

Office of the Pardon Attorney

Mr. Larry Kupers

145 N Street N.E.

Room SE 508

Washington, D.C. 20530

A CLEMENCY LETTER ON BEHALF OF MICHELLE WEST

Introduction

Dear Mr. Kupers,

My name is Nicholas Gentile. I'm a 32-year-old, ordained Christian Minister, who lives and serves in Rochester, NY.

I am writing this letter in support of Michelle West's clemency petition. Michelle is a first time, non-violent, drug offender, with no prior arrests or convictions, and as I will attempt to establish throughout the body of this letter, she has an impeccable prison record. Although the government offered her a plea of 20 years, Michelle believed that accepting that plea would've meant a death sentence for her then 10 year old daughter, Miquelle; so she exercised her 6th Amendment right and went to trial. She was eventually given, in my opinion, the ridiculously unjust sentence of 2 life sentences plus 50 years. She has already served 25 years in prison, which means she would've already been a free woman for 5 years if she had been a government witness.

Based on the facts of her case, and her prison record, I firmly believe commuting Michelle's sentence is the truly just thing to do, and would result in significant, and manifold, positive ramifications for taxpayers, for society as a whole, for justice, and for her loved ones, in particular, her daughter, Miquelle.

Michelle's Character

As a Christian Minister, I've encountered people from many different walks of life, cultures, and personalities; some of whom are the finest, salt of the earth people a person would be blessed to meet. In contrast, I've had the great displeasure of meeting some very insincere, selfish, self-absorbed, and manipulative people. Michelle is definitely one of the former; she's one of the finest human beings I've ever had the pleasure of meeting and if anyone qualifies to have her sentence commuted or to receive clemency, it's Michelle West.

I'm truly honored and blessed to know Michelle West. I'm nothing short of impressed with the person Michelle is. Michelle is a strong, intelligent, well-spoken, dignified, generous, gentle, honest, hard-working, selfless, and a resourceful woman of the utmost integrity, who draws her incredible mental, emotional, and moral strength from her faith in Jesus Christ; and whose friendship and counsel I value and hold in the highest regard.

In speaking with some of the women that were imprisoned with Michelle, they spoke of her without fail, in the most glowing of terms. Women like Jane O'Brien and Teresa Wallace, for example, talked about her great generosity, selflessness, and her willingness to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.

Even in the midst of the tremendous adversity she's faced, Michelle has served as an extraordinary example of grace in the face of great adversity, as well as demonstrating great courage and dignity while imprisoned, which have served as a great source of inspiration for those she was imprisoned with, Miquelle, Patrick, Myself, and the many others that know about the circumstances of her case and her sentence; which definitely provides a great example for anyone to emulate.

Michelle's Accomplishment's and Commendations In Prison

Here is a list of the many accomplishments Michelle's achieved, and commendations she's received, while imprisoned:

-Post-Incarceration/Marist College Certificate in Business Management with Legal Application

-Naugatuck Community College (Starting Your Own Home Based Business or Small Business)

-Career Resource Tech Apprenticeship from U.S. Department of Labor

-Advanced Computer Training.

-Spanish Level 1

-Post-conviction rehabilitation includes numerous ACE certificates

-Philanthropic Efforts:

-a. Obtained Warden approval to organize fundraiser(s) for non-profit advocacy, org,

-b. Facilitated the distribution of toys for the Sylent Heart Foundation 2014 Toy Drive for children with incarcerated parents

-Michelle provided weekly mentoring sessions for young adult inmates at F.C.I. Danbury,

In 2005, Michelle received a letter of commendation from an Associate Warden at FCI Danbury. It states that she assisted the Correctional Services Department during their Program Review and also during their American Correctional Association accreditation. **“She performed at a high level and is a competent worker.”**

Other BOP Staff members have written favorable statements about Michelle’s character:

“I have dealt with inmate West for the past 11-years and she has always helped out even when she didn’t have to. She’s always been a ‘model inmate’ and has always been more than just basically respectful. **I wish all of our inmates were like her.**”

- E. Vermette, Cook Supervisor FCI Danbury

“Inmate West, over the past 15 years, has always been a role model inmate. Inmate West has always been a team player when it comes to assisting multiple departments in preparation for sanitation inspections. **Inmate West is always willing to help at a moment’s notice.**”

-L. Plourde, FCI Danbury

The aforementioned information demonstrates that Michelle West has not only been an exemplary or model inmate, with a peerless track record while imprisoned, but more importantly, she is a great candidate for clemency.

The Benefits of Granting Michelle Clemency

Mr. Kupers, as I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, Michelle's release would have many positive ramifications or benefits in the following ways:

-For the Taxpayer: According to California Corrections, in the state of California, where Michelle is currently incarcerated, it costs approximately \$129 a day to house a single prisoner. Annually that comes out to a total of just over \$47,000. Instead of using that money to house Michelle, who in my humble opinion, is the perfect candidate to receive clemency, that money could be put to much better, and more practical use, for the state of California.

-For Society: Michelle's exemplary prison record includes philanthropic work; namely helping to distribute toys for the Sylent Heart Foundation 2014 Toy Drive for children with incarcerated parents. She has also provided weekly mentoring sessions for young adult inmates at FCI Danbury, Connecticut. These things speak to her character and represent a microcosm of the beneficial impact her release would have on society, in particular among girls and women, and how she deserves to be free to be a contributing member of society.

