

# Exhibit

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Klete Keller

[REDACTED]

January 23, 2023

Honorable Richard J. Leon  
United States Senior Judge  
District of Columbia  
E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse  
333 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Judge Leon:

I stand before you feeling ashamed and profoundly embarrassed. On January 6, 2021, I unlawfully entered the United States Capitol Building and demonstrated without permission. I am ashamed to admit that I wanted to interrupt and influence Congress's certification of the Electoral College vote. As a former member of the United States Olympic Swimming Team, my behavior set a terrible example for young people who looked up to me. I take full responsibility for my inexcusable actions. I will accept my punishment with humility and serve my sentence in peace.

As a proud American, I know it is my duty to obey the law at all times. I deeply regret crossing the line on January 6, 2021. I apologize to the Capitol police officers, legislators, staffers, and other government personnel who were in the Capitol doing their jobs. I apologize to the voters and citizens of our great country, and I regret that my actions disrupted and tarnished the democratic process. I am sorry about all the harm, damage, and pointless violence done on that awful day. To everyone I disappointed when I broke the law, I apologize.

Since my case began, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on what atonement and rehabilitation would mean for me. I've considered how I got here, what went wrong, and how I can use this experience as an opportunity for growth and service. For that reason, I'm offering this letter, hoping that it will bring you more insight into who I am as a human being.

I hope the prosecution, nor this Honorable Court, will not misunderstand anything they read here as an effort to minimize my criminal acts on January 6, 2021. Please look at this letter as a way to better understand who I am beyond my bad choices on that terrible day. My actions in this case do not reflect who I am or how I think about the duties of citizenship. I hope this letter assists your deliberations over the right sentence to hand down in my case.

## Early Life

I was born on March 21, 1982, in Las Vegas, Nevada, as the second of three siblings. When I was about three years-old, my family moved to Running Springs, California. My paternal grandparents lived there and operated Lloyd's, a popular local restaurant. Lloyd's served as the community hub and reliable rest stop for travelers. I loved bussing tables and refilling water glasses alongside my parents who both worked at Lloyd's.

I had perfect attendance and earned excellent grades at my public elementary school. After school, my father often took me skiing at the Snow Valley Mountain Resort. My father had been a competitive skier and college basketball player. My mother swam competitively growing up in Queens, New York, then at Arizona State University. My sisters and I inherited our parents' athletic talent and passion for swimming.

When I was in third grade, my family moved to Rancho Cucamonga, California, so we could be closer to our swim practices at The Claremont Club. My mother started teaching swim lessons while my father worked as a food and beverage manager at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach.

I broke my first swimming record when I was eight years old. Back then, six-packs of cola were the prize for winning. I had fun at practices and competitions along with my best friends on the swim team. My mother drove my sisters and me to every practice and swim meet. She paid close attention to our progress and recorded all our races on her camcorder.

To be closer to my maternal grandparents, we moved to Paradise Valley, Arizona, when I was in seventh grade. My mother, sisters, and I moved into an apartment complex near the Phoenix Swim Club. My father spent most of his time in San Francisco working at the Hyatt Hotel there. Around that time, my parents' marriage deteriorated into bitter conflict.

My sisters and I walked on eggshells around my mother. She could explode out of the blue and stay angry for weeks. My mother berated us and disciplined us harshly. As my home life grew more toxic, my social life and grades suffered. I felt myself shutting down and tuning out to block out the negativity.

Thankfully, I could depend on swimming as an emotional release and safe harbor. I practiced for about 18 hours each week. Starting in my senior year, I felt myself coming into my own as an athlete. My hard-driving coach pushed me to be my best every day. My technique improved, my aerobic capacity increased, and my racing times got better and better. I always remembered the words of my swimming hero, Gary Hall Jr., who said, "It's not where you start, it's where you finish."

Your Honor, I am thankful for all my blessings growing up in California and Arizona. Despite conflict at home, my parents both worked hard to provide a secure life for my sisters and me. My grandparents on both sides cherished and supported me. I had the privilege of working with outstanding swim coaches who taught me about discipline, focus, and perseverance.

When I broke the law on January 6, 2021, I disappointed so many people who counted on me to make wise choices. My presence at the U.S. Capitol made national news, which caused my loved ones a lot of pain. I should not have unlawfully entered the Capitol during a Joint Session of Congress. My actions contributed to a dangerous situation that led to serious harm. I will spend the rest of my life making amends for these bad decisions.

### **Athletic Achievements and Higher Education**

After graduating from Arcadia High School in 2000, I traveled to Indianapolis for the Olympic trials. I had prepared for this competition since childhood. I had visualized every stroke and breath for each race. My parents were thrilled when I set a new American record for the 400-meter freestyle and qualified for the 2000 Olympic team. I also qualified for the 4X200 freestyle relay.

