



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Chambers of Honorable Judge Jon M. Alander  
Superior Court  
235 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

Re: State of Connecticut v. Daniel Greer (CR17-0177934)

October 29, 2019

Dear Judge Alander,

I offer this letter for your consideration in advance of Daniel Greer's sentencing hearing. I am a licensed clinical psychologist and assistant professor of psychology at Swarthmore College. I study and treat OCD, anxiety, and trauma. I received my BA from Yale, MA and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, and I completed my internship and post-doctoral fellowship at the Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School. And I know Daniel Greer very well for a very long time.

I grew up in New Haven on Hubinger and Norton Streets and attended the Gan School through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I was a Greer/Gan insider from 1981, when I was 3 years old and we moved to New Haven for my father's medical residency at Yale, at least through 1991, when I graduated from 8<sup>th</sup> grade and left to board for high school in Boston.

I returned to New Haven as a student at Yale from 1997 to 2001, during which time I often prayed and studied at Greer's synagogue. I worked during Summer 1997 or 1998 in Greer's summer camp as a sports counselor. I celebrated my aufruf, a ritual the Saturday before a groom is married, in Greer's synagogue. And Greer was honored with a blessing under the chuppah at my wedding.

My parents attended Greer's synagogue until approximately 5 years ago, which means that I did when I was visiting, as well. Sarah Greer was my principal, Daniel Greer was my rabbi, his children were my peers, and his son and daughter-in-law were among my sister's best friends.

As you can see, I grew up with the Greer family. I am an insider if anyone is an insider.

Like others, at times I respected him. He is incredibly smart – rigid and unable to take others' perspectives, but the raw intellectual horsepower is amazing. I certainly feared him. He is nothing if not domineering, aggressive, and mean. At times – very many times – I despised him.

Greer harnessed fear, shame, and embarrassment to run his school and synagogue. He expertly and strategically mixed in pride and warmth so that one was both terrified to step out of line or disobey, and also eager to please. He was the puppeteer toying with the strings of students' confidence and sense of self-worth.

He humiliates people with the ease that others say good morning. Quite literally it is hard to fathom having the arrogance and disregard for others – both his objects of derision and bystanders – to demean others in public so comfortably. No passion or heat of the moment necessary.

You have already heard from and about victims who endured much worse than I did. You already know about the cruel punishments he contrived to break the will of students and isolate them from their families. I will not attempt to compile a list of similar incidents I witnessed. However, I wish to echo and amplify the voices of his true victims and to tell you both from experience and professional expertise that victims of emotional, let alone physical or sexual, abuse often come back, often seek to impress, and often fail to confront the abuser. After reading ██████ deposition, I had nightmares in which I tried unsuccessfully to confront Greer. In my own dreams, I could not confront him. And I was not a victim of his sexual abuse, just his regular, sustained meanness. And yet after some time, still he had me coming back. And still he had me wanting his approval. And still he received an honor at my wedding.

I ask you to imagine how we former students, congregants, and community members reacted to the news of ██████ allegations, not to mention the transcript of ██████ deposition. If you imagine that I was texting, emailing, and calling friends and family, former members of the school and synagogue, you are correct. If you imagine horror and pain and nightmares about the details, you are correct, as well. But if you imagine shock or disbelief, you are very wrong.

Here was my reaction: I did not know that he was interested sexually in underage boys, but there is not a question in my mind that if he was, he would be willing and able to groom, manipulate, and prey on them. Not for a moment did I consider the possibility that whatever residue of a conscience he might have would have the power to give him a moment's pause or an ounce of regret. Before we knew details of the abuse, my sense during the civil trial was that Greer deserves the disgrace even if he did not rape ██████ I cannot imagine thinking that about any other human being I know.

Nor did a single Greer/Gan insider with whom I spoke express otherwise. As one friend put it, "sexual abuse aside – the emotional abuse, manipulation, and sheer meanness is exactly what I remember, too." Said another, who was notably not a particular victim even of his emotional abuse, "I think that Danny Greer is the worst person I've ever known [...] We all know how much he loved power and belittling other people [...] he is a horrible horrible person [...] I believe his whole MO is about humiliation."

Greer will trample anyone to get what he wants, and will convince himself (others? victims?) that his is holy work. He is arrogant, mean, manipulative, abusive, and vicious. I do not ever recall him contrite, admit to wrongdoing, or express regret. He has earned jailtime with the abuse, humiliation, shame, tears, and nightmares of others. Do not grant him leniency.

You are welcome to identify me in court by name. I regret only that I never had the courage to express this directly to Greer.

Sincerely,



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