

Good morning Judge Selvaggio,

My name is Logan Cole. I am currently a senior in high school. I have lived in West Liberty my whole life. I was homeschooled until 6th grade, which is when I began attending WL-S. I have enjoyed being part of the soccer and quick recall teams along with many other extracurricular activities.

January 20th started as an exciting day for me. It was my first ever mock trial competition; my team and I had been preparing for months. I was dressed up in a suit and tie and was waiting for the bus to leave. This is when I decided to go into the bathroom to check my hair. As I turned the corner, I saw someone in a mask standing there with a gun and I was shot once in the chest and then again at the base of my neck from a couple of feet away. I remember falling down face first and my teeth cracking on the concrete. It all happened so fast that it took me a bit to process what had just occurred. It felt like I had been hit by a concussion grenade. Of course, that was not the case. After seeing my blood splatter on the wall, I came to the conclusion that I had been shot, and that I was not in good shape. I was worried that I might die. Strangely enough, the pain I remember the most was coming from the exposed nerves in my front teeth, not from the wounds themselves. I also remember breathing very heavily and coughing up blood.

I remember not seeing the shooter and assuming he had left the bathroom. I attempted to get up and walk to the stall on the other side of the bathroom away from the door. I did this to try to get as far away from him as I could. I made a step or two but then fell back down to the floor. The next thing I remember is facing Ely when he was in the stall. I remember begging him to put the gun down and not kill anyone including himself. I also recall telling him that if he cares for me that he would go get help.

After this, I remember Mr. Johnson and Mr. McGill coming into the bathroom and Ely giving up the gun. I was laid on my back on the other side of the bathroom and was having my wounds tended to by Jake Vitt and Mrs. Douthwaite, and I remember Mrs. Wilcoxon praying over me. They were asking me simple questions such as, "what is your name?" in order to keep me awake.

My next memory is seeing my parents and telling my dad that I love him. He told me that he loved me back and asked me "who did this to you". I told him "Ely Serna did this but that doesn't matter". I also remember my dad asking me "how are you doing." I told him: "well, I am still alive."

I was then lifted on a blanket up onto a gurney and taken down the hall and through the doors. At this point, my suit jacket and shirt had been taken off and I remember the cold air hitting my bare skin as I was taken outside and loaded into the ambulance. I was taken in the ambulance to Mary Rutan Hospital and my last memory there was laying in the trauma room and the doctor telling me "you are going to go to sleep". I was terrified about going under because I had never done it before. I was afraid they would begin working on me and I would not be totally asleep. I remember not being able to speak but still being aware of what was going on around me. I tried to wiggle my foot so the doctor would know I was still awake. Of course, I have no memory after this as the drugs must have done their job.

Early in the morning on the next day, I woke up in the ICU at Children's Hospital in Columbus. It was not long after coming out of sedation that I was made aware of the full extent of my injuries. The first shot entered into my right chest and exited just under my armpit. This shot left the splatter mark on the wall that both my parents saw as they raced in to find me laying on the floor. It damaged much muscle and punctured my lung. This wound also required me to have a chest tube for 5 days in order to drain the blood away from my right lung.

The second shot ended up being the more serious of the two wounds. The shot hit me at the top of my back and base of my neck. There was no exit and the wound was large and deep. The doctor could fit her whole hand into the wound. The pellets destroyed a large amount of tissue and broke and chipped multiple vertebrae which caused my spine to be exposed. Pellets also got lodged in my spinal canal.

One of the pellets entered my blood vessels and was carried to the right chamber of my heart. This risk of leaving this pellet in my heart was too high so I underwent a heart catheterization to dislodge it. This surgery caused the lead pellet to travel through my bloodstream to my lung. There is still long-term risk that this pellet will cause a lung infection but that is much better than a heart infection.

All of these injuries ended up requiring two blood transfusions, 1 heart catheterization, 3 surgeries on the flesh wounds, many dressing changes under sedation, 3 root canals, and three front teeth being capped.

