiling and soft-spoken, wearing a Columbia University fleece jacket and holding her long hair back with a clip. She was introduced by her assistant simply as “Dr. Karyna.”

But what the patient — who had come to the office in December expecting to see a different dentist — didn’t know was that she was being treated by Dr. Karyna Shuliak, the notorious sex offender Jeffrey Epstein’s girlfriend.

Dr. Shuliak was the [last person](#) Mr. Epstein called before he killed himself in his jail cell in 2019. She could [inherit](#) as much as \$100 million from his estate, including a 33-carat diamond ring, according to a trove of investigative records released by federal authorities.

But on that winter day, Dr. Shuliak was working as a part-time dentist in an unremarkable office in Downtown Brooklyn, according to dentists who work or used to work at the practice.

Her attempt to forge something of a normal life, though, was soon shattered when the Justice Department released three million pages of investigative files and emails it had gathered on Mr. Epstein. The files, released in late January, included thousands of intimate emails between Dr. Shuliak and Mr. Epstein and dozens of photographs of her and of them together.

Suddenly, their nearly eight-year relationship was on vivid display for all to see. They had fights about sex — with both wanting more at different times. She placed orders to a sexual wellness company for couples. She periodically sent him links to graphic pornographic videos. In some emails they discussed birth control pills and acne medications and treatments.

Dr. Shuliak, 37, emerges as a complicated and unusual figure in Mr. Epstein’s world, based on a close review of the files and conversations with several people familiar with her. A native of Belarus who met Mr. Epstein when she was 21, she has not identified herself as a victim, nor have federal authorities

considered her a co-conspirator [in Mr. Epstein's sex trafficking](#). There is no indication that the Federal Bureau of Investigation ever interviewed her, and lawyers for hundreds of his victims have never deposed her.

He once called her his [“favorite”](#) and often told her he loved her. She had free [use of a credit card](#) to buy whatever she wanted. They jetted around the world together, and he funneled payments of nearly \$1 million to her over the years. He also sent tens of thousands of dollars to her parents in Belarus, the files reveal.

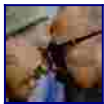
Editors' Picks



[‘In This City, Breakfast Orders Are Not Taken Lightly’](#)



[Let's Get Loud: These 19 Extra-Crunchy Recipes Hit The Spot Every Time](#)



[A Once Outlawed Māori Art Form Is Alive and in the Flesh](#)



Image

Jeffrey Epstein and Dr. Karyna Shuliak at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Credit...Department of Justice

Over the years, she earned enough of his trust to help manage his properties and staff and even [played a critical role](#) in his effort to buy a Moroccan palace just weeks before his 2019 arrest.

Mr. Epstein controlled the relationship, but there is little doubt she benefited from it professionally, personally and financially.

The emails reveal new details about how Mr. Epstein helped her get into Columbia University's dental school — and how he helped her obtain U.S. citizenship by [asking one of his female victims](#) to marry her.

[In one email](#) he suggested that the fastest “way to a green card” was through a same-sex marriage.

This year, [congressional Democrats](#) accused Mr. Epstein of exploiting the immigration system and called out Dr. Shuliak's marriage to an American woman, which ended in divorce, as a potentially “illusory” one. U.S. immigration authorities have not challenged the process through which Dr. Shuliak obtained her citizenship.

As of this spring, Dr. Shuliak had been living in the Upper East Side condo building in which Mr. Epstein's brother, Mark, has a financial stake.

Through her lawyer, she declined to comment.

In a brief interview, Mark Epstein said, “I only wish that woman the best.”

A friend of Dr. Shuliak's from Belarus, who once shared an apartment with her in Brooklyn and asked not be named to protect her privacy, said she believed Dr. Shuliak “truly loved” Jeffrey Epstein.

‘Go Slow’

Karyna Shuliak had lived in New York for only nine months when she met Mr. Epstein in late March 2011.

She had moved from Belarus on a temporary student visa to study English at a school in Manhattan. She was making about \$15 an hour as a dental assistant and applying for waitressing jobs while she tried to figure out how to continue the dental education she had begun in Belarus.

