

Your Honor,

On January 17<sup>th</sup> of 2007, I stood before you and took an oath to answer questions truthfully, and that is what I did. I told the truth and nothing but the truth as I knew the facts then. In February, I was under tremendous pressure from my legal team to pay their fees, some past due but mostly in the form of advances so that they can continue to represent me. Eventually, I was able to obtain a loan of 3.5 million dollars from GMH after weeks of discussing numbers and communicating with David Gustman, Brian Smith, Joel Cooper (the three attorneys from Freeborn & Peters), Joe Duffy, Bill Ziegelmueller, and Howard Adelman. GMH was represented by attorney John Caruso of Kirkland & Ellis. The discussions took weeks of phone calls and countless emails.

It was determined by the attorneys involved that since the 3.5 million was a loan, we would be in compliance with the court's orders. Therefore, we did not inform the court of the transaction. Your Honor, I am not a lawyer and I was not the one who interpreted the relevant scripts. Having said that, I understand that it remains my responsibility. I blame no one but myself, and I do apologize for not informing Your Honor of the transaction. I believe all of the above-mentioned individuals will reply similarly if asked.

However, Your Honor, the thought of making plans to leave the country never crossed my mind. I came to Chicago after finishing high school in Syria. I have lived in Chicago ever since. I have spent less than thirty days in Syria since leaving there over thirty-two years ago. All three of my children were born at Prentice hospital. Two of them are in college and the youngest is attending Wilmette Junior High School. The only language they speak is English. Chicago is where my family and I belong. I am a die-hard Bears fan. The White Sox are my baseball team because they are my sons' team. Until recently, I was also a season ticket holder for the Bulls.

The last four years have been very difficult for me. Since the Federal Government started investigating me, they have subpoenaed and interviewed hundreds of people in my life. Most of those people were my friends, associates, accountants, lenders, investors, employees, and ex-employees. My finances have been ruined and, as a result of the charges, I was forced out of what will be an incredible development on the South Side of Chicago. Everything I worked to build has crumbled in front of my eyes. The United States Attorney's office employed many federal agencies to investigate me including the FBI, the IRS, the Postal Department, and the Labor Department. My attorneys were well aware of the scope of the investigation and advised me as to what the government was investigating and who the government was interviewing. The government is wrong in saying I was not aware of the evidence when I came back from Syria. Your Honor, I fully understood what I faced when I boarded the plane that brought me back to Chicago from Damascus after my indictment.

I am proud to be an American. America is my country and Chicago is my city. I believe we have the best constitution and the best justice system in the world. I have faith that, ultimately, I will be exonerated because I am not guilty of any of the charges brought against me. I know this because I know myself. Throughout the weeks in solitary

confinement, I have counted my blessings. God has given me the best family I could ask for, and I am thankful for the opportunity to raise my children in this great nation.

Your Honor, the prosecutors have been overzealous in pursuing a crime that never happened. They are pressuring me to tell them the "wrong" things that I supposedly know about Governor Blagojevich and Senator Obama. I have never been party to any wrongdoing that involved the Governor or the Senator. I will never fabricate lies about anyone else for selfish purposes. I will take what comes my way, but I will never hurt innocent people. I am not Levine, Loren, Mahru, or Winter. I am simply an honest, humble immigrant who believes in the American dream.

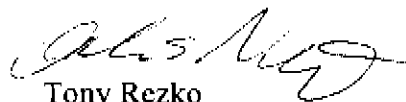
Your Honor, I ask you to please let me go home so that I may focus on my family and my defense. I am entitled to a fair trial. Despite my belief in my innocence, I understand I may well lose this case. If I do, I am prepared to serve my sentence. What was unjustly taken from me by the many agents who stormed my bedroom on January 28 was not only the ability to prepare myself for trial but the opportunity to prepare my family for my absence. I did not die, but in some ways it feels like I died without having the chance to say goodbye.

As Your Honor saw, my two sons spent their Spring Break watching my trial. Before I was arrested, they told me they would do that, and I was looking forward to spending that time with them and explaining to him what I did, and what I did not do, that caused me to be indicted. Now, the marshalls will not let me even talk to my kids in Court. My wife, the love of my life, spends every day in Court, but I can't talk to her except for the two Fridays a month we don't have trial. It simply isn't fair, Your Honor, to make me go through this process without sufficient access to my lawyers or the support of my family. I know you are a fair person, Your Honor, and I know you lost trust in me. I will not let you down again. I am not a flight risk. I want only what I spent the last year preparing for, which is a fair trial and the opportunity to go through it with the support of my family.

Your Honor, my mother passed away in 1990. She is buried at Queen of Heaven cemetery in Hillside, Illinois. I have a lot right next to her. That is where I am going to be buried. I am going nowhere. Chicago is where I belong.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

  
Tony Rezko