

30 June 2010

MSgt Christopher L. Strickland
6908 65th Ave NE
Marysville, WA 98270

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in staunch unwavering support of clemency for Barry Massey. I've had the opportunity to read numerous documents related to his case and believe further incarceration goes beyond justice and is clearly becoming cruel, given his age at the time of the crime and the influence of Michael Harris. My goal in writing this is to give you a unique perspective on Barry's character before he went to prison and the influence of his social community. What makes me capable to provide this prospective and what makes it unique?

My perspective comes from knowing Barry for a few years before he was incarcerated. He was a good friend of my brother Nathan and spent numerous hours at our home. My perspective is unique in that it was not developed as an adult or a peer of Barry. This makes it unique, because I believe children do not act the same way around adults as they do peers. The way someone acts and treats others while in the company of their peers shows their true character. As the younger sibling of Nathan, I was in the best position to evaluate Barry. Barry was always engaged in street sports and games with other kids from our neighborhood. I never once witnessed anything that would lead me to think of Barry as a bad kid. He treated everyone fairly and with decency. He was, basically, a young boy wanting to play, make friends, and just "fit in."

Barry attended the same Elementary School as I did, Lake Louise Elementary and then went on to Junior High, at Mann Jr. High. When I graduated from Lake Louise and went on to Mann, I wanted to "fit in" as well. Therefore, opportunities to be associated with the "in crowd," especially the Ninth Graders, was "Social Gold." I believe this to be true everywhere especially when a child is transferring from a one classroom one teacher environment to multiple classes and teachers.

So for anyone to believe that Michael Harris was influenced by Barry to do anything is completely absurd! No Seventh Grader could influence a Ninth Grader to do anything. This may not be true in other communities, but it was in mine and Barry's. He was just the unfortunate victim of the Social Pressure of trying to "fit in."

I myself was a victim of the Social Pressure of trying to "fit in" hanging out with the wrong person. The fortunate ending to my story is that the crime was not as severe. The basic point is this, if it could happen to me, then it makes complete sense that it happened to Barry. I've since learned my lesson and have become a responsible citizen. I have been married for the past ten years, have four children, and I am starting my fifteenth year serving as a Full Time member in the Washington State Air National Guard. I was given a second chance to show that I was "not" the company I kept and I believe it is about time we gave Barry a chance. His depth of involvement in the offense does not warrant a Life Sentence. The Justice System that gave this sentence to him is not perfect and this is why clemency is appropriate.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER L. STRICKLAND