I went to Pasadena for our two-week training camp before flying to Australia. I stayed in the Olympic Village in Sydney during the week we competed. After I placed third in the 400-meter freestyle event, my coach assigned me to the anchor leg of the relay. I felt overjoyed when our team won the silver medal. All in all, I had an incredible time in Australia representing the United States.

Next, I enrolled at the University of Southern California, joined the NCAA swim team, and started classes in January of 2001. Newly-liberated after years of intense training, I enjoyed an active social life for the first time. Looking back, I had fun, but my training and academics suffered. To buckle down, I relocated to Ann Arbor in the fall of 2002 to train with the University of Michigan swim team. I also enrolled at Eastern Michigan University to continue my college education.

By then, I had turned professional, so my NCAA days were over. Thanks to my Speedo sponsorship, I had the resources to focus on training. Plus, I taught clinics to kids across America through the Fitter & Faster Swim Tour. During that time, I met my first wife, Cari, who lived in nearby Dexter.

I felt genuine fear prior to the 2004 Olympic trials in Long Beach, California. Thankfully, my training paid off and I made the team in three events. We trained together at Stanford and in Mallorca, Spain, before arriving in Athens, Greece. Happily, I shared a gold medal victory with my relay team after placing third in the 400M freestyle.

After Athens, I retired from swimming and moved to Phoenix with Cari. We rented an apartment and enrolled at Scottsdale Community College together. Unfortunately, things did not go well in Phoenix. My parents and I clashed, leading to a painful falling out.

Six months after we arrived in Arizona, Cari and I returned to Michigan. I reversed course and resumed training for the next Olympic trials. I got back in an intense routine, then decided to

return to USC to complete my degree while training in 2007. On the road back to California, I proposed marriage to Cari and she said yes. At USC, I earned good grades for the first time while maintaining a rigorous training schedule.

At the Olympic trials in Omaha, I failed to qualify for my individual events and barely made the relay team. I arrived in Beijing feeling discouraged. My mood soured when my coach did not select me to compete in the final relay race. Despite my personal frustration, I celebrated my teammates' triumphs and returned home ready to move forward with my life.

Your Honor, the United States gave me the great privilege of competing at three Olympic Games. I felt so proud and grateful to represent my country in Sydney, Athens, and Beijing. It is devastating to know that my criminal acts on January 6, 2021, will forever overshadow my athletic accomplishments. I hope young people pay attention to my case and remember their duty to follow the law.

### **Family and Career Challenges**

Cari and I got married in her parents' backyard in the Fall of 2008. I went back to USC the following Spring to complete my undergraduate degree in Public Policy and Development. When I returned to Michigan, Cari had already moved into our new house. We decided to start our family and I started selling life insurance and annuities for Northwestern Mutual. I had a hard time adjusting to this new season of life, but I soldiered on nonetheless.

Cari and I welcomed our daughter, Finley, on January 24, 2010. The most rewarding, magical experience of my life was being there for Finley's birth. Once we got home, I cherished every moment with my baby daughter. Then, on April 1, 2011, Cari and I welcomed our twin boys, Carson and Wyatt.

After a short time selling treasury bonds in Troy, Michigan, Cantor Fitzgerald offered me a position in North Carolina. Cari moved with our children to Charlotte in the Spring of 2013 while I trained in Tennessee. I spent nine months learning the ropes in Cantor's fixed income office in Memphis. I commuted most weekends, driving nine hours each way. Sadly, my marriage did not survive that nine-month disruption. Soon after I started my job in Charlotte, Cari asked me to move out. The following day, Cantor Fitzgerald fired me for underperformance.

Devastated and disoriented, I spent a few months with family in Maryland and California. Under the separation agreement, I needed a full-time job and residence in order to visit my children. So, I returned to Charlotte to build a new life so I could see Finley, Carson, and Wyatt.

For ten months, I slept in my car while working full-time building decks for MC Custom Construction. Each evening, I taught lessons at the Little Otter Swim School. I also reconnected with the Fitter & Faster Swim Tour to teach clinics twice monthly. Then, RL West, an Ohio-based real estate development company, hired me as a commercial real estate broker. Six months

later, I took a new position at CoStar selling subscriptions to an online listing service for commercial real estate brokers.

I devoted myself to meeting my obligations so I could spend time with my children. They lived ten minutes away and I wanted to be part of their lives. Sadly, after over three years of legal obstacles, I finally decided to leave Charlotte in October of 2017. I relocated to Colorado where I joined Red Rock Realty as a residential real estate agent. Then, I hired a new attorney who negotiated a temporary visitation order.

For the next three years, I visited my children monthly in North Carolina and spoke to them via FaceTime every Sunday. We made up for lost time with trips to the Whitewater Center, national forests, and the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail. We did outdoor activities like hiking, mountain biking, and going to the driving range. I loved every minute of our time together.

