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February 14, 2023

David K. Bertan  
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41 East 11th Street, 11th Floor  
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Jill R. Shellow  
Law Offices of Jill R. Shellow  
15 Chester Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10601

Re: *United States v. Ray*, 20 Cr. 110 (LJL) (S.D.N.Y.)

Dear David and Jill:

We write on behalf of our client, Claudia Drury, and enclose her statement regarding sentencing in the above-captioned action. *See* Exhibit A. She requests that her statement be read aloud at the February 22, 2023 sentencing of Isabella Pollok.

Sincerely,

/s/ Rachel Sparks Bradley  
Rachel Sparks Bradley

# **EXHIBIT A**

Statement of Claudia Drury Regarding Sentencing of Isabella Pollok

I want to start by saying I have been thinking about and trying to understand the role Isabella played in my life since the day she was charged. Before that day, I considered her only a victim, and I was deeply upset to hear charges had been brought against her. At the time, I called it a miscarriage of justice. Over the course of the next two years, as I learned more about her involvement with Larry and how she viewed me, my opinions changed. I became very conflicted and remain conflicted. I still don't know exactly how I feel or what I think. I recognize this situation is not black and white, and that the line between being unable and being able to think for oneself is both unclear and shifting. I recognize that Isabella is not simply a victim and understanding her role in things is very complicated.

Nevertheless, I have been able to come to some conclusions, after many months of rumination and discussion, that I think are important in respect to her sentencing.

I do not believe she had a choice in who she became in the hands of Larry Ray. I believe that he specifically encouraged, groomed and conditioned callousness and meanness into her personality, while making her not only believe but know, with conviction, that her reactions were the appropriate and kind ones. I heard the rhetoric he employed in this process many, many times and the more I have thought about it the more I am convinced that she endured a unique degree of abuse and manipulation when it comes to callousness and blindness to anyone else besides, not herself, but Larry Ray.

He severed her from her family ties within a few months of meeting her and completely orchestrated and controlled her remaining relationship with her father. She truly had no one except Larry and Talia. She is a year younger than us, so this began when she was 18. He began sleeping in her room when she was 18. He began rewriting her life's narrative immediately. I truly truly

believe she stood no chance whatsoever against him, and against his manipulation. I was better equipped to withstand his influence, and I was not equipped at all.

It is often discussed how she participated in the assault against me in the Gregory Hotel. I have thought and thought about it. I do not believe she had any true capacity to stop Larry or mitigate what he was doing to me in any way, psychologically or physically. I don't believe that it would've been any better or lesser of an experience had she not been there at all. She did say cruel things and taunt me. I understand why she could and would do this, but I do not mean to make an excuse for it. It was cruel and I was hurt by the things she said in a moment of tremendous vulnerability. Being cruel, however, is not a crime and when I consider the criminal aspect of what he did and all the actions taken that evening by both of them, I do not believe she had any control over it. I do not consider that night an assault perpetrated by Larry and Isabella, just Larry. The history of manipulation and its context was so dense, abusive, confusing and distorting that neither of us had anything a normal person would recognize as a realistic choice in that room that night.

When I think about her involvement in sex trafficking me (keeping ledgers, making phone calls to check on me and picking up money) I don't blame her for it or view it as a sign of her increased agency or culpability. I don't believe she had an honest choice, or much of any kind of choice. Even though she did enjoy certain privileges the rest of us did not, she did not have the privilege of saying no without severe retribution. Moreover, at this point she was so brainwashed I don't believe she thought she was doing anything wrong. I do not believe that she thought the fact that I was being sex trafficked was wrong. I believe she thought that my "making amends" in this specific way was the right moral choice for all parties involved. This is what I believed, because I was broken down and reformed into someone who would be able to believe it. So was she but, in my opinion, to a significantly greater degree.

Isabella went to sleep and woke up next to Larry. She spent practically all of her waking moments by his side. His presence is deeply corrosive to morality, empathy, decency and humanity and I think he purposefully amplified this tendency in his manipulation and grooming of Isabella. I shudder to think what I would have done or been like were I in her position. I can not say I would've done anything differently than she did, I am only thankful I was not in her shoes.

I don't know what sentence would serve the interests of Justice the best. I am just too close to the circumstances. What I want, however, is a sentence that would promote the best outcome for Isabella. What I want is to see her heal, process, move on and live a good, happy life. I empathize with her and her positions and decisions. I can see how everything happened and came to be as it is today. Isabella trusted Larry much more than most people are capable of trusting anyone. She is an incredibly loyal person. Larry knew this, he used it to drag her down with him, to at every step be made specifically legally embedded in his crimes, and I'm sure he derives pleasure from the knowledge that he was successful.

I believe Isabella deserves to be shown lenience and mercy. I do not blame her for any of this, any of what happened, or even the things she said and did to me. Please remember that Isabella's role in Larry's crimes, and her willingness to play that role, were not the consequences but the goal of the way in which he abused her.