

This his document is a letter from the father of a U.S. Army soldier to a general. The author's son is up for court-martial, and the father makes an emotional plea to the general to allow his son to instead resign with an honorable discharge. In the letter, the father cites examples of his son's dedication to his community, the military and the country.

September 26, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

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I am writing this letter for my wife and myself. The purpose of this letter is to appeal to you, as a parent, for relief for my son (1st Lt. [REDACTED] b6-5) in his current situation. I understand that the U.S. Army wants to court martial him and send him to prison. Without getting into the specifics of the charges against him I simply want to appeal to you, as a father, to allow him to resign with an honorable discharge. My son is not the type of person that deserves to be placed in prison. He has never been in any trouble what so ever until these charges.

I know you don't know me, or my son, so if you don't mind please read this letter because it is important to me that you know who I am, and more importantly, who my son is before you make a recommendation about how to treat him.

First, so that you know a little about me and my perspective on young men I have written a little about my background. I have been in secondary education for 30 years. I have been a [REDACTED] b6-2 for 10 years. This June, Florida Governor Jeb Bush appointed me as [REDACTED] b6-2

b6-2 [REDACTED] Our school system has 40,000 students and 5,200 employees. My headquarters are located in [REDACTED] b6-2 a small city that is the home to Congressman Cliff Stearns and former Florida governor Buddy McKay. So you understand that I evaluate the quality and nature of my employees and interact with my community's leaders on a weekly basis. I am also heavily involved in activities with our Veteran's groups.

My family is very important to me and all of us are totally involved in our community. My wife recently retired after spending 17 years as the business manager of our 1,000-member church. My two daughters and their husbands are teachers. One daughter recently became our church's full time youth director. We are committed to our city, our county, and our country.

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My son, [REDACTED] has always been a leader academically and athletically, and has excelled at everything he has attempted. He has been chosen by adults throughout his life to be a leader in boy scouts, chosen as a camp counselor on several occasions, and represented our local VFW and our high school at Boys' State. This will be his first failure.

Quite frankly I find it hard to believe that he is not wanted and needed in our Army. He used to want to be a career officer. He had a great attitude and, I believe, the right morals to make the tough decisions every time. It breaks my heart to know that he no longer feels wanted by a country that he so wants to

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serve. Here are a couple of examples of what [redacted] has written to us in his letters from Iraq:

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April 12, 2003—"...You both can't possibly imagine how appreciative I am of you. Not just thankful, but proud. Proud to be raised by you both. Proud to be in such a strong family with such strong morals...you never asked why I joined but today I know why more than ever. I am here to embrace those values, those memories that you gave me. Only by sharing, and in this case leading others, do I feel I can possibly repay the debt that I owe you and the society that would allow for such a life to exist...I couldn't think of a happier time in my life. I am doing exactly what it is I have always wanted to do. Without this experience I would feel incomplete for the rest of my life, debts unpaid and talents unrealized."

July 12, 2003—At the start of the investigation by the Army he writes: "Needless to say the Army has made a decision, or helped me make a decision, that I will only serve for 4 years. I still love my country and have faith in her virtues, though she has none in mine. If this goes to court martial it will be broadcast over the news and my name, and yours, will be tarnished forever. You didn't sign up for that, but I did. If this happens I apologize in advance. All I ever wanted to do was to serve and protect those who loved me, and spread freedom to others less fortunate...I have brought hundreds of criminals to prison, captured countless weapons, saved lives of coalition and civilian personnel, have my life threatened on a daily basis from insurgents and criminals alike. Yet all I ever wanted was to be left alone with my platoon so I could continue doing what I love the most..."

As you can tell my son loves his country and I assure you he is not a criminal. Please allow him to keep his dignity and pride. If he must be released from the Army, then please allow him to resign his commission and receive an honorable discharge. I often hear that Generals are treated as gods from my friends who have served. Please act like a compassionate god, and a reasonable man, and allow my son to be released from all charges with dignity. I beg of you, as a father, for my son's life.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

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