

The Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly

United States District Court Judge

District of Columbia

333 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Washington D.C. 20001

Re: U.S. vs. Neil Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kelly,

I have known my husband, Neil since the end of 2010. We met while we worked together at Amerigas. He was a delivery driver and I worked in the office. I had been divorced for over a year and absolutely did not want to begin a new relationship any time soon. It took all of a year for me to finally break down and fall madly in love with him. His patience and kindness towards my son completely melted my heart.

Growing up was a very volatile time for me. My father, an abusive alcoholic had me believing that all men were that way. My previous marriage failing after three years corroborated that notion for me. He wasn't an abusive man, but rather a nonexistent husband and father. Neil was different. He always wanted to spend time with us. He even took my son fishing. He wanted to be involved in every aspect of our lives. I had never had that as a child let alone as an adult. It was the very first thing I fell in love with.

In time as our love for one another grew for each other, I realized how much this man had changed my life. He taught me about compassion and patience. That there can be arguments without violence. That I could be open and honest without fear of retaliation. It helped grow my own relationship with my son. The world always saw a brave face, one that never faltered, but Neil saw the real me, the broken me and helped me put back the pieces one by one. It was then that I realized that I wanted to grow old with him.

We finally decided that we should take the leap and officially marry in 2013. Just a small ceremony with our closest friends to celebrate our commitment to each other. It was such an exciting time for us as we were also pregnant. We welcomed our baby boy in 2014 and then our daughter in 2016. Both pregnancies were very difficult and unfortunately there was a miscarriage before we became pregnant with our daughter. Neil as always was my strength. He always has this ability to put aside his own needs to hold my hand and lift me up when I need it.

In 2021 my niece, Brooke whom I hadn't spoken to in years called my mom to ask her desperately for help. I called my niece and we talked for hours. My brother, who ended up being identical to my father, had basically disowned her and because of that so did her mother. Brooke was an unwed pregnant 18-year-old, with a baby that wasn't white. A cardinal sin in my brothers' eyes. She literally had no where to go and was living in her car. I hadn't known how horrible of a situation her life had become. My mom and I drove to Naples, FL and picked her up and brought her with us to Orlando, FL. We all had to

rebuild a relationship that had been lost, but knew that the love was still there. My husband being the kind and generous person he is, welcomed her with open arms. We worked together to make sure she was safe, a roof over her head and had a healthy pregnancy. She has grown so much over the last two years. She accepted Christ as her savior, reconnected with her high school sweetheart and is now married and pregnant with baby number two. She still isn't allowed at her fathers house, but she has managed to develop a better healthier relationship with her mother. She is also on her way to relocate to Oklahoma so she can be closer to us.

My husband is the heartbeat of this family. His love for me changed my life and his kindness changed my niece's life. No matter whose life he touches he makes a difference.

I wanted to share some history with you so maybe you can understand a little more of who my husband truly is. He's my hero and our kid's hero. He sacrifices so much to make sure we have a better life. We are getting ready to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> year of marriage this year and I can't wait to see what the rest of our lives hold.

Thank you, Your Honor, for the consideration of my testimony to the character of Neil Ashcraft.

Sincerely,

Shelly Varney

February 5,2023

The Honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly

United States District Court Judge

Re: US vs Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kotelly,

I met Neil Ashcraft in 2007. We worked together for the same propane delivery company. Neil had a CDL license with HAZMAT certification and delivered propane to our district customers. I was one of three sales representatives.

Neil met his wife Shelly Varney at our office and we all became friends. Their children and my grandchildren are close in age, so we celebrated many birthdays, beach outings and July 4th activities together.

After Neil left the company in 2014, he worked for another propane company and also started working in home renovations. I hired Neil to do work at my home. He gave me a written estimate for the work to be done and stuck to the cost! I miss that he's no longer nearby to do other work I need done around the house!

Neil was very proud of his service in the US Marines. Several years ago he went on a diet, so he could fit into his uniform to wear on Veteran's Day. He wanted his children to see him in uniform and posted his picture on Facebook. I have always respected Neil for his service to our country and I am proud to call him friend!

