

Bill Gates's familiarity with 'abhorrent' Epstein killed our marriage, says Melinda



Melinda French Gates and ex-husband Bill. Photo: Getty

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Bill Gates's familiarity with "evil and abhorrent" [Jeffrey Epstein](#) was a factor in Melinda French Gates's decision to divorce the Microsoft founder, she revealed yesterday.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the couple announced their split in May last year, Ms French Gates (57) said she "made it very clear" how uncomfortable she felt with her then-husband's interactions with the convicted paedophile, but that the warning appeared to fall on deaf ears.

"It was not one thing, it was many things. I did not like that he had meetings with Jeffrey Epstein," she said, when asked why they broke up.

Ms French Gates told *CBS Mornings* she went to meet Epstein because she "wanted to see who this man was".

"I regretted it from the second I stepped in the door," she said. "He was abhorrent. He was evil personified. I had nightmares about it afterwards."

It is not known when the meeting took place. Ms French Gates added: "My heart breaks for these young women because that's how I felt. Here I'm an older woman. God, I feel terrible for those young women. It's awful."

Mr Gates (66) struck up a relationship with Epstein after the financier was convicted of sex crimes, and the pair met numerous times, including at Epstein's New York townhouse.

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Mr Gates wrote in an email to colleagues after their first meeting in 2011: "His lifestyle is very different and kind of intriguing although it would not work for me."

The pair met a number of times in New York, were seen in conversation at a TED conference in California, and Mr Gates, unknowingly according to his spokesman, flew on Epstein's jet to Palm Beach, Florida.

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He is not accused of any wrongdoing.

Ms French Gates said: "I did not like that he had meetings with Jeffrey Epstein. I made it very clear how I felt about him."

Asked whether he listened to her concerns, Ms French Gates said: "Any of the questions remaining about what Bill's relationship there was - those are for Bill to answer. But I made it very clear how I felt about him."

Mr Gates told CNN last summer: "I had several dinners with him, hoping that what he said about getting billions of philanthropy for global health through contacts that he had might emerge. When it looked like that wasn't a real thing, that relationship ended. It was a huge mistake to spend time with him, to give him the credibility. I made a mistake."

The couple's \$140bn (€127bn) divorce came after 27 years of marriage, saying that it was "irretrievably broken".

It emerged shortly afterwards that Microsoft was investigating a complaint alleging that Mr Gates had "sought to initiate an intimate relationship" with a female employee in 2000. The investigation ended after Mr Gates left the board, but Microsoft said the two were not linked. Mr Gates's spokesman said at the time: "There was an affair almost 20 years ago which ended amicably. Bill's decision to transition off the board was in no way related to this."

In her interview, Ms French Gates also sidestepped a question on whether her husband had multiple affairs, saying: "I think those are questions Bill needs to answer."

Mr Gates has not responded to claims of multiple affairs.

Describing their current relationship, she said: "We certainly have a working relationship. I would say we have a friendly relationship at this point." (© Telegraph Media Group Ltd 2022)

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