A young woman from Siberia would introduce her to Mr. Epstein, the files show. The woman said in an interview with The New York Times that she had periodically been expected to recruit other young women, presumably to provide Mr. Epstein with sexualized massages. And that appeared to be Mr. Epstein's intention with Dr. Shuliak.

The woman, who asked not to be named because she said Mr. Epstein had abused her, had sent Mr. Epstein a photo of Dr. Shuliak, describing her as pretty. After some back and forth, it was decided that the woman, Dr. Shuliak and her roommate from Belarus would meet Mr. Epstein at his Manhattan mansion.

“Go slow,” the woman [advised Mr. Epstein in an email](#).

Their first encounters fit the familiar pattern he used with other women. Mr. Epstein flattered, pampered and tried to manipulate her, the files show. Almost immediately, he offered to help her realize her dream of becoming a dentist.

Image



Almost immediately after meeting Dr. Shuliak, Mr. Epstein offered to help her realize her dream of becoming a dentist. Credit...Department of Justice

But the emails show that Dr. Shuliak pushed back — at least in the first few months.

A few weeks after they met, she wrote to Mr. Epstein, telling him she thought he was a [“remarkable person.”](#) But she added that she could not accept his help “due to some views which strongly stay in my mind, no matter how stupid it may look.”

“I wish you all the best and apologize if I wasted your time,” she added.

Though she doesn’t specify what upset her, their introduction occurred after Mr. Epstein had pleaded guilty in Florida to a charge of soliciting prostitution from an underage teenager and had been accused of abusing dozens of other teenagers.

His response was to berate her for listening to “rumors and stories.”

[She responded:](#) “This world is very cruel sometimes and in most cases we have to pay a certain price for things. I should say that I have read some information about you.”

Mr. Epstein, who was 58 at the time, did not take no for an answer. The emails released by federal prosecutors show that he bought Dr. Shuliak and her roommate tickets to see “The Lion King” on Broadway and dinners at restaurants. He treated her to a scenic helicopter ride around Manhattan. By

July 2011, she had visited his New Mexico ranch; a few months later, his private island residence in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

‘You Are the Purest Man’

Ever since she was a child, Dr. Shuliak wanted to be a dentist.

She was inspired by her own family’s dental problems and what she saw as the poor dental health in Belarus, she wrote in an admissions essay to dental school reviewed by The Times. She had completed four of five years of dental school in Minsk, but stopped her studies to go to New York.

By the winter of 2012, she accepted Mr. Epstein’s help to get into dental school. After Columbia’s College of Dental Medicine initially rejected her, Mr. Epstein asked his own dentist, Dr. Thomas J. Magnani, a powerful alumnus, to put him in contact with the dental school dean. Mr. Epstein dangled the idea of making up to a [\\$10 million donation](#). In the end, he would [give only about \\$210,000](#) to Columbia, according to an accounting by the university, but it was enough to grease the wheels.

The Justice Department files include a text message chain showing how Dr. Magnani and Dr. James Fine, a dental school administrator, gave Dr. Shuliak a [heads-up on the topics](#) she would encounter during an admissions exam in April 2012 to test her practical skills as a transfer student. Neither Dr. Magnani nor Dr. Fine responded to a request for comment.

After she passed and Columbia admitted her, Mr. Epstein arranged for Dr. Shuliak’s mother to visit from Belarus. He would pay her tuition for her three years of school.

“You are the purest man out of all men,” Dr. Shuliak wrote to him in June 2012.

“All your love and care, my parents, school, apartment. THANK YOU SOOO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING!!!”

They fought at times over his insistence on having sex with other women in their 20s, including with the small group of assistants who did chores for him and whom he [referred to as his “family,”](#) according to the emails.

“I understand you need it, [however these are the things](#) that don’t feel natural to me, it feels somewhat dirty to me,” she wrote to him in August 2012.

Nowhere in the Justice Department files that were reviewed by The Times does Dr. Shuliak express a broader ethical concern about how he was treating those other women, many of whom would later claim to be victims of his abuse. Instead, she asked Mr. Epstein to keep his relations with those women out of her sight.

