



May 10, 2020

The Honorable Daniel D Crabtree
District Court Judge
District of Kansas

Your Honor,

My name is Michelle Gisoni and I am Jarrett William Smith's aunt. My brother, Chris, his father, asked me to provide some information regarding my relationship to and observations about Jarrett. I promise do my best to be honest, helpful and well balanced in my description.

I have always wanted to get a glimpse of inside Jarrett's brain! He is so incredibly intelligent and has such an impressive memory, much like his Father. I remember Jarrett as being an adorable, sweet toddler who loved Veggie Tales. Because of his cleft palate/lip, Jarrett had to undergo many corrective surgeries that lasted well into adolescence. He was always brave and positive despite his challenges. The aforementioned physical attributes have made Jarrett a target for bullying his whole life. We have had conversations about this throughout the years. It made him feel isolated, different and well...hated by many. Some days, he handled these situations better than others. I just can't imagine the day in and day out weariness he must have felt, due to the cruelty of others.

As I mentioned earlier, Jarrett is extremely smart, but I don't think he has always been able to take advantage of his gifts. When I ask myself why, my instinct goes back to the bullying. School was simply not a safe place for Jarrett. This was demonstrated when another student created bombs and planted them at school. The student had a hit list of people he intended to blow up, and Jarrett was one of them. This was a person Jarrett didn't even know! Despite all these obstacles, Jarrett graduated with his class and was proudly accepted into the Army, fulfilling a lifelong dream.

Being a soldier was something that made Jarrett very proud and confident. He believed in himself and was able to pass physical fitness requirements that were really tough for him. I watched him run on his days off and keep up with his training schedule when he was on leave for his Step Mother's funeral. He took it very seriously and showed a strong commitment to excellence. He found purpose and honor in the military and we are all very proud of him for those efforts.

Jarrett has always shown an appreciation for family. When we are all together, I see him make efforts to connect with everyone, have conversation and show interest in others lives. He especially treats his Grandfather, a retired Navy Captain and Chaplain, with great respect and admiration. It is a beautiful sight to see. Jarrett also takes time to "play" with my kids who are substantially younger than him. He will happily jump on the trampoline or play hide and go seek or just be silly. My kids have so many wonderful memories of hanging out with Jarrett and his sister, Jill, especially on Thanksgiving Day. His absence last year was really hard.

Jarrett has made special efforts to connect with my son, Leo. Leo is 11 years old and has Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, OCD and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. They share some common interests, mainly music which have help them cultivate a pen pal relationship while Jarrett has been imprisoned. I have been so impressed with Jarrett's commitment to writing Leo and offering words of support and guidance to him. A recent excerpt from Jarrett's most recent letter to Leo addresses how he treats

people in jail. Leo was worried about his safety and had asked how he stays safe. Here is an excerpt of Jarrett's response, " I am not in a gang. I am respectful to everyone...always try to learn more than you knew before. Stay away from drugs, alcohol and drama...make sure you follow the law. Then you won't need worry about jail." Those are wise words and I am grateful Jarrett is taking this opportunity to be a good role model to Leo. My son needs people in his life that accept him as he is, without judgement. I feel very blessed that he has Jarrett.

I have been corresponding regularly with Jarrett ever since he was arrested. His letters speak of hope, renewed faith and self-improvement. He speaks of a life after jail that is full of creativity, music and being a positive influence. He has a family that loves him and supports him unconditionally. He has a church that is ready to embrace him with employment upon release, and stable homes to which he can return. He has a sister who loves her big brother and needs his presence in her life. His Father and Mother are there to support and guide him upon his return home, setting himself up for the most successful transition possible.

I know Jarrett is aware of the challenges he will face once released. I believe him to be grateful for any help he will receive. I believe he is learning many critical lessons while incarcerated and understands the gravity of his actions. It is obvious Jarrett has made some very poor decisions and has gone down an undesired path. It has been very, very difficult for the entire family as these are not choices we condone. But thankfully, over time, I believe he gets it. And now, his family certainly gets it, which creates great opportunities for communal accountability. It is my desire that Jarrett be released as soon as possible into the supportive environment that is awaiting him. We are all really looking forward to Thanksgiving 2020 in hopes he will be there.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Gisondi". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Michelle Gisondi

