

The following is the victim statement from Leandra Blackmore, provided to reporters on August 2, 2019 following the sentencing of Ian Elliott before Chief Judge Eric Janes in Isabella County (MI) Circuit Court:

I can honestly say that 1,720 days ago, the day after it all happened, I never imagined I would be standing here. I don't believe Ian Elliott ever imagined I would be here either. I'd like to start off by thanking quite a few individuals who have helped to get me here today. Thank you to community members and Rachel's supporters, especially, for helping her keep up the fight the last 3 years. Thank you to my family and friends for loving me through every step of the way, whether you knew of my sexual assault for the first time a few months ago, or you knew about it moments after it happened. To the individuals who were there encouraging me, supporting me, praying for me, and helping me find light in the darkness that followed my assault, I truly do not know where I would've ended up if it wasn't for you. Thank you to my mom for teaching me that regardless of the pain others inflict on you, holding hurt and grudge will only hurt yourself in the end. You are a picture of what grace and forgiveness looks like. To the women of Alpha Chi Omega who have reached out since my coming forward in January and to those sitting here today, I truly would not have gotten through everything I experienced almost 5 years ago without such great examples of Real, Strong Women. Thank you for your passion and drive to stand up against sexual and domestic violence as our philanthropy. Thank you to the noble men of Phi Kappa Tau, specifically Anthony Cavataio, Jake Fleming, and Michael Greco, who have stood by me and never questioned me when I came forward to them in 2015. Thank you for the action that you took to remove Mr. Elliott out of the fraternity as well as the genuine care and support you have even given to me up until this point. To the incredible team at the Attorney General's office, you all have helped me heal in ways I didn't know I needed to. To Mr. Kolodziej, especially, thank you for being such a strong voice for Rachel and I and for always making decisions based on what we wanted, even if you were encouraged by this courtroom not to take all of our wishes into account. You were truly the glue that held us all together and we would not be here if it was not for the countless hours you have put into justice for us. This is truly a victory for us all. Thank you to my husband, for coming alongside me just months after I was assaulted and helping me work through it all. Unfortunately he could not be here today as he works to protect on our turf every day and locks up predators like Ian Elliott. He has taught me of what a man should look like and I'm blessed to have him in my corner for life. Last but far from least, thank you to Rachel Wilson for your courage and tenacity. I don't think I'll ever have enough words for you. I truly would not ever have come forward if it wasn't for your bravery and courage. I have found such a great friend in you and am so excited to join forces to advocate together against sexual assault. Regardless of why we're here or how we've come together, that is truly the silver lining of all of this. One of the biggest things I've learned though this all is the beauty that can come from such disaster. Our friendship will no doubt be for life and we will forever have such a special bond.

The first time I ever spoke to Mr. Kolodziej, he asked me "How did going through these traumas twice in your life not ruin you? How do you have a successful career and marriage?" My answer was simple. Even on my darkest days, Christ was the only light that I had and to

anyone in this courtroom that is going through hell and thinks that you may never find light, putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ is the only thing that will ever give you true peace. Being up here today is one of the last things I ever wanted to do, but I have the strength to do so because of my God and I hope that my life and this situation can only be used as a testimony to glorify Him.

To Mr. Elliott's friends and family, I do not judge you for standing beside the man you think you know and I hope you never see the man I got the chance to see. To his supporters that have laughed and mocked in this courtroom, the level of immaturity you've shown has spoken to the lack of confidence you all truly had in Ian's defense. To the individuals who I confided in days, weeks, and months after I was sexually assaulted by Ian Elliott that encouraged me not to come forward and helped silence me, you should be ashamed. I trusted you, looked up to you, and was searching for support and I got the exact opposite. To Mr. Barberi, I truly hope that you felt respected in my interactions with you during my cross examination at the 404b hearing. I wish you would've given me a little bit more of that same respect. Do you remember what you were doing 1,720 days ago? What day was it? Do you remember what you ate for dinner? What you were wearing? How about text messages you received? The amount of information that I remember from 1,720 days ago was because of the traumatic, horrific thing that your client put me through. I'd like to see how much you would remember that long ago if something traumatic had happened to you. Small details might slip your mind, but you would no doubt remember and questioning your memory would not be valid. I'm sure it would be just enough information that would stick with you for the rest of your life that you could talk about 4 and a half years later. I truly hope this was just a job for you but regardless of whether or not it was, shame on you for trying to twist my childhood abuse into the horrible thing that Ian Elliott did to me. Shame on you for using my faith as a weapon in your client's defense. I hope that the paycheck is worth it.

