

Jeff:

I wanted to thank you for inviting us to participate in the Horizon presentation at London yesterday. I was extremely impressed with your speakers, and with the work you've done. I'm glad our Office has been part of that process.

I write today to mention the particular interaction I had with Ernest (I apologize that I do not have his last name). As I recall, Ernest is 21 years into a 15-to-life sentence, and he told me later that he was up for parole again in 2017. I wanted to say that his presentation really spoke to me, and he was kind enough to talk to me afterwards. I won't pretend that I know his life story, but I will say that his sincerity and commitment seemed entirely genuine to me. Coming from a prosecution background, I will admit that my own bias is to take rehabilitation programs with a grain of salt, but even the brief time I had to talk to Ernest served as a valuable reminder to me.

It reminded me that we often think, "Are these inmates reachable?" But I don't think that is, or was, the question with Ernest. I think the question was, "Did he want to change?" And that's an important distinction because it removes the paternalism from rehabilitation. It removes the conceit that "we can change them," and converts it to, "they want to change themselves." That is a difference that I think we, who do not dwell among our inmates daily, often lose touch with.

Again, I want to thank you for setting up the program and the presentation. Also, I would like to thank Ernest for reminding me about the humanity that can exist and thrive even inside a correctional institution. If you could, would you please let him know that I truly appreciated both his presentation and the time he spent with me afterward?

Regards,

Matthew A. Kanai

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