“If that is not a lot to ask, please enjoy it but keep me away from it,” she wrote. “I will stay with you no matter what, as long as you are happy. I love you.”

Getting a Green Card

By the time she applied to Columbia in 2012, Dr. Shuliak had overstayed the student visa she obtained in 2010.

In early 2013, Mr. Epstein found a solution to keep her in the country, the files show. Two years earlier, New York became one of the first states to legalize same-sex marriage. Mr. Epstein [concluded](#) that a marriage in New York between two women might be the easiest way to gain U.S. citizenship without raising red flags that the marriage was arranged solely to avoid deportation.

Mr. Epstein chose, from the ranks of his assistants, a 30-year-old woman from Minnesota to be her spouse.

Brad Edwards, the lawyer for the woman, said that his client was a victim of Mr. Epstein and that he could not speak about her situation. But he said that, as a general rule, “nobody was permitted or dared ever to disobey Jeffrey Epstein.”

The emails show that [Mr. Epstein instructed](#) the woman to meet Dr. Shuliak on the morning of Sept. 16, 2013, at the New York City Marriage Bureau. She was told to have her bags packed so she could immediately fly to the Virgin Islands after getting the marriage license, while Dr. Shuliak would stay behind to attend her dental school classes.

The women were [married three weeks later](#) at the Office of the City Clerk. Photos were taken of the ceremony.

Image



Dr. Shuliak holding the arms of the woman she married in 2013 at their wedding ceremony. The Times is obscuring the image of the woman, who has claimed to be one of Mr. Epstein's victims. Credit... Department of Justice

After the wedding, a Brooklyn immigration lawyer working for Mr. Epstein submitted an immigration form stating that the woman wanted to list Dr. Shuliak as her wife and beneficiary. The request was approved, and immigration officials dismissed Dr. Shuliak's pending deportation proceedings.

Months after the marriage, Dr. Shuliak got a green card, making her a lawful resident.

Outwardly, the marriage had signs of legitimacy. The two women shared an apartment in the Upper East Side building that was partly owned by Mr. Epstein's brother and where Mr. Epstein had housed many of his assistants. They had a joint bank account at Deutsche Bank and went on trips together to London, Europe and Japan.

In May 2018, she [officially became a U.S. citizen](#). A year later Dr. Shuliak and her spouse divorced. [According to a report](#) released this year by Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Dr. Shuliak's former wife claimed she had been forced into marriage. The woman, in a statement to the Epstein estate, said she had not known that the wedding had been scheduled just days before Dr. Shuliak's deportation hearing.

The report concluded that the marriage may have been done to provide Dr. Shuliak with the "legal basis to continue residing in the United States." It did not recommend any legal challenge to her citizenship.

'I Met Epstein's Girlfriend'

In early 2019, Dr. Shuliak and Mr. Epstein seemed every bit a couple. She was living most of the time in his New York mansion and took along her cat, Blueberry, when they traveled together.

She had become a licensed dentist in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Florida and New Mexico after completing dental school in 2015. But there is no evidence that she had much of a practice, even though the files [detail dental equipment](#) installed at some of his residences. Instead, she spent much of her energy helping to manage his properties and staff.

Image



Dr. Shuliak's dental office in Mr. Epstein's residence in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Credit...Department of Justice

No task seemed too small. She [instructed his drivers](#) to keep “cold Voss water” in Mr. Epstein’s cars, [organized a floral installation](#) for his Manhattan mansion, [ordered a shipping container](#) filled with outdoor furniture for his island and [managed repairs and cleaning schedules](#) for the Upper East Side apartments that his brother was invested in.

In mid-June 2019, the pair traveled together to Paris, where Mr. Epstein had an apartment. On July 6, Mr. Epstein returned home to the United States, while Dr. Shuliak remained in Europe. When his plane touched down at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, federal agents were waiting and arrested him.