As bad as all these wounds were, they could have been much worse. The trauma doctor told my parents that if the shot in the back had entered a few millimeters to the right, it very likely would have severed my spinal cord and I would have been paralyzed from the waist down or killed. He told us that had the shot been slightly further to the left or from slightly farther away, the pellets would have spread and hit the heart and other vital organs. This, too would have likely taken my life. At the end of my treatment, my wound doctor said, "this is simply a miracle." I fully believe that there is no other way to describe how I survived this incident than by saying it was a miracle. God intervened on that day.

I currently have several hundred lead pellets in my body. These lead pellets are contaminating my blood. My lead levels are currently 29 and at one point were all the way up to 43. The doctors have told us that there are simply too many pellets to remove them all. The long-term risk that comes with the high lead levels I am experiencing are high blood pressure, decreased kidney function, infertility, and some mental deficits. I also have regular back pain due to the damage done to my back and spine. In addition to all of this, I have had recurring stomach issues that all started after January 20th .

This situation has also affected me mentally. I would consider myself not to be a very emotional person, and I don't like dealing with feelings. But this whole incident has changed me. When I first started talking in the hospital, my parents asked me to tell the story of what happened. I would start talking about it, and immediately my blood pressure would shoot up to dangerous levels, set alarms off, and I would have to stop.

For the first week or so, I would wake up after having a bad dream and not be able to fall back asleep. What caused a lot of this is the mask that Ely was wearing. My mom remembers me telling her that I couldn't sleep because "every time I close my eyes I see it." I can't really explain why it had this effect on me, but I do know that I really struggle because of it. I remember weeks after I got out of the hospital I was riding with my dad back home from the dentist in Dayton. We were talking about the mask and I just started crying, even though I had forgotten exactly what it looked like.

Along with this, I would (and to an extent still do) get scared by certain situations. When I first got home, I would sleep on the recliner in our living room. Every night I would have trouble getting to sleep because I was out in the dark by myself. Another situation that still scares me at times is school. Last year, I would get so anxious in the mornings, especially on Fridays, as the bell rang that another shooting would occur. The first time there was a rumor about a school shooting at our school last year, I remember that my friend texted me, I told my mom, and I just broke down crying uncontrollably because I was so worried that something would happen again. Recently, we were given the opportunity to watch some of the security footage from that day in the school. That was extremely hard for me. It stuck out how happy I seemed, talking to all of my friends in the hallway, then I stepped into the bathroom and everything changed.

But just as this has mentally affected me, it has also mentally affected hundreds of other students. It seems like the school's guidance counselors are constantly busy talking with students who are still struggling. In addition to this, I know many people personally who are still struggling daily with the emotional effects that January 20th had on them. Nearly every high school student either ran on foot or barricaded themselves in their rooms. For up to an hour they were fearing that the worst was occurring. Many believed that their friends, siblings, and teachers were being killed. That kind of trauma sticks with people.

I feel like my sister Leah very eloquently summed up much of what I feel was taken by Ely that day: She wrote "Never again will the men's bathroom in the high school wing of West Liberty-Salem be free of the pellet holes that once went through the body of an unsuspecting, defenseless human being. Never again will the right chest and mid-back of my brother be free of the fist-sized scars that stretch across them. Never again will you be able to Google Search "West Liberty-Salem" without having it auto-fill "shooting." Never again will our family and our community regain the innocence that we once held."

In my opinion, justice for someone who attempts to kill others, and succeeds in taking the innocence from so many, should be severe. It is for this reason that I am asking that the court sentence Ely to the maximum of 23.5 years allowed under the plea agreement.

Ely, as you have heard me say, I believe that the consequences to your actions should be proportionate to the actions themselves. In many ways,

even if you serve the full sentence possible, it will not compare to the damage that was done to so many lives on January 20th. I would like you to know, though, that I have forgiven you for what you did to me and to our school. I also want you to know that I believe there is a difference between forgiveness and justice. The reason I can show you forgiveness is because Christ first showed forgiveness to me. My hope and prayer for you is that you also come to know Him as your Savior.