

January 20, 2020

The Honorable Judge Stephen V. Wilson
United States District Court
Central District of California
350 W. 1st St. – Courtroom 10A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Judge Wilson,

My name is Antonio Mariot Wilson. I was born in Los Angeles, CA on February 2, 1963 to a single mother, Yvetta Jean Wilson. I am the third of four children and my Mom's only son. I grew up without my biological father, as he abandoned my Mom before my birth.

When I was 10 years old, my Mother later married a man named Samuel Martin. Samuel was a jockey at the Hollywood Bowl. Sadly, he was an evil and sexually abusive man. Almost the entire time that my Mom was married to that monster, he was raping my three sisters repeatedly. This torture happened for a number of years, and it was not discovered by my Mom until she came home one day and saw all of us trying to beat him.

It was a series of horrors that my sisters simply could not take anymore. This was a particularly defining moment in all of our lives for the worse. I tried to understand what had taken place, but as a young teenager, I simply was not equipped to comprehend the magnitude of the damage Samuel had inflicted on my entire family.

This led to my mother kicking him out of the house, which began a financial struggle for a single black woman in Los Angeles with 3 children. My mother had a high school education and worked as a laborer for many years. Ultimately, my mother met another man, Richard Ruff whom she later married. Unfortunately, my sisters were afraid of him because he was a fair skinned man that reminded my sisters of Sammy, the man who sexually abused them for years. My oldest sister Rene suffered a lot as a result of the trauma she experienced at the hands of Sammy. When she graduated from high school she immediately got married to a guy she was dating. It was very rushed, but in hindsight, we know she did it to get out of the house and away from my Mom's new husband Richie, just to make sure she didn't get victimized by another man my Mom brought into the house again.

Shortly after that, my sister Chere ran away from the home when Richie moved in with my Mom, for the same reasons – she was afraid that he was going to sexually abuse her just like Sammy did.

We never got the counseling that my sisters and me so desperately needed as kids. As a result, the horrific abuse that Sammy inflicted upon my entire family caused our family, which was a very close knit family before, to be split in two. My sisters were out of the house and I knew I needed to get out of there too as soon as I graduated from high school.

Those childhood experiences made me want to become more of caretaker, a protector of sorts. Upon graduation from high school I choose to join the United States Navy. I wanted to continue protecting and defending people from those who would try and do them harm. That experience made me hate bullies and is why I prefer to protect a weaker person, women, children the elderly from violence. This experience ruined relationships for my sisters with men in many ways and in me as well. I developed severe commitment and trust issues in general. So at the tender young age of 17, I enlisted in the Navy.

While I was in boot camp I qualified as the top one percent in my squadron in physical fitness, which gave me an opportunity to test for basic underwater demolition (BUDS), which turned out to be more physical training (run, swim, pull ups, sit ups, obstacle course and so on). I was in bootcamp in San Diego at the time. When I graduated bootcamp I went to a school for Aviation Structural Mechanics in Millington, Tennessee. Once I graduated, I went to NAS Miramar attached to VAW 117, a reconnaissance command attached to the USS Enterprise CVN 65. Soon after I received orders to Coronado for formal BUDS training. By the time I got these orders I had forgotten about the test in boot camp. I was the only black person in my group in BUDS at the time, as this was in the early 1980's and there was no sensitivity training or anything like that, so I experienced a lot of racism. Especially because I was in a field with few blacks Navy wide. After graduation I went onto CQC training, close quarter combat training and finally an assignment to Navy Special Warfare Group Three - NAVSPECWARGRU 3, out of Coronado with multiple detachments. You can see my progress as detailed in my DD214. There were many things I did in the Navy, acts of violence that I have never really been able to forget or overcome personally. In many ways it is why I chose to pursue Theology, in order to have a balance. Most people that experience PTSD don't have a healthy coping mechanism in order to be mentally healthy, at least PTSD that is the result of violence during military service. This form of study helped me. I had my service extended by the Navy beyond my scheduled time to be released due to my specialty, and the needs of the Navy during that time. I was promoted meritoriously more than once for saving the lives of others, detailed in my DD214. When I finally got out of the Navy there was not much available to me for work that was not connected to more violence, like military contractor work, which I did not want. I bounced around from odd job to odd

job for some time. I had saved a lot of money from the Navy because I had no need for money, living on base because I was constantly on detachments traveling.

