



WASHTENAW COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



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JERRY L. CLAYTON
SHERIFF

MARK A. PTASZEK
UNDERSHERIFF

To Judge Swartz
From Derrick Jackson
Date October 7, 2013
Re Marquell Ganter

It's not often that I take the time to write a letter on behalf of an individual that the Sheriff's Office has investigated and arrested, but in this instance I am compelled to share with you my knowledge of Marquell Ganter in hopes that it will assist you in making the best judgment possible regarding his sentencing.


In my role here at the Sheriff's Office I come across many young people who are in need of direction and a mentor. However, there is only one young person that I have directly mentored and attempted to take under my wing - Marquell Ganter. I did not do so out of some naive belief that I could save the world, but did so after years of experience in working with young people and seeing in Marquell a unique quality that he himself may not have recognized. For the past three years I have spent a significant amount of time working one on one with him, focusing on getting back into school, finding employment and staying out of trouble. Because of this relationship and my role here at the Sheriff's Office I think I have a unique perspective on his character and the implications of what he did.

On Wednesday August 21st I was awoken to a call regarding the shooting on Greenlawn. Upon arrival I was shown a picture of one of the suspects and was shocked to see that it was Marquell. I immediately called Marquell and without hesitation he answered. We spoke and I asked Marquell where he was and informed him that officers wanted to speak with him. Marquell told me where he was and sat waiting until law enforcement arrived. Yes, he made a horrible decision and took part in a crime for reasons that I cannot understand, but from the time he answered my call and officers arrived he has been truthful. This does not change what happened or eliminate the impact that he has had on the victims and the community, but it does give us a glimpse into the character I have seen within him.

My disappointment in Marquell is not based on the mentoring relationship we have, but in fact is because of the potential and character that this young man has demonstrated since I've known him. Correction Officers within the jail have said that he doesn't belong here while other inmates have asked why he is here. Although much of that is due to his young age, a large part of their sentiment is due to how he carries himself. Marquell is not a street-hardened young person destined for a criminal lifestyle. In fact, he is quite different than that. I do not pretend to know the appropriate consequence for the crimes he has committed, but I do know the difference between someone with malice and someone that has made a horrible mistake. I've seen those inmates that "fit in" to the jail culture and have worked with those that society would not like to see on our streets ever again. Marquell is neither.

I hope you will consider this in your deliberations for his sentence and take into account the impact that a long prison term may have on the development of teenager like Marquell. I know that he has learned a lot already and I'm sure he will learn more during his time away from society. However, I pray that his time away is not so extensive that it removes the youthful joy within him and replaces it with the hardened street mentality so prevalent within our prison system.

Sincerely,


Derrick Jackson, M.S.W.
Director of Community Engagement
Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office