

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter as a character reference for Sean Grayson, whom I had the privilege of serving alongside in Echo Company, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Riley, Kansas. During my time with him, I knew PFC Grayson to be an exceptional soldier who consistently demonstrated the qualities of a dedicated and reliable professional.

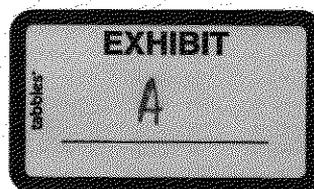
On duty, PFC Grayson was a stellar worker. He was always on time for formations and missions, and he could be counted on to complete every task assigned to him with diligence and a positive attitude. He was a dependable team member who consistently performed his duties and always showed a commitment to the mission. His work ethic and performance were consistently strong and a great example to others.

I am aware of the incident that resulted in his discharge. This incident was one that he reported himself, as the army was completely unaware that anything had occurred while on leave. It is crucial to understand that this was an isolated event that occurred while he was on leave, mourning the loss of a family member. It was in no way a reflection of his character while in uniform or on duty. Throughout his service, PFC Grayson was a hard-working and dependable soldier who upheld the standards of the military. He is not defined by this single mistake but by his consistent and dedicated service.

Based on his conduct and performance during his time in the Army, I can confidently attest to his strong work ethic and character.

Sincerely,

Zachary Lane Sheppard



To the honorable judge cadigan

My name is paul beams, i am sean graysons stepfather. I met his mother at the restaurant we work at and we started dateing 19 years ago when he was 12. I asked his mother to move in with me when he was 15 maybe 16 and she married me about a year after.

He was just a pretty typical teenage boy he loved sports and loved hanging with his friends. From the begining of our relationship he was the protector of the family, he made sure to help his family whenever they got into trouble. When he joined the army he was proud of it being able to move away and start his life. He came home one time after my grandfather passed away and that is when he got a dui.

We both were extremely upset with him over that. When he got discharged from the army he got a job at a gym as a manger and he got another dui. Again pretty upset as you can imagine. He kept blaming everyone for his problem without listening to us about accepting blame. Shortly after that his boss at the gym gave him a book to read and it really changed his mentality on things.

He started taking responsibility for things, he also started helping people working out getting healthy and enjoyed doing that kind of work. When he became a police he was so happy he could help people that needed it. He payed for his bothers cremation after he committed suicide and that hurt but he kept it together for his mom. When he was diagnosed with cancer the first time it was very very hard we almost lost him 3 different times and seeing him in the hospital on the bed skinny barley able to move at 27 with his fiance by his side helping us through this explaining things to us helped us. No matter what he was positive always to us sometimes you could see it in his face but he didn't want to make us worry.

Then the shooting happend and we were of course upset because that was not the man we raised. He has always been a great person who stands up for himself and others but will not hold grudges for any reasons, still to this day holds no grudges. After his brother who coached 7th and 8th grade basketball passed some of the kids had a hard time and one actually tried to commit suicide. His mother went to see the kid in the hospital and asked if sean could come and talk to them and he did and gave them his number so they could call him if they were having any problems. That is the kind of man he had been since I've known him.

He truly is a better man then I could every hope to be so on his behalf I beg for mercy. Thank you for reading all this rambling letter.

Sincerely Paul Beams

Your Honor Judge Cadigan,

I write to you with the utmost respect for the Court and for the gravity of the matters before you. I am a Deputy Sheriff with over twenty-two years of service in law enforcement, during which I have worked patrol, supervision of a union, and numerous specialty assignments.

Throughout my career, I have been guided by a commitment to public safety, accountability, and fairness—values that compel me to submit this letter in support of clemency for Mr. Sean Grayson. My experience has afforded me a deep understanding of how profoundly training, leadership, and organizational culture affect the decisions officers make under stress.

Law enforcement officers are shaped not only by their personal judgment, but by the systems that prepare them—or fail to prepare them—for the realities of the job.

In Mr. Grayson's case, it is my professional opinion that systemic failures in training and supervision within the Sheriff's Office played a significant role in the circumstances that led to his actions.

Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand how inadequate or inconsistent training, insufficient remedial instruction, and a lack of meaningful mentorship can leave deputies ill-equipped to manage high-pressure situations appropriately. When agencies fail to reinforce de-escalation, critical decision-making, and emotional regulation, deputies are placed in positions where errors become far more likely.

Mr. Grayson was a product of such an environment, and those institutional shortcomings must be weighed alongside individual responsibility.

Beyond these professional considerations, I ask the Court to consider Mr. Grayson's severe medical condition. His cancer diagnosis has imposed extraordinary physical pain, emotional distress, and suffering. Serious illness has a way of stripping a person down to their most human state—marked by fear, vulnerability, and reflection.

The ongoing impact of his condition substantially compounds the punishment he is already enduring and raises profound humanitarian concerns. I served numerous overtime hours guarding Sean while he underwent medical treatment. I observed firsthand a man in agony and suffering.

Clemency, in my view, does not excuse wrongdoing, nor does it diminish the seriousness of the events involved. Rather, it recognizes the totality of circumstances: a man shaped by institutional failures, now facing significant medical hardship, and enduring consequences that extend far beyond the sentence itself.

Mercy, when appropriately applied, is not a weakness of the justice system, but one of its highest expressions.

With full respect for the Court's discretion and the rule of law, I urge you to consider clemency for Mr. Grayson. I offer this perspective not lightly, but as someone who has dedicated more than two decades to law enforcement and understands both its responsibilities and its failings.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your careful consideration of this request.

Respectfully,  
Deputy Travis Koester  
Deputy Sheriff (22+ Years of Service)

President, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #55

Susan Fawns Butterfield  
Williamsville, Illinois  
01/20/2026

The Honorable Judge Cadigan  
Illinois Seventh Judicial Circuit

Re: Sean Patrick Grayson

Dear Judge Cadigan,

I write with respect for the Court to share my perspective on Sean Patrick Grayson, whom I have known for more than five years. Sean is engaged to my daughter, and my familiarity with him developed through consistent and regular family interaction.

Throughout the time I have known Sean, I experienced him as a gentle and family-oriented individual. He consistently sought out family connection and routine, and his presence within our family was steady, respectful, and calm.

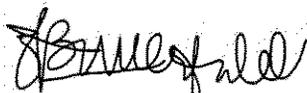
When Sean was diagnosed with cancer, I observed notable resilience. Throughout chemotherapy and subsequent medical challenges, he maintained a measured outlook. When facing significant illness and the life-altering reality of an ileostomy, he approached his circumstances with steadiness and composure.

More recently, despite serious medical setbacks, amid serious complications from several surgeries, and with the reality of incarceration, he has remained attentive to my daughter's well-being and has also offered me encouragement during particularly difficult moments. He has continued to demonstrate genuine concern for others.

Sean has also spoken about wanting to use his time in a meaningful way and to be of service to others, regardless of circumstance. This perspective reflects the same consideration for others that I consistently observed during the years I knew him.

I understand the seriousness of the matters before the Court, and I do not write to minimize them. I offer this letter solely to provide an honest account of the character and conduct I personally observed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Susan Fawns Butterfield

The Honorable Judge Cadigan  
Seventh Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois

**Re: Sentencing Consideration for Mr. Sean Grayson**

Your Honor Judge Cadigan,

My name is Andrew Boston, and I have known Sean Grayson for over twenty years. We became close friends in elementary school, and that friendship grew into a lifelong bond as we got older. From football to hunting and fishing, Sean and I spent much of our youth together.

Sean was a frequent guest in my parents' home, sometimes staying for days or even weeks at a time. My mother and father treated him as one of their own, and he was regarded as another son in our family. Throughout our friendship, I never questioned Sean's integrity. I watched him grow into a hardworking and dependable man—someone I was always proud to call my friend.

From a young age, Sean was driven by a strong desire to help others. His dream was to become a police officer so he could serve and protect his community. He consistently demonstrated compassion and selflessness, often willing to go out of his way—or give the shirt off his back—to help anyone in need.

Law enforcement is an incredibly demanding profession that requires split-second judgment under intense pressure. I cannot imagine the weight of making life-altering decisions on a daily basis. The fight-or-flight response differs in everyone, and a single moment can change lives forever. Knowing Sean personally, outside of the uniform, nothing about his character suggests malicious intent or reckless behavior.

