

EXHIBIT A

Troy A. Elenbaas, MA-LPC
Inner Room Counseling
928 S. Garfield Ave
Traverse City, MI 49686

18 October 2022

Honorable Trevor N. McFadden
United States District Judge

Dear Judge McFadden,

This letter is in regards to a case involving Luke Lints, No. 22-cr-259-TNM. I am a licensed professional counselor in Traverse City, Michigan, where Luke resides. I have not worked with Luke in the capacity of a counselor, but I did teach a high school class to him in my earlier vocation as a public school teacher. I have known Luke for about a decade. It came to my attention when teaching Luke that he was homeless at the time, and living in a motel with his mother and two siblings. Luke would remain in my classroom after school to talk, and we struck up a relationship that went beyond the classroom. Eventually, Luke ended up working out in the school weight room with me and another adult. There were times when I took Luke to my church and I would treat him to a dinner at a restaurant with my family. After he graduated high school, I saw Luke much less, but still maintained a bit of contact with him, from time to time. I met with him only about once every year or two in a public location to talk and offer him support and friendship, which he was able to reciprocate. Recently, last fall of 2021, I began building a home near Traverse City, and I offered Luke occasional work on my job site, such as digging foundations out with a shovel, or helping to clear trees. Luke is a very hard worker, and very strong, and he worked for me with great gusto.

It was on one of these work days with Luke that he mentioned to me that he had been at the January 6th event, where he listened to President Trump's speech and marched to the capital building. I had not been in contact with Luke much, if at all, during the year of 2020, leading up to the incident. I hadn't known that he had gone to the January 6th March. Even though I am a conservative Christian and support the economic and religious freedoms that President Trump had improved in my life, I didn't get involved in the March, largely because my life was full and busy at the time. I was worried about Luke after this, because I began hearing that the government was putting a lot of time and resources into arresting, detaining, and convicting the people who were involved in the January 6th incident.

I am dismayed that Luke may be convicted and sentenced for his participation in this affair, and I want to speak to Luke's character. First of all, Luke went through school with a special education status, and had some learning challenges, the specifics of which I do not recall at this time. He is a slow learner, but has learned to be very capable in some areas of interest, such as his passion for organic gardening, which he started a business with early in 2022. When I met Luke, he had very low self-esteem, which I later learned was due to abuse and neglect as a child. I believe he shared that he was in foster care at times, and I remember him discussing living year round, for a time, with his father in a tent in the woods. Needless to say, he came from great disadvantage, and his parents were at times incapable of meeting his emotional needs. When Luke was in high school, he struggled with a dark cloud of depression, which blunted his affect and made socializing with his peers somewhat difficult. He did make friends though, and has maintained many of those friends to this day. Luke invested in a Christian faith throughout his later years in high school and as a young adult. He has worked hard as an adult, in

restaurant work, and more recently with his gardening business. I've been proud of him and admired his determination and work ethic. He would sometimes discuss frustrations with his relationships in his family, but he would always include mentioning how much he loved his parents and his brother and sister. What I found with Luke was a young man, who was living his life the best he could, and who was quite gentle hearted and eager to advance his place in the world. He continued to improve his emotional well being as an adult, and his blunted affect disappeared. He appeared to be gaining more emotional stability and his sense of self was growing. He had a long-term relationship with a young woman and bought her a ring and got engaged to her. I was proud of Luke and the way he was living his life. I did notice, however, that he was passionately loyal to me and others, and I believe it was this passion coupled with a tendency for intense loyalty that appears to have gotten him into trouble on the date of January 6th, 2021. I don't know the full back story, but I don't believe he went to the event with the intent of storming the capital building. I believe he got caught up in the excitement of the moment, and hadn't thought through the repercussions of his actions.

I know Luke to be a good, caring, and gentle man, who is a good citizen of the United States of America. I have never seen him act or speak in an aggressive way towards another person. I have only watched as this young man has made the best he could out of a difficult start in life. I believe it would be a great wrong doing of our justice system to put this young man away for extended time for his actions on January 6th. I don't know the full details of his behaviors on that day, but I understand that he went too far in his enthusiasm in the protests of that day. Whether the election was stolen or not, Luke believed that the election was stolen, and he was acting on his conviction, and what he would see as his duty, to stand up against an oppressive government. I could understand that he may pay a penalty for this behavior, but I feel it would be very tragic if he was sentenced in the arena of years for what appears to have been a spontaneous burst of miss-directed enthusiasm, which aligned with his over-developed sense of loyalty, and his failure to discern under the grip of his passion that he was not actually acting in the best interest of conservatism or of himself in the moments when he stepped over from a peaceful march to a clash with police.

I thank you for your time and consideration of my words on this matter, and hope that they can help you see Luke for who he is, and understand that he is, at his foundation, a young man who is trying to make a good way in life.

Sincerely

 MA-LPC

Troy A. Elenbaas, MA-LPC

Inner Room Counseling

231-313-9781

inroomcounsel@gmail.com