

Hon. Lewis A. Kaplan  
Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, NY 1007-1312

Dear Judge Kaplan,

I'm writing to you to ask for your compassion in sentencing my brother Sam.

Sam is my older brother – by three years. He was my role model when I was growing up. Even as a middle schooler, he would frequently discuss how he and others could best help those in need. I'd listen to him discuss these issues with my parents, and was allowed to join in, and the two of us would continue the conversation later. Sam taught me to think critically about the world, and our place in it.

For Sam, morality wasn't just something you talked about or felt, it was something you thought deeply about and acted on. Sam stopped eating meat at a young age, even though he loved meat, and knew it made things more difficult for himself. He didn't do it to lecture other people; he never talked about it unless others brought it up. He didn't do it because he felt a sense of oneness with other creatures; we didn't have pets and he wasn't an animal kind of guy. He did it because he believed it was the right thing to do.

Sam's deep interest in the welfare of others stuck with him as an adult. I have never worked for him or his companies, but I have followed his charitable efforts with great interest. We have spent hundreds of hours talking about what activities or changes could make the world a better place. Sam has put his heart and time and energy into his philanthropy, and I believe it has made the world a better place.

While Sam was perfect at some things (such as school), he did not always have an easy time relating to other people. He was socially awkward and sometimes blunt. He would value someone and feel connected to them but have difficulty expressing that. This tension led some to see him as uncaring, and I understand why, but underneath the awkwardness is a deeply caring person. He wouldn't make small talk about your dog, but he'd subsist on bread and water in prison to avoid eating an animal. He was never good at apologizing, but always quick to admit fault. He would be uncomfortable giving me a hug, but I know he would give me a kidney if I needed one.

Sam was never interested in luxury or material things as a kid or an adult. When he visited me in D.C., he would sleep on my couch, rather than a 5-star hotel. We would eat at Chipotle. The trappings of fame and wealth were something we joked about. Sam never took himself seriously. He was always willing to laugh at himself. He was open to criticism and willing to listen.

He loved talking about ideas, working to help others, and spending time with those he valued and who valued him. Sam has made mistakes, but his life would be wasted in prison. He has great gifts to offer the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Gabriel Bankman-Fried*

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