Like all people, Sean made mistakes throughout life, but I always saw him take responsibility and do the right thing in the end. I never observed erratic or unstable behavior—only the normal growth and maturity of a young man learning from life's challenges.

This situation is deeply unfortunate, and my thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Andrew Boston**

The Honorable Judge Cadigan  
Seventh Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois

**Re: Sentencing Consideration for Mr. Sean Grayson**

Your Honor Judge Cadigan,

While this is not a letter I ever expected to write, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to the character of Mr. Sean Grayson, my fiancé. I understand the seriousness of the offense before the Court and write with the utmost respect for the judicial process and for all those affected by this case. I do not intend to minimize the nature of these proceedings or the Court's role. Rather, I seek to offer a perspective on the person I know beyond this isolated and tragic event.

In the five years that I have known Mr. Grayson, he has endured significant personal and medical challenges. From fighting cancer to handling the untimely death of his brother, he has handled difficult experiences with grace. Throughout these experiences, I have observed his strength, determination, and humility. During our life together, I have come to know him as a kind, respectful, and supportive partner—qualities that do not diminish the gravity of this case, but do reflect the broader measure of who he is as a person.

Mr. Grayson's kindness has extended beyond our home and into the community around him. Whether providing rides to individuals needing transportation to a shelter, gathering food for someone he encountered regularly through work, or taking small moments to connect with neighborhood children through simple gestures, he consistently sought to make others feel acknowledged and cared for.

Within the past five years, Mr. Grayson has faced serious medical diagnoses and complications that, at times, left him without independence and reliant on others for basic daily needs. Throughout these periods, he remained humble and patient, never expressing bitterness or directing his hardship toward others.

Thank you, Your Honor, for your time and thoughtful consideration. I hold deep respect for this Court and am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to share my perspective on Mr. Grayson's character beyond the confines of this case.

Respectfully submitted,

**Isabel Butterfield**

Williamsville, IL

The Honorable Judge Cadigan  
Seventh Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois

**Re: Sentencing Consideration for Sean Grayson**

Your Honor Judge Cadigan,

My name is Paul A. Perrine. I submit this statement for the court's consideration regarding Sean Grayson, whom I have known since elementary school, through high school, and well into adulthood.

I want to begin by acknowledging the seriousness of this matter and the profound loss involved. Nothing written here is meant to diminish the gravity of what occurred or the pain experienced by others.

I have known Sean for over twenty years, spanning nearly every stage of life. Over that time, I have consistently known his character to be true and faithful and have observed how he conducts himself in both ordinary circumstances and during significant hardship. I have witnessed him endure experiences that would deeply alter many other people, including a battle with stage 3 colon cancer and the sudden loss of his brother through suicide. Through those hardships, he did not become hardened or reckless. He remained grounded in his values, his sense of responsibility and humor, and his care for others. Sean never put himself before anyone else even through these obstacles.

As a family, my wife and I trusted Sean to be a part of our children's lives. That trust was built over years of observing his judgment, patience, and above all his protective nature. He spent time with our family regularly, playing with our children, swimming with them, wrestling in good fun, and engaging with them in games and everyday moments. He was present, attentive, and gentle with them. We never questioned his intentions or his ability to care for them responsibly. He was someone I would have relied on without hesitation if I were unable to be there myself, and that level of trust is not given lightly. I truly believe these characteristics did not waiver with any of Sean's relationships, whether it be my family, his loving fiancé, friends, work colleagues, and even strangers.

In my experience, Sean is not a person driven by anger, cruelty, or disregard for human life. He is someone who chose a profession centered on protecting others, often at personal risk. I believe this incident was the result of a split-second decision made under extreme stress, not ill intent. I have never known him to act maliciously or without concern for the consequences of his actions.

Since this occurred, it has been clear to those who know him that he carries deep remorse and sorrow. This moment does not leave him. It is something he lives with daily. That burden reflects the kind of man he is: one who understands the weight of his actions and does not dismiss their impact.

I respectfully ask the court to consider the totality of his character, his lifelong pattern of responsibility and integrity as known by those closest to him, and the context in which this tragedy occurred when determining sentencing.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Perrine