Growing up without a father left me to figure out a good number of things on my own, I never developed a relationship with Richard until I was in my thirties. This was partly because I was in the Navy and never home and I didn't know him. The only association I had was that my mother married him, and after the events with my sisters I didn't really want to get to know him.

My mother went on to have another daughter with Richard, and her name is Chrystal Ruff. Unfortunately, I have no relationship with her because my mother basically wanted to have a new family, one with a father, mother and a daughter. My mother basically tolerated my two sisters and I, but she really only did it for Chrystal. My Mom only really wanted to see us on the holidays, if even that. It created a resentment with Chrystal between my sisters and I. To this day we don't speak unless there is a problem that forces us all to talk. Our family was basically dysfunctional and what influenced me as a man were the experiences I had in the Navy which I served honorably for 12 years.

After my time in the service I bounced around trying to find what interested me, ultimately I bounced in and out of ministry work, trying business which I was never adept. I became more of a writer in theology. I eventually learned how to design software, as I met many people who were business people who would help me get the software developed and licensed. I was never any good on the business side, I am more of a creative type, therefore many of my decisions as to money and how to manage business affairs have been problematic. When I raised money for the software, I was under the impression, after asking a lawyer I hired who helped me set up the corporation, that it was ok to use some of the money from investors personally, as long as I delivered the product. I was instructed to make a loan to myself from the company and I signed notes prepared for me from lawyers to that effect thinking this is how it was done. Having said that, I did take money, not for anything foolish, but to feed my family and pay rent....I knew that the funds would be paid back once I could get the software launched. At the time I thought this was an acceptable behavior, but I know now that I was only listening to what I wanted to hear so I could justify my actions. I completely accept responsibility for everything that I have done. The blame lies squarely with me.

I got married to Carolyn Riley in 1998 which gave me a family base which I did not have before, we had children shortly after. I ran into trouble in 2010 with the creation of my original software project which landed me in prison for tax evasion. This was a chapter in my life for which I take full responsibility for. In this case, what I did wrong was not disclosing the fact that I had a felony involving money crimes, I also never disclosed that I was going to use funds or any portion of those funds personally. In my position, no person will work with you if you lead the conversation with your criminal history, people I asked if I should share it, said I should only discuss it if asked. What I

have learned in this case, is that the only way is to be candid up front and let people decide if they want to work with you, and give them the option on how they want to manage the financial part up front. Honesty is not an easy thing for someone with a past like mine. Many doors get shut in your face and life which is already hard enough, becomes almost impossible to get by. I know that is my doing, and that I made the proverbial bed you lie in.

My story coming out of prison is a typical one, it was hard to find work or any kind with a felony, I eventually managed work with Costco as a temporary hire for seasonal work that did not last beyond that because of my record. I became a personal trainer working for a large box gym, which again ended because of my record. This eventually landed my family and I into being homeless. This was officially my rock bottom in life. This homelessness for us lasted for about two years. We were literally living in a car with two children who were in high school and middle school. It was very hard and hurtful and 100% my fault.

Living on the street is wholly humiliating, using restrooms in hotels or restaurants, bathing inside toilet stalls. I have two women, my wife and my 16-yr. old daughter who was going to Santa Monica High School. My son was in Middle School at Lincoln. They were humiliated everyday. We all had to go to great lengths to try to hide our misfortune - the worst was at night trying to find a place to hide to sleep. You can never get sleep in a car with four people packed with all your clothes and such. We would park at the Veterans Administration when we could get in before the gates closed sometimes. There is also a lot of people who try to rape the women, rob you etc. I had to fight many times to protect my family and purposely not fight to permanently injure or kill a person. There is no internet so we had to manage as best we could to help the kids at libraries to do homework.

It was a very hard time in my life for my family to be homeless because I could not provide for them. I knew that I needed to get out of that situation. It took two years, one day at a time. For the first year there was no social services, food stamps, no money, my wife is not employable because of her maladies, so it was all I could do to get food. My family could not help, although my sister Chere sent what she could. As a veteran, The VA would only help me, not my family, so they were no help initially. A year later we were able to get into the Salvation Army Westwood Village because I am a veteran. We were able to move into the Westwood Village Salvation Army Homeless shelter. Being there gave us lodging so we could stop living in our car. This help was temporary and my status as a veteran was the only way we got the help.