About a month after his arrest, in a 20-minute [phone call](#) from a jail in Lower Manhattan, Mr. Epstein told Dr. Shuliak that the federal sex-trafficking charges would take longer to resolve than he had thought. He advised her to find another place to stay for the time being, according to an account of the call provided by her lawyer to federal authorities. The lawyer, Maurice Sercarz, said he had told her “to be strong.”

The next morning, Aug. 10, 2019, Mr. Epstein was found to have died by suicide in his jail cell.

Shortly before his death, Mr. Epstein amended his will to leave to her much of the \$600 million fortune he had at the time, including the large diamond ring “in contemplation of marriage,” according to a handwritten [note on a related document](#). But how much she will actually receive is unclear. The estate is worth between \$120 million and \$200 million after paying out large sums to his victims, records

show. There are dozens of beneficiaries in addition to Dr. Shuliak, including Mark Epstein's children, who stand to inherit \$10 million.

Yet despite this potential windfall, Dr. Shuliak did not give up on her desire to be a dentist. By 2023, she was back in New York applying for a postdoctoral dental program at Columbia, apparently to fulfill a requirement she needed to obtain a license to practice in the state.

The same two dentists who helped her gain admission to Columbia in 2012 [once again](#) came to her assistance, according to a copy of her admissions file reviewed by The Times. The file shows that Dr. Fine, the dean overseeing Columbia's postgraduate residency programs, created a special "faculty internship" for her at the Midtown Manhattan dental practice he shared with Dr. Magnani.

Both men gave her their highest recommendation for the program, which she graduated from [in May 2025](#) along with six other students. In November, she received her [dental license](#) to practice in New York.

In the aftermath of the release of the Epstein files, Columbia [demoted Dr. Fine](#) and [removed Dr. Magnani](#) from his alumni leadership posts. The men declined to comment. The university did not recommend any consequences for Dr. Shuliak, who it said had met the qualifications for admission.

At around the same time as she received her New York dental license, Dr. Shuliak answered a want ad on Indeed.com for a part-time job as a dentist in Downtown Brooklyn, according to a dentist with the practice, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss workplace issues. It was there that Yoonhae Kim, a patient, was treated by her twice, for a cleaning in December and a filling in February.

Ms. Kim said she hadn't realized Dr. Shuliak's true identity until she saw photographs of her released with the Epstein files. Feeling duped because she was not informed of Dr. Shuliak's full name and wanting to warn other patients, she reached out to The Times.

"I was so upset," Ms. Kim said. "I just couldn't believe it. Of all the things that happened to me, I didn't win the lottery. I met Epstein's girlfriend."

Dr. Shuliak's last day working at the Brooklyn office was Feb. 12. She was supposed to work on Feb. 16, but she called in sick and never returned. The notoriety from the files probably made it difficult for her to keep working there, the dentist at the practice said. Dr. Shuliak's lawyer declined to say whether she had gotten another dental job.

Kitty Bennett and Georgia Gee contributed research.

[Matthew Goldstein](#) is a Times reporter who covers Wall Street and white-collar crime and housing issues.

[Sharon Otterman](#) is a Times reporter covering higher education, public health and other issues facing New York City.

A version of this article appears in print on July 26, 2026, Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: The Woman Who Became Epstein's Heir. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

See more on: [Jeffrey Epstein](#)

- Share full article
 -
-

More on the Epstein Files

- **Gates Foundation:** A review by an outside law firm hired by the organization [found that it did not participate in Jeffrey Epstein's crimes](#), but it investigated only the philanthropy and not Bill Gates or his private office.
- **Top Lawyer Testifies:** Kathryn Ruemmler, the former general counsel of Goldman Sachs, [testified in a closed-door congressional hearing](#) investigating Jeffery Epstein. She said Epstein “was a masterful liar.”
- **Should Epstein's Friends Be Punished?:** At Harvard, students, alumni and professors debate whether a storied campus group [should cut ties with one of Epstein's closest associates](#), and whether Harvard itself should do the same.
- **Congressional Investigation:** The House Oversight Committee [issued two subpoenas to Leon Black](#), the private equity billionaire, after he refused to answer questions about nondisclosure agreements he had signed with women, some of whom had been linked to Jeffrey Epstein.

Related Content