

November 18, 2013

To whom it may concern,

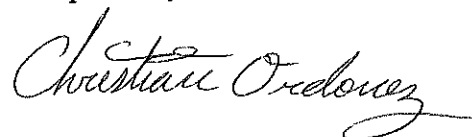
My name is Christian Ordonez, I recently received a notice informing me on the hearing that is due to take place on November 21st. I was told that I could write a letter voicing my opinion on this subject and am doing so now.

I have been incarcerated since I was fifteen years old. At the age of sixteen I was sentenced to twenty-four years. I know nothing I say or do can ever make up for the crime I committed. However, I ask myself this, in a country like America how can one mistake make a life worthless? Other than a couple of middle school fights, I did not have a violent history until this incident. In four-and- half years of being in prison I have not had a single fight or violent encounter with anyone. Again, I know that this does not make everything alright; I'm just trying to show where I'm going with this. It is said that the part of your brain that is used to make decisions is not fully done growing until a person is about twenty-four years old. So is it possible that a child almost ten years younger than that age, a child with no parents or guidance, can make a bad decision without considering, or better yet without being able to consider the full impact of his actions?

I'm not asking you to overlook what I have done. I am not asking for special treatment. All I ask is that you do not let one mistake ruin the rest of my life. Since I have been in prison I have discovered religion, seen how it changed lives, and have gotten baptized. I have completed Anger Management and eight other programs created by the state to help me with my rehabilitation. I have received my G.E.D., completed two vocational classes (Culinary Arts and Computer Technology), and have been enrolled in Auto Body class for nine months. I have had many jobs here on the prison which includes working in the kitchen and the laundry room, cleaning the school, being a janitor in multiple housing units, and I have currently been working in the library for about a year. I am not mentioning these things to gain your praise. I am merely trying to show you that I acknowledge the fact that I have to change and that I am trying to take every opportunity available to work on my self improvement. For example, one of my past teachers and I are currently pursuing a grant so that I can take college correspondence classes. I have also knitted blankets for victims of domestic violence and children in Africa, and I have written a short story for children in Mexico, where they do not have the same educational opportunities as us. In addition to those things I have multiple certificates for peer mentoring because I try to explain the consequences of violence to other inmates here in the facility. But most importantly I have learned how the decisions I make affect other people and their families.

So I ask you please, when it finally comes time to make a decision on this topic remember that just because someone makes a bad decision that does not make them a bad person. And I ask you to consider how age can play a big part in the making of that decision. At the age of nineteen I know that I am still not an adult, but I also know that I am well on my way to becoming a responsible and educated man. Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christian Ordonez". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Christian Ordonez