

Dear Judge Burlison:

As I write this request to you, my fingers are literally shaking. Recently, I received the news that the former Assistant Prosecutor who was assigned to my son's case, grievously accepted an 8 year plea deal from the Defendant in my son's case; Jarmond Johnson. Jarmond Johnson callously demonstrated a complete disregard of human life when he recklessly took my son's life on February 15, 2020.

While on a conference call with two other public servants, and me, the former Assistant City Prosecutor (now Assistant County Prosecutor), had previously declared that the original plea of 8 years was unacceptable, and that he had every intention of turning down the request. Last week, I placed a routine call requesting a date as to when I should schedule a return flight to St. Louis (I live in Austin, TX)? I was then informed that there would be no trial, and that you would make a decision on July 26<sup>th</sup>, as to whether or not to accept this absurd plea. Needless to say, I was devastated to have received this information due only to my routine call.

Judge Burlison, I would get on bended knee if necessary, to beg that you review the leniency of the request proposed by this Defendant's attorneys. My son's life was valuable to his family and many others. As his mother, my heart is now irreparably broken as a result of the actions of Jarmond Johnson.

My son Dwight, was a sweet and kind person who had been bullied for most of his life. At the time of his death, he suffered from untreated AD/HD, anxiety and depression. He also suffered from epilepsy and was dyslexic. Although Dwight grew up in a home surrounded by love and support, he opted to turn to the streets to self medicate. Thinking that I was making the best decision by practicing "tough love," I refused to allow him to come to live with my husband, and two of his three children that we are raising, until he got my version of his life together. His last words to me were, "Mom, please help me, these streets are dangerous, I've already been stabbed once, and I want to be with my kids!" I don't know if even with counseling, I will ever forgive myself for doing what I thought was right at the time.

Dwight, and his twin Duane, had been kind to Jarmond! They had even shared the very little money they had with him on previous occasions. Although I had never heard Duane mention Jarmond by name until after Dwight's death, They had fed Jarmond the day before he killed Dwight! Based upon what witnesses stated to my family after Dwight's murder, Jarmond and Dwight did tussle with one another from time to time, as a result of Jarmond's incessant bullying of Dwight. As was reported to us, Dwight sometimes displayed irritated responses to Jarmond's taunting (most often with some sort of weapon; his favorite being a pipe).

On that fateful February 15, 2020, I received "the call" that every parent dreads experiencing. I was told that Dwight had suffered significant enough brain injury; after having been blindsided by the significant punch to the head by Jarmond Johnson. The attending physicians feared he would probably succumb from his injuries. My husband,

son, daughter, and I (from Texas), were in St. Louis by February 16<sup>th</sup> to say our goodbyes, and for me to allow them to remove all life sustaining devices.

Unbeknownst to me, Dwight had previously given permission to donate his organs, should he die prematurely. In so doing, my son unselfishly saved the lives of 5 individuals! And Jarmond Johnson should receive a sentence of 8 years; which probably won't be 8 years, for leading a life of crime, centered around assault/abuse? I've researched this young man. He's violent, and seemingly devoid of sincere remorse. I'm sure that the people of St. Louis will sleep safer at night, if this miscreant is securely locked away.

Please Judge Burlison, do not allow my son's case to be a throw away. Jarmond Johnson is a very young man, who once out of prison, will still be a young man; able to reconstruct his life, or deconstruct the lives of others. He can marry, father children, further an education, or kill someone else.

I'm certainly not a legal scholar, however, I know that should you allow for the acceptance of this 8 year sentence, I realize that your decision will be FINAL! Judge, please take the time to consider that on February 16<sup>th</sup> so was my son's death...FINAL! There will be no opportunities for readjusting his life, seeing his children, no graduation ceremonies, or perhaps walking his daughter down the aisle. My sentence is also final. What I have left of my son, are his remains inside of an urn. Jarmond does not deserve a slap on the wrist, after he has broken so many hearts.

Please accept my sincerest gratitude for requesting that you read my lengthy document, however, I ask that you consider how you would feel, and to what lengths you would go, to receive the closest semblance of justice for one of your precious daughters.

As a more than 30 year educator, I know that one of the most important qualities is being empathetic. I want to believe that being a judge requires the same. Please Judge Burlison, allow for an extension if there is further information that I can provide (letters of support, etc.), however most importantly, I beseech you not to allow Jarmond Johnson's unjust plea for mercy. He offered my son none...

I asked for God's grace and mercy in submitting this request, and I pray that it touches your heart with powers beyond my control. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shirley Washington-Cobb, Ed.D.