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August 14, 2017

Honorable Rick Snyder, Governor &
Ms. Beth Clement, Legal Counsel
PO Box 30013 - 111 S. Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI. 48909

-and-

Michigan Parole Board
PO Box 30003
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: Recommending Clemency for Nancy Seaman #520695

Dear Governor Snyder:

I am Nels Thompson, a Limited Licensed Psychologist who was hired by the Michigan Department of Corrections to initiate a domestic violence program at Robert Scott Correction Facility in the year of 2000.

In addition to my master's degree, I had received significant training in domestic violence prior to this assignment and had spent 8 years co-leading in a program that treated men who were abusive to women. During those eight years we had 75-80 men in treatment spread over five groups a week.

During my career in psychology, I have 20 years experience in the domestic violence field as well as numerous training sessions in the dynamics of domestic violence. I am currently 73 years old, retired and living in a farm community in Michigan with my wife. I did not maintain my license to practice with the State of Michigan when I retired, though I recently had my license reinstated with Michigan to practice, and then decided I did not want to return to work even part time.

I have not had any contact with Nancy Seaman other than to receive a letter from her, asking me to write this letter of opinion concerning her case. I have responded to her with two or three emails through a JPay account, expressing my concern for her case, desire for her freedom and willingness to write this letter in her behalf.

Most importantly, I have always supported the prison and justice system and I always will. While working at the prison, I realized that life in prison is very difficult, yet, the Michigan prison system houses criminals that I would not like to

see in the free world. I am convinced that if they were in a free society they would continue in a life of crime and be very dangerous.

Furthermore, I do not believe that every woman who has suffered abuse at the hands of a man should be let out of prison for the crimes they have committed. I always think that physical, sexual and emotional abuse is wrong, but is not the cause of crime committed by that victim when they are engaged in criminal activity within the free choice of their life.

In regards to Nancy Seaman's sentence of life without parole and current application for clemency, I would be happy to meet with the parole board and explain in detail why I believe the case of Nancy Seaman is different than what I have just stated and deserves an evaluation with different information. I would attend any meeting you might invite me to attend.

I remember my work with Nancy Seaman very well. She joined my domestic violence group at Robert Scott Correctional Facility and I had a number of private sessions with her. She did attend 30 group session and in addition to the group sessions we probably had 20 individual sessions.

Ms. Seaman had not been in treatment for domestic violence before that time and she was shocked at the things she learned in the group. She is a very intelligent woman and was well able to apply the dynamics of domestic violence that she heard about in the group to her own experience in her marriage.

It is without question in my mind that she suffered physical abuse at the hand of her husband and she learned the typical coping skills of the abused woman: to make sure that no one would know or guess that she was being abused. She learned to clean up messes, make excuses and appear calm during turmoil.

In my professional opinion, violence is not natural to Ms. Seaman's personality structure and the violence that occurred at the time of her husband's death is related to her history of abuse, her fear of present abuse and the trauma of what she believed was happening between them. The previous violence that she had suffered caused her to believe that she was being attacked when he confronted her about leaving. When he fell on her it terrified her and caused her to fight as only a frightened individual would fight who believes they are fighting for their lives.

In my clinical experience with victims of battering, Ms Seaman's act of violence against her husband is not different from a well established pattern of abused people when they confront their abusers. She was full of fear and fighting for her life. She could not imagine that she was effectively defeating him and

continued to flail at him driven to excessive violence by her fear. When she came out of that stage she did what some victims do, she cleaned up the mess and acted as though it hadn't happened. The very behavior that can make her look so guilty to an uninformed public is in fact predictable with those who understand the dynamics of domestic violence.

As I write this letter, it causes me to feel empathy for the family of Mr. Seaman. I have no doubt that they will never believe that their loved one could be violent. In my experience, some men who are abusive are as talented at hiding the abuse as is the wife who is being abused and ashamed. Mr. Seaman was never my client and I have no firsthand knowledge of him. However, Mrs. Seaman was my client and I am convinced that she was abused, frequently overwhelmed, and, as the abused do, felt responsible for the abuse and desperate to hide the shame of her situation. Over time she began to fear for her safety and her life. It is out of the background of this history that the violence between she and her husband occurred, and he was killed.

It is my hope that her case can be reviewed and the history of domestic violence that she suffered at the hand of her husband will be appropriately considered in the release of Ms. Seaman.

Additionally, I hope you will consider that there is precedence for the grant of commutation in non-parolable life sentences for first degree murder.

In the case of:

Linda Hamilton (Oakland County, Judge Robert Webster)
Doreen Washington (Wayne County, Judge Gershwin Drain)
Kay Thomas (Wayne County, Judge Mary Beth Kelly)

These judges all advocated for clemency for these women and Governor Granholm commuted their sentences, despite any objections from the victim's families.

Nancy Seaman's case is similar in many respects to the Kay Thomas case, and it is my hope you will find Nancy Seaman worthy of commutation as did Governor Granholm in the Kay Thomas case.

- Both women had non-parolable life sentences for first-degree murder.
- A federal judge in both cases rules that these two women had received ineffective assistance of counsel.

- The verdict in the Kay Thomas case was overturned once. Ms. Seaman's verdict was overturned twice - in 2005 by the state court and again in 2010 by a federal district court.
- In both cases, the prosecutor's appeals reversed these rulings.
- Kay Thomas had judicial support for clemency, as does Ms. Seaman who has the support of Honorable Judge Jack McDonald as well as the support of Federal District Judge Bernard Friedman.
- Kay Thomas had served 11 years in prison at the time commutation was granted. Ms. Seaman has now served 13 years in prison.

Nancy Seaman, now 65-years-old, is a law-abiding citizen. She is not a danger to society and does not deserve to spend the rest of her life in prison. I hope you will find these reasons compelling and will seriously consider granting Ms. Nancy Seaman's application for commutation.

In conclusion, I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and answer any questions you may have about my clinical opinion or expertise.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nels Thompson. M.A. LLP.