

April 2001

Dear Judge Baker:

Before you make your decision this morning I would like to share with you my thoughts. The future of my little brother rests in your hands. No one in that courtroom, which convicted John of murder, knew him the way that I knew him. I did not hear anything that convinced ME he killed those two people. I heard the testimony of two criminals that had, their own lives as, motivation to lie. They will spend approximately 1 year each in prison while my brother is looking at the rest of his life.

John was not a criminal. He has never been suspected of any crime or gang activity. We were teenagers in the very hart of gang activity and John never participated in any of that. He was a good kid. When I first heard what John was charged with, two counts of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder, I was shocked. I thought that was impossible it must be a mistake. Or that his life was in danger, self defense.

“Chewy” is short for Chewbacca, a character in the original Star Wars film. A huge hairy thing with an even bigger heart, that wouldn't hurt a mouse. That is how John's friends described him at outdoor school where he was first called “Chewy”. Outdoor School was probably the best time he ever had in his life. He was accepted for who he was. The other kids actually liked him. He fit in. And he went back to camp in High School as a Camp Counselor. To try and give other kids the same terrific experience that he had.

John also loves animals very much. They have been a way for him to give and receive unconditional love his entire life. You saw that love in the courtroom when the Prosecutor mentioned John abandoned his dog, Drexler, in the woods. To every one else John probably appeared irrationally angered. But keep in mind John never stopped trying to get his dog back. Dane's mother lied on the stand and said that John made no attempt to get the dog. I personally overheard several phone conversations, where John attempted to make arrangements to get the dog. She also stated that she had kept the dog, right up until the month before the trial and then took it to the pound. Where it could be destroyed. I know that information came as a hurtful shock to John.

I do not believe that John was a drug dealer. The “Enforcer” for a drug family, was living at home with his Mom, Sister and Niece. I would think that a big time drug dealer could at least afford his own apartment.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please consider these points when making your decision.

Sincerely,  
Lori Hinds

ADMITTED

DEFENDANTS  
EXHIBIT 16