

Mr. President,

The meaning of freedom has changed for me over the past several years. As a soldier, freedom was an ideal that we internalized and swore to preserve. As a soldier in prison, freedom is about something much different; it is about finding a new place in society.

Over the past three years in US military prison, I have taken a deep look into what my new role in society will be when released. To that end, I've been taking notes as I move through the criminal justice process. Now I understand my purpose.

Upon release from prison, I will retake my Law School Admission Test and apply to law school. In the classroom, I'll use my first-hand experience to keep conversations in perspective. I will remember the faces of the prisoners with whom I've lived for so long. They will be my motivation. I will remember my days working in the prison barber shop learning about inner-city culture from my brothers who grew up there while I was growing up in rural Oklahoma. I will remember the moment I realized that we are not so different; we all want the same things out of life. I've learned the first step is communication outside comfort zones.

Mr. President, I will become an attorney who steps outside the status quo and makes bold moves toward unity and peace. Dr. King showed us that we won't have healing without such bold action as that. This cannot be done from an office.

My loyalty is to my country Mr. President. I will become a different type of soldier now: one who fights to heal the division in this wonderful country. That is my new place in society. As my Commander-in-Chief, I make this promise to you today: I will spend every day of my life devoted to peace and unity in America, and I will always fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

With Respect and Admiration,

Clint J. France