

Dear Mr. Unwilling and Reluctant Witness,

I know that we don't know each other personally, but whether you realize it or not, we are connected. We've never formally met or been properly introduced, but we definitely know of one another. Eight years ago, almost to the day, I was arrested, tried, and convicted of a crime that you watched someone else commit. For every day of the past eight years, my family and I have been trying diligently and desperately to prove my innocence, but nothing seemed to be enough until you came along. I've been screaming to authorities for years that I'm innocent, I've personally passed three polygraph tests, and my son's mother (my alibi witness and my former co-defendant who was acquitted at trial) has passed the polygraph exam twice. Before all of this happened to me and shattered my life, I was only a 19-year-old kid who'd just had a kid himself. Now I'm 27 and he is 9. My oldest son is 10 and I met him in the visiting room of a prison. Prior to this, I was a firm believer in our American justice system. Every night from the very beginning, I've been praying and asking God to help us prove my innocence. A few years ago when my attorney informed me that they had finally discovered a witness who had actually seen what happened, I was elated. I couldn't wait to call home and tell my family. I just knew that our prayers had finally been answered, but as time went on and you kept saying that you didn't want to get involved, I just really didn't know what to say. As time went on and you continuously refused to help me, I slowly began to lose my faith in God. I stopped reading my Bible and I stopped praying because I felt that God was teasing me. Sort of the carrot-in-front-of-the-rabbit type thing. I couldn't believe that God would allow you to show up in our lives but still keep me so far away from my freedom and release me from the confinements of this injustice.

Mr. Unwilling, I know that it may be hard for you to really grasp what I am going through, but it is of the utmost importance that you understand that I am serving a life sentence for a murder that I didn't even know had happened. My life has been extreme hell from the moment that all

of this shit began. There is truly no way to cope with a life sentence, but how would you feel if everything that you've ever loved was taken from you all at once? To have a life sentence for a crime that you didn't commit is torture all by itself, but the three and a half years that I spent in level 4, an 20-hour lockdown, and the two and a half that I did five hours away from my family, in a part of the state where it is still in June — a part of the state that I'd never heard of until the Michigan Department of Corrections sent me there. — these things sort of speak for themselves. It's torture to wake up in the morning and it's torture to go to bed at night. It's torture to talk to my kids over the phone, and it's even worse to watch them leave me in the visiting room. I'll never get a chance to see those first words, those first steps, their first day of school or their first ballgames. My life is literally hell. Since I've been ~~gone~~ gone, two of my closest friends have died. One to gun violence and the other to a brain aneurysm. My grandmother doesn't remember who I am or what I look like because she has been diagnosed with full-blown dementia. My mother wants to move out of state and retire, and my sister refused to accept a full college scholarship out of state because they both wanted to stay close to me, hoping that this would be over soon.

Believe it or not, I still have nightmares from the night that I was arrested. All that I see in the dream is the police ripping my son from my arms the way that they did that night. He was asleep on my chest when they kicked in my front door. I relive that nightmare, night after night. I try not to let my family witness my emotions because I don't want them to worry about me, but in all honesty, I believe that if you don't help me, there is a big possibility that I'll die in prison for a crime that I did not commit. It's hard to find the appropriate wording to try to get you to envision some of the extremes that I've endured over the past few years, but know that I've seen men leave the prison system in every way imaginable. Dead in the back of an ambulance, dead in a helicopter, through the courts, on parole, and even an escape or two. I've been traumatized by the things that I've seen in here and I would never wish this on anybody. My family tries to tell me to stay calm and be patient, but they haven't seen the things that I've seen or witnessed the horror that I have. I am begging you to help me get away from this hell on earth. I have been sentenced to the mental agony of a slow death. I pray that you'll be able to find the

Serenity in your heart to come forward and do what is right for me. I pray that you'll give me an opportunity to put this behind me. I pray that you'll become more than just a name to my kids — a name who could've given them their future back. I pray that one day soon you'll let me live again.

This has been an extremely painful experience, but with your help it can all be over soon.

Please help me.

Sincerely,
Wrongfully Convicted