A hearing was finally scheduled in family court in October of 2020 to finalize a permanent visitation/custody agreement. I was proud of my good visitation record and felt optimistic about getting more time with my children. At the hearing, the opposing counsel made false accusations and insisted that I did not care about my kids. I went into a state of numb shock when the judge ultimately kept the status quo in place with no added visitation. I felt betrayed and disregarded by the family court system. My shock at the result of the hearing turned into simmering anger and a profound sense of injustice which I struggled to move past.

Your Honor, many people survive agonizing personal challenges. They do not all go on to break the law like I did. In this case, I let my emotions distort my good judgment. I crossed a line and I understand that I must be held accountable. As I atone for my criminal acts, I will remember the people at the Capitol and across the country who were traumatized on January 6, 2021.

### **Breaking the Law**

I flew to Washington D.C. to attend a political rally on November 14, 2020. A large crowd assembled at Freedom Square to voice their concerns about possible election irregularities. It was a beautiful, sunny Saturday afternoon. I had a positive, invigorating experience at that peaceful daytime event. So, with expectations of a similarly good experience, I returned to Washington for the rally on January 6, 2021.

I went to Ellipse to listen to the political speeches. I didn't hear anything new, so I left early and headed over to the food trucks along the Mall. After I ate, I joined the people walking towards the Capitol. I smelled tear gas and saw people climbing up nearby scaffolding. I sensed a more somber, intense energy in the crowd for the first time. Looking back, I should have recognized the potential danger and gone back to the hotel.

I am embarrassed to admit that I chose to move forward despite signs of trouble. I wanted to see what happened next, so I joined a line that had formed to enter the Capitol. I knew I

shouldn't be there, but it seemed like an act of civil disobedience. I entered the Rotunda and followed some people down the Ohio Clock Room hallway. I shouted out obnoxious, hostile slogans at law enforcement officers who were doing their job to protect Congress.

Soon after, the police began to push the crowd, including me, out of the Rotunda. I knew it was time to go and eventually exited the building. I headed towards the metro once I heard about the curfew. When I got back to the hotel, I felt sick after seeing myself in the news footage. I saw the same clip on the flight back to Colorado. It pained me to see such terrible chaos, damage, and harm. Five days later, I turned myself in to federal authorities in Denver.

Your Honor, I am ashamed of my reckless decision to enter the Capitol without permission. I regret participating in an illegal demonstration to obstruct a joint session of Congress. I broke important laws that protect the public servants who work at the Capitol. Looking back, I wish I had not joined the rally at the Capitol. My presence and behavior contributed to a volatile situation that got out of control and hurt innocent people. I accept full responsibility for my actions and will never make bad choices like this again.

## **Reflections**

In 2014, while I lived in Maryland, I spent a lot of time exploring Washington D.C. I fell in love with the architecture which reminded me of Athens. I read Thomas Jefferson's quotes at his memorial on the Tidal Basin and Lincoln's at the Lincoln Memorial. I took trips to historic battlefields and museums. My new wife, Lindsey, and I had our first date across the street from the White House. As a child, I learned to love America and I still do today. I am very sorry that I betrayed my own values and disgraced myself by breaking the law on January 6, 2021.

I let events in my personal life affect my outlook and actions in the runup to January 6<sup>th</sup>. I was angered and disillusioned by my experience in the family court system. I felt my relationship with my children was taken from me without any consideration of the facts. I felt similarly with the way election irregularities were seemingly dismissed and discussion of the same was squelched. I conflated my feelings with each situation and devolved into a state where I allowed my emotions to influence my actions, which I sincerely regret. I've learned an important lesson in managing my emotions and behavior.

Thankfully, my current employer hired me back after a period of reflection. I am now in my fourth year working as a commercial real estate agent. I recently brokered a real estate project which will create jobs and revitalize a wonderful neighborhood in Colorado Springs. My colleagues and I spend our days working to make the best possible contribution to our local community. I have found my professional niche and feel very optimistic about the future.

Since my case began, I have learned about how the Department of Justice is striving to improve programs for disadvantaged people. Wanting to help, I started volunteering with Prison Professors Charitable Corporation to develop coursework for currently incarcerated individuals. I recorded a course about what it took for me to qualify for the Olympics. I hope these lessons

about hard work and discipline will help many justice-impacted people start productive new lives.

I hope my case serves as a warning to anyone who rationalizes illegal conduct, especially in a moment of political fervor. The consequences of my behavior will follow me and my family for the rest of our lives. I disappointed my co-workers and former swimming teammates who depended on me to use good judgment. When this period of atonement and reflection is over, I will share my newfound wisdom with young people and pass on a message of peace.

Your Honor, I should have obeyed the law and stayed away from the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021. When deliberating over the appropriate sentence, please take into consideration that I will not repeat the mistakes of my past. I understand my conduct was criminal and that I am fully responsible for my actions.

Thank you for considering all that I've offered through this narrative. If you find me worthy, please have mercy on me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Klete Keller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Klete Keller