

January 7, 2004

The Honorable William J. Haynes, Jr.
U.S. District Judge
C/o Peter J. Strianse, Esq.
Tune, Entekin and White, PC
Suite 2100, AmSouth Center
315 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37238-2100

Dear Judge Haynes:

I am writing to request mercy in the sentencing of my friend, Bernie Ellis.

In 1990, I was the administrator of a substance abuse treatment center in Gallup, New Mexico which borders the Navajo and Zuni Indian Reservations. Even casual visitors to our community referred to Gallup as "Drunk City" because of the epidemic of alcohol addiction in our region.

In order to change the environment of abuse, our community needed accurate and timely data on the problem and its impact. After being rejected by numerous university experts who considered Gallup a hopeless case, Bernie Ellis agreed to work with us.

It was Bernie who documented over 40,000 pick-ups of public inebriates in a community of only 22,000 residents. Bernie provided comprehensive statistics on DWI deaths; alcohol-related homicides; deaths of chronic alcoholics due to exposure; death due to cirrhosis; alcohol-related pedestrian deaths and other morbidity and mortality indicators.

By documenting the disease, Bernie opened doors to resources, personnel, programs and results that have changed the entire region. Bernie's data helped us build the nation's largest detoxification/assessment center and close Gallup's infamous drunk tanks. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selected our region for a major Fighting Back Grant partly as a result of Bernie's systematic data collection. We were able to close drive-up liquor windows in Gallup and eventually across the State through legislative testimony based on Bernie's data. In the recent decade, alcohol-related morbidity and mortality in nearly all categories has been reduced by over fifty percent.

I do not know the details of Bernie's offenses. He has been found guilty and must pay the price. I ask that the punishment fit the crime. Perhaps you will consider his service to the people of our community and the many others he has helped in Wyoming and Montana. If you can consider such a proposal, our organization would be more than willing to supervise community service for Bernie as an alternative to prison. During his time in Gallup, Bernie has saved lives, inspired hope and never broke the law.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Herb Mosher
Director
Rehoboth-McKinley Hospital
Gallup, NM

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