

Confidential: To be enclosed under seal

October 9, 2020

Victim Impact Statement of Camila
USA v. Raniere et al
1:18-CR-00204

My name is Camila. Most people call me Cami. As for the man I am here to speak about, I will not say his name. I will only call him “he.” He doesn’t deserve anything more than that. I don’t want to allow his name back into my life.

I understand there are charges in this case that concern me, and that my name has been mentioned repeatedly throughout the trial. But I was not here, and my voice was not heard. The man you are about to sentence had a deep impact on my life that I am not sure I can fully quantify or qualify. It has taken a long time for me to process the trauma caused by his attempts to control my mind and my world, and his efforts to replace my voice with his own. He screwed with my mind for so long that finding the strength and clarity to tell my story has been a slow and difficult journey. And I still have a long road ahead.

But as I heal, I remember that I am someone’s daughter, sister, and friend. And if my daughter, sister, or friend lived through the experiences that he subjected me to, I would find it absolutely unacceptable. He wanted me to believe that my only value came from how he felt about me. I now realize I am stronger than he ever allowed me to think I was. He tried to control me because he knew that the knowledge I had about him—and his actions towards me—made him vulnerable. During his trial, I was advised by my former lawyer—[REDACTED]—not to speak with the government and to stay invisible. But I have recognized the power I hold and I am ready to reclaim my voice and stand up for myself.

I met him when I was just thirteen. From the start, I did not feel comfortable around him. I would even try to avoid being in the same room as him, but the adults around me would get upset at me for being “rude” and push me back towards him. This felt like a violation of what I wanted and what my gut was warning me. The first time I was left to have a conversation alone with him, we talked about how I had placed second in my eighth grade Spelling Bee contest. I continued to avoid him after that for some time, but years later he told me he knew I was “special” from the time he first met me at thirteen.

He first had sex with me on September 18, 2005. He would expect me to celebrate September 18th as our anniversary every year. That first time, I was fifteen. He was forty-five. This was after a few months of walks in the middle of the night, where he would bring up topics of a sexual nature, escalating in detail over time, and asked me explicit questions about my sexual history (of which I had none). He told me to keep it all a secret, immediately severing me from my family and friends, and effectively making himself my only resource.

Beginning at that time, he would ask me to sneak out of the house that I was living in to meet him in places where we were isolated from everyone else so that we could have sex. He would often take me to his “executive library,” [REDACTED]. During these secret meetings, when I was still fifteen, he took naked pictures of me. The experience of being photographed is seared into

my memory. As a fifteen year old, that is not something you easily forget. We had sexual contact during every meeting we ever had; when he took the photos was no exception.

While he hid our sexual relationship from others, he explained it to me by telling me I was “very mature for my age.” And I know now that it was false—I was a child. I also know that it was no excuse to rob me of my youth, or to interfere with my life the way he did. He used my innocence to do whatever he wanted with me—not just sexually but also psychologically. He manipulated me into what he wanted, for his own reasons—for his own pleasure.

He was calculated and methodical in the way he tricked me into a “relationship,” and the way he manipulated me for over a decade of my life. Today, I still have trouble identifying the line between a normal relationship and an abusive one. Even the times with him that could have been perceived as smooth and conflict-free, I now realize were the other side of the abuse. I had to become good at figuring out how to stay in his good graces by pleasing him and doing exactly what he wanted me to do. And I did—I became the best. He had made himself my only lifeline and I was not going to mess with that. Survival is instinctive, even in the most twisted circumstances.

He was involved in and controlled every aspect of my life. When I was seventeen, he directed that I overstay my visa. At the time, I was too young to understand why he wanted this to happen, but I now realize that he was using my status and its lapse to strip all options from me and, in doing so, deprive me of my freedom. I was not old enough to consciously consent or understand how he was taking away my rights. I regret listening to him and trusting him. I regret so much.

In 2011, he put me up in an apartment in the neighborhood. It was clear that just like our relationship, no one could know about it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As a result of my living situation, and the secrecy surrounding it, I became even more isolated and withdrawn. My family and friends described me as “mysterious.” While at first they were curious and inquisitive about my life, eventually, they stopped asking. I became unreachable to my parents, my brother, and my friends, until I had no one that would worry about me, no friends to check up on me. I felt abandoned for the longest time. I didn’t see it then but he cut me off from anyone who could ever help me.

In addition to manipulating me into a sexual relationship, he emotionally and psychologically abused me. I battle with the effects of his manipulation to this day. He exerted an intense amount of pressure on me regarding my weight, which resulted in an eating disorder that has become a lifelong battle and has caused me ongoing health problems. When I was fifteen, I was a normal teenager who had a normal relationship with food and exercise. But he destroyed that. From the time we started having sex, he would ask me my weight every single day. This continued into my adulthood. His goal for me was to be one hundred pounds or less. Today, I try not to think about my weight, but I still hear his voice in my head and it is a daily struggle.

[REDACTED]

Each attempt to distance myself from him was met with resistance. The worst part started when I tried to break up with him. I wanted a normal life and to be in a normal relationship. I believed him when he had said before, “if you ever want to go, I will support you,” but when I tried to leave I learned that was a lie.

[REDACTED] He punished me emotionally, psychologically, and sexually. I had no one I could reach out to for help. He acted happy, loving, and caring when I showed signs of falling back in line, but as soon as I expressed again a desire to leave, he’d become a monster. He knew the things that mattered most to me, and what I feared, and used both to control me.

He drove me to the point of a suicide attempt with his cruel mind games. That night, when he

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I hold scars on my body from him that can never be erased. They carry immense emotional and psychological pain. They are a reminder of his cruelty and manipulation. He knew exactly what he was doing, even asking me at some point if having his initials on my body would keep me from being with other people. He drew pleasure from knowing he had marked me—I was his. Even when I got a tattoo to cover his mark, it was not enough to disguise the pain and shame it reminds me of.

I left in 2017 thanks to my sister. When I walked away, I had the mind of a fifteen-year-old in the body of a twenty-seven-year old. I missed out on incredibly basic things people learn in their youth, so I was completely unarmed and unable to cope. Even after I left, I was still constrained by him. I was distrustful of almost everyone, including my own family, and sometimes had moments of confusion where I felt unsure it was right of me to leave. I felt completely alone. Because of him, I lacked documentation of legal status, even in Mexico. Because of him I had no formal work experience and no higher education, which has severely constrained my

ability to find work. It's hard to explain to potential employers how I came to suddenly enter the workforce at twenty-nine, with such a limited resume and no references.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As I write this statement, the gravity of what he did to me becomes more and more clear. He hid his abuse behind ideas and concepts of nobility. I only now see that there was nothing noble about abusing children, abusing his authority, and taking advantage of my natural inclination, as a child, to trust adults. He demanded loyalty but was loyal to no one but himself. He left me weak, confused, and completely unprepared for life outside of his control. He claimed to build me up—to love me selflessly—yet he kept me blind and lost, controlling everything around me, including my perception of the world and myself. It has been difficult to rebuild myself, but not impossible: I am and will continue to grow stronger than he ever allowed me to know I was.

[REDACTED]

He lied in an attempt to save himself. He talks himself in circles trying to redefine principles so that they justify his actions. But if he truly believed the principles he claimed to live by, he would have honored those and told the truth instead of refusing to take accountability for the pain and harm he has caused. As such, I ask the Court to take my twelve years of abuse, and the effects of that abuse that I continue to experience today, into consideration in sentencing him.

The hardest part of my story is over: I made it out. Now I need to do my story justice. I cannot stand idly by. I will not let somebody else tell my story. That is why I'm here. To prevent him from almost destroying someone ever again.