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## Epstein Memo Sparks Tensions Within Trump's Base

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The release of a Justice Department and FBI memo last week, dismissing long-standing conspiracy theories surrounding Jeffrey Epstein, has ignited a firestorm among supporters of President Donald Trump. The document, which found no evidence of a list of powerful men involved in Epstein's alleged sex trafficking network and confirmed his death as suicide, has driven a wedge between Trump and some of his most loyal followers.

For years, Trump and his inner circle fuelled speculation about Epstein, promising revelations that would expose a shadowy elite. Yet the memo's findings have left many in the MAGA movement feeling betrayed, as it directly contradicts their expectations. This fallout has created a rare rift, testing the loyalty of a base that has long hung on Trump's every word.

The memo's release has exposed fault lines within Trump's camp. At a heated meeting last Wednesday, FBI Director Kash Patel and Deputy Director Dan Bongino faced scrutiny over claims the FBI sought to release more Epstein-related information but was blocked by the Justice Department. Bongino, now serving as Deputy Director of the FBI, reportedly considered resigning, missing work on Friday. When asked about Bongino's status, Trump told reporters on Sunday, "I think so," adding that he had spoken to him and "he's in good shape."

Patel, who previously amplified Epstein-related conspiracies, took to social media on Saturday to affirm his commitment to the administration, admitting, "The conspiracy theories just aren't true, never have been." This reversal has done little to quell the discontent among supporters.

Attorney General Pamela Bondi, who repeatedly pledged to release Epstein documents, has faced the brunt of the backlash. Despite her promises, the lack of a "smoking gun" has led to accusations of betrayal. Trump, however, has stood by Bondi, offering public support via a Truth Social post on Saturday: "What's going on with my boys and in some cases, gals? They're all going after Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is doing a FANTASTIC JOB! We're on one team, MAGA, and I don't like what's happening." He further invited Bondi to join him at the Copa America final in New Jersey on Sunday, a public gesture of solidarity.

The frustration spilt over at the Turning Point USA Student Action Summit in Tampa, Florida, where prominent conservative figures voiced their anger. Megyn Kelly, speaking at the event on Friday, accused Bondi of misleading the public: "She's never missed an opportunity to dangle sweet nothings that something's coming on Epstein, and it was a tease. You either believe she was telling the truth then, or now, but both cannot be true."

Florida Republican Representative Anna Paulina Luna issued a stark warning: "Pam, if you can't do your job, we'll find someone who will." Others, like YouTuber Brandon Tatum, suggested Epstein's activities implicated "a whole lot of people," including potential allies.

Steve Bannon, a former Trump adviser, called Epstein “the key that picks the lock on so many things, not just individuals, but also institutions.”

At the summit, Fox News host Laura Ingraham polled the crowd, asking how many were satisfied with the Epstein investigation’s outcome. The silence was deafening. Ordinary supporters echoed this sentiment. “I don’t think people are going to be quiet until they do it,” said Lisa Britt in an interview with CNN’s Donie O’Sullivan. Another attendee, Taylor Sharp, added, “There are two things President Trump lied about: One was that the Epstein files would come out, and they’re not out yet. They need to come out.”

Trump has attempted to shift blame, pointing fingers at previous UK governments and Democrats in the US for failing to release Epstein’s files earlier. “Why didn’t these Radical Left Lunatics release the Epstein Files?” he wrote on Truth Social, claiming Epstein is “somebody that nobody cares about.” Yet this deflection has failed to satisfy his base, who see the issue as a litmus test of Trump’s commitment to transparency.

Privately, Trump has worked to mend fences, calling critics of Bondi to urge restraint, according to three sources familiar with the matter. His inner circle has also reached out to vocal detractors, assuring them Bondi’s position is secure for now. However, the unrest suggests a broader challenge: as Trump’s influence remains strong, this episode hints at how the MAGA movement might evolve independently of its leader.

The Epstein saga has exposed a rare moment of vulnerability for Trump, as his base demands answers he may not be able to provide. Whether this marks a turning point for the movement remains to be seen, but for now, the tension is palpable.