

September 18, 2013

Circuit Court Judge Jan L. Brodie
Fairfax County Courthouse
4110 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Dear Judge Brodie,

By way of introduction, my name is Charlie Gibson. For 33 years I was a journalist for ABC News. For 19 of those years I was a host of Good Morning America and for the four years before my retirement I was the anchor of World News with Charles Gibson, ABC's evening news broadcast. For 46 years I have been a friend of Chris Kloman's.

The morning after reading of the events in your courtroom in mid-August, I wrote you immediately as I was troubled greatly by what I had read. That letter was sent to your chambers. I am told the proper channel is to communicate through Chris's lawyer. So this is a near facsimile to what I wrote earlier.

I tried throughout the 12 hours or so after I read the Washington Post account of Chris's appearance to reconcile the Chris Kloman I read about and the Chris Kloman I know.

And I could not.

I was left with an ineffable sadness. I grapple with the thought that good men can do bad things, that, as Thoreau wrote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." I have long believed that many of us carry demons within ourselves contrary to our character, and that at times those demons can overwhelm our basic nature.

In my experience as a reporter and in my personal life, this is not the first instance I have observed of such a phenomenon, but to me this is the most difficult to try and understand.

For I have known Chris as a wonderful husband, a great Dad, and yes, as a truly fine teacher. My wife and I came to know Chris and his then girl friend Pam when we moved to Washington and my wife started teaching at the Potomac School. We attended Chris and Pam's wedding. We rejoiced in the births of each of their children, Whitney, Trap, and Peter. My daughter Jessica grew up with Whitney, spent countless nights in the Kloman home, went to Princeton with her, and she and Whitney remain friends, as do their children. Indeed, Jessica is the Godmother of Whitney's daughter Samantha.

This is a wonderful family and Chris has raised three kids whom I would be proud to call my own and I have no doubt you would feel likewise.

Since the charges against Chris were first raised back in November, we reached out several times to the family and uncharacteristically they responded only with polite words of thanks – nothing more. That left my wife and me with a sense of dread that was realized when we read the Washington Post report.

I spent that first night thinking of the young girls involved in this case and of Chris. It is a case almost Dostoyevskian (if I can coin a word) in that Chris has to have carried this guilt with him for years and I can't imagine how the knowledge that it would some day come out, as it inevitably would, must have eaten at his soul.

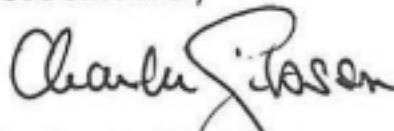
I know of his actions only what I read on the Washington Post website. I do think it characteristic of his nature that at this point Chris would acknowledge his actions and express the horror and the remorse that he has to have carried with him all these years. Indeed, it reads as if there were instances in recent years when Chris, inadequately I realize, tried to make amends for some of his actions.

I have tried since learning of Chris's actions to put myself in your shoes. You have the most difficult of jobs. For I don't know how one can determine what is fair and right after all these years – fair and right for the young women who were involved; fair and right for Chris. As the father of daughters, I feel tremendous sympathy for these women. I don't know how you balance justice for them and justice for Chris. I do know that I believe in redemption. When I was hosting Good Morning America we frequently broadcast stories about forgiveness and I was amazed that some people who were victimized had reserves of forgiveness far greater than mine. Any punishment for Chris now, however, strikes me as retributive not rehabilitative, but at the same time I realize there is a need for accountability. I hope you can find a way for Chris to make amends, stay a part of his truly wonderful family, and contribute something productive and useful to society.

In the end, I am left grappling with a case that is to me inexplicable. I am left with my love for a friend who is, I truly believe, at his core a good man, a good husband and a good father. I hope you can take all this into consideration when it comes to judgment about Chris.

And I wish you only the best in your deliberations.

Most sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles DeW. Gibson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Charles DeW. Gibson