

John C. "Jack" Ryan

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January 3, 2017

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS
President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Av.
Washington, DC 20500
Re: Clemency Petition Leonard Peltier
Case No. C179410

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Dear President Obama:

I write in support of the 2016 Clemency Petition of Leonard Peltier, which seeks his release in the interest of justice and reconciliation. In my opinion, notwithstanding the crime charged, the circumstances surrounding the case in combination with the passage of 4 decades of time served support his request to live his final years at home.

I was an FBI Special Agent from 1966 through 1987. Although I was not directly involved in the Leonard Peltier case, and did not know Agents Jack Coler or Ronald Williams personally, when I learned that two of my fellow agents shot and killed on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, I, like all the agents I worked with and throughout the FBI was completely shaken, and drawn into the emotion of the incident.

I entered the FBI while J. Edgar Hoover was still fully in command, and became part of an era where agents were directed to discredit and neutralize social activists. We were taught to follow orders and we acted in good faith based on the directions given, believing we were doing the right thing.

The cumulative impact of targeting social activists, personally, came to a head in 1987 when I was fired from the FBI, 9 months before I could retire, for refusal to investigate, as terrorists or saboteurs, 4 veterans, fasting on the steps of the US Capital, protesting the government's funding of the Contras in Nicaragua. I was faced with a moral dilemma and did what I thought was right, though the consequences for me were dramatic and financially disastrous.

With the benefit of hindsight, the advocacy of the AIM and the Oglala Lakota on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in particular, was misunderstood. The

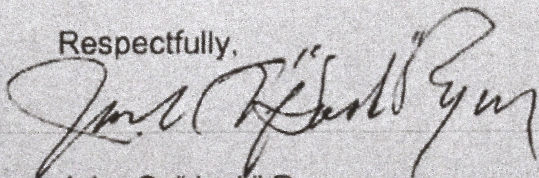
community was polarized, impoverished, marginalized, and had a tumultuous history with the American government and with federal and state law enforcement. Following the 1973 siege of Wounded Knee by AIM, the reservation had an extremely high crime rate; it was a dangerous place for its residents as well as visitors.

When Agents Coler and Williams lost their lives it was a devastating loss to us agents. Emotion ruled the decision-making process and likely clouded the judgment of the massive team of whom were driven to hold someone responsible for our loss.

If the government could do it all over again, it would respond differently. Through today's lens, Leonard Peltier was not treated fairly and did not get a fair trial. The very fact that humanitarians and Nobel Prize Laureates around the world have advocated for his release for more than 4 decades, validates that position.

For these reasons and many more, I respectfully urge you, Mr. President, to grant the Clemency Petition of Leonard Peltier in the interest of the system of justice for which my two fellow agents died, and in the interest of reconciliation and compassion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

John C. "Jack" Ryan

cc: Robert A. Zauzmer, Pardon Attorney
Honorable Loretta Lynch, Attorney General