

October 26, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I am writing this letter to serve as a character witness for Brian and to urge leniency and mercy with respect to whatever outcomes our Justice System would deem appropriate in response to Brian's charges. To level-set the context in which I am writing, Brian and I have been the best of friends since the Tenth Grade in high school which, if memory serves, would be circa 1986. During these roughly 30+ years of friendship, I can say with all sincerity that I have never known a more giving, caring, or selfless soul in my life. Since I first graduated high school to go and serve in the United States military, to my recent career moves into the field of Oncology, his genuine support and thoughtfulness for others has been not only a gift to me personally but has been a source of inspiration to me in my own growth emotionally and otherwise.

While I do not have the honor and privilege of either practicing nor enforcing the laws of the nation that I love so dearly, I ask myself what response from our Justice System would best serve private citizens like myself, our dearly beloved youth, Brian's own children, and his wife of 25+ years? Some would urge incarceration. But I would ask if an alternative path is better? For a man who experienced an admittedly brief but dark moment in his life, and then resolutely put that behind him for the last six years, does the prospect of his incarceration offer any benefit to our society? It could be argued that he poses no threat to anyone, hasn't for the last six years (and perhaps never really did?), and that incarceration would therefore offer no benefit of protection to anyone. It could further be suggested on those grounds that perhaps we would all be better served by incarcerating someone who *is* a direct and imminent threat to law-abiding citizens rather than tying up an empty prison bed with someone like Brian. Finally, one could ask if the emotional and financial fallout that would surely impact his family were he to be incarcerated would benefit anyone. My own thought is that a restorative solution might be the most appropriate response. I realize that I do not sit in the same seats as those who legislate, interpret, and enforce the laws of our land and therefore do not have their perspectives on matters like this. I am however, a parent myself and I can say that I would entrust my own son's wellbeing to very few others the way I would entrust him to Brian. I therefore offer my thoughts on this question with the greatest humility, nevertheless asking for leniency.

As an almost life-long friend of Brian's, if can serve as a character witness in any way for him, I would be honored and happy to do so. Thank you for considering my personal thoughts on this most weighty and delicate of matters.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allen Baumgarten", followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Allen Baumgarten, M.A.