

Monday, February 2, 2015

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Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain,

The first thing they teach us as journalists is to seek the truth. We're also taught to seek balance, proportion, accuracy and use as many reliable, credible sources as possible. I'm writing to request leniency from you in the March 12 sentencing of Rasmea Odeh, an award-winning community leader. While I don't actually know her, I do know her Palestinian-American family – the Odehs, and have known them for a couple decades since I was the morning talk show host on WVON-AM Radio. Presently, I'm a columnist with the Wednesday Journal in Oak Park where the president(Mayor) here is also a law-abiding Palestinian-American, Anan Abu-Taleb. Here's a link to a story about him.

<http://www.oakpark.com/News/Articles/12-30-2013/Oak-Park-Villager-of-the-Year:-Village-President-Anan-Abu-Taleb/>

Here's what I know. Rasmea Odeh's case is supported by an Oak Park-based group of Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist citizens called The Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine. I know the Odeh family to be intelligent, law-abiding, compassionate people. I've learned through them and others that, Rasmea, whom I've seen in a documentary about Palestinian-American women, was indicted in October, 2013 for allegedly falsifying information on her immigration papers. This November, she received a guilty verdict after a trial, in which the core of her defense was not allowed to be presented in court. That included evidence of torture and rape in the Israeli military prison system and subsequent post traumatic stress disorder. In light of this new information that you should include in your sentencing March 12. Reasonably people suggest you be lenient, Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Very truly yours,  
Stan West