Respectfully,

Becky Polk

1891 N 61<sup>st</sup> Ave

Unit B408

Hollywood, FL

33024

01/30/2023

Dear honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly,

My name is Bomattie Singh. I have known Neil since 2014. We met at Kaiser University while enrolled in the Forensic Investigation program. I began the program much later than the rest of the students who had already established a fairly tight knit group. Neil was the first to welcome me into this group, became my lab partner, and a very close friend. He often referred to himself as the 30 year old "old man" in a class of mostly 19-22 year olds. He regularly spoke of his boys and if he hadn't told me I would have never guessed that his oldest child is not biologically his. When his daughter was born he shared his moment of joy with the whole class and could not contain his excitement. We all saw a softer side of him that is often hidden by his thirst of knowledge. His first son is older than mine by a couple of years and over the teenage years Neil has shared experiences that he used to raise his eldest son to help me when my son was going through the same phase in life. From learning how to drive and getting their first job Neil's words of wisdom helped make parenting my son a little easier. His middle child is a special needs child, and he often shares the challenges that he faces with his growth. Those challenges make Neil think outside of the box. He speaks highly of his wife that pushes him to be a better man and father. I often get photos of his kids that include cheerleading practices, baseball games, and new first day on the job outfit. He is a family man that flaunts them every chance he has.

In 2018 I was working for a medical examiner's office when the office was to begin servicing a sixth county requiring 3 additional death investigators. When my superiors asked the employees for recommendations I immediately endorsed Neil and he was eventually hired. During his time there He became an extremely proficient investigator and raised the standard for everyone else. He is reliable and meticulous and always willing to go the extra mile. He was able to remain objective and professional while dealing with some of the most serious situations anyone could face all while consoling friends and family of a deceased individuals. His work in the field was imperative for the pathologists and technicians to be able to perform our jobs accurately. He took his duty to the people of Seminole County very seriously and never let anything stop him. When 2 investigators left abruptly on the same day Neil stayed on 24 hour call for more than a month. He never faltered on a case and never wavered under the workload. I was saddened when he left the field of forensics and went back to commercial driving. I felt that the community had lost a great asset, but Neil was very steadfast in his decision stating that, while sad, he was very content to be able to better provide for his family.

Neil has expressed a great deal of remorse regarding his actions on January 6, 2021. Throughout several conversations he has stated that he is ashamed and disgusted to have been involved. He has also stated that he takes full accountability for his actions.

Neil is without a doubt a loyal and devoted father, husband, and friend and I am grateful to have such a great friend.

Respectfully,

Bomattie Singh

The Honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly

United States District Court Judge

Re: US vs Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kotelly,

I have known Neil for a little more than 10 years as he is my son in law. I was very skeptical when my daughter married him, but he has shown me he is a very loving and caring husband, father and stepfather.

He has been an amazing role model for my daughters first born, Carlos, who is from her previous marriage. He never treated Carlos like a stepson, he always treated him with the same love and compassion of his two biological children. In fact when asked, he always states he has three children, he never differentiates that Carlos is his stepson.

Neil has shown me over the course of time that he is a devoted husband and father that works hard to support his family. I am very proud of the man he has become.

Thank you, Your Honor, for the consideration of my testimony to the character of Neil Ashcraft.

Sincerely,

Carol Varney



## Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office

Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter & Seminole Counties

809 Pine Street

Leesburg, FL 34748

Ph# (352) 326-5961 Fax# (352) 365-6438

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January 30, 2023

The Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly  
United States District Court Judge  
333 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Ashcraft, Neil

Dear Judge Kollar-Kotelly:

Neil Ashcraft, who has pled guilty to serious charges before Your Honor, asked me to write a letter of support on his behalf. It is my pleasure to do so.

I have known Mr. Ashcraft and his family both professionally and personally for slightly more than 4 years. I am a forensic pathologist serving as the Chief Medical Examiner for Florida's Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office, which provides medicolegal death investigation services for six counties in Central Florida.

Mr. Ashcraft joined my office in 2018 as a forensic investigator. A Districts 5 & 24 forensic investigator performs death investigations and has the responsibilities of obtaining critical information on death cases, including medical histories, through liaison with law enforcement agencies, physicians, hospitals, family, acquaintances, etc.; preparing case reports; documenting property or evidence related to cases; photographing death scenes, bodies and evidence; and presenting testimony at deposition or trial. Mr. Ashcraft came to be highly respected by both his peers and his supervisors, as well as by members of the public, including people grieving after the loss of a loved one, in addition to the funeral directors and members of the law enforcement and legal communities with whom he interacted. He demonstrated outstanding powers of observation and fact finding, the ability to communicate effectively both verbally and through written reports, to deal objectively with the emotional stress generated by dealing with death and grief on a daily basis as well as caring and compassion for both the deceased and their survivors. Mr. Ashcraft achieved certification as a Registered Diplomate of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators by sitting for a national examination. He thrived on the service he provided to the community.

