

Jackson, a senior journalist at Maxwell's *Daily Mirror*, says he saw Ghislaine shredding documents aboard her father's yacht shortly after his death. The Maxwells denied this, but Jackson has never retracted his version. Whatever her impulses were after Maxwell died, one thing cannot be disputed: Ghislaine was heartbroken. One friend described her as 'catastrophic' with grief. Rupert Fairfax said: 'She worshipped him. He was not just her father, he was her hero. Then, as well as having to cope with losing him, she had to cope with everything people were saying about him.'

Maxwell's death came when Ghislaine was getting over the break-up of her four-year romance with Count Gianfranco Cicogna, a member of the Ciga hotel clan. The dashing and urbane Cicogna was credited by Ghislaine's friends with helping her shake off the frumpy image she had at Oxford. 'He told her what to wear, where to get her hair cut – everything,' said one.

With her father dead and Cicogna gone, Ghislaine turned up in New York, the town she was to conquer. She rented a one-bedroom flat on the Upper East Side and began to reinvent herself. She was far from destitute. Her father had bought her a pretty mews house in South Kensington which, in 1992, was valued at £500,000. She also had a trust fund that provided her with £80,000 a year, at that time more than the prime minister earned. And she was a knockout, with deadly charm and, perhaps most importantly, a bulging filofax. In London, she had suffered for her father's crimes. One estimate of the money missing from his companies was £727 million. In New York she was a celebrity, with an address book full of the names of rich and famous friends. Robert Maxwell was a determined soldier, ruthless and, by his own admission, an unflinching killer. His daughter, in whose dark beauty the old tyrant can still be discerned, was not about to succumb to guilt by association. She hit the phone. Soon, she was being seen at all the smart parties. Men adored her. She talked dirty in a British boarding-school accent, peppered her Rabelaisian asides with an occasional four-letter word. She once brought dinner-party chatter to a standstill when she announced she was planning to remove all her body hair. Then, about a year after her father's death, she was photographed boarding Concorde at Heathrow, heading back to New York. There was outrage. Maxwell's retirees had just been told their pension payments were being stopped. How could the evil crook's daughter spend £2,000 on a plane ticket while that was happening? In fact, she

didn't spend the money. Her ticket was bought by the soft-spoken grey-haired American who, unnoticed by the photographers, boarded the plane with her. This was Jeffrey Epstein, then a shadowy figure whose copious supply of money baffled everyone. What did he do? Some thought he was a bounty hunter, recovering vast sums owed to the very rich. Others said he was a property developer. Or a financier. The question has never been satisfactorily answered. To this day, no one really knows where Epstein gets his money. But there is an awful lot of it. He lives in what is believed to be Manhattan's largest private residence, a house once owned by the Macy family, spanning more than 50,000 square feet. He also has a 7,500-acre ranch in New Mexico, a 70-acre island in the US Virgin Islands and a house in Palm Beach, Florida, which is said to be worth around £3 million. He has a helicopter and an executive jet and he either owns or has access to a Boeing 727. He used the Boeing to fly ex-president Bill Clinton, actors Kevin Spacey and Chris Tucker and others to Africa to investigate AIDS and poverty. When Ghislaine met Epstein, he was in his late 30s and had just been named *Comopolitan's* bachelor of the month. Given his money and screen-star looks, one can see why. But Epstein had something else Ghislaine found irresistible. He is frighteningly clever. He started out as a maths teacher at an exclusive private school and

Below, from left: Ghislaine with, from left, Indigo, Sophie Dahl and Amy Sacco; Naomi Campbell, Donald Trump and Melania Knauss; and Tim Jeffries

Bottom right: Tim Jeffries