

EXHIBIT A

Dear Judge Gilliam,

I will not make any excuses for the crimes I have committed. My past actions were selfish, immoral, unjust, and utterly appalling. I am deeply ashamed of the person I was under active addiction especially when committing my crimes. By taking advantage of the trust I was given, I hurt the victims, my fiancé, family, and friends. I took everything around me for granted and caused a lot of pain. I am filled with shame and remorse for my past actions and will spend the rest of my life trying to make things right. I take full responsibility for the magnitude of my crimes and humbly accept the repercussions. I wish I could change the past but I am also grateful for this case because I finally received the help I didn't realize I needed all my life. I am determined to repay my debt to the victims, to society, and to everyone I have hurt along the way. I am committed to becoming a better person and regaining the trust I have broken. Here are the ways I've started taking the necessary steps towards recovery and what I'm doing to change.

As I am writing this letter, I am celebrating 1 year clean in recovery. My clean date is July 30, 2021. I originally planned to commit suicide because I couldn't bear the shame and guilt of my past actions. It was Narcotics Anonymous (NA) that saved my life by providing the support system I never had and the unconditional love I always searched for. When committing my crimes, I was trying to impress people so they would want to be in my life and not abandon me. Now I have a whole support system of people that love me for who I am. NA has become a huge part of my life. Since the end of September 2021, I attend a meeting every day where I regularly share and get vulnerable. I am very active in my home group, Carpe Diem Daily. I have 2 service commitments which I've held since April 2022. I have a sponsor who has a sponsor and we all work steps. I am currently working on step 5 with my sponsor who I've developed a very close relationship with. NA helps me stay clean by teaching me important lessons like how to become a better person and live a healthy life as a productive member of society. I have learned better values through the 12 steps and spiritual principles. I am discovering who I am as a recovering addict and who I want to be. I am learning how to control my other compulsive behaviors, such as shopping and stealing, by healing the root of my issues. Through NA, I have developed a strong relationship with my higher power. I pray and talk to God everyday. My spirituality and faith are helping me get through this challenging yet healing transformative time.

I have weekly substance abuse counseling and bi-weekly mental health counseling through pretrial services. I also attend therapy every few weeks and see a psychiatrist every 1.5 months. In these sessions I have been able to break down and heal my past traumas that led me down the road of addiction. I have learned how to enforce boundaries for my highest good. I have completed group therapy courses on depression, anxiety, managing stress, and improving sleep. I am currently enrolled in a 6-month Dialectical Behavioral Therapy course that meets weekly. In addition to taking my medications, these group therapy courses help reprogram my brain to have healthy coping mechanisms and cognitive tools while living with bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder. I am now more able to control my emotions and impulses.

Each day I focus on becoming a better person, making daily living amends, and doing the next right thing as God guides me. I am rebuilding my career to become a tax and restitution paying member of society. I am enrolled in Blackstone Career Institute's paralegal certification program. I also hope to grow my web design and marketing business. One of my goals is to get married to my fiancé and start a family before it's too late. The desire to be a good wife and mother motivates me everyday. I hope to give back to my community through volunteer work, NA service commitments, and becoming a sponsor. I want to help others by sharing my experience, strength, and hope. I am determined to become a success story by continuing to grow from this experience and spending the rest of my life making up for my past mistakes. I can achieve this by being able to continue with all my substance abuse and mental health support, which are crucial for my growth and recovery. I am truly sorry for the crimes I committed and I will do whatever it takes to make things right.

Sincerely,
Shelbee Szeto