

5 May, 2010

Barbara Sampson, Chair
Office of the Parole & Commutation Board
Grandview Plaza Building
PO Box 30003
206 E Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48909

RE: Joshua Puckett

MDOC # 250645

Dear Ms. Sampson:

I have known Joshua Puckett since he was 7 years old. I consider him a good friend. I am prepared to help Josh re-enter the communities which he had begun to build, the communities that supported him as a youth, and the communities with which he has reconnected in recent years. Those ongoing relationships, both in the states of Michigan and Washington, are evidence of his maturity, positive attitude and pro-social development.

Though I only met his mother once or twice, Josh's father, Joe Creedon was a close friend. I believe the traumas of Josh's childhood contributed to his poor decision to become involved with gangs who were up to no good. Josh, an only child, orphaned at 14, longed for family and the gang was a poor substitute.

Joshua has written me consistently since he was first incarcerated. His letters and artworks are an amazing testimony to how he has grown and evolved since he was a teenager unfairly (but perhaps understandably) sentenced to life without parole. I have watched his language and his grammar, spelling, and ability to express

himself catapult from the level of a high-school dropout to that of a college graduate. I have observed his self-image evolve steadily from one of youthful misapprehension and denial of cultural realities, to one of a wiser adult who sees things from multiple perspectives and appreciates his own strengths and weaknesses.

I have recently been in touch with Josh by telephone and through his website. My conversations with him and understanding of what he has accomplished for himself and for the prison reinforce my strong belief that his sentence should be commuted.

As a journalist who has covered education, juvenile justice, youth issues, and community functioning, I have seen many con artists and two-faced people, both in jail and in high positions of authority. While I do not believe Josh is perfect, I believe he has shown himself to be prepared to reconnect with the world in a constructive way and support himself instead of being supported by an expensive and not-perfect prison system.

I am happy to answer any questions you have, and to say more if it's useful. I appreciate your taking my remarks into consideration in reviewing Joshua Puckett's application for release. And I thank you and the parole board for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Stephen Silha
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