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June 14, 1999

Mr. Ronnie Kimble
#0628799
Odom Correctional Institute
Route 1, Box 36
Jackson, NC 27845

Dear Ronnie:

I am in receipt of your letter of June 8, 1999.

In the first paragraph of your letter you say you have made many requests of David and me through your family. I am sorry to have to inform you that absolutely no requests have been made of me either directly from you or through your family since you were sentenced to life in prison.

I saw your parents when Ted tried to withdraw his guilty plea but your Mom declined to talk to me. Your dad and I spoke briefly about Ted's intention to appeal if the judge ruled against him. Neither of them asked me to do anything on your behalf.

In the second paragraph of your letter you say that you were never told your rights or the law on the substance of motions made on your behalf. You also say that at one point you were told to "shut up" when you asked questions. You further assert that there was valuable information that went "unintroduced."

I absolutely disagree with all of those assertions. In 25 years as a lawyer I personally have never spent more time with a client who was confined than you. The prosecution made full disclosure before trial and every document was either shown to you or described to you.

Please recall that I made a motion to have you released on bond and it was denied by the judge based upon threats allegedly made by Ted to various material witnesses.

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In the course of your trial we heard evidence that tended to show that Ted did threaten various witnesses. You probably were denied bond because of Ted's actions and not because of inaction on my part.

In the third paragraph of your letter you express "dissatisfaction" with much of what was done and not done on your behalf.

Let me remind you that you never expressed dissatisfaction with my performance to me personally. In fact, while we waited for the jury to decide your guilt or innocence, you thanked David and me. We all hoped you would be found not guilty and we were all disappointed when the jury decided against you.

Several times during the preparation for your trial we discussed the possibility of a plea to Second Degree Murder and Arson. You could have received a sentence of between 125 and 196 months for Second Degree Murder and between 51 and 80 months for First Degree Arson. It is possible that you could have negotiated a plea in the range of 157 to 275 months rather than life without parole. David and I explained to you that any plea bargain would be based upon your testifying against Ted. You understood that very well and you repeatedly said "Why would I plead guilty to something I did not do?"

On one occasion you told your parents and the Stumps that I was urging you to plead guilty against your will. I explained to you that my duty as a lawyer included exploring the possibility of a plea bargain. You told me you understood I was only doing my job and we had no further discussions about pleas because that is how you wanted it.

You say you were "kept in the dark during your trial." This is false, Ronnie, as you well know. You and I spent numerous hours together discussing your case. David Lloyd also spent numerous hours with you which he documented when he applied to the court for his fee.

Two factors created problems for us in your trial:

(1) Your visit to Mitch Whidden's house in Lynchburg and your acknowledged conversation with him about a dream you had about your sister-in-law's shooting death.

(2) The statements you made in writing to Janet Smith including a statement that you would essentially lie to protect her.

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We spent literally 50 to 100 hours trying to figure out what to do about the Whiddens. Mike Ingold went to Florida to investigate Whidden and he and I spent numerous hours preparing for the cross-examination of Whidden.

Although most of the evidence concerning Janet Smith was kept away from the jury as a result of David's and my objections, the jury believed Mitch Whidden and his wife and felt that you had confessed to the murder of your sister-in-law.

You and I spent many hours preparing you for your confrontation with Dick Panosh. I warned you that you could never be perceived to be lying by the jury if you wanted to win. I warned you not to match wits with Panosh. You denied attending Ted's wedding under oath and then had to eat your words when Panosh produced a picture of you at the wedding.

David and I fought hard for you every day of your trial. We thoroughly prepared for cross examination of every witness. Unfortunately, witnesses like the Whiddens and Jerry Falwell impressed the jury. You spent more than a day on the witness stand and your testimony obviously impressed the jury also.

You were found guilty of First Degree Murder by a jury that spared your life when they could have put you on death row. You went to trial with the 100 percent support of the Stump family and David and me. Everyone tried as hard as possible to secure your acquittal. We are grateful that the jury spared your life so that you can serve God in your own way for the rest of your life.

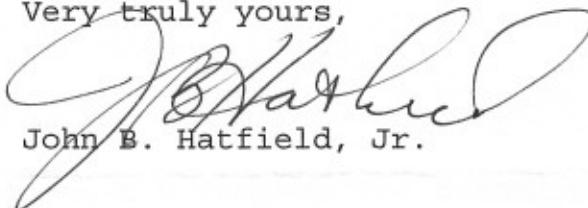
I hope you do not believe "jail house lawyers" and other inmates who think that you can obtain a new trial by claiming ineffective assistance of counsel. Putting aside my own efforts on your behalf, David Lloyd was extraordinarily well prepared.

I will be glad to withdraw from your appeal if you want me to. David and I agreed that he would do most of the work preparing the record and the brief and that I would serve as a

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consultant where needed. On the appeal I defer to David. If you do not want me in on the process, just say so in writing and I will step aside.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John B. Hatfield, Jr.", written in black ink.

John B. Hatfield, Jr.

JBHjr/ph

cc: David Lloyd