Additionally, because of common backgrounds, my husband and I came to know Mr. Ashcraft and his family personally. My husband, Peter W. Person, is now retired from his position as Troop Commander for the New York State Police and also served in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War and I began my career in forensic pathology as the Director of Forensic Medicine for the Medicolegal Investigation Unit of the New York State Police. Mr. Ashcraft served in the Marine Corps as a Military Police Officer and voluntarily worked with humanitarian aid missions. He also volunteered for deployments but was never selected. I can state without reservation that he has the highest ethical and moral standards, in addition to a great love of his country. He was very open with me about the actions that brought him before Your Honor. He takes full responsibility for those actions and is deeply remorseful and ashamed of them.

Mr. Ashcraft was without a doubt one of the most valued employees and colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure to work with. Regretfully, he left my employ in 2022 to pursue a better opportunity for his family in Texas. I have had the opportunity to observe Neil with his wife and family, which includes an 18 year old stepson and two young children who will rely on their father's love and influence which will be very important as they mature. He is an outstanding parent whose family is the main focus of his life.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional further information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara C. Wolf, M.D." in a cursive style.

Barbara C. Wolf, M.D.  
Chief Medical Examiner  
Districts 5 & 24  
State of Florida



February 5,2023

The Honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly

United States District Court Judge

Re: US vs Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kotelly,

I am Denise Ashcraft, mother of Neil. What I will say will be obviously positive, but positively true. He is loved and loving. He is the baby of our large family so as a child he was doted upon by everyone.

I worked a full-time job as a server, and his Dad, Jim, ran a successful mobile marine repair service from home, along with raising some livestock. Dad took over watching the kids instead of having to put them in a daycare facility. Neil was literally his shadow from the time he was born, learning everything about mechanics to how to care for and love animals. Even today, he is passionate about dogs.

Being patriotic, he joined the Marine Corps out of high school. He drove trucks for a while, but eventually left that to pursue his ultimate dream of becoming a forensic investigator with the Medical Examiner's office. He was amazing at his job, but also sympathetic to the victims. I have heard his stories and witnessed his compassion, kindness and patience when he was on the phone explaining the process and procedures of the medical examiner and providing help to the families of victims.

His kids adore him. He is a great father and husband. He took on the responsibilities of raising his wife's 8 year old son when they were married. He now has his own little piece of land, with dogs, of course, to live on, passing on the farm tradition.

He makes sure to check on me and his Dad regularly.

I hope this gives you a small glimpse into the nice person we think Neil is. I'm proud of his accomplishments, his ambition and patriotism.

Sincerely,

Denise Ashcraft

348 Brighton Woods Drive

Pooler, GA 31322

January 19, 2023

The Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly  
United States District Court Judge  
District of Columbia  
333 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: U.S. vs. Neil Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kotelly:

I have known Neil Ashcraft since 2015 and am writing to you in order that you may gain information on the character of this man.

Neil is the husband of one of my closest friends, Shelly Varney Ashcraft. Shelly was a single mother of her son, now a bright 17-year-old. When I met Neil, she had just come out of an abusive relationship and was doing well enough on her own, leaning on herself and her family. She began talking about Neil, I was skeptical and protective; next thing I knew Neil was spending all the time he could with them and helping support them so Shelly and her son could lead a more enriched life. They moved in together, married, had two more children now in elementary school and here we are.

I got to know Neil during dinner visits to their home while I lived in Orlando. They had a home on the small side, full of kids, dogs, extended family living with them. The refrigerator was always covered with preschool artwork, coupons and photos. It was always loud and always full of laughing and love.

Neil and I became true friends when their family of five came to visit me on a four-day Fourth of July trip in 2018. In my 850 square foot condo in Savannah. I am sure you can imagine it was chaotic to say the least, especially with two little ones, dogs and the lack of space. We spent the weekend celebrating, visiting one of the local Civil War monuments and really getting to know each other. My eyes were opened to the gem my friend had married, and here is why: he uses what he has learned in his background to teach others how to be better.