Michelle's greatest regret is getting involved with the wrong person during a vulnerable time in her life, although she definitely didn't know that person was bad until it was too late, which unfortunately played a role in her imprisonment. Her release would absolutely be in the best interest of our society as she embodies the best of what America represents and what America has to offer. I imagine Michelle, once she's granted clemency, traveling around the country and speaking to audiences of young people, especially girls and young women, that are traveling down the wrong path or in the wrong direction, or are dealing with tough circumstances and could end up making terrible decisions, using her experiences as a cautionary tale, in order to deter these young people from making some of the same choices she made or making worse choices that could lead to them ending up in the same situation as her or worse, and thereby helping them turn their lives around and fulfill their God-given potential. This is just one of the very realistic and practical ways in which Michelle can potentially benefit society tremendously, after being released, and demonstrates that her freedom is of greater value, in so many ways, than her imprisonment.

-For the sake of Justice: I believe true justice will be served when Michelle is finally released. I will not argue about whether she should've been imprisoned to begin with or not. What I will say, is that I believe her sentence was more than excessive and that granting Michelle clemency will go a long way to demonstrating that the Trump administration is serious about promoting both justice and mercy in the land, Mr. Kupers, and upholding our country's longstanding tradition/heritage of American Exceptionalism.

And last but not least...

-For the family members, friends, and loved ones who continue to suffer each additional

day that Michelle remains incarcerated; this especially applies to Miquelle, who as I stated before, was 10 years old when her mother was sent to prison. A mother is the person who brings us into this world, and who nourishes and cares for us from the very beginning. This bond is an indispensable part of human existence. As we grow older, our mother is there to comfort us whenever we feel down. She is there to soothe, calm, and encourage us and chase away our fears. When we are nervous, scared, and angry or in pain, she is the person we look to for unconditional support. As someone who has been blessed to always have his mother in his life, and has been blessed with the type of mother that I just described, I can attest to the above description, and therefore can't imagine what Miquelle has dealt with over the last 25 years.

Miquelle is a great young woman, much like her mother, and has had a successful career as a Fashion Stylist, both due in large part to the extraordinary contributions, influence, and support of Michelle even while behind bars; nonetheless, this doesn't compare to having her mother's constant maternal presence in her life, which she's been deprived of for 25 years. The negative impact that Michelle's absence has had on Miquelle's maturation and psyche cannot truly be quantified. She has vowed not to get married or have children until her mother receives clemency. It's clear that she will not be able to really move forward in her life until her mother is released.

Here's a quote from Miquelle about her relationship with her mother and the impact she's had on her life:

"My mom was and still is a major influence in my life... She's an inspiring woman, and she has supported me since I was a little girl. She's an avid reader and studies the history of fashion, so she can assist me and support my career in fashion from where she is. She has helped me navigate through life. I listen to her suggestions and directives. I tell my friends, 'Kris Jenner doesn't have anything on my mother. The only difference is she's incarcerated.' She's strong, opinionated, and a leader. She instilled values and principles in me at a very young age, I was taught to be a leader at all times. I am my mother's main concern. All of the sacrifices she made were for me..."

I believe Michelle's release will allow Miquelle to move forward in her life, blossom and truly come into her own, and make an even greater impact on society.

Here's what Patrick Edwards, Michelle's best friend, had to say about Michelle's impact on his life and what she's done for Miquelle while behind bars:

"My name is Patrick S. Edwards and Michelle West is one of my best friends. Michelle has made a huge, positive impact on my life for over 30 years. Prior to her receiving the ridiculously draconian sentence that she did, I could always count on Michelle for advice on a plethora of issues. Even from prison she is still more concerned with helping others more so than herself. Miquelle has grown into the woman she has due to Michelle's indirect involvement in all aspects of her life. I look forward to the day Miquelle and I, are reconnected with Michelle. I've never had a friend like Michelle and I can't wait until the day I see her again doing positive work in the community."

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr. Kupers, Michelle's case parallels that of Alice Johnson. Both of them are non-violent, drug offenders, with exemplary prison records, that were denied clemency under President Obama; however, after a great outpouring of support, including tremendous advocacy from the likes of Kim Kardashian on Ms. Johnson's behalf, recently, President Trump did the right thing and granted her clemency; but whereas Alice served 21 years in prison, Michelle is in her 25th year behind bars.

I hope you will give just as strong consideration to Michelle's clemency petition and find her worthy of the same mercy and compassion as Ms. Johnson. Mr. Kupers, I hope and pray you will submit her petition with a favorable recommendation to President Trump for his approval and that he will have mercy on my dear friend, Michelle because otherwise, she will die in prison.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” - The Lord Jesus Christ -
Matthew 5:7

I will do everything I can to support Michelle in her re-entry into society, help her in any way possible to transition back into life outside of prison, and answer any questions that are asked of me once true justice is served and Michelle is granted clemency.

I know if afforded this rarest of opportunities, that Michelle is going to take full advantage of her second chance by doing everything she can to be a contributing member of society. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this extremely important matter that has the potential to favorably impact many lives.

Sincerely yours,

Minister Nicholas Gentile

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