As noted earlier, P-stranding violations evidently cannot be repaired by ellipsis. This is rather mysterious, in fact paradoxical if the P-stranding constraint is an "island constraint".

Abels (2003) shows that in one crucial respect, the P-stranding prohibition (in languages that exhibit it) diverges from standard island constraints: While the complement of the P cannot move, subextraction out of the PP is (sometimes possible).

Some Russian examples:

- Ot čego sleduet otkazať'sja
  Of what follows give up-self
  'What should one give up?'

- Čego sleduet otkazať'sja ot
  what follows give up-self

- Na čto sleduet otkazať'sja ot vsjačeskij pretenzij
  on what follows give up-self of whatsoever hopes
  'What should one rid oneself of any kind of hope for?'

- Kakij argumentah protiv ehtoj točki zrenija ty ešče ne slyšal o
  which arguments against this point view you yet not heard about
  'Which arguments against this point of view haven't you heard about?'

- Protiv kakov točki zrenija ty ešče ne slyšal ob argumentah
  against which point view you yet not heard about arguments
  'Against which point of view haven't you heard about arguments?'

"The existence of examples like [(6)] shows that PPs are not inherently barriers to movement. Moreover, the sharp contrast between [(5)] and [(6)] shows that subextraction out of PP and P-stranding are clearly different phenomena." p. 160

Standard island violations (at least most of them) do not show this pattern. Rather, extraction from deeper in the island is still bad.

- That he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who that he'll hire is possible
  [Sentential Subject Constraint]

- That Mary thinks he'll hire someone is possible, but I won't divulge who that Mary thinks
  he'll hire is possible

- She kissed a man who one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends
  she kissed a man who bit
  [Complex NP Constraint, relative clause]

- She kissed a man who Bill said bit one of my friends, but Tom doesn't realize which one of my friends
  she kissed a man who Bill said bit
  [Complex NP Constraint, relative clause]
(15) So why can't P-Stranding violations be repaired? I conjecture (roughly following a suggestion of Merchant (2001) for another phenomenon - Superiority - see pp.147-148 of the 1999 original) that there is a distinction between constraints whose violations are marked in the output and those that are more strictly properties of derivations. (See, in this connection, Lasnik (2001) and Boeckx and Lasnik (2006).)

(16) 'Derivational' constraints can't be repaired (Merchant's suggestion about Superiority).

(17) Suppose now that the P-stranding constraint is derivational: the A-over-A.

(18) Chomsky (1973) proposed this in anticipation of Postal's argument against successive cyclic wh-movement (Postal (1972)).

(19) a  To whom do you think (that) John talked
   b  Who do you think (that) John talked to
   c  *Who do you think to (that) John talked

(20) To allow (22)a and (22)b, Chomsky proposes that the wh-feature on who(m) can 'percolate' to the PP to whom.

(21) (22)c is still not possible, since the initial move of the PP means the feature has percolated, so the second step is impossible, by the A-over-A condition.

(22) Suppose then that the difference (or one of the differences) between languages that do and don't allow P-stranding in initial position is whether the wh-feature can or must percolate from DP to immediately dominating PP.

(23) In the latter type of language, even the first P-stranding step would violate the A-over-A. And if we continue to take that as a constraint on the operation of the transformation, P simply couldn't be stranded, so repair would never be a possibility.

(24) As Ross (1969) observes, even in English, pied piping is sometimes required:

(25) a  Under what circumstances will the moon implode
   b  *What circumstances will the moon implode under

(26) Ross does not point out, though, that this English violation can be repaired by Sluicing:

(27) The moon will implode under certain circumstances, but I'm not sure exactly what circumstances

(28) Thus, the English effect does pattern with island constraints. In fact, the CED (which bars extraction out of adjuncts) seems like the relevant island constraint, at least for this example.

References

