



Thomas Bongiorno
April 8, 2020

RE: Jarrett William Smith

The Honorable Daniel D. Crabtree
District Court Judge
District of Kansas

Your Honour,

Good day. My name is Tom Bongiorno and I am Jarrett's Step-Dad, married to his mother, Rebecca Bongiorno.

I have known him since he was ten years old. He had been dealing with his family's divorce at the time. Jarrett is a good kid. He never gave us a hard time like most typical teenagers do. Jarrett felt like an outsider because he was bullied for his cleft lip and red hair. His parents taught him to defend himself if no teachers would, from those that would berate him and punch him without provocation. He had no alcohol or drug problems. Everyone should have as good of a teen as Jarrett was.

I'm sure he was exasperated by his mother contracting cancer when I was first getting to know him. It was hard for him to deal with that, and then later, when his step-mother contracted it and later lost her life to it. He held a lot of those feelings inside.

When it was discovered that Jarrett was one of 11 kids on a High School shooter's target list, he was never the same. He was left victimized and hurt by the continued bullying which made him cautious and somewhat untrusting of people after that traumatizing event. He tried to find people he would fit-in with and felt comfortable being outspoken and somewhat opinionated with. He thought that this would make him more respected by others.

I was proud to attend his High School graduation. He completed some continuing education online after that, and was a loyal employee at his jobs. He had planned to go to Horry Georgetown Technical College, but decided to wait. He wanted to try something else first.

He was always interested in the Armed Forces. I was proud of him for joining the Army. I had hoped he would join the Navy or Air force, as they have better schools. With that schooling, he could learn a trade. Still, I was very proud to attend his Basic Infantry Training Graduation. I was honored that he chose me to pin on his blue cord at the Turning Blue ceremony, since his Dad could not attend that particular ceremony.

He did very well with the Army and liked it until events put him where he is today. He is not a terrorist and never claimed to be and didn't display being upset at certain groups. He never built devices or plotted to hurt anyone. Jarrett is not the bad guy the media portrays. He is a good person who can get infuriated by others because of the years of belittling, but I have never seen or heard of him actually being violent. I was as surprised as anyone with regard to the events he was accused of, leading up to his arrest and detainment.

I knew he had a wealth of intelligence in knowing what is going on in certain parts of the world, as he was always interested in History and Social Studies. I believe those who spoke with him online and lured him in were mercenaries who didn't care about him and were just trying to recruit naive young men. They preyed on a young man longing to fit-in with something or someone, or some type of group that was accepting of him. He thought he had a friendship with them but found out later what they were really like, after they were discovered. He was appalled.

I can swear on the Bible that Jarrett would never hurt anyone. He might show lots of bloviating but is short on action which, in this case, is a good thing.

I pray the court sees what we see and acts accordingly. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Tom Bongiorno