I began trying to find more work, while trying to create more software, something that could help. I began attending incubators at People Connect in Santa Monica and other incubators. I was eventually introduced through the incubators to something call Bumble Bizz, which is both a dating app and a business connection app. I published my application with the idea of the 2nd Life application I had created which was designed to help people get social services. I learned about the social services, like

food stamps etc. because I was required to apply for by the Salvation Army. I designed the app as a result of the problems I experienced with getting public assistance like not having a birth certificate, marriage certificate, SSN cards, no apartment or address, you cannot get public assistance without an address, and if you're homeless you have to be in a shelter to get help. I could not use the address at Westwood village until we had completed some classes (family counseling) and been there for two weeks. There are many other problems that make it difficult, but most of the issues surround administrative documentation we did not have because, we were in fact, homeless.

I met Ms. Klipp and Ms. Hagopian through the Bumble APP with the purpose of getting help to develop my software. This is evidenced by the agreements between them and I for its creation. I attempted to approach this properly by hiring a lawyer (Ross Meader) to advise me on the proper way to move forward and to create the legal documents to take in the investments. I also hired another lawyer, Eric Lowe, to set up the business corporation etc. I thought I was doing the right thing.

My family was. Nearing the end of the term that we could live at the Salvation Army (max 1 year). I didn't know what else to do and I couldn't stomach the thought of putting my family back on the streets again. I made the decision to use some of the investment money to move my family into an apartment, food so we could eat, nothing lavish, just something to keep us off the streets. The rest of the money went into the project. Including a patent application for the animations and patient portal of the medical site I created as well...<https://a2ndlife.org>

The problems arose with these two, because I did not disclose my past. They began to Google me after they invested money, and they found out about my past. Once this happened there was no way to explain, even though the software existed.

Jenifer Lewis was a person I met at the gym and that friendship started as a conversation about fitness that later got into personal discussions about my plans and interest. She knew about my interest in theology and I shared with her a book I had written called "Behind The Faith". She took an interest in me and offered to help me move into public speaking, production etc. As she is an actor with all these relationships. She met my children and even had a friend record an opening for what was going to be quick excerpts where I talked about the book. The money she gave me was not connected to any investment, as there was no agreements like I had with the other investors. Her checks to me said gift at the bottom, as she was giving me money to help me with this project specifically. She did this because she took an interest in me, my writings and simply wanted to help. What followed was her managers and others around her, performed a background check on me and things exploded from there, she felt deceived by me, embarrassed because of the help she intended, introductions she had made to me etc... she became very upset with me.

Ms. Auna Harris is a person who knew me, my family in the days prior to my incarceration, she and I were trying to create a ministry as well.

I have always been a person in good health, but in the last eight years I have begun to have serious medical issues. I am now afflicted with Diabetes, and I have both prostate and heart problems. Currently, the thing that is most threatening is my heart problem. I have something called Super-ventricular Tycardia. My heart starts beating over 200 beats per minute without warning, it can be fatal. I have had a few episodes with this where the doctor wants me to have heart surgery. With COVID I am now considered a severely high risk. For someone like me who has diabetes and a heart condition, if I were to contract COVID in prison, there is a strong chance I would not survive. Sadly, my Uncle Ray Ruff who was 68, died in October from COVID with the same conditions I have. Additionally, my Cousin's son David, 40, died one week from his father's death, and he had diabetes as well. I take medications for the prostate, but he heart condition requires tight monitoring or surgery to remove a valve in my heart. The problem with the surgery, is afterwards your heart condition is quite vulnerable, it may stop the tycardia, but you are more susceptible to strokes. For this reason I am monitored every 90 days. My next visit is February 9th. I am currently being monitored every 90 days by a heart doctor, Duane E. Bridges MD and a generalist Dr. David Solomon at Venice Family Clinic.

I know that my actions have hurt these four women. For the pain and suffering I have caused them, I am eternally sorry. I want nothing more than to work to get the money to pay the restitution to these women and make them as whole as I possibly can.

I know that I have to be punished for my behavior, and I ordinarily would not be scared about serving time in prison, if it was not for Covid-19. I am deathly afraid that with all of the BOP Covid cases, if I contract Covid-19, then my punishment may be a death sentence as I won't likely survive Covid-19. For this reason I come before Your Honor asking you to please consider a sentence of home confinement. I will do whatever I have to do – I just don't want to abandon my family should I die in prison because of Covid. Regardless of your decision on punishment, I will work the rest of my life paying these women back in hopes that making them whole financially will at least bring them some comfort.

Sincerely,

Antonio Mariot Wilson

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