

## Section 4: OPTIONAL Personal Statement

If you decide to include a personal statement, it **may** include:

- ✓ A summary of how your life or circumstances have changed since your last arrest
- ✓ Reasons you seek clemency
- ✓ Reasons you feel you are a good candidate for consideration
- ✓ Information you feel supports your request

My name is [REDACTED] first I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I'm not sure how to start but here we go, growing up it was wonderful. I cannot blame anything that happened to me on my parents as they were very hard-working and they showed my brothers and sisters and I how to become hard workers.

I never really got into any trouble. Maybe a few parking tickets but nothing crazy until my divorce with my first wife. I think that's when I believe I started drinking heavily. But it didn't stop me from working and functioning then my father was killed at his restaurant when 2 guys tried to rob the place in July of 1999. That was the beginning of the end, it destroyed me! I started to use cocaine and drinking even more heavily. Shortly after, maybe a little over a year, my younger brother was killed by a drunk driver on Roosevelt Boulevard in 2001 and two years after that, my older brother coming home from his auto parts store was brutally beaten and killed in his own house in September of 2005.

At this point, I was drinking and using almost every day. Didn't care if I lived or not, I just wanted the pain to go away. It got to the point that I lost everything, my house, my job, and I started living on the streets for maybe three years not knowing where my next meal was coming from. I stopped going around family members and stopped visiting friends because I didn't want anyone to see me in the condition that I was in, but I was homeless so I decided to sell drugs to get off the street to have a roof over my head and a hot meal. And let's be honest to also support my habit. I was lost for maybe 10-12 years and became a normal way of life.

I got arrested for possession with the attempt to distribute and manufacture. Believe it or not, but going to jail is one of the things that saved my life! It just got real starting to sober up as the days went by, starring and realizing all the damage I did to myself and to my family that doesn't even have a clue of how I was living and where I'd been. I've been sober from narcotics since being incarcerated in 2006.

When I got released, I knew that I no longer wanted to live like that anymore but didn't know how or what to do. But with the grace of God, my sister took me in and then I went to live with my mother in Puerto Rico until I met my wife.

My wife Carmen is the other reason my life was saved. She was my high school sweetheart then we went our separate ways. After 25 years she arrived in my life when I needed her most. I was still in the crossroads in my life, I could have gone either way at this point in time, but I was able to tell her everything about my past and she stood by me through all the sleepless nights, mood swings, and cold sweats. But she gave me the strength to keep going.

My wife and family, helped me through the difficult times, and as the years passed it got easier with time, I moved to Boston with my wife, where her family is from, and what I needed to start my life over. Away from Philadelphia and its streets. As the years passed, I learned how to stay clean. I started to work in a restaurant cooking for a great guy named Nathan and his family, who trusted me and made me his manager and when he opened his other restaurant Nathan made me co-owner of the pizza shop that I managed in 2015.

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