

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Eric Tandberg, and I have known Staff Sergeant Robert Bales roughly ten years. He is my brother in law, favorite uncle to my children, and someone I have considered a good friend since I first met him. I stood by Bob as he went through the Court Martial, and I gladly stand with him now.

The man the Army received in 2001 was completely unable to commit the crimes he is accused of. I do not know what happened to Bob on his last tour in Afghanistan, nor do I really expect I ever truly will, but before three tours in Iraq, and one in Afghanistan, Bob was incapable of committing those crimes.

I am not a soldier, nor do I pretend to understand the ramifications of what happens in battle, nor the long term effects on an individuals mental health and well being, but I do know that when Bob first joined the Army for all the right reasons, he began as a good man trying to defend his country. It was just something he believed he should do. When our country is attacked, able bodied men stood up and said "Not on my watch". It was something we have had discussions about many times prior to his Afghanistan tour, and he was always consistent in his belief that that was what Americans do. I was always impressed with his convictions with respect to that ideology. He believed it to his core, and never wavered once. He is a good man who was trying the best he knew how to defend his country, family, and friends. It is something he felt passionate about.

During the Court Martial, I watched as the press systematically brought forth story after story degrading the man and his character. Many of those stories were wrong, or at least only showed one side of the story, and I wish fervently I had been able to address those stories with the truth, instead of spin, but Bobs attorneys advised me not to. There are two of the stories I would like you to understand what truly happened. First is the idea that Bob swindled an elderly couple out of millions. Bob didn't swindle anybody. He did not get the proper signature from a client to make an investment in a bank that Bob believed would be a good investment. He screwed up. He didn't profit, and in fact lost most everything he had, along with other clients investments as well. He was not the only person to lose everything on a bad investment, and many people suffered. What you were not told was that Bob did go to the clients he had not gotten the proper signature for, and said "I'm now homeless, living in my car. Here are my bank accounts, and everything I own, and you may have everything I have. I am sorry I screwed up, but the only thing I can give you is everything I have. I'm truly sorry." That's not a swindler, or thief, but is a good man doing whatever he can possibly do to try to do the right thing. It was a terrible situation for the clients, but he offered all he had to try to help.

The second story that targeted Bobs character was the physical altercation he got into over "a woman who was not his wife." This was not Bob hitting on some girl and a fight occurring. This was an instance where the man with the woman was being abusive and Bob simply said, "No Sir. You do not get to treat a woman like that, not while I am sitting here." What Bob did wrong was have some drinks, and given that he had drinks, the press just reported that he was drunk and had gotten into a fight over "a woman who was not his wife." If my daughter is ever being abused like that, and I am not there, I sincerely hope a man with Bobs character is willing to stand up and say "No Sir." If Bob had been stone sober, he would have been applauded, instead of the press just reporting he was drunk and causing a fight.

There are several other stories that I would love to address, but I realize your time is valuable. If you wish to discuss anything about my relationship with Bob, or have anything else you have questions about, I will make myself available at any time of the day or night.

As you consider clemency, please take into account the man as a whole, and do not sum up the man based on one terrible night. Bobs life has been a positive influence on me, my wife and especially my children. He has shown himself to be a wonderful father, and to me, a good friend. Even with all that has happened, I stand by the man, and will continue to gladly stand by him. I believe that Bob will continue to be a positive influence on the people he is around, and sincerely hope to have him continue to be a positive influence more involved in my life, not always separated by bars. Please consider clemency carefully.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

*Eric Tandberg*

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