

MICHAEL LEVINE  
CONSULTING

October 7, 2008

The Honorable Royal Ferguson  
Western District of Texas  
San Antonio, Texas

Re: Celerino Castillo III

Dear Judge Ferguson,

I am a veteran of 30 years government service, all of it spent in either military, state or federal law enforcement. I am also currently serving as a police instructor, trial consultant and expert witness and have been doing so for the past 18 years since my retirement from the Drug Enforcement Administration in 1990. In short, my credibility means everything to me, and I am rarely willing to write a letter of this nature, unless I believe heart and soul that it is merited, which is very definitely the case with my dear friend Celerino Castillo III.

Cele and I first met in the early 1970s while I was a supervisory officer for the Drug Enforcement Administration in its New York City office and Cele was serving as a special agent. During that period of time I came to know Cele well as a courageous well-respected undercover officer who often laid his life on the line for his country. I also became aware of his distinguished combat record in Vietnam where he was a recipient of the Bronze Star for bravery.

During the early 1980s both Cele and I were transferred to DEA offices in Central and South America respectively. As the Country Attache for Argentina and Uruguay and later as the headquarters Special Operations and desk officer, I became involved in numerous international drug smuggling organizations many of which overlapped with the undercover work Cele was doing in Central America. Cele at that time was credited with one of DEA's biggest cocaine seizures on record (2,202 kilos) in Central America. His record as a courageous undercover officer and premier investigator continued to reverberate throughout the agency.

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Cele has many other accomplishments that were well known within the agency, such as being the first airborne combat agent in, in one of the biggest cocaine lab seizures in DEA history. Also, as a result of his training and experience in Vietnam, he trained a special group of Colombian and Peruvians and led them on air assaults into cocaine labs. This operation was known as Operation Condor/Relampago.

While on a "Search & Destroy" mission targeting cocaine labs in Central America, Cele survived a helicopter crash in the mountains of Guatemala. After exiting the crash, Cele pulled both pilots to safety. This was Cele's second aviation disaster in his service to his country. Cele continued on duty in Central America where he continued to place his life on the line for his country in worn torn places like El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua for an additional five years.

For the past 18 years since my retirement from DEA, Cele and I have remained in contact as colleagues in the trial consulting field, authors and as friends.

Four years of my law enforcement career were served as a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, so I am well aware of the technical nature of the violations of law to which Cele has pled guilty. During my service in BATF the decision as to whether or not to proceed criminally with such violations—not to make light of them—was usually in the domain of the BATF supervisory officer with the approval of a prosecutor. These decisions always took into consideration the past record of the alleged violator.

I have never met a man whose distinguished record more exemplifies service and sacrifice to his country. As a veteran military man and law enforcement officer myself, I can only hope that Cele's long record of honorable service and sacrifice, merit the court's consideration.

Sincerely

  
Michael Levine