UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

UNITED STATES

-against-

CARLOS WATSON and
OZY MEDIA INC.,

Defendants.

Case No. 23-cr-00082

DECLARATION OF CARLISA BROWN-SIMONS

STATE OF NEW YORK)
COUNTY OF KINGS)

I, the undersigned declarant, Carlisa Brown-Simons, have personal knowledge of the contents of this declaration, which I know to be true and correct. I am making this declaration on my own accord and of my own volition. No one intimidated, pressured, or coerced me to give this declaration. No one promised or gave me anything of value in exchange for making my declaration. I understand that I am making this declaration under penalty of perjury:

1. My name is Carlisa Brown-Simons and I served on the jury in the criminal case against Carlos Watson and OZY Media Inc. I was juror number 5.

2. During the trial, long before we started deliberations, I heard some jurors saying that they believed the defendant was guilty. I remember jurors saying things like "You know he's guilty, right?" and "Why are we even having a trial?" when we were sitting around on breaks. I did not want to hear remarks like this, so I would say "You know I can hear you," hoping they would stop talking about how they had already reached their verdict even though the trial was still going on.

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3. After the closing statements, the judge read the jury instructions out loud to us in court. I don't remember how many pages he read to us.

4. Then we went into the jury room to deliberate. Someone gave us handout with instructions from the judge. The handout was about five pages or so.

5. I was confused by the jury instructions on the handout. They were written as a bunch of "if you find this, then you must find that" statements.

6. In my mind, the government did not prove that the defendant was guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. There was no evidence that Mr. Watson intended for any investors to be harmed or to lose their money. From what I heard at trial, Mr. Watson and the company paid everyone back and even paid back high-interest loans to keep the company going. Mr. Watson put his own money into the company. That just did not strike me as what someone who was trying to defraud others would do. Samir Rao and Suzee Han admitted their fraud, but Mr. Watson did not.

7. On the last day of deliberations, I was the only juror unwilling to vote guilty. One of the jurors I now know to be juror number 11 was leading the push to vote guilty. He went nuclear on me when I wouldn't vote to convict. He raised his voice at me and kept yelling "He's guilty, he's guilty." I thought he was going to have a stroke.

8. I said that the jury instructions were confusing. He said something like, "They confuse you with the instructions. Instructions are confusing. That's why they have appeal courts."

9. I read the jury instructions handout. It said that the defendant could still be guilty even if no one lost money, which confused me, but I felt like I had no choice but to vote guilty based on those instructions. In my mind, there was only one way to vote and it was based on the judge's instructions.

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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York

10/10, 2024

Carlisa Brown-Simons

Carlisa Brown-Simons

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