

October 17, 1989

Re. Mr. P.F. Lazor

To Whom It May Concern:

I first learned of P.F. Lazor through the newsletter of a political action group in Anchorage, Alaska. The article was published in 1986, almost three years after he had been tried and convicted of second degree murder.

The article was very thought-provoking, especially since it included a copy of an appointment record book which had been entered as evidence. Mr. Lazor had maintained that his notes were misinterpreted to the jury by the prosecutor, and thus strongly weakened his defense. Apparently placing a great deal of faith in our justice system, however, he felt confident that his own attorney would vigorously set the record straight at the appropriate time, but it didn't happen.

A few months later, as I thumbed through my own appointment book, it struck me how easily my own cursory notations could be misinterpreted by someone else. I recalled and retrieved the article and contacted Betty Brandon, who was listed in the article as, "Chairperson, Friends of P.F. Lazor." I learned firsthand from Betty about her many frustrations experienced as she tried to help her brother and about her efforts to raise the money that had been requested for legal assistance, all to no avail. She was discouraged, but still convinced that her brother's conviction was in error; that he was a warm, loving, and productive human being, and that he had acted in self-defense.

I haven't yet met Betty or P.F. personally, but I have had several telephone discussions with them and with many of P.F.'s friends in my efforts to help P.F. with his appeal. I am very impressed with all of them. It must be quite difficult, after six years in prison, to not get hopelessly discouraged about your plight, especially if you feel you are wrongly imprisoned. However, P.F.'s letters and conversations have always been as objective and professional as possible, never complaining or condemning, but always positive and hopeful. He has reflected on his courtroom experience and concluded that he placed too much reliance directly upon an attorney who, for whatever reason, did not completely or competently represent him. Stipulation agreements between prosecuting and defense attorneys to which P.F. was not a party, decisions by his attorney to withdraw earlier-submitted jury instructions, and the "sanitizing" of submitted evidence all seem to support his conclusion.

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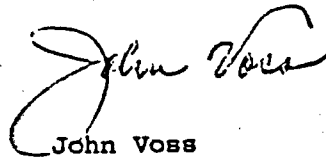
All of P.F.'s friends and relatives want to see him get another chance. P.F. himself is not just hoping to have his conviction reversed or set aside, but is hoping to have another trial. Realizing that he left too much of his first trial up to others, he is eager to be a more active participant in a second chance to prove his innocence, and to prove that he acted in justifiable self-defense. I admire his desire to set the record straight, realizing as I know he does, the dangers to his future liberty if the prior courtroom performance is repeated.

His desire to submit himself to the jeopardy of another trial to set the record straight speaks strongly to me of his innocence and his continuing faith in the justness of our legal system. In our numerous conversations, he has never given me any indication that he is vindictive in any way, only that he is convinced that errors crept into the process, errors that for the sake of all involved, should not be allowed to remain uncorrected.

I've personally witnessed as well as participated in many courtroom proceedings and feel that, while our system is probably the best in the world, it is still subject to the frailties of man. Perfect understandings are seldom completely conveyed in the normally short span of a trial.

I genuinely hope P.F. is granted another trial, another chance. Over these last three years, I have become relatively well-acquainted with him, his friends, and his family, and feel that he may well be a victim of a good, but imperfect, system. Prior to that fateful day of January 10, 1983 he led a fruitful and productive life. I believe him to be a moral and honest individual, capable and anxious to once again be a productive member of our society.

The foregoing is a true, correct, and complete statement of my understanding and experience.



John Voss
1449 Twin Sisters Drive
Longmont, Colorado 80501

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