For those of you that may not know my background with Ian Elliot, Ian was a friend. I knew Ian years before I started my journey at CMU. We met through the Michigan Association of Student Councils and Honor Societies at a summer camp in 2012. I was in my second year of camp and he was in his third. I remember my impression of Ian and the following that he had. Even though he was more reserved than some of the other leadership students, he had such a calm about him and people wanted to surround themselves with him. Him and other MASC/MAHS role models were a part of the CMU Leader Advancement Scholarship and I became 1 of 40 blessed individuals to become part of the cohort behind him. I had a mentor in the class above me, one of Ian's best friends. I believed Ian had something to do with her choosing me. Some of my beginning college memories included Ian and some of his closest friends. I viewed the three as role models and aspired to be like them. Ian was even considered a mentor. At one time, I truly believed Ian could be a world changer and am disgusted at the potential that he's wasted. Many of you are here today sitting on that side because he still has the power to influence and lead, even if it's not in a positive way. It could not have been more evident in the character references written by his family and friends of just how fooled everybody is. It was clear that not one of them suggested that Ian had not committed these horrible

crimes. Almost all of them as well acknowledged his severe drug and alcohol addictions. I hate to say it, but I felt so sad reading them because I was reminded of the Ian I once knew and how I viewed him at one time.

The confusion, pain, and horror of November 15th, 2014 left me feeling broken and lost. I had difficulty with daily functions in the days following. When I did sleep I often had horrible nightmares, and sometimes still do. I was able to get professional counseling with encouragement from friends. Ian's role in this had so much more to do with just the night of November 15th. It was the friendship, his standing, the amount of respect peers and advisors had for him, our mutual friends, and his attempt at manipulating me into thinking that he loved me and had my best interest in mind. A few months after the assault, I received a call from Ian's roommate, stating that he was worried about him and seemed to be suicidal and drunk. Everything in me said not to allow him to make me feel for him any more or to come to his side after the hell he had put me through, but I'm glad I did. That was the only time I've ever seen Ian admit to what he has done. Of course, he tried to blame all of his actions on his mom's death, his friend's death, or alcohol, but I saw something that I didn't expect to see. We both sobbed for what seemed like forever and he said "sorry" over and over and over again and we both knew what he was talking about. I believe that was an admission of guilt and I know I won't get that in this courtroom, but that's something he can't take from me regardless of whether or not he every admits that he's a rapist.

My idea of closure and making peace with all this has changed dramatically over the last few years. Days after the assault, I didn't know if I would be able to stand up to him and tell him what happened and what he forced me to do was not okay, but I did. Weeks after the assault, I didn't know if I would be able to get help and move forward with my life, but I did. Months after the assault, I didn't know if I would be able to completely cut him out of my life and be able to walk away from friendships that sided with him, but I did. I certainly didn't think I would be able to tell his fraternity brothers of the corruptness that existed among them, but I did. He was given a choice to leave the fraternity or step away as a result, and I believe he left knowing that he was guilty of what he was being accused of. When the AG's office contacted me and asked me to come forward in support of Rachel, I didn't think I'd be able to face him and dig up all the pain, but I did. I didn't know how many months or years would be involved with filing charges and if I could handle it, but I did. I didn't think that I would see the day that you would be going to jail and that I would have the chance to address you, but here I am.

Ian, I don't believe we've met. The girl in front of you today is not the girl you knew almost 5 years ago. That girl allowed you to take advantage of, manipulate, and toy with her. That girl genuinely cared about you so much that she allowed you to get away with sexually assaulting her, until now. That girl would've done anything for you and tried to forget about the horror you put her through because she feared losing your friendship and influence. I don't know if I'll ever be able to fully understand how I feel about you. I do feel sorry for the loss that you've experienced. I did really care about you. I didn't want to admit that this is what happened, but it did. I'm angry at you. I'm disappointed in you. I feel that you've wasted the efforts so many people have put in you. But above all, I do

forgive you. I'm not here today because I want to see anyone suffer, even though this has dramatically changed my life. But this is dramatically changing your life, and it should.. After I began to move on, I did hope that you had changed your ways and become something of yourself. But then I found out you did this to someone else. I want to be clear that this is a victory for Rachel and I, not for you. The reason that we agreed to this plea was not because we were concerned about winning the case. In fact, it was the quite opposite. I don't even think that you are surprised we are here, considering you saved text messages from me from 4 and a half years ago. Which not only corroborated my story but confirmed the master manipulation and pattern that you used. We knew that had we sat in front of a jury and told our story, we would have still gotten this or a similar outcome, but we would've won. Our lack of trust was in the belief you would have gotten a similar sentence to what we agreed on, rather than the max sentence you deserve. I truly hope that you change. I do believe that you reap what you sow and even though I wouldn't wish this on anyone, I want you to put yourself in the shoes of if this had happened to your child. When I have daughters of my own, not only will I teach them about the predators in the shadows, but the wolf in sheep's clothing. The boy that they care about and believes would protect them and honor them. I'll teach them that they unfortunately cannot trust that boy, either. One day, I will teach them and tell them about you. I hope you take the next 366 days to reflect and admit to the things you've done. I truly hope you make your peace with God because you will have to answer to these things you've done.