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# Lawrence Ray: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know

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*The Cut* has published a disturbing investigation of Lawrence "Larry" Ray, 59, a former New York City entrepreneur who is accused of starting a bizarre mini-cult of college students from Sarah Lawrence College. Ray's group has been likened to NXIVM, the "self-help" organization that allegedly has brainwashed its members and turned young women into sex slaves.

Ray's devotees were mostly comprised of his daughter's college roommates. Some of the group's former members recalled how Ray humiliated them, manipulated them into fighting with each other, pressured them to have sex in front of him and caused them to commit self-harm, including attempted suicide. One follower has confessed to trying to poison Ray.

Before these accusations, Ray was well known in New York and pleaded guilty to conspiracy in 2001 after being indicted with 18 others in a $41 million securities fraud scheme. Some of those involved in the crime included mobsters.

Here's what you need to know about Lawrence Ray.

## 1. Ray Moved Into his Daughter's Dorm After Serving a Stint in Jail

In 2010, after serving six months in jail over a child custody dispute involving his youngest daughter, Ray moved in with his oldest daughter, Talia. She was living in a two-story residence hall at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, where she was a sophomore.

Ray rapidly ingratiated himself with Talia's seven dormmates. He often did the cooking and cleaning. Ray would also take everyone on outings or for dinner and pick up the tab. "He did all of our cleaning and definitely took on the dad role in the house," said one former roommate who wished only to be identified as Juli Anna. He also entertained the group by telling stories of how he had worked as a CIA operative, getting weapons on the black market and negotiating a cease-fire in Kosovo.

When Ray first moved into the group's student housing he was sleeping on an air mattress in daughter Talia's room, but eventually wound up sleeping in the room of her best friend, 19-year-old Isabella Pollok. Pollok was distraught over a recent break-up with her boyfriend.

Talia's boyfriend at the time told *The Cut* he found the arrangement troubling, especially after discovering Talia's father stroking 19-year-old Isabella's hair while both were laying on Talia's bed. The boyfriend recalled Ray saying, "You're acting like I'm going to be sleeping with her. But I'm going to be sleeping on the floor. She needs someone to help her."

Isabella Pollak's aunt said Ray contacted their family as the college co-ed was set to go home for winter break. He told them that she had been sexually abused as a child and if she came home to visit she might attempt suicide. "You let this happen to her," the aunt recalled he said to Pollak's mother.

Ray soon exhibited a Svengali-like hold over the group. Talia's boyfriend recalled how he controlled every move. The situation became so unbearable that Talia's boyfriend broke up with her in order to get away from Ray.

Legal documents show that Larry Ray, daughter Talia, Isabella and others were still living together in 2017. It's reported that Larry, Isabella and another woman named Felicia Rosario are currently living together in New Jersey. He calls both the women his wives.

## 2.Talia Described her Dad as "A Truth Teller"

Talia described her dad to friends as a "truth-teller." She said that her father had been unfairly jailed after he attempted to rescue her younger sister, Ava, from her mother's abuse and divulged that she, too, had been abused by her mother. Child welfare workers later determined that the allegations of child abuse lodged against Larry Ray's ex-wife Teresa were unfounded.

Talia came to her father's defense, saying he'd been jailed due to crooked officials trying to bring him down for exposing government corruption. One of these officials was former New York City Police Commisioner Bernard Kerik. Former roommate Claudia Drury wrote what Ray had shared with her. "The politicians who wanted to see Kerik in office teamed up with Teresa (Ray) to try to hurt Talia and Ava in order to get Larry to stop exposing their corruption. In nine months Larry was arrested 23 times and released every time."

According to *The Cut,* As the group's ninth roommate, Ray would sometimes share his ideologies by starting group discussions about social justice issues. He once screened Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* in the dorm room's common area and then held a lecture about "the nature of the universe." He also enjoyed talking with the students about the philosophy "Quest for Potential" or "Q4P" that one of his friends had developed.

The roommates didn't seem fazed by having a 50-year-old ex-con living with them in their college housing. "I don't think anyone really questioned (his presence) because it was such a huge part of Talia's life," roommate Daniel Barban Levin explained.

## 3. Ray Began "Counseling" Talia's Roommates

Some of Talia's former roommates stated that Ray began giving them advice when they needed help with personal problems. According to The Cut, Ray also told the naive college students that he could teach them mind control techniques that he'd learned from the U.S. government.

In the evenings, Ray would put one person in the "hot seat," demanding that one member of the group answer extremely personal questions. According to *The Cut,* these sessions were supposed to reveal "deep, personal truths." Afterwards, whoever had been selected for the interrogation would be applauded for his or her "breakthrough."

Roommate Claudia Drury began having “counseling sessions” with Ray. Friends remember her personality gradually changing. Those close to Drury became alarmed when she said she might be schizophrenic, a diagnosis Ray wasn’t unqualified to give.

In an online essay written by Drury that’s since been taken down, she recounted how she felt accepted by Ray. “Instead of distancing himself, he kept listening to me. I felt no judgement or recoil from him for these things that I had hidden from everyone else. That was the first time in my life that anyone had listened to me.” Drury continued by saying how devoted Larry was to their “community.” “Larry always made it clear: he would never abandon any of us because of what other people said or thought. And he didn’t, even when it threatened to put him back in jail!”

Over time, the group of students became more entangled in Ray’s web. Three of the women tried killing themselves and another said his family gave Larry over $200,000. Drury said she became a prostitute to try and repay Ray money she owed for damaging an apartment shared by the group. Daniel Levin claimed Ray made a “necklace” out of Saran wrap, aluminum foil rolled into small balls and string. Ray then took his creation and began to twist it around Levin’s penis and testicles until it caused tremendous pain and cut off circulation.

## 4. One Member of the Group Said She Tried to Poison Ray and Two Other Members of Their “Community”

In 2017, Ray devotee Claudia Drury created a disturbing video where she confessed to working with three others in their group to poison Ray, his daughter Talia and Isabella Pollak at the urging of her mother. “She told me to kill you,” Drury said to Ray, who can be heard off-camera questioning her. Drury shares how she tried to poison him using mercury, cyanide, and arsenic while he was hospitalized in 2014. “I brought a vial of each, each time,” she confessed. She described how she put the poison in his food, on doorknobs, his laptop and throughout his room. “I wanted to poison you and I didn’t care about other people,” she said.

At one point in video, Drury said she had told doctors at the hospital that Ray was delusional and that she had been pressured into saying “I was just trying to make it seem like you just pressured me into saying it.” When Ray can be heard asking her off-camera if she poisoned him, she said “Yes, absolutely. Absolutely I did.” At the end of the video, when he asks why she is confessing, Drury responded sheepishly, “So I can have access to you.”

Drury has created a website where she continues to assert that she intentionally poisoned Ray.

## 5. Ray Was Close Friends With Former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik

Ray was once good friends with former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerick. The two were so close that Ray served as Kerik’s best man when he married Hala Matli in 1998. In 2005, UPI reported that Ray and a friend were being investigated for paying $10,000 towards wedding at the Chanticler catering hall, lavished the newlyweds with $7,000 in wedding gifts and added another $4,000 in baby gifts from when Kerik’s daughter was born.

Ray also introduced Kerick to some of New York’s most influential people, including several with mob ties. Many of the gifts and favors that came Kerik’s way were unreported. But the friendship disintegrated when Ray was arrested for stock fraud and was denied help from his long-time police buddy. When Kerik gave him the cold shoulder, Ray began revealing improprieties that helped destroy Kerik’s once seemingly stellar career.