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## Statement of Gloria Allred

My name is Gloria Allred, and I am an attorney from the United States.

I have been representing victims for the past forty-eight years, including victims of Jeffrey Epstein, Harvey Weinstein, R. Kelly, and now, victims of Sean “Diddy” Combs. I have also represented victims of Bill Cosby, including one victim who we represented in a civil trial against him, which we won. In addition, in one lawsuit against the owner of a company, we represented a female employee and won at trial a judgment in excess of 52 million dollars against that owner who sexually harassed our client.

I am very familiar with how powerful men use their wealth, positions of power, and fame to subject women and girls to sexual abuse.

The allegations against Mohamed Al-Fayed include serial rape, attempted rapes, sexual battery, and sexual abuse of minors. They involve doctors administering invasive gynecologic exams as a condition of employment for some of the employees who were targeted by Mohamed Al-Fayed for sexual abuse by him. The allegations also include the unauthorized disclosure of the exam results of targeted employees to Mohamed Al-Fayed, cover-ups, threats, and a quarter

century of sexual abuse by Mohamed Al-Fayed after he purchased Harrods and became its Chairman.

Harrods is often referred to as the most beautiful store in the world. It has a storied and glamorous history. Many women dreamed of working there to be associated with this prestigious corporation and to further their careers.

However, underneath Harrods' glitz and glamour was a toxic, unsafe, and abusive environment.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* said: "something is rotten in the state of Denmark." We say, something was rotten at the core of Harrods. The store was known for catering to the every need of its customers, and it was presented as the epitome of beauty. The ugly truth, however, was that a number of female employees were being sexually abused by its Chairman, Mohamed Al-Fayed.

The current owners purchased Harrods in 2010. Their statement in the BBC documentary appears to suggest that they were unaware of this history of sexual abuse. However, in the documentary, it is alleged that Al-Fayed's abuse was not a secret and was widely known by many of his employees. Perhaps the new owners were blinded by the billions of dollars they stood to gain or by their opportunity to buy a piece of Britain's history.

When Mohamed Al-Fayed sold Harrods, a spokesperson for Al-Fayed said he "specifically chose" the buyers to "ensure that the legacy and traditions that

he has built up in Harrods would be continued.” Al-Fayed’s legacy was to prey upon, denigrate, humiliate, and abuse female employees for his sexual gratification. That is a legacy that no one should continue.

There are certain themes that emerge from the BBC documentary. Most of the victims were terrified and felt that they had no place to turn. They felt powerless and feared retaliation. Their terror was reinforced by threats, surveillance, and phone tapping. It was also apparent from the documentary that many of the women were vulnerable, and that Al-Fayed took advantage of their vulnerability. He used his wealth and power to manipulate and control female victims for his sexual pleasure.

Another common theme was that Al-Fayed’s sexual misconduct was constant and repetitive and went on for the twenty-five years that he owned Harrods. He was the epitome of a serial sexual abuser.

Yet another common theme was that Al-Fayed’s sexual abuse was not confined to the Harrods store. For example, sexual abuse occurred at the Ritz Paris and in his residence in Paris (which was formerly the residence of the Duke of Windsor). He required some female employees to accompany him on overnight trips to various locations, ostensibly for work, but actually to facilitate his sexual exploitation of them.

Mohamed Al-Fayed died last year at 94 years old. He died without ever taking responsibility for what he did to his many victims. These victims have

suffered for years—even decades. They have lived with the shame, humiliation, and the anguish that Mohamed Al-Fayed and Harrods caused them.

Al-Fayed was determined to silence these women. They will be silenced no more. We are proud of all of the women who are coming forward to seek accountability.

The good news is that civil justice is still available for them, and they will not rest until they obtain it. It is not enough for Harrods to now say that they are sorry. It is not enough to acknowledge that Harrods failed these women. Justice demands that the victims receive meaningful accountability for what they have suffered.

We are glad that the new owners of Harrods have acknowledged that Harrods failed those who were victimized there, and that they are “determined to do the right thing as an organization.” We believe in deeds, not just words.

It is never too late to do the right thing. This is an opportunity for Harrods to prove their assertion that “[t]he Harrods of today is a very different organization” and that their words match their conduct. The time for justice is now, and we look forward to victims obtaining meaningful justice.

Attorney Gloria Allred

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