

December 7, 2000

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
12-9-00

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Nolan
Cabe
Podesta

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In just a short time you will take leave of the greatest and most powerful office in the history of the world. In your wake you leave an unparalleled period of peace and prosperity. I write to you asking that you grant not only peace and prosperity, but also hope and justice, to two million Americans, two million Native Americans, who have for so long forgotten the true experience of hope and justice.

I ask that you grant clemency and commute the sentence of Leonard Peltier, United States Prisoner #89637-132. To two million Native Americans Leonard Peltier's incarceration serves as a symbol of injustice, racism, and intolerance that has spanned more than 500 years now. Freedom for Leonard represents hope and justice not only to the indigenous people of America, but for **all Americans** who value these precious ideals. I will not waste your valuable time with a complete recitation of the injustice that led to this disgrace of the American judicial system, and a dishonor to two F.B.I. officers who died in June of 1975, but a brief account is necessary so that you may understand why leaders such as the Dali Lama, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and others have called for the release of Leonard Peltier.

Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned for almost 25 years for a crime he did not commit. He was wrongly convicted in 1976 for the murder of two agents of the F.B.I. on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The memory of those two officers is disgraced by the injustice that followed their tragic deaths. As you can imagine, public pressure and political sentiment was enormous to secure a conviction in the death of two F.B.I. agents. All involved in the Peltier case acknowledge that witnesses such as, Myrtle Poor Bear, were coerced into lying. Ms. Poor Bear was forced not only to identify Leonard as the killer, but also as her boyfriend and father to her children, in order to boast her credibility. This witness, had never even met Mr. Peltier, nor ever laid eyes on him prior to her coerced testimony. The F.B.I. and federal prosecutors knowingly suborned this false testimony in an effort to extradite Leonard from Canada and ultimately gain a false conviction.

Mr. President, the miscarriage of justice includes the fabrication of evidence, the withholding of exculpatory evidence, and the intimidation of witnesses, such that federal prosecutors have since admitted that they do not know who killed those two agents on June 26, 1975. This American tragedy has also

caused former Senior Judge Gerald Heaney of the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, a member of the very panel that denied Leonard's appeals, to call for Leonard's release. Judge Heaney is convinced that misconduct by the F.B.I., and other governmental agencies, before, during, and after Leonard's trial demands executive clemency.

Of course we must not forget the two federal agents who lost their lives that day, Special Agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams gave their lives in service to their country. To their families and their fellow officers they are husbands, sons, fathers, and heroes. In the spirit of true heroes, they must be remembered, respected, and revered. To their families I offer prayers and condolences, as even 25 years later they must be needed. Leonard Peltier has also offered his prayers to the families. He knows that they are victims as surely as is he. The wrongful imprisonment of Leonard Peltier prevents any attempt at true respect for the lives of these two public servants.

Mr. President, to Native Americans Leonard Peltier is the "Nelson Mandela" of our people. His imprisonment reminds us each day of the injustices all our people have experienced since that fateful day in 1492. We stand on the edge of a new millennium, one of great peace and prosperity, of which you have been no small part in creating. We ask that your "bridge to the 21st century," you so passionately invoked over the last few years, carry all our country's citizens, original or otherwise, from that land of peace and prosperity, to the home of hope and justice it is so close to becoming. This is not the easiest decision nor the most politically expedient, but it is the right decision.

As you leave the office of the President of the United States, I ask that you free Leonard Peltier. He is an innocent man, wrongly convicted. Restore faith in the American judicial system. Show this country's indigenous people they are respected. Show all Americans that ultimately truth will prevail. You will gain the respect, admiration, and reverence of not only two million Native Americans, but of every true believer in hope and justice. Right this wrong. I am

Very Truly Yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Troy D. Chandler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Troy D. Chandler
824 Canyon Crest
Irving, TX 75063
(972) 373-9397