First, he is a Veteran Marine. He has taught pride and honor to his children, and these characteristics of his are reflected in every aspect of the family. Kindness to siblings, love towards his wife, animal rescue and care, kind tolerance to difficult family members.

He is reliable and true. He will take his wife's side every minute of the day out of love. That is not easy sometimes. He stands up for what he believes and does not bully others due to their opinions or beliefs.

He is motivated towards a better life. When the going got tough for him jobwise, he would work two or three jobs to be sure his kids could stay in sports and extracurricular activities.

He is 100% dedicated. Their middle son is a special needs child, and along with his wife, he opened his mind to any and every bit of help and advise to teach their boy coping strategies, how to be loved, how to cope in a normal world. That child is now an exuberant 8-year-old who can take a computer apart and put it back together in a flash and stand on his own with pride and self-esteem in his school, family and world.

He is tender. He has adopted their oldest son and been a solid example of how a man should be: responsible, respectful, someone to rely on, someone to give a pat on the back when needed. That boy is now a senior in high school graduating with a two-year college degree. He is an extremely dedicated husband and son. When his mother-in-law was battling cancer, he moved her into their home. When a niece became pregnant and her mother threw her to the street, he moved her in so she could be cared for and so the new life would have a fighting chance. He can braid long, curly baby girl hair perfectly. They have three rescued dogs.

He is a fine Christian man and has relied on God to protect his family in times of trouble and keep his belief in good and a good world.

His presence in Washington D.C. two years ago is a result of all these character traits. In a world that has been chaotic for quite some time, people want it to be better. People who are responsible. People with pride who are reliable and true. People who are motivated and dedicated towards a legacy of something better for their family. People who have faith, especially in God. People like Neil Ashcraft.

Your Honor, thank you for taking time to read my letter and taking this information into consideration while you deliberate on an appropriate sentence.

Respectfully,

Sharon Johnson

The Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly

United States District Court Judge

District of Columbia

333 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Washington D.C. 20001

Re: U.S. vs. Neil Ashcraft

Dear Judge Kollar-Kelly,

I have known Neil and his wife Shelly since the beginning of 2020. They have demonstrated to be wonderful parents to their three children and are building a home on godly character and love. Shelly and I attended Grace Homeschoolers Co-op together, but often Neil was the one to accompany the kids to class. While we would wait for the children to be dismissed, Neil would play with my then 2-year-old, and always treated him like his own son. My children love Neil and Shelly, as well as their three children.

It was always a pleasant experience to come over to their house, as we would grab a plate of food and talk about life, camping and recipes as we watched the children play. Neil was working on renovating their home, and had spent long hours redoing their bathroom, turning their garage into an extra room, and so much more. He loved to talk about all the details that went into a house remodel, and I was impressed with his workmanship and knowledge.

I believe it was the end of 2021 when Shelly, Brooke, her mom, and the kids went to Texas to live on a small farm with Shelly's family. Neil was to follow when he had finished up the remodel and sale of the house, as well as completed the time with the two jobs he was working.

On Sunday February 13th of 2022, Neil accepted Christ as his Savior. He had been attending church with his family for some time but had been wrestling with the Lord on many things. After his family went to Texas, Neil began to attend by himself, often coming straight after working an overnight shift. My 17-year-old son and I would notice how during alter call Neil's hands would grip the pew, turning white-knuckled and holding him in place, as he fought the calling of the Lord to get saved. That February, however, my family and I watched as he stopped resisting God, and came up to the front of the church to make a public proclamation of his trusting in Jesus, immediately followed by Believer's baptism.

I immediately saw a change in Neil, a new zeal if you will, concerning his life and his family. He finished up what needed to be done in Florida, and moved to Texas to join them. He took on a trucking job, that provided additional income for their family, and just recently, Neil and Shelly were able to purchase their dream home. Neil has been a wonderful husband to Shelly, loving father to their children, and a great friend to me. The love their family has for each other is a beautiful thing to behold.

It has been a joy to have Neil, Shelly, and their children in my life, and it has been greatly enriched as a result. It has been an honor to watch as the Lord has worked in each of their lives, transforming them and shaping them in a way that would bring Him glory.

Thank you, Your Honor, for the consideration of my testimony to the character of Neil Ashcraft.

Sincerely,

Amber Carroll