

# Ex-convict who abused college women gets 60 years in prison

By LARRY NEUMEISTER yesterday

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NEW YORK (AP) — An ex-convict who obtained millions of dollars by subjecting his daughter’s ex-college roommates to forced labor and prostitution was sentenced Friday to 60 years in prison by a judge who labeled him an “evil genius” who used sadism and psychological torture to control every aspect of his victims’ lives.

Lawrence “Larry” Ray, 63, was sentenced in Manhattan federal court by Judge Lewis J. Liman.

“There is no reason to believe Mr. Ray will age out of criminal behavior,” Liman said, noting that the crimes began when Ray moved in late 2010 into his daughter’s on-campus housing at Sarah Lawrence College, a small New York liberal arts school.

The judge said Ray charmed his victims with his “exaggerated sense of self” and his intelligence before “robbing them of their relationships, self worth, memories and then their bodies” after convincing them they had poisoned him and owed him for it.

“Through psychological terror and manipulation, he convinced them what they knew to be true was in fact false,” Liman said. “He beat his victims. He tortured them and at times he starved them. He degraded them sexually to the point where they lost any self worth.”

Once his vulnerable victims were diminished, Ray extorted them, forced them to engage in labor and sex trafficked one woman, Liman said.

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“He had the evil genius to take people who were young, not minors, and he broke them ... and then he used them for his evil needs,” the judge said.

Liman announced the sentence after Assistant U.S. Attorney Mollie Bracewell requested a life sentence, citing Ray's "unspeakable cruelty."

Given a chance to speak, Ray expressed no remorse but decried his prison conditions and physical ailments.

"Being in jail has been horrible," he said, noting that his father and both step-parents recently died in the same week.

Defense attorney Marne Lenox argued against a life term, saying the 15-year mandatory minimum was sufficient, particularly because Ray has experienced harsh conditions while in federal jails.

She said her client still believes he's innocent and that his victims poisoned him.

Ray was [convicted at trial](#) last April of charges including racketeering, conspiracy, forced labor and sex trafficking.

During the trial, one woman testified that she became a sex worker to try to pay reparations to Ray after becoming convinced that she had poisoned him. She said that, over four years, she gave Ray \$2.5 million in installments that averaged between \$10,000 and \$50,000 per week.

In a statement read aloud at sentencing Friday by a lawyer, the woman said she had been subjected to "unremitting sadistic torture" by a man who offered a "twisted, empty and broken version of life."

"Experiences I had while being sex trafficked haunt me today," according to her statement. She said Ray had forced "us to hold his evil for him. ... Each time we tried to put it down, he brutalized us."

One victim who spoke said he was living a happy, exciting life as a college sophomore when he met Ray "and all of that went up in smoke." He said he'd attempted suicide more than once.

Another victim said in court that he fears Ray will find a way to harm him from prison.

During Ray's trial, several students testified that they were drawn into Ray's world as he told them stories of his past influence in New York City politics, including his role in ruining the career of former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik after serving as the best man at his wedding years earlier.

Ray had, in fact, been a figure in a corruption investigation that derailed Kerik's 2004 nomination by President George Bush to lead the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Ray was arrested in February 2020. At the time, then-U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said an investigation was launched [after an article](#) appeared in 2019 in New York magazine.

As he imposed the sentence, Liman credited victims willing to testify for bringing justice for the kind of crimes "difficult to detect and difficult to prosecute."

"This case shows the strength of the human spirit and the dedication of law enforcement," Liman said.

The judge said Ray's attempt to "extinguish lives" had failed and the sentence he announced will ensure Ray will never again harm someone else.