

Your honor-

My name is Katrina Polen and I am writing to you to share my personal experience with Erick Shute, in hope that you reconsider his recent, heartbreaking conviction.

To give you some background on myself, I am 30 years old, originally from the Chicagoland suburbs but now reside in Salt Lake City with my fiancée. I am a professional martial artist and I formally owned and operated a dojo in the Chicago area for six years that I opened when I was 22. I excel in working with special-needs children including those with autism, physical handicaps, learning disabilities, and behavioral disorders. I have served hundreds of satisfied clients over the years.

I met Erick online in 2011. We had similar interests which included the outdoors, natural health, spirituality and being a voice for anti-corruption. We spent a lot of time talking on the phone over a couple months, and eventually decided to meet in person. I flew to New Jersey to spend a few days with him and we had a great time. I remember getting sushi, meeting a co-worker of his, and hanging out at his mother's home. He was a wonderful host and it was apparent that he is a very considerate person. I flew home and we continued to date long distance. One of my favorite things about him was how he always had a smile on his face.

The next time we saw each other Erick came camping with my family in 2012. My parents found him to be extremely polite and he was very helpful around camp with what needed to be done. We went tubing down the local river each day, and had a blast. Erick was so grateful for the experience, he thanked my parents multiple times. He truly is such a kind and loving person.

Eventually the time came and I told him that I would still be his friend but that I felt I needed to see other people. I have to say I was surprised at how well he took that. He was agreeable and wanted for me what I felt was best. How rare for a guy to not get angry when getting dumped. We continued on our friendship, checking in with each other every few months, and even chatting to each other about who we were currently dating. He was always someone I could depend on to be a listening ear when I needed a friend.

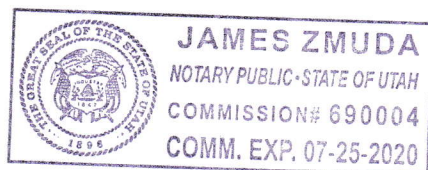
After a rough breakup, and feeling the need to travel to clear my mind I went to visit Erick in New York City in 2013. We attended his band practice together and had fun exploring the city. It was to be able to spend time with someone I felt completely comfortable with while healing my broken heart. Erick not once tried to manipulate me or pressure me into reconnecting when I was vulnerable, like many men unfortunately would have.

He is a rarity when it comes to people in general, in that he is consistent and reliable. He is perhaps one of the most moral people I have known! He is also hard-working, and I always saw him having a family someday. He would be an incredible father! I pray that you can see that he is a man deserving of living a life not defined by the questionable events that happened that day. Erick, much like myself, has a desire to help others and enjoy a peaceful, happy life.

While I was not there that day of the incident Erick is being accused of, I can tell you this- I am an expert in self-defense, I have been studying martial arts since I was eight years old and have been teaching professionally for half my life. I live and breathe the moral implications of what I teach, it's an important aspect of martial arts, knowing when you can escape the situation or when you have to fight to protect yourself from harm. Erick and I have had countless conversations about the morality of self-defense and where that line lies. We even did some training while we were camping. I am a very good judge of character because I don't believe in training someone who would use my methods for harm.

In my heart I believe that he must have felt threatened to the level of taking action. In closing, I am asking you to set aside the verdict for Erick and change it to self-defense. Please sir, let the outside world experience the amazing heart that this man has to offer.

Sincerely, Katrina Polen



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State of Utah
County of Salt Lake
Subscribed and sworn before me
On this 24 day of SEPTEMBER
in the year 2018 by KATRINA POLEN
Notary Public: James Zmuda